IT WAS IN 1651 THAT JOHN WAS BORN INTO THE WEALTHY DE LA SALLE FAMILY IN REIMS, NORTHERN FRANCE. THE COUNTRY WAS FIGHTING SPAIN, AND A CIVIL WAR WAS UNDERWAY. EVEN THE WALLED CITY OF REIMS FELT UNDER THREAT. IN ENGLAND, WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE HAD DIED ABOUT 30 YEARS EARLIER. OLIVER CROMWELL WAS RULING ENGLAND, AND SIR ISAAC NEWTON WOULD SOON BE TALKING ABOUT THE FORCE OF GRAVITY!
ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS IN THE CATHEDRAL, JOHN WOULD SEE THE PRIESTS CELEBRATING MASS IN A SPLENDID WAY. JOHN AND HIS FRIENDS WOULD PRETEND TO DO THE SAME.

LORD JESUS, YOU ARE THE GOOD SHEPHERD. LORD, HAVE MERCY.

IN THOSE DAYS, ALL MEMBERS OF WELL-TO-DO FAMILIES LEARNED TO PLAY A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.

THAT WOULD BE A GOOD PIECE TO PLAY WITH THE FAMILY TONIGHT, JOHN.

WILL YOU LIKE TO GO TO YOUR GRANDFATHER'S FOR A FEW DAYS?

YOU'LL BE ABLE TO JOIN IN THE GRAPE-HARVEST.

I LIKE BEING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE.

WITH POOR UNDERSTANDING OF HEALTH CARE, SOME BABIES WOULD DIE AT BIRTH, OR IN THEIR FIRST FEW YEARS. THESE WERE WORRYING TIMES FOR ALL FAMILIES.

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO CALL HER?

WHAT ABOUT ROSE-MARIE?

* THE DE LA SALLE FAMILY HAD ELEVEN CHILDREN, SEVEN OF WHOM SURVIVED. 
JOHN HAD A HOME TUTOR FOR HIS FIRST FEW YEARS. ONLY AFTER HE HAD BEEN TAUGHT TO READ AND WRITE IN LATIN, WOULD HE BE TAUGHT IN HIS OWN LANGUAGE.

I LIKE READING STORIES.

FOR FAMILIES LIKE OURS, JOHN, SCHOOL STARTS FOR A BOY WHEN HE IS NINE. I WONDER WHAT YOU'LL BE LIKE IN A FEW YEARS?

FOR A LONG TIME I HAVE THOUGHT THAT GOD WANTS HIM TO BECOME A PRIEST.

WE'LL GIVE HIM EVERY SUPPORT WE CAN. HE IS A FINE YOUNG MAN AND HE'D MAKE A GOOD PRIEST.

JOHN STARTED ON THE LONG PATH WHICH WOULD LEAD TO HIM BECOMING A PRIEST.

THIS 'TONGUE' IS A SIGN OF YOUR SERVICE IN THE CHURCH.

JOHN BECAME A CANON OF THE MAGNIFICENT CATHEDRAL OF REIMS. THE CANONS GATHERED TOGETHER EACH DAY TO PRAY. IT WAS A SPECIAL POSITION, AND SEVERAL CANONS LATER BECAME BISHOPS.

YOU WERE ONLY AGED THREE, JOHN, WHEN KING LOUIS XIV WAS CROWNED IN OUR CATHEDRAL.
The young man spent several years in a seminary, preparing to become a priest. (Most religious men of the time wore similar-looking clothes.) Each day, let's look for little ways of showing kindness and building people up. Often we'll call to mind that we are in God's presence. We'll take the gospel seriously. We'll be faithful in prayer, and be prepared to help others to pray. Let's live our lives in such a way that we'll be able to 'touch the hearts' of those we're with.

After just a few months in the Paris seminary, John's mother died, and then his father. John was now aged 37, and was the eldest of the family. He returned home to help his brothers and sisters.

I will be responsible for my younger brothers and sisters.
YOU ARE THE ELDEST, AND A LOT OF THE FAMILY MONEY WILL BE MADE OVER TO YOU.

John was not yet aware that God would be inviting him to care for many young people.

NOW THAT I AM THE LEGAL GUARDIAN OF MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, I WOULD LIKE TO INVEST THE FAMILY MONEY.

Soon, Marie (John’s sister), I’ll be returning to my studies to become a priest.

IN HIS WILL YOUR FATHER ASKED YOU TO LOOK AFTER THEIR EDUCATION.

I WILL DO MY VERY BEST.

IT’S A HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY, BUT WE THINK YOU CAN DO IT.

NOW YOU ARE HEAD OF THE FAMILY, JOHN.

AS WE RECEIVE FOOD, LORD, WE PRAY THAT WE MAY ALWAYS REMEMBER OTHER PEOPLE.

John joined the other canons in prayer for about 5 hours a day. They also advised the archbishop.

“LORD, YOU ARE COMPASSION AND LOVE, SLOW TO ANGER AND RICH IN MERCY.”

YOU’LL RETURN, OF COURSE, FOR MY WEDDING.

* FROM PSALM 103: ONE OF THE PRAYERS THE CANONS WOULD SAY TOGETHER.
I HEAR YOU'VE STARTED SOME SCHOOLS, NICOLAS, FOR POOR GIRLS?

BUT JOHN SAW NO REASON - AT THAT TIME - TO GET INVOLVED IN TEACHING.

WHEN HE WAS AGED 27, HE WAS ORDAINED A PRIEST IN REIMS CATHEDRAL:

JOHN HAD LOOKED UP TO NICHOLAS ROLAND, A FELLOW-CANON OF REIMS CATHEDRAL. HE HAD BEEN JOHN'S SPIRITUAL GUIDE, AND A GOOD FRIEND.

I GIVE YOU THE LORD'S BLESSING.

I AM GOING TO DIE. THE SISTERS NEED THE KING'S PERMISSION FOR THEIR SCHOOLS TO CONTINUE. WILL YOU HELP THEM GET IT?

LIKE THIS STATUE OF 'THE SMILING ANGEL', THOSE WHO TEACH MUST BE 'ANGELS', 'MESSAGERS OF GOD'.

EVEN DAY, JOHN, LITE THE GOSPEL AND DEEPEN YOUR FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS.

AT LAST, SISTER FRANCES HERE IS THE OFFICIAL APPROVAL YOU NEED.

SOME PEOPLE ARE AGAINST US FOR BRINGING EDUCATION TO THE CHILDREN OF THE LOWER CLASSES.

WITHOUT YOUR HELP, THESE SCHOOLS FOR GIRLS WOULD HAVE BEEN CLOSED.
FOR POOR PEOPLE THERE WAS LITTLE MONEY FOR FOOD, AND NO ONE TO PAY FOR CHILDREN’S EDUCATION.

I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE ADRIEN NUEL. HE HAS SOMETHING TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT. I HOPED YOU'D BE INTERESTED.

IN THE CITY OF ROUEN I HAVE OPENED SOME SCHOOLS FOR BOYS FROM POOR FAMILIES. I HAVE COME TO REIMS TO DO THE SAME.

WILL YOU HELP ME, SO THAT THESE CHILDREN CAN MAKE SOMETHING SPECIAL OF THEIR LIVES?

YOU MUST GO ABOUT THIS VERY CAREFULLY. I KNOW A FEW PEOPLE WHO MIGHT HELP US. YOU'RE WELCOME TO STAY AT MY HOUSE.

IT'S A GOOD IDEA, BUT YOU'LL CERTAINLY HAVE SOME PEOPLE WHO WILL DO A LOT TO TRY AND STOP YOU.

ADRIEN NUEL SOON OPENED MORE SCHOOLS. JOHN DE LA SALLE FOUND HIMSELF GETTING MORE INVOLVED AS ONE THING LED TO ANOTHER.

WILL YOU LISTEN TO WHAT I'M SAYING? AND YOU AT THE BACK—STOP FIGHTING!

THE CHILDREN ARE TROUBLE. I CAN'T HANDLE THEM, AND I CAN'T UNDERSTAND THEM.

YOU REALLY NEED TO GIVE THE TEACHERS AN IDEA OF HOW TO TEACH. THEY ARE LEFT TO THEMSELVES AND HAVEN'T GOT ENOUGH SUPPORT.

WELL, YOU HAVE YET TO GAIN EXPERIENCE...

IF I START THINGS, FATHER JOHN, COULD I ASK YOU TO SHOW THE TEACHERS JUST WHAT TO DO?

JOHN KNEW THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO THINK ABOUT THIS VERY CAREFULLY.
IN 1680, AFTER PRAYING AND TAKING ADVICE, HE GATHERED THESE TEACHERS IN A RENTED HOUSE. HE TRIED TO IMPROVE THEIR MANNERS, AS WELL AS THEIR ATTITUDES. A LITTLE LATER HE INVITED THEM TO HAVE THEIR MEALS IN HIS OWN HOME, ALONGSIDE SOME OF HIS WELL-TO-DO FAMILY.

"We must all take pride in who we are, and in what we are called to do."

"This is the first time anyone has ever served me at a meal! How do I eat it?"

"How can we invite these teachers to eat with us?"

"These ill-mannered men won't be able to educate anybody!"

"John is being very generous. I think he has a good idea."

"Well, I'm not used to such manners, myself!"

"I am your family servant, sir, but I just can't serve those teachers of yours."

"But I just can't serve those teachers of yours."
JOHN INVITED THE TEACHERS TO MOVE INTO THE FAMILY HOME. WHEN THE OLDER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY HEARD THIS, THEY WERE VERY ANGRY.

I THOUGHT ABOUT THIS CAREFULLY BEFORE INVITING THEM TO MOVE IN. I DO BELIEVE THAT GOD WANTS ME TO BE CLOSER TO THE TEACHERS.

THOSE 'TEACHERS', AS YOU CALL THEM, ARE IN THIS FOR WHAT THEY CAN GET.

WE HAVE DECIDED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS. WE WON'T ALLOW YOU TO BE IN CHARGE OF YOUR YOUNGER BROTHERS ANYMORE. WE ARE GOING TO ENTRUST THEM TO PROPER EDUCATORS.

WHAT KIND OF EXAMPLE DO YOUR 'TEACHERS' GIVE TO YOUR THREE YOUNGER BROTHERS IN THE SAME HOUSE?

JOHN HAD GREAT LOVE FOR HIS FAMILY BUT, IN JUNE 1682, HE MOVED WITH THE TEACHERS INTO A HOUSE HE HAD RENTED. HE WAS CUTTING HIMSELF OFF FROM HIS FORMER EASY LIFE.

YOU'LL FIND LIVING HERE TO BE VERY DIFFERENT FROM YOUR OWN SPLENDID HOUSE FATHER JOHN.

GROUP TOGETHER PUPILS WHO ARE AT THE SAME LEVEL. THEY'LL BE BUSIER THAT WAY AND LEARN MORE.

SHOW MUCH KINDNESS TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE GOD ENTRUSTS TO YOU. LET LOVE GUIDE YOU IN ALL THAT YOU DO, PRAY FOR THE GIFT OF TOUCHING HEARTS.

WHEN I AM TEACHING ONE PUPIL AT A TIME, THE OTHERS BECOME RESTLESS.
ADRIAN NYEL OPENED SOME MORE SCHOOLS, BUT THE TEACHERS WERE BECOMING DISCOURAGED. SOME OF THE FIRST TEACHERS DECIDED TO LEAVE.

THE WORK IS TOO HARD AND WE GET NOTHING IN RETURN. I'VE HAD ENOUGH.

THE REGULATIONS ARE TOO STRONG, WE NEVER SEEM TO HAVE ANY TIME OFF. GOODBYE.

WE DON'T CHARGE THE CHILDREN, BUT WE'RE GIVEN HARDLY ANYTHING TO LIVE ON BY THE PARISH PRIEST.

IT'S ALL RIGHT FOR YOU, FATHER JOHN. YOU HAVE LOTS OF MONEY OF YOUR OWN TO FALL BACK ON, IF ANYTHING GOES WRONG.

SOME OF THE FIRST TEACHERS LEFT.

THEY'RE RIGHT, OF COURSE, IF I AM TO DEPEND ON GOD I CAN'T HAVE ALL THIS FAMILY MONEY TO PROTECT ME.

SO JOHN WROTE TO A PRIEST FRIEND FOR ADVICE.

LORD, YOU ARE ASKING A LOT OF ME, BUT I'LL DO AS I BELIEVE YOU WANT.

I MUST GIVE UP BEING A CANON, AND JOIN FULLY WITH THE LIFE OF THE TEACHERS, SPENDING MUCH MORE TIME WITH THEM.

I THINK YOU ARE MAKING A MISTAKE, FATHER DE LA SALLE, BUT I KNOW YOU ARE DETERMINED ABOUT THIS...

JOHN FEEL THAT HE MUST NOW GIVE UP THE SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY HE HAD BEEN GIVEN IN THE CATHEDRAL—OF BEING A CANON, AND SO HE WENT TO SEE HIS BISHOP.

JOHN MAKES A BREAK WITH THE COMFORTABLE LIFE HIS WEALTH AND FAMILY CONNECTIONS COULD HAVE BROUGHT HIM.
De la Salle could have spent his money on the schools, but he felt it was God's will to give it away during a time of cold, famine, and sickness, in the winter of 1683-84...
AND SO FATHER DE LA SALLE DISTRIBUTED TO THE NEEDY THE SHARE OF THE FAMILY WEALTH THAT HE HAD INHERITED. HIS SPIRITUAL GUIDE INSTRUCTED HIM TO KEEP BACK ONLY JUST ENOUGH TO SUPPORT HIMSELF.

IN JUNE 1686:

WE'RE COMMITTED TO GOD, TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE, AND TO EACH OTHER.

LET'S TRY AND DISCOVER WHAT GOD REALLY WANTS US TO DO.

LET'S CALL OURSELVES "BROTHERS"!

I'M SORRY, BUT YOUR VILLAGE PARISH IS TOO SMALL TO SUPPORT TWO BROTHERS IN A SCHOOL AND WE INSIST ON AT LEAST TWO FOR EACH COMMUNITY.

COULD YOU PERHAPS TRAIN ONE YOUNG MAN TO BE A TEACHER - SOMEONE WHO IS NOT INTERESTED IN BECOMING A BROTHER?

THAT SOUNDS A GOOD IDEA.

AND SO THE FIRST BROTHERS MADE THIS VOW (OR Promise:) "WE WILL CARE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE UNTIL WE DIE, EVEN IF WE HAVE TO BEG, AND LIVE ON BREAD ALONE." THEY WOULD LIVE AS A COMMUNITY. NO BROTHERS WOULD BECOME PRIESTS.
Father de la Salle became the first to start a training centre for teachers before opening a school. John always made an agreement that funds would be raised by the parish priest and some local wealthy people. The schools would be free of charge.

John grouped children together according to ability, and taught a whole group at a time. No longer were children being taught individually.

Well, they're keeping all those children off the streets, and their schools have good discipline!

An inside pocket would hold the New Testament "close to the heart". John asked the brothers to read the word of God each day, so as to be inspired.

This rough black cloth is the cheapest we have.

We want to wear a 'habit' that will be simple and will keep out the cold.

They do look funny!

They try to set up a lending library in their schools.

You are very ill. This way of life is too much for some of you men.

They're being taught in their own language, instead of speaking and reading everything in Latin.

With the hard work in the schools and the demanding life they led, some brothers soon became ill. They were exhausted, and many died young from diseases picked up in the decaying slums. They also practised severe penances on themselves.
THE PEOPLE OF REIMS DID NOT ALWAYS APPROVE.

MY LAD'S NOT GOING TO YOU ANY MORE. I NEED HIM FOR WORK.

YOU LOOK AFTER BOYS, BUT WHAT ABOUT MY DAUGHTER?

TAKE MUCH MORE CARE OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE ENTRUSTED TO YOU THAN IF THEY WERE THE CHILDREN OF A KING. BUILD ON THEIR AFFECTION FOR YOU TO DRAW THEM TO GOD WHO LOVES THEM.

SOME OF THESE MEN HAD CHANGED A LOT. THEY WERE GROWING CLOSER AS BROTHERS, KNOWING THAT GOD WAS CALLING THEM AND ENTRUSTING YOUNG PEOPLE TO THEM.

NOW THE BROTHERS WERE INVITED TO WORK IN A SCHOOL IN PARIS.

I WONDER IF FATHER DE LA SALLE REGrets GETTING INVOLVED WITH THE SCHOOLS?

I HEARD HIM SAY THAT, DESPITE HIS TROUBLES, HIS MEETING WITH ADRIAN NVEL AT THE BEGINNING WAS INSPIRED BY GOD.

I WONDER HOW THINGS WILL BE FOR US IN PARIS?
Every hour in class a pupil would ring the bell. This was a time for the brothers and pupils to remind themselves that they were in the presence of God. The more they realised that they were in God's presence, the more likely they would be to say and do things in the way of Jesus.

Chris, I'd like you to read the first passage out loud. I want everyone to follow carefully as he is reading.

Jesus preached good news about God's forgiveness. He preached to the poor.

It's easier to learn, now that no-one is allowed to mess about!
At the start of class the Brothers would give a reflection—a short story or lesson with a message.

I am concerned about young apprentices like these. They had no education when they were younger, and have a poor religious background.

The Brothers set up a vocational school for apprentices up to the age of 20. For 3 hours on Sundays the school gave them a good basic education and religious teaching, and also served as a youth club. Numbers soon rose to 800.

* Circumference = \( 2\pi r \)
  \( = 440 \text{ units}. \)

The radius of a building’s dome is 70 units. What length of stringing would you need for its circumference? *
THE ENGLISH PARLIAMENT HAD REMOVED KING JAMES II FROM THE THRONE IN 1688 (AND REPLACED HIM WITH WILLIAM AND MARY). SOME IRISH NOBLEMEN FOLLOWED JAMES TO EXILE IN FRANCE. DE LA SALLE WAS ASKED TO OPEN A SCHOOL FOR THEIR SONS, AND KING JAMES VISITED THE SCHOOL.

I AM VERY PLEASED, FATHER DE LA SALLE, WITH EVERYTHING I SEE.

THE BROTHERS WERE INVITED TO OPEN SCHOOLS IN MORE TOWNS.

GET TO KNOW YOUR PUPILS INDIVIDUALLY. REMEMBER THAT GOD GIVES YOU THE POWER TO PERFORM MIRACLES BY TOUCHING THE HEARTS OF OTHERS.

BROTHER VUVARI, WE ARE GOING TO TRAIN TEACHERS FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE. I WOULD LIKE TO ENTRUST THIS TO YOU.

COULD JOHN HELP INDIVIDUALS - NOT BROTHERS - TO GO OUT TO TEACH, ONE-BY-ONE, IN SMALL VILLAGES NEAR PARIS?

THE BROTHERS WERE INVITED TO OPEN SCHOOLS IN MORE TOWNS.
Another bad winter caused food shortages and, again, the poor were dying of hunger.

I'm a baker, but have no flour to make bread. My family is hungry, too.

Many pupils of the 'writing masters' were leaving them to go to the 'free schools' of the brothers. The 'writing masters' thought of ways they might accuse John in court so as to get the schools closed down.

The law doesn't allow these brothers to teach only us and they are depriving us of our living.

Here is a summons for you to appear in court.

The law doesn't allow these brothers to teach only us and they are depriving us of our living.

You have also been accused of feeding your pupils badly but the only ones underfed seem to be the brothers!

If there is any proof that the brothers have been given any money by the pupils, then I will close the schools myself.

The court found him 'not guilty' of the charges brought against him.
John tried to draw good out of difficulties, and often said, "God be blessed!"

But the other house isn't suitable as a school, or for us to live our community life.

Sometimes when threatened with difficulties, the brothers would eat no food and go on pilgrimage, praying that all might be well. Now the writing masters made a fierce attack against the brothers. An order from the court closed down some of the schools.

I will cut off your money supply from the parish!

Don't blame me. I'm only following orders.

We are trying to serve God, but you are putting obstacles in the way.

How can you do this? What's going to happen to our children now?
A big house in the city of Rouen included the novitiate - the place where a young man tries to discover if God is calling him as a brother.

John started at St. Yon the first secondary school for modern languages, arts, and science. He was also asked to open a boarding school.

I'd like James to study what would help him become an architect.

I would like a different kind of education for Paul. He is good at making things. How could you help him?

My husband travels abroad. Another language would be useful to Kevin.

These studies will help you develop the skills needed in trade and industry.

Courses for all students:
- R.E.
- French
- History
- Geography
- Accountancy
- Architecture
- Science

Optional courses:
- Technical Drawing
- Calculus
- Music
- Languages
- Art
JOHN TOLD THE BROTHERS THAT THEY WERE "AMBASSADORS" OF JESUS THEY WERE TO HELP THE YOUNG PEOPLE TO PRAY. THEY WERE TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO RECOGNISE GOD'S PRESENCE IN THEMSELVES AND IN OTHERS. IN THIS WAY THEIR LIVES AND THE LIVES OF THOSE AROUND THEM WOULD BE ENRICHED.

SIX YEARS AGO I PUT VUYART IN CHARGE OF THE TEACHER-TRAINING CENTRE. NOW YOU TELL ME THAT HE HAS LEFT THE BROTHERS AND KEPT THE PLACE FOR HIMSELF?

I AM SORRY TO BE THE ONE TO TELL YOU. I KNOW THAT YOU PUT GREAT TRUST IN HIM.

LORD, HOW COULD THIS HAVE HAPPENED? HE WAS ONE OF MY MOST TRUSTED COMPANIONS FROM THE VERY BEGINNING. LORD, YOU KNEW YOURSELF WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE BETRAYED AND LET DOWN BY CLOSE FRIENDS.

IN A SHORT TIME I WILL RECEIVE SOME MONEY THAT IS DUE TO ME. I WILL RETURN YOUR LOAN THEM.

FATHER CLEMENT, YOU ARE A YOUNG MAN. I WILL TRUST YOU AND LEND YOU SOME MONEY I HAVE JUST BEEN GIVEN.

WITH THIS MONEY, FR. CLEMENT (A PRIEST WHO HAD TAKEN THE BROS' PROPERTY WHICH WOULD BE USED BY THE BROTHERS AS ANOTHER TEACHER-TRAINING CENTRE.)

BUT THE MONEY WAS NEVER PAID BACK, AND CLEMENT THEN ACCUSED DE LA SALLE OF STEALING FROM HIM!

MY SON WAS BELOW THE LEGAL AGE FOR SIGNING DOCUMENTS. YOU TRICKED HIM INTO THIS FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENT.

JOHN HAD WITNESSES ON HIS SIDE, BUT THEY TURNED AGAINST HIM. CLEMENT'S FATHER HAD A LOT OF INFLUENCE.

I DON'T HAVE A CHANCE OF WINNING IN THE COURT CASE, EVEN THOUGH I'M TOTALLY INNOCENT.
John knew how dangerous it was for him in Paris, and so he left for the South of France. Brother Bartholomew was to remain in charge in the North. In his absence the court condemned and fined de la Salle, although he was not guilty of anything.

John arrived in Marseilles, a port in the South of France.

Lord, help me to bring good even out of bad experiences. May I not waste suffering, but become a more caring person because of it. May your Kingdom come through all that happens to me.

Everyone wants us here, and they are ready to open schools and pay for a novitiate.

At first, everything went well and several schools opened, then trouble started for John Baptist de la Salle.

He's teaching religious things we Jansenists don't believe in any more.

Some of his own brothers have lost faith in him.

Our family agreed to give money, but only if the teachers were to be priests—not brothers.

I'll make sure no more money supports their schools.

Because of what you're saying, our schools will be closed. You've brought us disaster.

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JOHN OPPOSED THE 'JANSENISTS'. THEY BELIEVED THAT GOD WAS HARSH AND THAT WE HAD TO TRY TO 'EARN' HIS LOVE. THEY SAID THAT, BECAUSE WE'RE NOT WORTHY, WE SHOULDN'T RECEIVE COMMUNION VERY OFTEN. BUT JOHN TAUGHT WHAT JESUS SHOWS US IN THE GOSPEL: THAT GOD IS LOVE, AND HE WELCOMES AND FORGIVES. IT IS BECAUSE GOD WANTS US TO BECOME MORE LIKE HIM, THAT WE ARE INVITED TO RECEIVE COMMUNION OFTEN.

"YOU'VE CAUSED US A LOT OF PROBLEMS BY GOING AGAINST THESE PEOPLE. YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE IT!"

"THINGS WERE NOT EASY FOR HIM."

"WILL YOU CELEBRATE MASS WITH US?"

"CERTAINLY AND THANK YOU. I DIDN'T KNOW OF ANYWHERE ELSE I COULD GO."

A LITTLE LATER HE LEFT FOR THE TOWN OF GRENOBLE. HE WAS DELIGHTED THAT THE BROTHERS THERE RECEIVED HIM WITH OPEN ARMS.

"LORD, MAY YOUR SPIRIT BE FULLY ALIVE IN US."

JOHN WAS ILL AND IN PAIN FOR MANY YEARS. THE DOCTOR'S TREATMENT FOR HIS RHENUSMATISM WAS TO LEAVE A CORD OVER A LOW FIRE.

"I DON'T KNOW HOW HE STANDS IT. IT'S TOO MUCH EVEN FOR ME TO WATCH."

He decided to go to a nearby place of retreat: Parmenie, a peaceful place at the top of a mountain, with views into the valleys below. Good air would also help his asthma.
JOHN WAS LOSING FAITH IN HIMSELF, AND BLAMING HIMSELF FOR MANY THINGS, HE THOUGHT THAT, IF HE WAS OUT OF THE WAY, TROUBLE WOULD NOT COME TO THE BROTHERS. AT PARMECIE HE WOULD FIND GREAT PEACE. HE MET SISTER LOUISE, WHO EVERYONE THOUGHT WAS A SAINT. PEOPLE USED TO VISIT HER FOR ADVICE AND PRAYER.

NO, FATHER JOHN, YOU MUST NOT ABANDON THE BROTHERS AND THE YOUNG PEOPLE. GOD HAS ENTRUSTED THEM TO YOU.

EVERYTHING I DO SEEMS TO GO WRONG. I FEEL THAT I HAVE FAILED. EVERYONE IS AGAINST ME. WOULDN'T IT BE BETTER TO GIVE IT ALL UP?
One of the Bishops wanted the next Superior of the Brothers to be a Priest (and not one of the Brothers themselves), and so the Brothers wrote a letter to John, asking him to return as Superior.

The Brothers send you warm greetings, and ask you to return.

"You remember that we made a vow of obedience together. In love, we now order you to return, and take charge of the Brothers again."

Lord, I turn to you with confidence. I will do what you want of me.

On 10 August, 1714:

At last! For two years we have felt like orphans!

But why? Brother Bartholomew was in charge. He must continue.

For 61 years, Louis XIV - the 'Sun King' - had been one of the greatest Kings of France. In 1715 he died.

These are difficult times and we need you to lead us.

Your leadership is what we need.
Another new idea was the setting up of a kind of ‘reformatory’, where boys were sent who had been in trouble. There they were taught a trade.

With patience and care they were led to be better citizens, and some then joined the ordinary boarding school, also in St Yon.

John inspired the teachers to give a good education in all the schools, and prepare students for life in society: to be responsible citizens as well as good Christians.
When the founder of the brothers visited some schools, the local people wanted to honour him.

I don't deserve this!

Everyone in our town would like to present you with this small gift, to thank you for caring enough to help.

Why is there a man behind that curtain?

We've asked him to paint your portrait.

I'm not at all happy with this!

I don't accept any more invitations to dinner! John's concern now was to convince the brothers that they needed to choose a new superior: one of themselves.
During his lifetime John wrote several books for teachers and for pupils. Each month he wrote to every brother. In greater peace he now had the time to write prayerful meditations for teachers. He put the final touches to the brothers' "Rule", about their way of life.

Now that he wasn't the superior any longer, John thought of himself as the least important of all the brothers.

Father John, we all owe you so much. I should be kneeling before you.

Will you give me permission to write to Brother Gabriel in Rome?

For a sick and elderly man, bad accidents can be very serious.

On Good Friday, 26th April 1719 John died, aged 67. Even as John lay dying, the archbishop who had been given wrong information about John sent him a message. He was no longer to be allowed to hear anyone's confession. He has had a large share of the cross in life. Now he lives with the risen Lord!
IN HIS LAST YEARS, JOHN OFTEN VISITED SCHOOL WHEN THE PUPILS WERE OUT OF CLASS.

SOME 300 YEARS LATER, JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE WAS DECLARED A SAINT. IN 1980, HE WAS MADE THE PATRON SAINT OF TEACHERS. THERE ARE NOW 26 BROTHERS WHO JOIN HIM IN BEING CALLED "SAINT" OR "BLESSING": FROM BELGIUM, ECUADOR, FRANCE, REUNION, AND SPAIN.

WE, TOO, ARE CALLED TO BE "SAINTS" - TO BE "FULLY ALIVE". TO GO ABOUT OUR ORDINARY LIVES IN AN EXTRAORDINARY WAY.

"HELP US, LORD, TO KNOW YOU MORE CLEARLY, LOVE YOU MORE DEARLY, AND FOLLOW YOU MORE NEARLY, EACH DAY OF OUR LIVES".

TO GET INVOLVED WITH YOUNG PEOPLE WAS NEVER MY OWN PLAN.

LOOKING BACK, I NOW SEE THAT GOD WAS LEADING ME SLOWLY AND WISELY FROM ONE THING TO ANOTHER, WITHOUT FORCING ME, AND WITHOUT MY BEING AWARE OF IT. HE IS A GOD OF SURPRISES! LET'S TURN TO HIM WITH CONFIDENCE.
If you would like to know more about the De La Salle Christian Brothers, please see the following websites:

www.brothersvocation.org
www.lasalle.org