

Patrons of Parishes SAINT JEAN-BAPTISTE DE LA SALLE

IN France, ever fruitful in heroes and in Saints, is due the honor of having given to the Church this humble priest whose works and glory now fill the whole world. Jean-Baptiste de La Salle was born at Rheims on the 30th April 1651, of parents no less distinguished for their piety than for the nobility of their blood. This child of benediction manifested marvellous dispositions for virtue from his earliest childhood. His piety was that of an angel. So great were his meekness and obedience that his parents were never obliged to reproach him once.

From his earliest youth the altar possessed an irresistible charm for him. We read in the Brief of his beatification that Jean-Baptiste, feeling himself impelled to the priesthood as by a divine instinct, asked and obtained from the archbishop of Rheims permission to be admitted among the clerks. The young La Salle was then only eleven years old. He was only fifteen when admitted among the canons of the church of Rheims.

Fully alive, even then, to the obligations inherent to this vocation to the Lord's heritage, the young and pious canon embraced a kind of life, which, in the eyes of all, foreshadowed the singular perfection he was destined afterwards to attain.

After a brilliant course of humanities and philosophy in his native city, the young levite went to Paris to study theology and train himself to sacerdotal perfection in the Seminary of St Sulpicius, « that most noble School of science and virtue.»

He was 27 years of age when he was raised to the priesthood in the Cathedral of Rheims on the 9th April 1678. The air of sanctity observed in him the first time he offered up the divine victim in his consecrated hands, never afterwards left him. One had but to see him at the altar to believe oneself in our Lord's presence. The ardor of his love shone upon his face. Frequently