

CHAPTER IV

PERSONAL SYNTHESIS

Unity in a Variety of Gifts

14 1 - These elements taken together give the Brother a unique and proper place within the people of God. What specifies the vocation of the Brother is not any of these elements taken separately, but rather the decision to assume them all in a personal synthesis motivated by love.

2 - Experience shows that the ways of being called and the specific roads taken thereafter to respond to the call are very diverse. The socio-cultural origin, the psychological maturity, and the variety of human and Christian experience differ from one individual to another and in the successive stages of a person's life. These variable factors produce recognizable differences (for example in how one understands the ministry of the Word or the service of the poor) that come from values deeply rooted in a particular culture and the understanding that one gradually acquires of the meaning of religious consecration.

3 - A laudable desire for unity does not imply that we can define a changeless and universal type of Brother to which all should conform. In all the constitutive dimensions received from the Founder, as in all the signs of the times, God challenges each Brother and invites him to a personal response adapted to the needs of today's world.

4 - While the General Chapter wants to maintain the cohesiveness and specific nature of the Institute in fidelity to its origins, it affirms also the interior liberty of each Brother and the benefits that come from different charisms. Unity is not to be found in uniformity, but in harmonious complementarity, according to the words of St. Paul, "There is a diversity of gifts, but it is the same Spirit," and again, "To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (I Cor 12, 4- 7).

5 - Each Brother, then, will travel his own road in fulfilling his vocation, but always in reference to his Brothers and to the Rule of the Institute, as well as to the challenges from all his fellow human beings. Furthermore, he will be convinced that one of the applications of the principle of subsidiarity consists in taking the initiative to respond personally and to persevere in fidelity to the Holy Spirit. This fidelity to the Holy Spirit, according to Saint John Baptist de La Salle, is the unifying element in the life of the Brother.

A Personalized Formation

15 1 - The personal responsibility of each Brother requires a solid initial formation that is prolonged by continual updating. The General Chapter insists on the importance of a serious preparation for the Brothers, one that is human and spiritual, theological, professional, and pastoral. It ought not to come merely from books, but ought to be joined by action that is then reflected upon so as to foster a sense of initiative and community, as also to awaken a mature apostolic spirit.

2 - Programs for formation, however excellent they may be, can never dispense

each Brother from his own responsibility. It is up to each one, in response to the incessant call of the Holy Spirit, to do everything possible to realize his personal vocation. All genuine formation is a discipline: it requires frequent personal re-examination, opening oneself to ever new possibilities, and refusal to become complacent with the mastery of any particular skill. Such is the condition of an authentic educational and spiritual open-mindedness.