La Salle Connection – Episode 3: “I adore in everything the will of God for me”

“La Salle Connection” is a multimedia series designed to connect the Lasallian Family with historical events that continue to inspire Lasallians today.

In today’s episode of *La Salle Connections* we are going to discuss some events concerning the end of Monsieur de La Salle’s life.

The year is 1719. In early January, De La Salle received a letter from his brother Juan Luis, who reproached him for having broken off relations between both of them. He also mentioned some properties that were still jointly owned by both of them, and about which De La Salle had to make decisions, given that his life was coming to an end.

At the same time, there were rumours in the city of Rouen and elsewhere in France that John Baptist de La Salle was one of the so-called ‘appellants’. The ‘appellants’ were a group of clergy and lay people who were calling for a council to be convened to decide whether Jansenism was truly a mistaken view of life or not. His brother Jean Louis and some of his nephews were on the list of ‘appellants’. That was why they had broken off relations.

But there was also a rumour that Mr. de La Salle was on that list. This caused Mr. de La Salle great suffering. But it is part of the final process of life to purify and refine our intentions and desires. This is especially true for someone like John Baptist de La Salle, who made abandonment to God and the dispossession of his own life the centre of his existence.

Hurt by this situation, in the first days of January he also wrote a letter to a Brother in Calais, precisely talking about the one who had never given any reason for this. You can take the trouble to read it, a very beautiful letter: it is Letter number 65.

In January, we also have another issue that will lead him to bed. De La Salle had wanted to address the students who were in Saint-Yon, and so a stage was set up

with a chair, but just as De La Salle was about to sit down to give his speech, something happened and he ended up on the floor. He hit his head, and from then on, he was unable to recover fully.

In February, he suffered asthma attacks and an exacerbation of the rheumatism from which he suffered. And in March, while he was standing, a door fell on him. He was unable to recover enough to walk, and on the 19th, the feast day of St Joseph, he was able to get up to celebrate Mass; it was his last Mass.

But on that very day, the revocation of his powers to hear confessions was signed. The bishop took them away from him. They tried to hide it from him, so that he would not find out, but at the beginning of Holy Week, on Palm Sunday, De La Salle received the document informing him of this.

From then on, visits and events began to take place, with which he began to close the process of his life. On the 3rd, he wrote his testament, in which he again emphasised his fidelity to the Pope and made arrangements for various properties. The text of the Testament is also a very beautiful text that I recommend you read and reflect on.

On the 5th, he went to celebrate, or rather to receive, the Eucharist, on his knees again, getting up at least for a moment.

On the 6th, he received the anointing. And that day he gave a short speech with a blessing to the Brothers, some very beautiful words also speaking of fidelity to the way of thinking of Jesus, to whom we must be faithful.

And on the 7th, Good Friday, at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, after Brother Bartholomew asked him if he was accepting the pains he was suffering, De La Salle replied with what would be his last words: "I adore in everything the will of God for me," or better translated, "I adore in everything God's conduct to me throughout my life," or "I adore in everything the way God has guided my life." May these also be our feelings.

In the next episodes, we will continue to share other significant moments in the life and work of Saint John Baptist de La Salle. You can find them at www.lasalle.org and on our social media.