

Waiting for Andre

(a meditation in three acts)

by George Klawitter, CSC

(summer 2020)

for Andrew

Act I in Ruillé, October 22, 1820, the parish rectory

Act II in Ruillé, September 1, 1835, the Grand St. Joseph

Act III in Le Mans, March 16, 1844, the Brothers' house

Dramtis Personae

**Pierre Hureau
Louis Duchene
James Dujarie
Andre Mottais
John Mottais
Stephen Gauffre
Vincent Pieau
Leonard Guittoger
Rémi Mérianne
Hilarion Ferton**

Act I

(Ruillé, October 22, 1820. Pierre Hureau and Louis Duchene are standing in the rectory dining room. Occasionally they look out a window.)

Pierre: Do you think he'll come?

Louis: Why wouldn't he? Father said he'd be here today.

Pierre: It's already two o'clock.

Louis: Well, Larchamp is not next door.

Pierre: I know that. Where is it anyway?

Louis: Somewhere up around Rennes.

Pierre: So he won't be walking. That's quite a distance.

Louis: No more than fifty miles. Not a very long hike. But I bet he comes by cart. Or hitches a ride along the way.

Pierre: Farmer?

Louis: I suppose.

Pierre: How was the blackberry patch?

Louis: The usual. With that old grouch Mother Marie snooping around. I swear every time I end up there working in their garden she makes it her business to come out and find fault with my work. I should tell her to weed her own garden.

Pierre: What do the other Sisters say?

Louis: They're all afraid of her.

Pierre: Then why do they keep her in charge?

Louis: Beats me. Maybe they like being told what to do and how to do it. Maybe they're glad to be away from whatever homes they came from.

Pierre: I've always found them nice.

Louis: Yah, well try weeding their garden when the old battle ax is around.

Pierre: Ouch!

Louis: It's true. You go over there and work under her nose, and I'll stay around here and dust the furniture.

(Dujarie enters)

Dujarie: What's the chatter?

Louis: We're just thinking about the new man.

Dujarie: Oh. What do you want to know?

Pierre: Is he old?

Dujarie: No, no. He's twenty. You three will get along nicely together. He comes from a fine family. His pastor recommended him highly. Yes, I think you three will do well together. Louis, aren't you supposed to be weeding the Sisters' blackberry patch?

Louis: Yes, mon père, but the Sisters were called inside for a consult, and Mother Marie told me to finish off my row and then call it quits. We were almost finished anyway. I don't think there are more than six or seven bushes yet to clean out.

Dujarie: I hope you didn't break any branches. The Sisters had a good crop this past summer, and we shared in the bounty.

Louis: I remember.

Pierre: Great berries. Good for breakfast. And then there was that pastry that the Sisters sent over one afternoon. I can still taste it!

Dujarie: How was Mother Marie today?

Louis: The usual ray of sunshine.

Dujarie: Ha, ha! Now let's be nice. Remember the Sisters have thrived under her direction, and they are highly respected and wanted around the diocese.

Louis: Well, I'll give her to the diocese any time they want.

Dujarie: I hope you were not snippy with her. Remember she came from roots as humble as yours and she works day and night to keep the Sisters in good shape.

Louis: I'm glad I'm not a Sister.

Dujarie: Do you want to be replaced for the garden work? I don't think that would be a good idea because you must learn how to get along with all kinds of people. Remember it won't be long before you're out teaching in a school, and your students will have all kinds of personalities. Some of them, of course, will be sweet, but some will have problems at home, will be discontent, and will try your nerves. Louis, you're strong-willed, but to be a good teacher you'll have to be flexible, to know how to bend in the wind. Don't forget the little Aesop tale I told you about the mighty oak tree and the slender reed.

Louis: I won't forget what you've taught me. But there are times in the garden when I'd like to give her a piece of my mind.

Dujarie: I think you would find that she can give right back to you twice as much sass as you would give to her. You two are more alike than you may want to believe. A little sass can help you through some tough times, but the Sisters' garden is not one of those tough times. This new life for you is a real challenge. Back home you grew up with those around you, but here in Ruillé you meet new people every week, sometimes every day. You must learn to listen, Louis, and sometimes you must bite your tongue. You are bright, and you will be an effective teacher, but you must not put your own feelings ahead of those around you. Getting along with people is something you will have to do your entire life. Not just in Ruillé. Not just in your first school. But forever. You're not a king. You're a Brother of St. Joseph. And remember that Joseph served faithfully and sassed no one.

Louis: Thank you, mon Père, I will always try to remember what you're teaching me. You know I think highly of you, and I bless the day you took me in.

Dujarie: OK, Louis. I think the next time you see Mother Marie you should go out of your way to be pleasant. Say how nice it is to work for the Sisters. Ask her if she needs you for any other kind of work. Honey, Brother Louis, honey. Not vinegar.

Louis: All right. I'll try to be nice to the old bag...

Dujarie: Louis!

Louis: I mean Mother Marie.

(A noise is heard outside. It is the sound of a cart coming to a stop in front of the rectory. There is a knock at the rectory door.)

Dujarie: This may be our man. Pierre, get the door.

(Two men enter: Andre Mottais and his brother John. They remove their hats. Andre sets a bundle on the floor.)

Andre: We are looking for Père Dujarie.

Dujarie: I'm that man.

Andre: I'm Andre Mottais from Larchamp, and this is my brother John.

Dujarie: Welcome, welcome. We have been expecting you.

(The two men kneel and Dujarie blesses them.)

Dujarie: Come, come in and sit down. You must be tired after that long trip.

(All sit.)

Andre: Not really, mon père. The weather was pleasant all the way, and the roads not bad.

John: A few little rough spots around noon, but we got here easily enough.

Dujarie: Are you hungry? Can we give you a little something?

John: No, we're fine. Our mother packed us enough sandwiches to last us here and back.

Dujarie: Surely you are not heading back to Larchamp today! You must at least stay the night.

John: Thank you, mon père, but a farm never sleeps. The work has to be done whether we like it or not. And now that we are going to be short one pair of hands...

(Pause)

Dujarie: You have given your brother to the work of God. Your family will be blessed twenty fold for your sacrifice.

John: Yes, mon père, I've told myself that a hundred times on the trip here, but we'll miss our Andre terribly. If he were a lazy no-good brother, I'd be happy to dump him here and be rid of him, but he's a wonderful brother who works hard and prays hard and never grumbles. You're getting our best.

Louis: Does he have any of your fire?

Dujarie: Ha, ha! Louis!

John: Don't worry, mon père, I have tough skin. I'm a Larchamp farmer. So your name is Louis?

Louis: Yes.

John: You have some of my fire. I can see that. You may have your hands full with my holy brother Andre.

Louis: You mean he is a slouch.

John: Nothing of the kind. But if he has the choice between cutting wheat and praying on his knees, he goes for the latter. Don't get me wrong. He can cut wheat with the best of us, but he's happiest when he's praying or talking about God. We'll miss him.

Dujarie: And that's why your pains will be your joys. You share with us your brother Andre, and we'll never forget you. Your family will be stronger for giving us your brother. Now surely you want to see our church and our grounds before you head back. Louis, take John to the church and show him the stables too. And show him the attic where Andre will be sleeping so John can give a good report to his family. Pierre, you go with them. Louis talks so much he might forget some things to show John.

Pierre: Yes, mon père.

Louis: Come along, John. After the church and the stables, we'll take you over to the Sisters' place so you can see the gardens. Maybe we'll run into Mother Marie, and you'll be able to see something else your brother will be in for.

Dujarie: Now, now, Brother Louis.

Louis: Oops. My bad. Let's go, John. Come along, Pierre.

(Louis, Pierre, and John exit.)

Dujarie: Andre, let me get you a cup of water.

Andre: That would be nice.

(Dujarie exits through a door into the kitchen while Andre gets up and looks around the room. He picks up a plate on the table. He goes to a bookcase and takes a book off the shelf and begins to turn pages as Dujarie returns with a cup of water.)

Dujarie: Here, Andre.

Andre: Thank you, mon père.

Dujarie: Sit, sit. And tell me about yourself. (Pause) Why do you want to become a Brother of St. Joseph?

(Andre does not answer right away. Seconds pass. He sips some water and looks at Dujarie. He is thinking. He is obviously not as spontaneous as his brother John.)

Andre: (Slowly) I don't want you to think, mon père, that I am unhappy in Larchamp. I love my family dearly, and farm life is the only life I have ever known. I did have some school in town, but most of my learning came from my mother and the parish priest, whom I revere. My parents are hard working. They have provided well for their five children, and I will miss them, I know, very much. But something has been eating at my heart for over a year. I want to serve the church. I want to help bring back learning to our poor devastated country. I have grown up hearing stories about the terrible Revolution. Those terrible times touched even our little town. Those times scarred our lives. I was two years old when the great Napoleon engineered peace between the government and the church. So I didn't know the worst of the times. But I have listened to countless stories about the killings and the loss of direction. Mostly the loss of direction. Yes, the Revolution had grand ideals, but most of them were lost in the greed and grab for power. Now things are brighter. But the little towns still lack schools and have lacked them for a generation. We've got to bring good teaching back to the little towns. We've got to bring back the schools. I want to help with that restoration.

Dujarie: You are the man I have been waiting for.

Andre: What?

Dujarie: You are the man I have been waiting for. You will stay here with me and the two Brothers. I'll train you to train men. Already I see in you potential for the work that needs to be done, and you can do it—you will do it. How often do you pray?

Andre: I say my morning prayers and evening prayers without fail.

Dujarie: And during the day?

Andre: As a family we say a prayer before our breakfast and before our supper. At noon we are often out in the fields so we pray on our own.

Dujarie: And do you?

Andre: I like to think about heaven and Mary and the saints and how they worked to get where they are.

Dujarie: And what do you think about Jesus?

Andre: I want to be like him.

Dujarie: What do you mean “like him”?

Andre: I want to cut myself off from every need I have for comfort, for ease, for recognition. I want to be like Him even if it means suffering and death.

Dujarie: Everybody dies.

Andre: I mean to die for what I believe in—like Jesus did.

Dujarie: But what kind of suffering do you anticipate here in the middle of France? We don’t scourge people and we don’t crucify them.

Andre: But people still suffer for what they believe in.

Dujarie: Most people I see are happy to be healthy and make a little money to feed their families. I don’t see much greed in little Ruillé.

Andre: But what about the bigger cities? What about Rennes? What about Le Mans?

Dujarie: Your work as a Brother of St. Joseph won’t happen in any big city. The Brothers of St. Joseph will work in towns and villages and communes. We’ll let the cities up to the LaSalle Christian Brothers. They like to work in cities. But the Brothers of St. Joseph will stay away from cities and will work in small towns. And they’ll work hard. They’ll live alone and rarely see each other unless the towns they teach in are close together. But for many they’ll see each other only at the annual retreat here at Ruillé.

Andre: And when will that retreat be?

Dujarie: I don’t know! I haven’t thought that far ahead! We have now only three of you, and my hands will be full enough with getting the three of you ready to teach in schools. And be assured I already have half a dozen pastors begging for Brothers of St. Joseph.

Andre: You mean you have been thinking about the Brothers only since Pierre and Louis arrived?

Dujarie: No, the bishop asked me two years ago to start a community of teaching Brothers.

Andre: Why the delay?

Dujarie: You must not question the Spirit. Some things take time. Some things have to wait for the moment. Some things cannot be jumped into. So this past

summer out went the summons and in came the first two recruits. Do you like them?

Andre: Why would you ask me that? I just got here.

Dujarie: Well, you'll have to live with them. Day after day. You can't be living with people who get on your nerves or take too much of your time, can you?

Andre: I'm a pretty patient man, mon père. I'm used to letting God decide when to send rain for the crops and letting God decide when the sun has worked its magic enough on the wheat and barley so they can be harvested. So can't I let God help me put up with people? Anyway, you don't seem to have any trouble living with them.

Dujarie: Pierre, no. But just you wait and see how Louis may get on your nerves. You never know what he's going to say or how he's going to react to a command.

Andre: Then why do you keep him around?

Dujarie: You just said that you let God decide when the rain will come for the crops, didn't you? Then shouldn't I let God decide if Louis is suitable for this life of a Brother or not?

Andre: You got me there!

Dujarie: Louis, I know, will be a handful for me. I'll be curious to see how you work alongside him. You'll like his energy, his free-wheeling ways. I have my eye on him for a little school already. The pastor at St. Denis d'Orques has been pestering me for a Brother-teacher. I know that pastor—he can be demanding. Louis will be a good match for him. But we're getting ahead of ourselves, aren't we? You just arrived and I'm already confiding in you. Why is that?

Andre: I've been wondering about that myself the last few minutes.

Dujarie: Well, I could say that I sized you up pretty quickly, within minutes of meeting you, but the honest answer is that I got good notices of you from your pastor in Larchamp.

Andre: You did?

Dujarie: Yes, months and months ago. In fact at last summer's retreat for priests in Le Mans. He knew of the bishop's commission to me, and he told me about a young man named Andre Mottais in his parish who would make a fine Brother of St. Joseph.

Andre: He did?

Dujarie: He said you're a prayerful young man who reverences his religion and who comes from a very fine, hard-working family of farmers. He said you're bright and have promise. He said you'd be his gift to me.

Andre: And to the Brothers of St. Joseph.

Dujarie: Yes, to the Brothers of St. Joseph.

Andre: Then you already have plans for me?

Dujarie: Yes, he said that you're ready to teach. So I have plans for you to open a little school right here in Ruillé at the beginning of next year. In three months.

Andre: But I have no teacher training.

Dujarie: I will teach you what you need to know.

Andre: But I've never been in front of a class of young boys.

Dujarie: But you will be. For every teacher there is always a first day.

Andre: But you hardly know me.

Dujarie: I know what I see. And I know what I hear. You'll open a little school right here in Ruillé at the beginning of next year. I'll help you prepare your first classes. I'll watch you in your first few weeks. I'll pick you up when you fall down, and I'll applaud you when you do something well.

Andre: I think I'm going to get back in that cart outside and return to Larchamp with my brother.

Dujarie: No, you won't. God has sent you here, and here you'll stay. You'll be a Brother of St. Joseph, and you'll help me train many, many, many Brothers of St. Joseph. We'll work together side by side, month by month, year by year. On you will depend the future of the work. I'm already fifty-two years old, soon to be fifty-three—how much longer will I have the stamina to train Brothers of St. Joseph? You will learn how to lead, and you will lead well. On you will rest the success of our work.

Andre: I will do my best.

(Pierre, Louis, and John re-enter.)

Louis: We're back.

Dujarie: How was the tour? Did you like our little church?

John: (to Andre) Did you know you're going to sleep in the attic?

Andre: The attic?

John: On the floor.

Andre: So?

John: And there are no beds up there. Just some thin mattresses on the floor.

Andre: OK.

John: And rats.

Andre: I know rats. We had some in Larchamp.

John: Not in our house. Only in the barns.

Pierre: They're not much trouble. We hardly notice them. We don't keep food up there so there's no reason for them to hang around.

John: It's not a nice place up there.

Dujarie: John, your brother is going to be fine. We'll take good care of him. He'll have the best care we can give him. He's going to be fine.

Andre: John, you shouldn't be so concerned. I know you're only looking out for me.

John: I'm older than you.

Andre: By six years.

John: I'm older and have to look out for you.

Andre: I'll be fine.

John: We will miss you.

Andre: I know that. And I will miss you. And my sister and little brother.

John: Little Joseph.

Dujarie: Joseph? So there already is a Joseph in your life!

Andre: Little Joseph. He's only nine. And I try to keep an eye on him. He can be a handful. John, will you keep your eye on him? You know how special he is to me.

John: Mon père, little Joseph does get into mischief. Andre was always Joseph's guardian angel. And sometimes had to go out on a limb to save Joseph's neck. But my parents love Andre so much they trusted his judgment with Joseph all the time.

Dujarie: It sounds as if they had a special bond.

John: And I hope it won't be broken by Andre's new life.

Dujarie: Andre will stay a guardian angel to the little fellow, even if it is by long-distance.

Andre: I'll write to him, John, and you must make sure he'll answer my letters. You know he can be forgetful.

John: I think I should be on my way. If I want to make some miles north, I'd better take advantage of the sunshine.

Dujarie: Come with me, John, into the kitchen so I can give you something to take with you on the way. We've got some fine bread left over from lunch and some excellent fruit from the Sisters.

Louis: From Boots.

John: Boots?

Dujarie: **(who has not heard "Boots" and is already into the kitchen)** Come, John.

Louis: It's a long story. We'll tell you some day.

(John follows Dujarie into the kitchen.)

Andre: Boots?

Pierre: It's what Louis calls Mother Marie at the Grand Providence next door.

Andre: Why "Boots"?

Louis: That's what she wears sometimes into the garden when she comes to sniff around to see what I'm doing. If she thinks I'm lagging she'll stand there tapping her big fat boot on the ground right near me. She doesn't have to say anything. Of course, I'm all peaches and cream: "Hello, Mother Marie, how are you today?" She never answers that. It's usually something like "And don't forget to get to the weeds

in the rhubarb when you're done here. And don't break any of the stalks like you did last week." She's such a sweetie.

Pierre: This has been going on since he got here in August.

Louis: Such a sweetie. I think she secretly likes me.

Pierre: Louis!

Louis: Well, she never tells Father Dujarie to keep me away. And she looks out her office window a bit too often if you ask me. **(Louis winks at Andre.)**

Pierre: Shame on you! Poor Mother Marie.

Louis: Poor Mother Marie my foot. She's got the tongue of a snake, and she's not afraid to use it on any of us, including our good Father Dujarie.

Pierre: I wouldn't worry about our good Father. He can take care of himself.

Louis: Ha! He never crossed swords with a harpy before.

Pierre: I can't believe you are talking about a holy Sister like this. She never finds fault with my work in the garden.

Louis: No, because you're all "Yes, Mother Marie...if you like, Mother Marie." Bah, you should become a Sister of Providence. Then you'd get her 24/7.

Pierre: There's nothing wrong with a little sweetness when you mix in company. Your tongue is going to undo you. Mark my words.

Andre: Is she the first Mother General of the Sisters?

Louis: No, the holy one died two years after getting here. Everyone loved her. She was an aristocrat from Normandy. She had a serving-girl she brought along with her when she came down to join our good father's community of Sisters. Then she had to go and die. And you know what happened to her serving-girl?

Andre: What?

Pierre: Louis...

Louis: The Sisters elected her Mother General! She's been Mother General for over ten years.

Andre: Mon dieu!

Louis: Wait till you meet her.

Andre: I'm not sure I want to meet her.

Louis: Bring a whip and a chair.

Pierre: Louis! What a way to talk about a Sister, much less the Mother General. And she always gives us wonderful produce from the garden. And what about that milk you like for your breakfast? It didn't fall from the skies.

Louis: All right, all right. She gives us stuff. But she doesn't pay us either for slaving in her palace.

Pierre: I don't have to listen to this. Andre, what do you think so far? Try not to let Louis influence your first impressions.

Andre: Ha, ha! Don't worry about me, Brother Ignatius. I'm a farm boy and can tell you that I've heard all kinds of talk in my day. Brother Louis, I'm actually kind of looking forward to meeting Mother Marie. After what you've said about her, I think she has some real spunk in her. Her Community certainly has a wonderful reputation all over our part of France.

Louis: Oh, you'll meet her all right. You'll meet her.

Andre: It can't be easy for a woman to try to deal with hierarchy and all kinds of pastors running little parishes miles and miles around. Just collecting the Sisters' annual stipends must be a chore.

Louis: Believe me—she's up to the job. Any pastor who meets her gets to know his place real quick.

Andre: I'm just saying she has to be tough in a man's world if she's going to shepherd her good Sisters well.

Louis: Well, let her keep her toughness for those pastors and not waste it on me in the garden. How about that?

(Dujarie and John Mottais re-enter.)

Dujarie: John, that should take care of you.

John: Mon père, you are most kind, most kind.

Dujarie: You're giving us your brother and we're giving you some bread and fruit. Not a bad trade.

John: Andre, you'll come to visit?

Andre: I could never *not* visit. You know my heart is still in Larchamp. I'll have to come and visit my heart.

John: Mon père, will you grant him leave to come and visit? His mother and father will miss him terribly.

Dujarie: You have my word on it.

John: Andre, I've been rough with you sometimes, but that's the way it is with older brothers. Maybe I was just a bit jealous of you. You know, the way you picked up learning so easily, and the way you won your way into people's souls. You are special to me. I can't leave you without tears.

Andre: My brother...(pause)...you know me well. You know me better than our father and mother. You trained me to be a man. You taught me how to survive. I will never be able to tell you enough how much you mean to me. Your rough language to me may have hurt now and then, but I always knew that you meant well for me. You know that. Hug our mother for me, and hug our father. Give Jeanne Juliette a special kiss from me. And let Joseph know that you'll be looking after him. I'll be his long-distance guardian angel, but you'll be the one to correct him when he needs it and perk him up when he feels down.

John: (turning to go) Good-bye, my brother. Learn your new life well. We're already proud of you. Make us even prouder.

(John and Andre hug and they go for the door.)

Andre: I'll do my best for our family. I always will. And I'll write to you all faithfully.

(The door closes behind them.)

Dujarie: Well, well. Such a nice man.

Pierre: He was full of questions on our little tour.

Dujarie: Oh? What did he like the best?

Pierre: He liked the church of course, its ancient stones, its fine roof. I told him that you put that roof on yourself after the Revolution. And he liked the barn.

Dujarie: He's a farmer.

Louis: He didn't like the attic where we sleep.

Dujarie: Do you like it?

Louis: It's OK.

Dujarie: Be honest.

Louis: I'm not yet used to rats running around during the night.

Pierre: It's the best that can be done right now.

Dujarie: Don't worry, Louis, I'm already working to get you a nice place to live away from the attic. But it'll take a little time.

Louis: Oh? Where's it going to be?

Dujarie: I'm looking at a spot a few blocks away, down by the railroad tracks. It's a nice plot of land and we'll have a fine building put up there with classrooms and a big chapel and a nice dining room. There's room for a nice garden. And there's even a little brook running through the property that we can tame into a pond.

Louis: For fish?

Dujarie: For fish.

Louis: And rats?

Dujarie: Ha, ha!

Pierre: Get off the rats, will you, Louis?

Louis: OK. OK. Enough with the rats.

(Andre returns. He is a bit sad.)

Dujarie: John is gone?

Andre: The cart is probably already at the end of the block.

Dujarie: He's a good brother.

Louis: He's tough.

Dujarie: He cares deeply about you. I'm glad he came along to see where you'll live. He can report on everything to your parents.

Louis: Even the rats.

Dujarie: (ignoring Louis) He's a strong man, your brother. You must be proud of him.

Andre: I've always looked up to him. Sometimes with a little fear. I always looked up to him for advice.

Dujarie: You have a new home now, Andre. I hope you'll be happy here.

Andre: I'm already happy here, mon père.

Dujarie: Good. Well now, we still have a bit of the afternoon left before prayers and supper. Brother Ignatius, you can take Andre upstairs with his things and get him settled in. Louis, you can go out to the barn and make sure the horse has some food and water.

Andre: Prayers and supper. And then?

Dujarie: Oh, of course, our house schedule. It doesn't vary much. We all get up at 5 AM. The rooster will see to that. Then at 5:20 we will be in the church for meditation...

Louis: On our knees. Ouch.

Dujarie:...before holy Mass. At 6:45 we'll study catechism back here in the dining room until 8 AM. Of course, we'll interrupt that study period with a little breakfast...

Louis: With the emphasis on "little."

Dujarie: Then we have a study period until 11:40.

Andre: What do we study?

Pierre: We study reading, writing, grammar (ugh), and musical chant. Chant is my favorite.

Louis: His favorite...even though he has the voice of a turkey.

Dujarie: Now, Brother Louis.

Pierre: Even turkeys sing.

Louis: They gobble.

Pierre: That's their singing.

Dujarie: Morning ends with particular examen at 11:40.

Andre: What's that?

Louis: That's where you kneel and think about your sins.

Pierre: And Louis thinks about lunch. **(Louis sticks his tongue out at Pierre.)**

Dujarie: We have lunch at noon with recreation afterwards until 1:30.

Pierre: Then we study more until 4:30. This time more reading, writing, and some catechism.

Andre: This all sounds wonderful.

Dujarie: At 4:30 we have a visit to the Blessed Sacrament in the church. But sometimes we say the rosary or do the Way of the Cross. At 5 o'clock we study grammar, not Brother Ignatius' favorite...

Pierre: I hate it.

Dujarie: And then we do have some spiritual reading.

Andre: What's that?

Dujarie: One of you will read to the others from a spiritual book.

Pierre: And Louis falls asleep.

Dujarie: Sometimes there will be Chapter of Accusation.

Andre: Oh my, what is that? Is that what I think it is?

Dujarie: What do you think it is?

Andre: We have to accuse each other of faults.

Dujarie: No, no. Each man accuses himself of faults. And I give out a penance. It's a bit like Confession, but it's not a sacrament.

Pierre: It teaches us humility.

Louis: Which some of us need more than others I suppose.

Dujarie: At 7 PM we have our supper and then we have some recreation and some evening prayers. The last thing you'll hear from me is the subject for the next day's meditation. There's nothing like a good idea to sleep on so our meditation the next morning will be fruitful.

Andre: And bedtime?

Dujarie: 9 PM. Always 9 PM.

Andre: It sounds wonderful to me.

Louis: Just wait until those afternoons when we get summoned next door to paint a new room in the Grand Providence or weed the garden for Boots.

Dujarie: Boots? Boots?

Pierre: Oh my, what was that noise? Did I hear something in the kitchen?

Dujarie: Brother Ignatius, will you check on it?

(Pierre leaves and comes back.)

Pierre: It's nothing. A sack of flour fell over on the counter and hit a bag of those nuts we all like.

Dujarie: OK. Let's get to those little duties I gave out. Louis, to the barn. Ignatius, take Andre upstairs.

(Louis leaves.)

Dujarie: (to Andre) Did you bring extra clothes as I mentioned to your pastor?

Andre: Yes, mon père, I have some work clothes and my best clothes for church.

Dujarie: Good. I see you have sensible shoes.

Andre: They're farmer shoes.

Dujarie: And good ones they are too. Brother Andre, you're in your new home. I'm your new father. If you ever have any pain you can't bear, you must come to me. Ignatius and Louis are your new brothers. You will work together, pray together, eat together, and laugh together. Sometimes you may cry together. You will learn how a religious family works, and you may conclude it is much like the family you have left behind in Larchamp. You will never forget your Larchamp family, but you will gradually learn to love your Ruillé family.

Andre: Mon père, I'll do my best.

Dujarie: And should we call you "Andre"? Or do you want a new name? Pierre chose "Ignatius" for his name as a Brother of St. Joseph. Louis decided to keep his baptismal name.

Andre: I haven't thought about it, but I think I'd like to keep "Andre." Changing my name might confuse my family back in Larchamp. Besides, my parents named me Andre. I'll keep "Andre."

Dujarie: Fine, "Andre" it will remain.

(Andre picks up his big bag and leaves with Pierre to go upstairs. Dujarie waits and then kneels.)

Dujarie: Oh my Lord, I thank you for this gift. You've sent us a gem. May he grow into the beautiful soul he already gives promise of becoming. You have sent me a helper as I crawl into old age. Keep our Andre happy and healthy. Make him the good religious man You want him to be. Amen.

(Exit Dujarie.)

Act II

(Ruillé, the Grand St. Joseph, Chapter Room/Study Hall, August 31, 1835. Vincent and Leonard are talking.)

Vincent: Where is he?

Leonard: Say what?

Vincent: Where is Andre?

Leonard: I think he's talking with the bishop in the sacristy.

Vincent: It must be a hard day for him.

Leonard: Vincent, it's a hard day for all of us.

Vincent: I couldn't see his face during the ceremony, but I can just imagine how torn he was inside.

Leonard: Because he's losing his job?

Vincent: Because we're leaving Ruillé. Because we're leaving our good Father Dujarie.

Leonard: You could have done something about it.

Vincent: What could I have done?

Leonard: You could have protested. You could have objected when the three of us met a year ago to talk about our good Father's failing health.

Vincent: I leave the speaking up to you, Leonard. I'm a listener.

Leonard: Well, now you've got a new place to listen in. Most of us will be pulling out of here within a week. Start packing.

Vincent: All except Andre and me. I guess he'll be happier to stay here with our good Father.

Leonard: And supervise those at the Grand St. Joseph. You'll phase out the boarding-school.

Vincent: But leave the other school, the little school that Andre started a few months after he got here.

Leonard: Right. No sense in trying to run a boarding school if there are no brother-prefects to do the day-to-day supervision. And few students. They're down to six.

Vincent: Andre will miss us. I don't mean just you and me and the weekly meetings we three had to discuss new recruits and new schools. I mean he'll miss all the men. Remember he's the one who trained almost all of us, who supervised us in our classrooms, who picked us up when we fell down.

Leonard: I didn't think you ever fell down.

Vincent: Well, what I mean is that he was always here for us, always with the gentle ear, always the man with good advice.

Leonard: Those days are gone. We're in new hands now.

Vincent: I hear the new director has plans to take you with him up to Ploërmel to visit the Christian Brothers up there, study their rule, see how they operate.

Leonard: We won't do that until autumn, probably in November. We won't need to. Remember he already has worked out plans for the kind of religious congregation he wants to lead.

Vincent: You sound bitter.

Leonard: I am not bitter.

Vincent: Well, you're excited. I'm excited too. New blood. New leadership. Remember that the new director has connections with the higher-ups that our Dujarie never had. It's partly the result of his working in Le Mans, of being assistant rector at the seminary, being at the elbow of the bishop. Our new director knows people. And he did lead the wing of the Good Shepherd Sisters in Le Mans well for years. He's a proven leader.

Leonard: Yes, well, we'll see. I'm keeping my eyes open.

Vincent: He stepped in to save us as we were dying.

Leonard: We were not dying. We were never dying. Why do you keep saying that?

Vincent: We were shrinking. After the 1830 revolution...

Leonard: Everyone was shrinking. *Everyone* was shrinking. We are not dying. Do you think we're the only ones to suffer loss of religious brothers because of that poor-excuse for a revolution? Every community is smaller.

Vincent: But it hurts the most when you're on the inside.

Leonard: Of course it hurts, but pick yourself up and move on. You've got a new director. And you wanted him.

Vincent: You wanted him too. You spoke up for him in our little meetings.

Leonard: When I saw he was inevitable...but here comes our man now. Andre!

(Andre enters.)

Andre: Vincent. Leonard. So nice of you to wait here.

Vincent: It was a beautiful ceremony. I thought you put it together so well.

Andre: The bishop gave me the outline of what had to be done, and then our new director tweaked it a bit.

Vincent: I don't think the holy exposition was ever more beautiful. The speeches were lovely. The bishop so mannerly. Then when our Father Dujarie started to speak, the atmosphere grew tight. He reminded the bishop that it was a bishop that asked him to start the Brothers. Then as he started to say that he had been unable to lead us for a long time—his very words—he heard the sighs and groans in the chapel, the Brothers crying. We could not hold back our emotions. Then our good Father started to tear up and then to cry ever so gently himself. He knew that we would miss him as much as he will miss us. We've loved him from the beginning. He was truly our earthly Father the way he reflects our heavenly Father. He cried. I cried. I could not hold back my tears. Everywhere I heard the sound of sobbing. We knew his trials in the horrible Reign of Terror. We knew how he hid for his life in Paris and in the farms of Ruillé. We knew how he surfaced with hope after the Concordat, how he put a new roof on the Ruillé church himself, how he built the Petite Providence with field stones for the Sisters. We knew how he suffered as the Sisters pulled away from him. We knew how much he gave up to shepherd us, to teach us virtue—he showed virtue in everything he said and did. And now tonight he was admitting he could no longer care for us the way we needed to be cared for. Then he turned to our new director and said, "Father, I want you to accept this little congregation because of my infirmity and inability to carry on." He leaned on the altar as he said this, not only because he needed support, but he knew that the strength of the altar would bring the transfer to a new future, a bright new future, a future of hope and happiness.

(During Vincent's long speech the lights dim and on the wall a copy of the painting depicting the transfer of power is projected. When Leonard starts to speak, the lights come back up.)

Leonard: I don't think there was a dry eye in the whole chapel. The Grand St. Joseph will not soon forget this evening.

Andre: Yes, it was a beautiful and sad and hopeful evening all in one.

Leonard: The Grand St. Joseph will remain?

Andre: I don't see how it can. Our novitiate is moving to Le Mans so there will be no need for this wonderful building.

Leonard: Right. I forgot. Couldn't it be used as part of the boarding-school?

Andre: The boarding-school will close. I will be staying behind to see to that when you move north to Le Mans.

Leonard: Well, couldn't it then be part of the grade school?

Andre: The grade school?

Leonard: Yes, the one you started here four months after you arrived.

Andre: I don't think so. The grade school building already standing is fine and does not need any addition.

Leonard: It seems a shame to lose the Grand St. Joseph. What will become of it?

Andre: I don't know. I'm sure there'll be a buyer, and it'll be up to the buyer to decide what to do with it.

Leonard: Another apartment building. Another apartment building.

Andre: It's out of our hands. Our new director will see to its sale. Our job will be to make sure the transition to Le Mans goes as smoothly as possible. You know that we will count on you, Brother Leonard, to help the transition go smoothly.

Leonard: You know you can always count on me to carry my own weight.

Vincent: And the weight of others. We know you, Leonard. We know your strengths.

Leonard: What happens now?

Andre: Our new director will continue his interviews tomorrow morning with each of the Brothers.

Leonard: All sixty-four of us?

Andre: All sixty-four.

Vincent: What should we expect in our interview?

Andre: I think we can expect changes. You already know that our new director is suppressing the Brother-Directors. The three of us will no longer meet and make decisions about personnel and placements.

Leonard: It sounds tough.

Andre: And our new director will also decide which Brothers will remain as teachers and which will be taken out of the classroom and transformed into manual laborers. And, of course, he will dismiss some.

Leonard: Ouch! Won't he need some input from the three of us?

Andre: Leonard, our day is over. Vincent and you will continue in teaching, I'm sure. And I will remain here to supervise the closing of the boarding-school.

Leonard: So you will no longer be novice master?

Andre: That's correct. I will no longer be novice master.

Leonard: Your star is losing its luster.

Andre: I never thought of my work or life as a star. I don't think we should. As Brothers we do the work that needs to be done. Since the new director sees my work to be here in Ruillé, I accept his decision.

Leonard: I wish Henry were still around—I mean as a Brother-Director. He'd not take these transitions very well.

Vincent: Henry had to go.

Andre: Sadly yes, and I wrote the bishop my reasons for dismissing Henry. He was with us many years, and he served well as a Brother Director with you, Vincent, and you, Leonard, and me, but he had to go.

Leonard: The four musketeers became three musketeers.

Andre: What's past is past. We have to look to the future. We must be thankful that we have a new director now who is vibrant and experienced with the religious life. We will thrive under his direction.

Leonard: Hmmm. We'll see. But aren't you skirting an issue?

Andre: What issue?

Leonard: The issue we've never resolved...at least to my satisfaction.

Vincent: Oh no, not this again.

Leonard: Yes, this again. Why do we need a priest to lead us? Why couldn't we take care of ourselves? Vincent, Leonard, Andre—the new directors of the Brothers of St. Joseph. Andre, you've been making all the assignments for the past ten years. You know the schools. You know the pastors. You know the expectations of each of the fifty towns we serve. You even know the town councils and what they want from brother-teachers. Why can't we run ourselves? Look at the Sisters of Providence—they've been running themselves for four years, and they've done very well.

Vincent: Do you call treating our Father Dujarie the way they did "doing very well"? I don't call that well at all. Leonard, you are a troublemaker—and you will be until the day you die.

Leonard: Ha! Stick me in the ground? I won't stay there. The Sisters are women who saw an opportunity for women in the Church to take over their own government, their own direction, their own future. Why can't we? After all, we're the ones doing the grunt-work out in the schools, living alone, dealing with classrooms of forty and fifty boys, cooking for ourselves, trying to keep up our religious lives as best we can, year by year. It seems we are missing a golden opportunity to govern ourselves.

Vincent: You are forgetting their mother-superior. Do you really want our Andre to become another Mother Marie? Heaven help us!

Leonard: Sure, you see only the dark side of her. Yes, she can be a little cold, and yes, she can be a little demanding, but you can't argue with success. Her Sisters are growing in number, growing, growing, growing. And they are respected as superb teachers all around central France.

Vincent: She was ungrateful to our Father Dujarie, and she engineered that nasty separation of finances from the Brothers four years ago. Are you forgetting that? Are you forgetting how that hurt our good Father?

Leonard: It had to be done.

Vincent: Because she thought the Brothers would ruin the financial solvency of her Sisters?

Leonard: That was part of it. And the bad blood between her and our Father Dujarie. You know that on several occasions he wouldn't even open the letters she sent to him?

Vincent: Sent from the convent a hundred yards away?

Leonard: Distance is not the point. I'm just saying you have to look at both sides in a situation, and the Sisters have in Mother Marie a seasoned leader who does not need men to tell her how to run a group of religious women.

Vincent: You want to work with Mother Marie you go right ahead. I'm following the new director.

Leonard: Into the unknown.

Vincent: Into the unknown where faith and hope will lead us.

Leonard: We are making a mistake.

Andre: Brothers, let's not squabble over the past. We have gone to the bishop for over a year. He has listened to our concerns. He has counseled us. We even suggested to him the name of our new director. So our future is mostly our own doing. We've been happy with Father Dujarie as our leader...

Leonard: As our pastor and one-time leader.

Andre: As our leader. His judgments were sound, and didn't he put great faith in the three of us ever since he formed the notion of Brother-Directors? Didn't he?

Leonard: Yes, he did. And we have done well for him.

Andre: And we'll do well for the new director too. Leonard, you must give him a chance. He's highly respected in Le Mans at the seminary and at the cathedral. He's a proven teacher.

Vincent: He's a very spiritual man who is trusted unconditionally.

Andre: He will do well for us. Sure, he will take us in new directions, but we have to expect that. In fact, we should look forward to that. He is nobody's fool. He'll stand up for us in the tight spots. He has the ear of the bishop and the rector of the seminary. In fact, our new director has told me that the seminary rector has already promised to take over the teaching of math and science to our novices. Our men are going to be better trained than ever.

Vincent: You underestimate yourself, Andre. You've been a fine teacher. You've been a fine novice master, a fine organizer, a model for our young Brothers.

(Dujarie enters)

Dujarie: What's all the chatter?

Vincent: Our men are going to miss you terribly, mon père.

Dujarie: And I will miss them, Vincent. You and Andre are staying here in Ruillé so I won't miss you two!

Andre: I'll be at the Grand St. Joseph—at least until it is sold.

Dujarie: Yes, yes. Sold. It has memories for you, Andre, many memories.

Andre: It has memories for all of us, those who trained there especially, but everyone returned there for the summer retreat—Adrian, Vital, Rémi.

Dujarie: Yes, Rémi, Baptiste, Martin...

(Rémi enters.)

Rémi: Did someone mention my name?

Vincent: We were just talking about the future of the Grand St. Joseph..

Leonard: The FATE of the Grand St. Joseph.

Vincent: And how it will be missed by all those going up to Le Mans.

Andre: But they'll not stay in Le Mans. By mid-September they'll be off to their school assignments. They'll get caught up in their class preps and their grading and their discipline cases and their parent-interviews...

Leonard: To say nothing of their interactions with their pastors.

Dujarie: Which are generally cordial. We know how happy the pastors are to get Brothers to teach their young boys. They are happy and grateful.

Leonard: When they remember to pay.

Dujarie: Ha, ha! Leonard, you are a ray of sunshine today. Why so dour?

Leonard: We're moving away.

Dujarie: Don't think of it that way. Think of it as moving to a great new home.

Vincent: Really, mon père, we do appreciate the move, most of us do, but there must be tears. There must be tears because of all the good that we experienced here, all of us overjoyed to find a new home with a loving father and a Brother guide to take us into the mystery of wonder in our new life.

Rémi: We will never forget you, mon père, not as long as the wheat continues to grow and the birds continue to sing. And Andre, we'll see you up north as soon as you can finish up here.

Andre: Yes.

Rémi: When will that be?

Andre: We'll take our time with that. There are first of all the children to think of, and then their parents. Some will want a boarding-school elsewhere.

Leonard: And what will you tell them?

Andre: I'll tell them that our new director is thinking about opening one in Le Mans.

Leonard: Of course.

Andre: And it will be a good one too.

Rémi: Yes, we must remember that Le Mans is a big city and will have many many attractions that our little Ruillé does not have.

Vincent: Le Mans will not have our Ruillé father. It will not have our Ruillé father.

Dujarie: Brother Vincent, I'll never leave you. I'll never leave my Brothers. You'll be in my heart day and night. At every Mass you'll be in my heart, in my thoughts, in my prayers. You'll never leave me.

Leonard: Are you sure, mon Père, that our new director can replace you?

Dujarie: He'll be a remarkable director. Remember he had a seminary education that I never had. When the Revolution closed down our seminary, the great Sulpicians gave us courage when they sent us all home. They would not take the oath of fidelity to the Revolution so they had no choice but to send us all home.

Rémi: And you went home and then *sotto voce* went up to Paris to complete your priestly studies on your own.

Dujarie: *Sotto voce!* Yes, *sotto voce*.

Leonard: Is it true that you worked in disguise as a lemonade salesman?

Dujarie: Ha, ha! Yes, for a time I did that. You know you can pass yourself off in Paris as a do-nothing for only so long. Then someone gets suspicious and starts to ask questions.

Vincent: Excuse me, mon père, I'm not smiling at the thought of your pretending to be a lemonade salesman. I'm smiling because I can't imagine you sitting still for very long without doing something.

Dujarie: I do like to be active.

Vincent: Active? You built the Petit Providence all by yourself.

Dujarie: Not true. I had local farm boys help me. They found stones and carted them to Les-Hauts-de-Ruillé. I even taught some of the older ones how to mix cement and lay stone. How wonderful it was to see those walls go up!

Andre: And how happy the Sisters of Providence must have been to have a home of their own at last. And a little chapel. With a bell to remind the neighbors of the Angelus.

Dujarie: Yes! You see I'm still here next door to the Grand Providence and the good Sisters of Providence!

Leonard: And Mother Marie Lecor.

Dujarie: Ha, ha! Oh, Brother Leonard, you are a kidder. I know she can be a handful, but her devotion to the Sisters and her work for the Church has been inspiring.

Leonard: And her little charade in 1831? Was she so wonderful when she believed our Brothers would drain the Providence coffers dry? When she believed that the Brothers would ruin her Sisters financially?

Dujarie: Those were rough days.

Andre: It was all done with the blessings of the bishop.

Leonard: So we know.

Andre: He agreed with Mother Marie that it was time to separate the finances of the two communities.

Leonard: Right after we had lost a third of our men because of the mini-revolution in Paris?

Andre: She had no alternative.

Dujarie: She had no alternative.

Leonard: So we must believe, but I will always have my doubts.

Rémi: Ha, Leonard, some macho man you are—longing to be kept by the women of Providence!

Dujarie: Now, now, don't be harsh.

Leonard: I can take it. Don't worry about me, mon père. I can take it.

Andre: What's past is past.

Rémi: Yes, let's not let the events of four years ago spoil the joy of our new future. We are heading into exciting new uncharted territory.

Dujarie: You'll all be fine. Andre has trained all three of you not only to be good teachers, but to be self-sufficient men. You have lived on your own out in the schools and done marvelous work.

Rémi: You were our inspiration.

Dujarie: But Andre was your angel. Andre was your daily guide, your instructor, your mentor, your disciplinarian. Leonard, the math you know, the grammar you teach so well, the penmanship skills you have—all those you learned from Andre. And you know what they say about a student and a teacher—if you don't surpass your teacher, you fail your teacher. Never forget that. You are what you are because Andre was there every day you lived in Ruillé.

Andre: You overestimate me, mon père.

Dujarie: I overestimate no one, my good Brother Andre. Two of these three men standing here learned from you so well that they themselves became Brother-Directors to help you make decisions day to day for the new Brothers. Day to day. Now if you'll all excuse me I'm tired. It has been a long, long day, and I need my rest. I will see you all tomorrow for Mass.

(Dujarie exits.)

Rémi: We'll miss him. We'll miss our good father.

Vincent: But Le Mans holds challenges that we should look forward to.

Leonard: Including a new director.

Vincent: A new director.

Leonard: Who definitely has his own way of doing things.

Vincent: He can be a tad tough.

Leonard: A tad? How many of our Brothers has he already decided to take out of their classrooms? How many will be sent packing? How many will go into manual labor?

Vincent: Our new director is a strong man with a brilliant mind. You know how well he writes.

Leonard: I know how well he can give orders.

Andre: Brothers, we must make do with what the bishop has decided.

Leonard: Must we? Why do we need another priest to take over? Have we really had a priest in charge these past ten years? It seems to me that the four Brother-Directors did a good enough job with keeping us on track.

Andre: We did our best, but, Leonard, you're missing the important point of having a priest in charge. A priest has connections in the diocese we will never have. He works on an equal basis with other priests in the diocese. He is comfortable in their presence because they are equals.

Leonard: And we Brothers are equal to no one?

Andre: A priest is special. He has careful training in theology, in all his studies. He takes years and years of study before he's ordained. He's close to the bishop. He's revered by his flock. We'll be lucky to have our new director with all his connections leading us.

Rémi: I for one am excited about the new direction we are taking.

Leonard: (motioning to Rémi) He still has his teaching job.

Rémi: What?

Leonard: You will continue on in the work you have trained to do, the work that you have found rewarding. What about the men being pulled out of their classrooms?

Rémi: I like to think that some of them will be happy to get into work they are more suited to do.

Vincent: I agree. We have sent far too many young Brothers out to teach with minimal training, and some of them have failed miserably. Sad for them but sad also for the little boys in those classrooms.

Leonard: And what about those men being sent home by our new director? What about them?

Andre: Some of them need to go home. Some will in fact be relieved that someone has made a decision for them that they were unable to make for themselves.

Leonard: Bah! We are not children. We are grown men.

Vincent: Grown men?

Rémi: Some of our young Brothers were not grown men. They were going out to teach when they were sixteen years old. Sometimes they had boys in class who were almost as old as they were.

Andre: Ha, ha! None of you were here in our first year. Our good father had to hire a sixteen-year old kid from Ruillé to teach us math and grammar. He was something else. Often he just laughed at our mistakes.

Vincent: I heard about him. He didn't last too long.

Andre: Our good father sent me off to live with the Christian Brothers for a year. Let me tell you that was a joy.

Vincent: You learned how to teach from them.

Andre: I learned how to teach, and I also observed their community life, how they prayed together, how they ate together, how they had fun together.

Leonard: But young Brother Louis went out to teach that next year while you were away. He didn't get the benefit of Christian Brother training.

Andre: True. But Louis was a different kind of person. He had energy unlimited. He was ready to learn on-the-job. And he did OK for a few years.

Vincent: Then he left.

Andre: Then he left us. I always hate to see a man leave us.

Vincent: Especially those you got close to and trained and monitored.

Andre: It's part of the process. I like to think that we never lost a man who did not want to go or who had to go for his own good and for ours.

Vincent: Tough decisions. Tough decisions.

Leonard: OK, enough with the trip down memory-lane. I think we are failing to face a question we have been too reluctant to bring up.

Rémi: Here we go again.

Leonard: Yes, Rémi, here we go again. **(Pause)** We've been together for a long time. Rémi, you and I arrived ten years ago. Vincent, thirteen years ago. And Andre, you are our patriarch.

Andre: I wouldn't call fifteen years patriarchal.

Leonard: From the beginning. You were chosen by our dear Father Dujarie to lead us. As he aged, you strengthened. You made tough decisions. You went to the bishop behind his back last year to beg for help as our dear father aged and weakened. Why? Why? What did the Sisters have that we never had? We've had superb teachers slugging it out in the classroom year after year after year—Vital, Adrian, Stephen. Dozens and dozens of wonderfully strong teachers enriching the diocese with their hard work and devotion to their children. Are we any less worthy than the Sisters to govern ourselves? Do we lack the backbone to take control of ourselves? Andre, you have been our negotiator with city councils, with recalcitrant pastors, with the bishop himself. He trusts you as a man of good faith and hard work and sound virtue. Why are we not taking you as our new director? What is there in a priest that you don't have? What skills come with the holy oils that you have not already demonstrated? So you haven't babbled Latin into an altar stone—is that essential to leading a cadre of teaching Brothers? You have made hard decisions. Who dismissed Henry? He was one of the sacred four, one of the four Brother-Directors, yet you showed him the door. You made the decision. Yes, you walked it by our dear father, but you did the hard face-to-face work of moving him out of our community. Only then did you write to the bishop and tell him that Henry was gone, gone because he was incorrigible and could not take orders. Doesn't that show leadership? Did the bishop countermand you? Did he tell you that you were wrong? No! He trusted your decision. He knew our dear father was slipping farther and farther away from leadership. He knew our dear father was sickly, often unable to get out of bed for days because of that horrible gout that tormented him, that kept him from attempting to make the annual rounds of the schools to check on our teaching. Bishop Bouvier trusts you. Why are you not our new director?

Andre: Leonard, you have rehearsed this grievance before. Must we go over it again?

Vincent: Can't you accept our future?

Rémi: Yes, after all, our new director was in the seminary with Bishop Bouvier. And he has served at the seminary when Bishop Bouvier was rector. Bishop Bouvier named our new director to be assistant rector. Don't you understand that we are getting as our new director a priest who is at the heart of the diocese?

Leonard: Tell that to the Sisters.

Rémi: The Sisters are not the Brothers.

Leonard: Right. They have a tigress as a mother-superior.

Vincent: The Sisters have seen a way to govern themselves. We are not in that position.

Andre: And we will never be. Leonard, why are you so anti-clerical? What have you suffered from a priest that makes you so angry?

Leonard: That's not the point. Would you say that to the men of the slave rebellion in Haiti? "What did your French masters do to enrage you?" No, you would say, "Hurray, former slaves, welcome to the world of freedom and self-governance."

Andre: We have never been slaves. Our dear father Dujarie has ever been a kind and loving ear, a most wonderful director. We have always trusted him.

Leonard: Yes, he has created us to the point where we can govern ourselves.

Rémi: Remember that our dear father Dujarie wanted to bring priests into our community. He wanted priests to join us early on.

Andre: Several times he asked priests to come and live with us, try out our lifestyle. In fact our new director was himself invited to move in with us and become one of us.

Leonard: And just what was their role going to be? Do you think they would teach in our little schools and knuckle under to some local pastor?

Andre: They would join us with their ordained ministry and continue their priestly functions.

Vincent: Didn't you yourself propose such a merged community with Bishop Bouvier.

Andre: I did.

Rémi: And was our new director aware of your plan?

Andre: I wanted a community of three branches. I wanted our Brothers to continue on in their ministry to the little schools. I wanted men who were not religious brothers to join us in our teaching ministry, pray with us, live with us or live alone, be members of the Brothers of St. Joseph.

Vincent: But without religious vows.

Andre: Yes. And of course I wanted priests to join us.

Rémi: That is a radical idea, Andre. I don't think I've heard this before.

Andre: I confided in Vincent and Leonard.

Rémi: And Leonard, what did you think of this idea? What do you think of it now?

Leonard: It would never work. Priests would be pulled in two directions: they would be equal to the Brothers of St. Joseph but only as "brothers" with a small "b." They would be pulled to identify with hierarchy and the possibility of climbing the ladder of hierarchy. How can you be "equal" and not equal at the same time? I was never in favor of this idea, and now you are submitting yourself to a new director who may very well have such a plan in the back of his mind. Andre, you have not yet answered my question. You've discussed your plan with the bishop, but have you also discussed it with our new director?

(A bell sounds.)

Rémi: Brothers, the bell for retiring.

Andre: Brothers, we must go.

Leonard: Saved by the bell. We will talk of this again.

(Leonard leaves.)

Vincent: Andre, you've had your hands full with Brother Leonard. How will he survive in our situation in Le Mans?

Andre: Don't worry about Leonard. Our new director has already chosen him to go with him to visit the Ploërmel Christian Brothers up north. They will travel together once the novices are settled in. Leonard, you see, will be the new novice master in Le Mans.

Rémi: What? Leonard? Why not you? What will become of you?

Vincent: Don't forget, Brother Rémi, that we had Leonard try to set up a satellite novitiate in Esclimont last year.

Rémi: True, but it didn't last.

Vincent: Because the donor of the property had second thoughts and new recruits didn't show up in droves. After all, Esclimont is not a metropolis.

Rémi: And Ruillé is?

Vincent: Ruillé is our home.

Andre: Leonard will be the new novice-master and will be resident in Le Mans. I'll stay here and direct the grade school and supervise the few Brothers who remain here to maintain the Grand St. Joseph.

Vincent: And I'm staying to direct the boarding-school as it phases itself out.

Rémi: Poor Leonard. He knows all this already, and he's still angry.

Andre: The trust that our new director has in him will soften his anger. Our Brother Leonard is a smart man. He knows how to maneuver among those in charge. Our new director sees in him what we should all see in him: a powerfully intelligent man who is not afraid to speak his mind.

Vincent: That voice may get him in trouble some day.

Andre: We can only hope that his goodness will outweigh his impetuosity. Our new director has faith in him. Let's ourselves have faith in him. Now our day's work is done. Our good father Dujarie is relieved of his work. I can only believe that he will sleep gently tonight because the mantle of decision making is forever lifted from his shoulders. He can settle into his parish work with his Ruillé flock and do the work he came here to do forty years ago, risking his life to minister to the good people here when to be discovered would have brought him to the guillotine. He can sleep tonight knowing that his Brothers of St Joseph are going into strong hands in Le Mans, the hands of a young and vibrant priest who knows religious life intimately and who has wonderful, big plans for us. May we also sleep gently tonight knowing that we are moving into a wonderful new phase of our Community.

(Exeunt omnes.)

Act III

(Le Mans, the Brothers' house, March 16, 1844, Saturday evening, outside Brother Andre's bedroom. Leonard and Rémi are standing near a table and some chairs in the parlor.)

Rémi: Is he comfortable?

Leonard: He's comfortable. We've done as much as possible to make his going gentle.

Rémi: He's been our lodestar. Everything I do, everything I've become, I owe to his guidance, his prayerful guidance.

Leonard: He'll be in God's hands before very long. Do you want to go in and see him?

Rémi: In a bit. Let me catch my breath. Will he last until the feast of St. Joseph?

Leonard: Tuesday? No, the doctor doesn't think so.

Rémi: Oh, Andre! How we'll miss you!

Leonard: We must not think of ourselves right now. He'll be with God soon. How did you find out he was not well?

Rémi: Adrian visited me last weekend and said he had a letter from Baptiste. And I had a premonition, something did not feel good inside me for a week. I thought it was a little stomach ache, but it was not. I'm sure an angel wanted me to know.

Leonard: And you came. How did you get here?

Rémi: A good farmer in the parish was coming in this direction for seed. He was good enough to let me ride with him. I just had to see Andre if just for one more time. He was my mentor. He taught me teaching skills. And all the rudiments in math and grammar that I lacked. But he was more than a guide. He was my angel, our angel. If I were to try for a year, I couldn't think of a thing negative to say about him, to think about him. What do they attribute his sickness to? He's only forty-four.

Leonard: Just turned forty-four last month.

Rémi: So why so sick when so young?

Leonard: You're asking the wrong man.

Rémi: I'm asking you because I know you'll give me an answer.

Leonard: I blame Algeria.

Rémi: Algeria?

Leonard: Algeria. Those two years in Algeria killed him. He was so happy to be chosen to go on that first mission abroad. Or at least he said he was, and I believed him if only because I wanted to see him get away from the daily reminders of his fall from power. You know he was in charge of us Brothers for ten years. Day by day he made decisions about us, our lives, our futures. Then when we were moved up here to Le Mans, he was a nothing, next to zero. Yes, he was a member of the General Council of ten, but what was that compared to the decision-making power he had in Ruillé?

Rémi: Leonard, as usual you are too harsh on the man behind that move. You forget that Andre pushed for our new director, knew we needed a new priest to shepherd us.

Leonard: A priest?

Rémi: Yes, a priest, a vibrant young priest with little fear of authorities, a priest with access to the municipal and department powers, a man who could even travel to Paris on our behalf.

Leonard: Granted. But why send Andre to Algeria? Our first among firsts?

Rémi: For that very reason. Our first mission abroad needed the best we had.

Leonard: Yes, but Andre was supposed to be in charge of the mission. He was to take young Brothers along and continue their teacher training on the spot. Then plans were changed and Father Drouelle was put in charge. Andre was a nothing.

Rémi: Andre was not a nothing. He was still in charge of supervising the teachers.

Leonard: Oh sure. And did that happen? They arrive in Algiers to find that the bishop had prepared nothing for them. The Brothers could not teach in schools because the schoolmasters already there were protective of their turf. The Brothers ended up running an orphanage in the capital city. Then Andre was sent out to the boonies, hundreds of miles away. Philippeville—a real dump.

Rémi: But it was near Hippo, the great seat of St. Augustine.

Leonard: Yea, great fourteen-hundred years ago. Now there's nothing left at Hippo. Andre made a trip there and found a makeshift little shrine to Augustine and the

outline of the basilica foundations, but no church. And no city. No people. No nothing. Hippo! Don't mention Hippo to me!

Rémi: But Andre had a school to teach in at Philippeville.

Leonard: You can call it a school. One room on a busy city street with windows open all day because of the heat. People leaning in the windows and watching Andre as he tried to teach thirty urchin boys. And where did he live?

Rémi: I presume in the rectory with the pastor.

Leonard: Indeed. In a small room under the pastor's bedroom with dust falling down every time the pastor walked around. And the food! Nothing for breakfast. A piece of bread at noon and maybe a piece of fruit. Supper nothing but weak soup. That's what our Andre was reduced to. No wonder he sickened. Frenchman that he is he was not ready for the rigors of the desert.

Rémi: But he stayed.

Leonard: Yes, he stayed. Because he's Andre. He stayed and suffered. The pastor had a maid, but Andre had nothing, not even a bed pan. He had to go out into the mountains to relieve himself. On weekends he had to clean the church and teach catechism to the boys who were not in his school. Mindless. Mindless. And then his hemorrhoids kicked in. Rémi, he was bleeding to death. He was bleeding to death slowly, day by day.

Rémi: Thank goodness our director called him back to France.

Leonard: That's not why Andre came home. Everyone was called back because Father Drouelle got in trouble with the bishop.

Rémi: The bishop?

Leonard: Yes, the bishop. A community of Visitation Sisters in Algiers did not like their extraordinary confessor, but the bishop refused to assign them another. Father Drouelle and Father Haudebourg sided with the Sisters. The bishop got furious.

Rémi: I hear the bishop was a bit irascible.

Leonard: The bishop was looney-tunes. He ordered Holy Cross men out of his diocese. That's why they all came home. It was not the fact that Andre was so very sick.

Rémi: Our Andre is such a gentleman, so patient and kind. I don't like to think of his suffering like that.

Leonard: Anyway, our director got them all home and made Andre a member of the two councils. But Andre was never the same again. He came home two years ago, and he has weakened more and more with each passing week. At first we thought he would rally and become the Andre we had known and loved. But he weakened. In all his suffering he never complained. Not once.

(Stephen enters.)

Stephen: Rémi. So good to see you. So good of you to come.

Rémi: Stephen! You are here. What about your school?

Stephen: My school is in good temporary hands. So lucky to have an elderly man in the parish who taught for years in Rennes. He was most happy to take my place for a few days. My school is in good hands.

Rémi: You've been there, what? Six years?

Stephen: Yes, six years. And I hope to die there. I love the place. How's our patient?

Leonard: Our angel is in and out of sleep.

Rémi: I think I'll go in and check on him.

Leonard: He will joy to see you. He'll say, "Good Rémi has come to see me for the last time." And he'll pretend that there is no pain. Our angel is going to a better place.

(Rémi exits into the Andre's bedroom.)

Stephen: Leonard, what will we do without him?

Leonard: We'll slug on as we have. We'll slug on.

Stephen: I've known him from the beginning. I came to Ruillé just a month after him. We had so little in those days. Just our good Father Dujarie to set an example for us. Doing with little and happy to have that. Learning our basics from our good father's lips and heading out to the towns: St. Denis-d'Orques, Larchamp, Marçon, Montourtier, Les-Autels-St-Eloi, Yvré-l'Evêque, Ménil...

Leonard: Yes, all the places that our good Father Dujarie negotiated for us, but soon thereafter it was all in Andre's hands.

Stephen: More or less. With our good father running a parish and trying to pacify the dear Mother-Superior next door.

Leonard: You mean the old harpy Marie.

Stephen: Now Leonard...

Leonard: I bet you could tell us stories about those early days with her high and mighty Sweetness next door.

Stephen: She was indeed a severe lady, but she never treated us unfairly.

Leonard: Oh? Not even in the 1831 separation?

Stephen: She was looking out for the good of her Sisters.

Leonard: And herself. I bet the old biddy was happy to see our good father leave the area.

Stephen: He left because he missed us. Our move away from Ruillé was hard on his old heart.

Leonard: But Andre and Vincent stayed behind.

Stephen: Yes, the boarding-school had to be closed down.

Leonard: That wasn't hard. There were only six students left in it. It was going on hard times. Andre saw that it died with some dignity. And he had to take care of the Grand St. Joseph until it was sold. Coming up here without his priest-mentor could not have been easy on Andre.

Stephen: I know that. Remember I was there from the beginning.

Leonard: But you were out in the schools within a year. Andre stayed behind and saw our good father every day until the 1835 move north.

Stephen: And then six months later Andre returned to Ruillé to bring our good father Dujarie up to Le Mans. He so wanted to end his days among his beloved Brothers. And he did. Our new director gave him a fine room, and every day Brothers would carry his chair out to the recreation area where the boys played. And our good Father Dujarie would laugh with the boys and give them whatever sweets he had. And he had Andre at his side when he went to his well earned spot in heaven.

Leonard: I should have remembered you knew old Dujarie almost as long as Andre did.

Stephen: But of course not near as well as Andre who had our father's confidence for fifteen years. Right from the beginning our father recognized something special in our Andre and trusted him with information the rest of us were not privy to. Andre was the epitome of discretion. He could be trusted implicitly. In everything. Leonard, why did we fall apart?

Leonard: Blame the 1830 revolution. Blame the upset in the government. Blame the political unrest. Blame it all. Remember that we could not have our annual retreat in 1830 because of all that turmoil. That surely demoralized many of our Brothers.

Stephen: But our "Declaration of Fidelity" at the retreat the next summer surely brought us some solidarity. Remember how we pledged to stay faithful to our ideals even if we were broken apart we would remain faithful to each other, to our beloved founder.

Leonard: There were only seventeen of us who signed that document. Where were the other forty?

Stephen: I signed it.

Leonard: I did too. But others filtered away, never to come back. Some stayed right at their school and continued to teach, but not as a Brother of St. Joseph.

Stephen: I don't think it matters who leaves—it matters who stays.

Leonard: As they say of a poorly attended party—enjoy those who do show up!

Stephen: Exactly. But it was wonderful that Andre put the "Declaration" together. I knew he was going to do it because I heard about it a month before.

Leonard: From whom?

Stephen: From Adrian. Andre was our heart.

Leonard: Not our father Dujarie?

Stephen: A double heart. The founding heart and the guiding heart. Two hearts. Then one broke and now the other is breaking.

(Hilarion enters.)

Stephen: Hilarion!

Hilarion: Hello, Stephen. Hello, Leonard.

Leonard: You've come to see our Andre.

Hilarion: Yes, can he talk to me? I'm hoping to lead a new mission to Algeria. I need his advice.

Stephen: Algeria?

Hilarion: Yes, we're going back to Africa.

Stephen: Andre could give you good counsel about Algeria. But, Hilarion, I'm afraid Andre is too weak to talk much.

Hilarion: Then I just want to see him. Just to be near him would give me courage.

(Rémi returns from the bedroom.)

Stephen: Hilarion has come to see Andre.

Hilarion: Hello, Rémi. I'll go in now.

(Hilarion enters the bedroom.)

Stephen: What do you think?

Rémi: I think we are just waiting, waiting for Andre to go. We always looked to him for direction. Leonard, he wants to see you. Alone.

Leonard: OK.

(Leonard exits to bedroom.)

Rémi: I'm worried about Leonard.

Stephen: Why?

Rémi: You know he's always been strong-willed.

Stephen: I bet the meetings of the four Brother-Directors were heated.

Rémi: I can only imagine. With Leonard-the-outspoken-one and Henry-the-puzzling-one. Andre had his hands full.

Stephen: Even after he dismissed Henry?

Rémi: That may have taken away a trouble-maker from the group, but Andre and Vincent would still have their hands full with Leonard.

Stephen: So sad that Vincent and Andre had to be sent to different missions. They were such good friends. I knew Andre longer than Vincent did, but somehow those two clicked nicely. Vincent is a threat to nobody. That's probably why our director selected him as the grand-old-man for the mission to Indiana.

Rémi: Yes, who else would be able to steer Edward Sorin?

Stephen: Well, there was Fancis Xavier.

Rémi: A quiet one. He would confront nothing.

Stephen: And Lawrence the farmer-businessman.

Rémi: Sorin needed Lawrence's money skills and his savvy with outsiders. But you are forgetting little Gatian!

Stephen: Who could forget little Gatian? Gatian wouldn't allow that. Maybe our director sent him along as Sorin's scourge. He said he was sending Gatian because the boy is super-bright and could pick up English like nobody else, but down deep I think our director wanted to have a mole on the mission, someone who would not be afraid to look around and report back to Le Mans. Vincent would never do that. Never. I wonder how Sorin is doing.

Rémi: He married a piece of property. He lives and breathes for a piece of property.

Stephen: Ouch!

Rémi: Leonard was in good company when the Brother-Directors shrank from four to three. All three respected each other. Both Andre and Vincent had a respect for Leonard that I don't think was fear, at least not more than half-fear. Leonard is formidable, but he is reasonable. Why else would our director make him the new novice master in Le Mans? He must have something by way of leadership.

(Hilarion enters from the bedroom, smiles sadly at Stephen and Rémi, then exits out the side door.)

Rémi: Poor Hilarion. I bet he couldn't get much out of Andre. But Hilarion has spunk—he'll do well in Algeria. He's a leader, young, but a leader.

Stephen: Like Leonard. Leonard has tenacity. But you said that you are worried about Leonard. Why?

Rémi: Well, yes. It's his outspoken questioning of our merger with the auxiliary priests. Leonard saw them as a drain on the Brothers.

Stephen: Because the priests had no income?

Rémi: That was surely part of it, if not most of it. The Brothers have had a visible and viable apostolate for twenty-four years—there is no end to the need for Brother-teachers in the small schools of our diocese. Remember the Christian Brothers will not teach in small towns. They like big cities where their communities can thrive with multiple Brothers in one school. We, on the other hand, appeal to the little towns that desperately need good Christian teachers. The auxiliary priests have no such reliable apostolate. They preach retreats at the beck-and-call of parish pastors, but what is that? A week's work? And how often does a parish run a retreat? Twice a year? The auxiliary priests have a tenuous income. And remember that their training before ordination is years long when they are earning nothing. The Brothers are out teaching after a year of study at most—wage-earners early on.

Stephen: I hope our Community is not about money.

Rémi: You don't have to tell me that. Talk to Leonard. He's the one with the hang-up. And why does he question our merger? Our dear father Dujarie wanted priests to be part of us almost from the beginning. And remember that Andre did too. He shared our good father's vision. And Andre brought it up with both the bishop and our new director as soon as he saw that our dear father Dujarie was no longer capable of leading us. One would think that the wisdom and insight of our founder and our dear Brother Andre would be enough for Leonard to accept the merger.

Stephen: But he still questions it.

Rémi: Too often. And he shares his views with the younger men who are easily impressionable. Our director now likes and trusts and protects Leonard. I'm not sure why. But from day one of the move to Le Mans, in fact even before that—as soon as he sensed Leonard's steely personality, our director gave him responsibility and power. Trusted him with duties he would not give Andre. Or Vincent.

Stephen: True, true.

Rémi: Our director will not be our director forever.

Stephen: But his office is for life, just like the Jesuits.

Rémi: Just like the Jesuits, but not just like the Jesuits. Personality, Stephen, personality. Our charism is being shaped by the zeal of our director. Some would say he has too much zeal. I don't know about that, but I do know he has a powerful imagination for what work we can do for the Church. Look how he is reaching beyond the diocese—a mission off to Algeria just five years after he took control.

Then a year later a mission to the Indiana Territory. Now Hilarion tells us he is going with a new mission back to Algeria. Who knows where our director will take us next? Asia is a big place and needs missionaries. This man who leads us seems tireless.

Stephen: I've heard about his handling of the two Councils.

Rémi: He uses a council as a board of advisers. He loves input but his personality and, yes, his charm on occasion are such that he can often get his way. He is eloquent.

Stephen: I know. I have read his circular letters. I have heard him preach.

Rémi: We are so lucky to have him as our director.

Stephen: Well, tell that to Leonard.

Rémi: Maybe that's what Andre is telling him right now.

Stephen: You think?

Rémi: I can only guess. But I know our director will not last forever, and once he is gone, Leonard will be at the mercy of a Superior-General who may not have the patience that our present director has, patience and an ability to get on people's good side. You have to admit our director knows how to steer us in directions we never thought we'd be good in. A successor to him may be heavy-handed.

Stephen: You mean like Drouelle or Champeau?

Rémi: Or Sorin.

Stephen: Sorin?

Rémi: Yes, Sorin. Just because he's thousands of miles away, across the ocean, doesn't mean that his influence on our future is minimal. You know Sorin. You know him.

Stephen: I know him as a congenial priest who likes a good laugh and a good glass of wine.

Rémi: And getting his own way. Don't cross him. Sure, he has little Gatian as a thorn-in-his-side right now, but how long do you think Sorin will abide little Gatian's cute and cutting remarks?

Stephen: Our director always liked Gatian.

Rémi: He likes Sorin better. Take it from me. If Sorin can handle Gatian, he may try his hand on other problem areas in our Community. Distance means nothing.

Stephen: I hope you are wrong.

Rémi: Time will tell.

Stephen: You paint Sorin as someone who would name multiple buildings after himself.

Rémi: Ha! Sorin is an organizer. And he knows how to get work out of his subjects. He knows how to use power. And power is like a virus that feeds and grows and conquers.

Stephen: But if it is for the good of God's kingdom?

Rémi: We always hope it will be, but just let me say I would not want to be on Edward Sorin's bad side. Never on Sorin's bad side.

Stephen: You talk like a prophet.

Rémi: I talk like a man who thinks much of our community and wants it to grow and help nourish the Church.

Stephen: I hope you live long enough to witness much and write it up for our future members. You do have a way with words.

Rémi: We do what we can and as we are counseled.

(Leonard re-enters from bedroom. He is quiet and subdued. His exuberance has ebbed.)

Stephen : What do you think?

Leonard: I think our waiting is ending. Our waiting for Andre is ending. Our little saint does not have long to be among us.

Stephen: Don't talk like that. He will always be among us. We can never forget him.

Leonard: I'm talking about our physical Andre. I have been speaking with a man about to go to a better place.

Rémi: Are you sure?

Leonard: Rémi, trust me. I have a sense for this. I've known Andre for twenty years. Not as long as Stephen but as long as you.

Rémi: And you have worked side-by-side as a Brother-Director with him. You have seen his ups and his downs first-hand.

Leonard: I have been there. I have challenged him often enough, but my respect and love for him has never ebbed.

Stephen: And his vision?

Leonard: His vision?

Stephen: For our future. He always wanted priests and Brothers working side by side, living together, praying together, suffering together, happy together.

Leonard: He did. He did. Almost from the beginning.

Stephen: And you?

(Pause)

Leonard: Rémi, are there preparations for his going? For his wake and funeral?

Rémi: I'm sure our director will do everything he can for our comfort. I'm sure the liturgy will be beautiful. The boys in the boarding-school will no doubt be part of it.

Leonard: He loved his students. He loved teaching. He loved training teachers.

Stephen: In Ruillé. In Le Mans. In Algeria. It always seemed that he had a touch for teaching. It was his life.

Leonard: And he did it so well. I never heard a student complain about Andre's discipline. And I never heard a Brother complain about his methods. Sure, the training was often abbreviated, but given the pressures he was under to get men out in the field, he did the best he could.

Rémi: And we have thrived.

Stephen: And we will thrive. We will endure.

Leonard: I believe you. I believe both of you. Let us never forget our Andre. And let's not wait for the world to remember him. Let's keep his name and his honor bright and alive forever.

Rémi: Year by year, word of his goodness will be carried Brother to Brother, priest to priest, student to student. No one will have to wait for Andre again.

(Exeunt omnes into the bedroom: Stephen, then Rémi, then Leonard. They close the bedroom door behind them: There is total silence for 20 seconds. Then a chant is heard:

In paradisum deducant te angeli / in tuo adventu suscipant te martyres / et deducant te in civitatem sanctam Jerusalem. / Chorus angelorum te suscipiat / et cum Lazaro quondam paupere / aeternam habeas requiem.

The lights dim gradually throughout the chant.)