

# La Salle Connection - Episode 6: The Founding of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools

*“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 Connection, we’re going to talk about 24 June, the anniversary of the founding of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

The idea that there is a specific date for the founding of the Institute is somewhat problematic. There is no document stating that the Institute was founded. What is remembered are certain episodes involving various commitments that De La Salle undertook, which led to the creation of this Community.

The first instance where the term “foundation” of the Institute is used in relation to a specific date is in the Bull of Approbation of 1725, some years after De La Salle had already died. And there it is stated that De La Salle is the founder, and that this took place on 24 June 1680, but in reality nothing happened on that day. The curious thing is that when the first centenary of the foundation was celebrated, it was not in 1780, but in 1781. And the second time in 1880. And the third time in 1980.

So, the first time it is said that De La Salle founded the Institute, we run into a bit of a problem because nothing actually happened on that day. What could have happened? Perhaps they were looking for a date that was easy to remember; perhaps the documents said something we are unaware of today.

In any case, what happened on 24 June 1680 was that De La Salle invited the teachers to dine at his home. He had rented a house at Christmas the previous year, and the teachers were living there; he would not rent a house properly until 1682. In the meantime, in 1681, on 24 June, the teachers went to live at the home

of the family of Monsieur De La Salle. The date of 24 June was the date on which tenancy agreements were officially renewed in the city of Reims. And that is why the repetition of this date is something that may catch our attention.

In any case, the question is: what does this 'founding' mean, because Father Barré had said precisely to Monsieur de La Salle, 'if you found this community, you endow it'. Because 'founding' in those days meant putting money in to make something work. And De La Salle did not do this in any way, because he renounced his funds, his possessions, his property, his canonry, to place himself in the same situation as the teachers.

Therefore, when we think of this date, perhaps rather than thinking of a specific day in a specific year, what we need to try to see is a process of commitment upon commitment that led him to create this community together with the teachers. This is probably the best way to think about what it means to found, to create something together. And in a way, that process is not yet over.

***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](http://www.lasalle.org) and on our social media.***