
Letters and Writings

Life and works of Frédéric Ozanam (1813-1853)

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Frédéric Ozanam: A Life In Letters

Joseph I. Dirvin C.M.

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Frédéric Ozanam
A LIFE
IN LETTERS

Translated and edited by
JOSEPH I. DIRVIN, C.M.

SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
COUNCIL OF THE UNITED STATES

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and
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Frédéric Ozanam: A LIFE IN LETTERS

SOCIETY
OF ST.
VINCENT
DE PAUL

OTHER BOOKS BY
JOSEPH I. DIRVIN, C.M.

St. Catherine Labouré of the Miraculous Medal

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Woman Clothed With the Sun

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Mrs. Seton, Foundress of the American Sisters of Charity

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Louise de Marillac

Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York, Spring, 1970.

Frédéric Ozanam
A LIFE IN LETTERS



LOUIS JANMOT—ARTIST

Frédéric Ozanam 1813-1853



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A LIFE
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SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL
COUNCIL OF THE UNITED STATES

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FOREWORD

The Council of the United States has taken on the responsibility of publishing an annotated English translation of selected correspondence of our Frédéric Ozanam. This praiseworthy effort is made possible by the unselfish labor of Father Joseph I. Dirvin, C.M., who has translated the letters from the original French. We are deeply indebted to him and the Council of the United States for this opportunity to share our founder's works with our brother and sister Vincentians and all persons.

The publication is timely in this Year of the Laity, for Frédéric Ozanam was truly an outstanding layman. In his message to the Holy Father in the Cause of Frédéric Ozanam, Cardinal Pironio, President of the Pontificum Consilium Pro Laicis, characterized Ozanam as a loving husband and father, an outstanding teacher, a learned scholar thirsting for knowledge, an apologist passionately defending the Church, a faithful friend, and a committed Christian. Cardinal Pironio went on to state that despite all Ozanam's suffering "he was really the man of the Church in the heart of the world and the man of the world in the heart of the Church."

As you read the intimate correspondence Ozanam had with his beloved family and friends, the saintliness of this sensitive man pours out of the pages. There is a quiet intensity, a deep love of Our Lord, and a clear realization that the role of the Society and its membership is vital in carrying out God's mandate to care for His people in need.

Those who have read Ozanam's biographies know of the breadth of his career accomplishments. A career that clearly could not have been telescoped into the few short years of his life were it not for his penetrating intelligence and fervent devotion to God and His people. In the pages that follow you will share the deeply emotional and spiritual presence that pervaded his vocation.

It is my devout hope that not only Vincentians but also other people living today everywhere who share this insight into the life of our founder will grow in faith and zeal because of the experience. I hope that you, like I, will be struck with the timelessness of his writing. Although much of what is chronicled here happened well over 100 years ago, you will find that the philosophy and challenges are as contemporary as if written today. He lives today in your works.

AMIN A. DE TARRAZI
President of the International Council
of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul



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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Frédéric Ozanam was born April 23, 1813, at Milan—then under French rule—where his father was practicing medicine. Frédéric grew up in Lyon and had his early schooling at the Collège Royal de Lyon. He was a brilliant student with a far-ranging mind and enormous capacity for work, despite a frail constitution. It was, perhaps, this precocity—he was publishing in learned magazines at 16—that prompted a “crisis of doubt,” which caused great anguish to his deep and devout faith and which his mentor and spiritual guide, Abbé Noiroi, helped him eventually withstand.

Frédéric entered the Sorbonne at Paris to study law in 1831. In the French capital he made the acquaintance and fell under the influence of the great Catholic minds of the day: Chateaubriand, Montalembert, Lacordaire, Ballanche, and Ampère with whom he boarded for a time.

There was much anti-Catholicism in the University, and professors were not above salting their lectures by attacking the Church or baiting believing students. Ozanam gathered some dozen-and-a-half such believers around him, and together they answered every attack, respectfully but firmly, to the admiration of their fellow students and the discomfort of the offending professors.

The young law student and a number of these young defenders of the faith also put their words into deeds with the formation of a Conference of Charity in May, 1833. With the formalization of the rules and purposes of the infant association in 1835, it took the official title Society of St. Vincent de Paul, which it had begun to adopt the previous year.

Ozanam took his law degree and began private practice at Lyon but soon abandoned it as he understood ever more clearly that his real interest lay in academics and that his true intellectual bent was for foreign literatures. Returning to the Sorbonne, he earned his first degree in literature in 1835 and attained the doctorate in 1839. After a year at Lyon as its university's first chair professor in commercial law, he returned to Paris as a substitute professor at the Sorbonne, assuming the Chair of Foreign Literatures in his own right in 1844 at the age of 31.

Now his genius flourished in the fame of his courses and the intensity and originality of his literary criticisms and expositions. He was at home in the romance tongues, as well as German and English and classical Latin, Greek and Hebrew. He gained special renown as a Dante scholar, and his approach to the poet revolutionized subsequent research.

On June 23, 1841, Ozanam married Amélie Soulacroix. They had one daughter, Marie.

Besides Frédéric's full intellectual life, he was on constant call to serve the Church, which he did not only by his complete dedication to the rapidly growing Society of Vincent de Paul but also as editor of the *Annales* of the Society of the Propagation of the Faith and liaison between its Paris and Lyon councils and in a host of ongoing delicate and often secret negotiations with the government in the Church's behalf. He was, at the same time, a prolific contributor to the leading Catholic journals of the day.

Unfortunately his physical frame could not stand up to it all, and tuberculosis gradually sapped his energy and strength. He died quietly at Marseilles on September 8, 1853, at the age of 40.

The cause for the beatification and canonization of Frédéric Ozanam is currently in process at Rome.



1821-1836

3.¹ To his father
January 16, 1821

Feast day wishes. Good resolutions.

Dear Papa,

I love you very much! In bringing you best wishes on our mutual feast day, I assure you it is with all my heart. I give you my letter, and you promise me *Télémaque*.² I want to become very wise and very obedient, no more whining like the other day. I would hope that my wisdom and obedience bring you joy and happiness and a long life.

It was very good of you to allow me to dine at Madame Galline's, for I had a very good time. I am not ungrateful, and I want my prompt obedience to show my gratitude.

Adieu, dear papa. I am, with respect, your dear son.

FRED.-ANTOINE OZAN.

Original: Archives Laporte.

Notes:

1. The numbering of letters in this collection follows that of The French Critical Edition: *Lettres de Frédéric Ozanam*:
With the co-operation of the descendants of Ozanam, Léonce Célier, Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, Didier Ozanam. Tome I, *Lettres de jeunesse* (1819-1840), Paris, Bloud et Gay, 1960.
Jeanne Caron. Tome II, *Premières années à la Sorbonne* (1841-1844). Paris, Celse, 1971.
2. The title of a book Frédéric wanted.



6. To Auguste Materne¹
Cuirens, September 12, 1829

*Reply to Materne's criticism of an article on Christianity's freeing of slaves.*²

Dear friend,

Mama brought from Lyon the letter you happily decided to write me. Nothing startles me more than a letter from Materne. I begin to fear an accident or misfortune . . . I open the letter. I read and am agreeably surprised to find only the good

advice of a good friend. The only thing that bothers me is that you digress too much for me to know what your thoughts are. Get to the matter, lawyer.

I come to the case, which is very well pleaded. But I am sorry not to be able to discuss it with you face to face. I would agree with you that my intentions can be misunderstood. Nevertheless I think I expressed them very clearly since one of the first sentences says, "Let us weep for the misfortune of our oppressed brothers; let us weep for the cruelty of our brothers the oppressors."

Further, I have clearly pointed out, as you yourself admit, the intellectual and moral slavery joined to bodily slavery; it is one of the dominant thoughts of my letter. I even added that Christianity, freeing people from intellectual and moral slavery and giving them the liberty of the children of God, ought also to free them from bodily slavery.

I made every effort, therefore, to show how I felt—making no case for the barbarians sympathetic to the Negro trade—that I was as horrified as you.

As for the object of the prophecy, I think it could be given the meaning I have attributed to it. For, as a famous author said (I think it was Newton), one should judge prophecies by the outcome. Prophecy foretelling a slavery in general terms and slavery being general and a real fact, nothing stands in the way, it seems to me, of the application I have made. My assertion is fortified by this observation, which I ask you to verify, that frequently the predictions in Scripture apply equally to two orders of phenomena, physical and intellectual. Such a one is the destruction of Jerusalem and punishment of the Jews. At the same time they were expelled and despised, they were struck with blindness and obstinacy. The same with this other scriptural prediction: "You shall eat your bread in the sweat of your brow," which applies as much to the nourishment of the soul as of the body.

So much for useless words. You have, perhaps, the last issue of *l'Abeille*. My article is in it or has not yet appeared.³ If it is, you can judge without so much of my prattle; if it is not, all my arguments are vain and I willingly submit to the distinguished people who edit the journal. For, if as you tell me, this article might be contrary to justice and good morals, or if it could be wrongly interpreted, I a hundred times prefer that it not be printed. Had there been time, I would have withdrawn it to read it over with you. But, *jacta est alea*.⁴

Let me now say that you have made me laugh by praising my zeal for reading the Holy Bible, by talking about my reputation, my numerous articles, by comparing my letter to the most orthodox philosophical systems, etc. . . . We are no longer in rhetoric class, so why so many oratorical pains in speaking to a friend? Do you know that even when you tell me foolish things, I take them as proofs of your friendship for me and your zeal for truth? Much more when you make observations both wise and friendly. *Disputare philosophorum est*.⁵ Did not Cicero⁶ debate with Atticus?⁷ *Si parva licet componere magnis*.⁸

You recognize that we agree on one point: the danger of a false interpretation. A short conversation would put us in quick agreement on the others. Thank you for your good advice: next time I will be more careful. I wrote the article off the top of my head and in half an hour, and took it to M. Louet the same day. In the future I

will reread dispassionately articles written in a moment of ardor and let a night pass between composition and correction. In the meantime be ever sure that I will accept your advice with the greatest affection and try to profit from it, and am always

Your faithful friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: To Monsieur, Monsieur Auguste Materne, at Collonges

Original: Archives Laporte

Notes:

1. Auguste Louis Materne, born at Lyon June 2, 1812, entered the Ecole Normale in 1832 and, after a university career without distinction, retired in December 1869 as censor of the Lycee de Versailles. He published classic translations of Latin, Greek, and German authors. His father was a Lyon businessman.
2. The article appeared in August 1829 under the title *Lettre sur la Traite des Nègres*. Cf. Galopin, n. 26. Abbé Galopin published the first bibliography of Ozanam's complete works: *Essai de bibliographie chronologic sur Antoine Frédéric Ozanam*, 1933. All Galopin references are cited from the French Critical Edition.
3. Cf. note 2.
4. The die is cast.
5. Philosophers dispute.
6. Marcus Tullius Cicero, most eloquent of Roman orators, born 106 B.C.
7. Pomponius Titus Atticus (109-32 B.C.), Roman nobleman, friend of Cicero, who wrote him many letters.
8. If the little can be compared to the great.



11. To Auguste Materne
Lyon, May 5, 1830

*Justification of a position taken in a poem on the Algerian expedition.*¹

Dear Materne,

How could you wonder whether I would accuse you of indifference to our country? Oh how well I know you, and know well that if our minds do not always agree on some political matters, both our hearts at least beat together for our *belle France*.

But I must say that you surprise me greatly by finding me too rigorous in judging the Algerians, and while I have decided to make some changes in that regard, I think I should defend myself.

First, it seems to me that a war poem should deal in exaggeration and hyperbole in order to speak the language of orators. Poetry should be like a concave mir-

ror that exaggerates the size of things; and lyric poetry especially should, I think, be the expression of exalted sentiment, of passion. But passions are pieces of glass that highly exaggerate everything seen in passing. What is my error, then, if there is one? It is to confuse the nation with the government. But I do that only in rhetorical figure, as you know very well. For that matter, is it not true that politically the government is the representation of the nation? And is not war declared against a government always declared against the nation? Is there not such a solidarity between the nation and the government, that one's mistakes are also the other's? When Bonaparte destroyed Austria and Prussia, was it not the nation it struck in order to punish the government? And if that is true for all peoples in general, is it not more so for Algeria in particular where the dey is elected, where the people give a man authority when he pleases them and the reverse when he suits them no longer?

Do you not see that the Algerians, who have already killed so many of their governors, would kill the present one if he did not agree with their sentiments. If then the Algerians have chosen a criminal to rule over them, and at present they have, they are as criminal as he is.

You must not then make the mistake of thinking the Algerians so innocent. I have it on very good authority that not only is piracy practiced in the government's name, but also that most of the country's pirates work for themselves. Algeria's commerce consists entirely of piracy and the sale of slaves. And that is what makes me tremble. I am overcome with horror when I think that you or I could some fine day become the prey of these pirates if we had to embark on some voyage or when I think that one of our relatives could be taken and sold to the Grand Turk for his harem.

The Algerians have always behaved as they do today. If, then, the fault is with the government, we must say that their government has always been to blame, and the nation innocent, that that unhappy people, good as they are, have always been so blind as to choose a government that deceives them and that they have done so for 500 years. So for me, I find this argument to be more than a little absurd.

As for the sentiments you profess on the subject of the lottery, I am in perfect agreement with you, loudly applaud the measures which have finally diminished the number of lotteries greatly, and plead and plead for the memorable day when that miserable siren will be forever exterminated.

I know that the lottery has caused more misery than piracy, and I do not maintain that piracy is the reason why the French lack bread, but I do think the pirates have at all times wreaked havoc with commerce. I only meant to contrast the wealth of most of these armed Algerian criminals with the poverty of so many honest workers who are dying of hunger.

Let us pass on to this. . . . You believe that there is no reason for the war with Algeria . . . but, then, is the insult to Provence's ships nothing in your eyes? You believe that it was done without taking a vote. I know it is true that it was not decreed by the *Chambre*, and according to the ever memorable Charter given us, the right to make war and peace appertains to the king. On the other hand, does not the multitude of volunteers, the enthusiasm of the soldiers and the sea coast towns,

and the agreement of the majority of newspapers show the will of the people? And because such and such a paper is of the opposite opinion, do you believe that such a war should be postponed until we have the assent of these gentlemen? You say that there is no point to it and you despair of the usefulness of the attempt. I think you are wrong. It is true, M. de Polignac² belongs to the *ancien regime*.³ He could even be an anglophile. But I also believe that M. de Polignac has not lost that old quality of honor common to all French from the most shrivelled marquis of '89 to the deputy of 1830. I believe that M. de Polignac, aspiring to make the Algerian War the most glorious event of his ministry, would not be so foolish as to take in regard to it anti-French steps contrary to his own interests. Oh my friend, I believe that patriotism dwells in every French heart. And why attribute a bad intention before seeing the outcome? Patience! Do not try to judge men's thoughts categorically when only probabilities are available. Do not think, just the same, that I want to eulogize M. de Bourmont.⁴

Finally, there is something in my heart I must get out: you condemn the religious motive at the end of my poem. I never wished to say that the war was undertaken for that motive, but I did think it really the secret motive of Providence which, by destroying Muhammadanism in Africa, would pave the way for civilization in that unhappy country. Besides, is it not worthy of Providence to bring to the attention of nations the chastisement of these great criminals, and is it not time that a really cruel people disappeared from the face of the earth? I hold that Providence here directs the arm of temporal power, and Providence has its own ways. How greatly have not the Mussulmen made Christians suffer? Is it not just that their turn should come? For the rest, since there is no philosophical exactitude present, I believe that the heroic belongs to poetry; and I only express sentiments that can be found everywhere in the Prophets.

I confess, however, that your comments have bred some serious doubts in me concerning my piece, and I have decided, after some partial changes, to show it to M. Noirot⁵ for a judgment of the whole thing: I have a rapport with him.

Do not be angry with me, dear friend, for having spoken frankly and for not taking your advice at once. I am very anxious to ask your advice again. Let us dare to contradict each other sometimes: truth and concord will end up by banishing strife. Let us open our hearts and discuss things with wisdom. Our friendship will only become firmer. Oh, yes, we shall always be friends! Right?

A.-F. OZANAM

Address: To Monsieur, Monsieur Aug. Materne, poet, philosopher, etc. Lyon

Original: Archives Laporte

Notes:

1. *Chant de Guerre sur la Conquête d'Alger*. In *l'Abeille française*, May 1830. Galopin, n. 33.
2. Jules Armand, Prince de Polignac (1780-1847), president of the council and minister of foreign affairs under Charles X.
3. The government in France before 1789.

4. Louis, Comte de Bourmont (1773-1846), French marshal who commanded the French army in the Algerian War.
5. Abbé Joseph Mathias Noïrot (1799-1880), longtime teacher of philosophy at the Collège de Lyon, exercised great influence over Ozanam, which many letters evidence. He became, in 1853, inspector general and in 1854 rector of the Academie de Lyon.



12. To Auguste Materne
Lyon, June 5, 1830

Ozanam recalls events of his own youth and analyzes his dominant traits of character.

Dear Materne,

A big thank you for your good letter and still more for the confidence you place in me. I want to think indeed that it is not your intention to flatter me, but only on condition that, when you have time, you will favor me with your judicious criticisms and share with me those pleasant compositions your modesty belittles and you hide.

For the rest, your closing comments prompt me to give you the following few biographical details of the years up to the present, and some psychological details of my personality. Without this occasion I would perhaps have put it off until later. Why put off strengthening the bonds of a friendship which has so beautiful and happy a future?

No, dear Materne, it is not the pleasant recreations spent with you, nor the family meals, nor the little get-togethers of friends that I reproach myself with. Far from me is such a thought. I believe as you do that adequate recreation is necessary and that the innocent pleasures of friendship accord highly with God's law. Even more, I confess, and without doubt you already know, that the pleasures of the great world do not please me, so that whatever I say of it in my piece of verse must be considered hyperbolic and exaggerated by imagination: indeed, it can all be reduced to this single idea that all the pleasures I have discovered have never offered me true happiness. It is also true to say that I have seen many people hardly Christian and much given to pleasure, and these people were not happy. That is that.

Now I am going to tell you what I have been like up to today. Read to the end; the end is best.¹

They tell me that when I was a child, I was very good and docile, and they attribute it to the weakness of my temperament, but I see another reason. I had a beloved sister who taught me together with my mother, and their lessons were so good, so well presented, so well tempered to my childish mind that I found real pleasure in them. In sum, I truly believe that I was good enough then, save for some little faults, and I reproach myself for nothing of moment then. At seven I suffered a

serious illness. Everyone believes too freely that I did not survive except by a miracle. Not that I lacked care. My good parents never left my bedside for fifteen days and nights. I was about to die when, in my delirium, I asked for beer (N.B. I never liked it previously). And the beer saved me. I was cured. Six months later my sister, my good sister, died. I joined deeply in the common sorrow. Oh how sad I was.

I studied Latin, and in studying it I acquired malice. Truly I have never been as bad, I believe, as I was at eight. Nevertheless, a good father, mother and brother went on with my schooling. At that time I had no friends besides my family. I became bad tempered, arrogant and disobedient. I was punished, and grew obstinate under it.

I would write letters to Mama to plead for me. And then there began to run through my head all kinds of wicked ideas that I tried in vain to resist. That was when I was about to enter the college, at nine and a half. Little by little I became better. Example drew me from idleness, I liked my teacher very much, I made the acquaintance of the excellent Ballofet,² any successes encouraged me, and I studied hard, but at the same time I began to be proud. It was high time for me to change from slops and stupidities, etc., etc. But I changed a great deal.

It was almost the same in the fifth, where I had a long illness and was obliged to spend a month in the country with a fine lady where I acquired a great deal of courtesies which was lost in great part afterward.

I relaxed a bit in the fourth, and in the third I recaptured my courage. It was then that I made my first communion. Day of happiness, may my hand wither and my tongue cleave to my palate if I ever forget it! I changed greatly then. I became modest, good, docile, and unfortunately also a little scrupulous.

You are a little more acquainted with my life since then; it suffices to say that since then I am more hardworking perhaps but remain still proud and impatient enough.

But I must go into some detail about a painful period of my life, a period which began when I was in rhetoric and ended this past year. From hearing about unbelievers and unbelief, I asked myself why I believed. I doubted, dear friend, and although I wanted to believe and resisted the doubt, I read every book where religion was proven and not one of them satisfied me completely. I would believe for a month or two on the authority of certain reasoning: an objection would leap to my mind, and I would doubt again. Oh! How I suffered, for I wanted to be religious. I buried myself in Valla.³ Valla did not satisfy me. My faith was not firm, and meanwhile I preferred to believe without reason than to doubt, because it tormented me too much.

I began philosophy. The thesis of certitude upset me completely. I believed for an instant I could doubt my existence and could not. I finally decided to believe. Little by little everything reasserted itself, and today I believe on the authority of the idea of cause.

During this time my imagination was active; criminal and licentious thoughts overwhelmed me in spite of myself. I wanted to banish them and was too occupied with them. My venerable confessor told me not to be upset, and I have not yet

succeeded, although they are rarer today. I flatter myself that such thoughts are not mine, nor from me. At least so I was told and am told still. Unfortunately I sometimes still allow myself to be entrapped.

I must tell you further, so as to hide nothing, that often these thoughts insinuate something of the sensual in my enjoyments, and sometimes distract my mind and my eyes. I must confess, however, that the dark passion of love has still no power over my heart and that I know only friendship.

For the rest I believe that I have always a good enough heart, cherish my friends, am habitually compassionate toward the poor, grateful to those who are good to me, and never hold a grudge.

That is what I was; this is what I am. I tell you everything without prejudice, the bad and the good.

As for the bad, I reduce it to four predominant faults: pride, impatience, weakness, and an extreme meticulousness. Pride and everything in its train: love of praise, difficulty in seeing my faults, sometimes a bit of arrogance. Impatience, only toward my little brother, who often riles me. When I speak of weakness, I mean human respect, little firmness in holding to a resolution, etc., and scrupulosity, extreme meticulousness, I mean regarding spiritual matters and exactness in composition. Add to these faults that of despising the neighbor a little too easily and you have my bad side.

As to the good in me, it is this: a heart which I think not perverse, an intention ordinarily excellent, but which often fails in certain circumstances, and a desire to do well which dominates me overall. I think I possess the two qualities which make a good Frenchman, patriotism and loyalty. I love my country very much and have ever abhorred duplicity. I hold to my . . . , and I am faithful to those I . . . loved, but on parting from a friend coldness pierces my soul without however preventing me from loving him always. I love . . .⁴ advice is given me, but friendly advice like theirs; I would prefer it to be harsher. I insist on preserving my freedom, however, and reserve the right to follow or not the advice given. I think I am grateful and am certain I keep secrets well. For the rest I am devoted to religion without being very pious, which is why I can sometimes be or appear intolerant. I swear that I love to work, but I let myself be distracted easily. To sum up, I think I could become either a very wicked or a very virtuous man. I hope I have now chosen the latter and will be all my life at least a good Frenchman, a good friend, and a good Christian.

There is your man: I have told all; I have opened my heart to you; you know me thoroughly. You now know whether you want to continue our friendship, break it off or deepen it. Whatever happens, I will always love you, always wish to remain and become ever more your friend.

A.-F. OZANAM

If you wish to continue your friendship, I beg you not to pamper me, to advise and never flatter me: be as frank as I have been in this letter, for I have given you the testimony of my conscience.

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur A. Materne, at Collognes

Original: Archives Laporte. Cited by Goyau, *Livre du Centenaire*, p. 57, under the date of January 5.

Notes:

1. I count on your discretion. (Note added by Ozanam.)
2. Pierre Ballofet (1811-1880) and Ozanam were students together at the Collège de Lyon and again at Paris where Ballofet studied law from 1834 to 1838 and was a member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. On his return to Lyon ill health forced him out of general practice of the law. A lifelong bachelor, he occupied himself "administering contested properties and following the various lawsuits they gave rise to" (Ballofet to Ozanam, August 10, 1845).
3. Père Joseph Valla is the author of a philosophy manual (*Institutiones Philosophiae*) for use in the schools of the Archdiocese of Lyon. Published in 1782, this work was frequently reedited until 1855.
4. Words illegible.



13. To Auguste Materne
Lyon, June 8, 1830

Pleasure of a mutual friendship. Benefits of a common faith.

Dear friend,

What good your letter, which I have just received, has done me. How happy I am! If you knew what it cost me to write my last letter. *Dieu!* I said to myself, if he should find me unworthy of his friendship! And I wished to erase something or to begin the letter over, not to tell everything at once but save the rest for another time. I trembled while mailing the letter to your home, then regretted having sent it. I waited anxiously for the reply. Was it a declaration of war? A formal break? My heart raced. I read the first lines and I am happy! I am happy to have told all, to have hidden nothing. I am relieved of a heavy burden. I breathe again, friend, I am content.

My friend! It is on June 8, 1830, at six o'clock in the evening that I say it with all the warmth of my heart. Oh! It is very true. I wanted you for my friend. I made overtures. I probed. I acted like Master Raton pulling the chestnuts from the fire. I asked myself, "Does he love you? Does he bother himself with my friendship?" I hoped. Today I am sure. Oh! *Quam bonum et jucundum habitare fratres in unum.*¹

We will love each other all our lives, and our beautiful religion tells us that we shall love each other even beyond. Our religion! I need to say something more about it. I hold fast to religion out of admiration and reason but, as I have shown you, fail in fervor and charity. I suffer a great deal, but my wise director reassures me

by telling me that at my age these kinds of temptations are frequent, continual, and will disappear *when I am formed*. *When I am formed*. When will that day come?

Like yourself, I often find myself criticizing sermons, etc., whether on a point of politics or a scientific opinion, but I am always careful and do not allow myself too easily to judge others, especially as to their intention. I would like to have childlike submission to the Church and am trying to suppress rash judgments. I hope I finally succeed.

As to my religious duties, I make every effort to fulfill them exactly, especially confession, precisely because it costs me more. You would not believe how difficult it is for me to go to confession. My sloth complains, my pride groans, my scruples revive, I suffer. May God be understanding. I would put it off, but the more I put it off, the greater the pain. So I take the best remedy, which is promptness, and with the frequent repetition of the act, the less I have to tell, which bothers me less.

Oh! Dear friend, we both have a terrible conflict to endure. We have much to suffer. Let us join forces, helping each other, encouraging each other. Let us flatter each other no longer, but tell each other the truth. Good advice often, sometimes criticism, but always the criticism of friends. Let us look together for some eminently practical means of curing the ills we both experience. Let us unite in being good Christians. Such a union could not but be blessed from on high, and one day we shall attain, happy travelers at the end of our journey, that place where we shall congratulate each other for having passed every peril and be reunited in a friendship which brought us earthly happiness and contributed to the happiness beyond.

Write me your political, literary opinions, etc. I will write you mine. I will receive yours with pleasure, even if we are not in agreement. But by the way of orderly presentation we might quickly discover the point of argument and perhaps even end by agreeing. I truly believe we are made for each other! Let us not be afraid to tell each other the whole truth. I regret very much having sometimes hidden what I thought in order to seem to agree with you.

Send me, please, your pieces of poetry; I will receive them with thanks. What does opinion do to friendship? The sphere of friendship is well outside it.

Adieu, dear Materne. Your friend forever,

A.-F. OZANAM

I promise again my advice. Let us promise each other never to be offended over mutual advice. Let us ask it as a right and receive it as a benefit.

I forgot to give you the statistics of my biography: born April 23, 1813, I made my first communion May 11, 1826. I became your true friend June 18, 1830. I died. . . .

I forgot to tell you I am often melancholy enough by nature. There are days when I am depressed, when I want to weep without knowing why. But these are clouds which a friend dissipates very quickly.

Address: To Monsieur, Monsieur A. Materne, at Lyon

Original: Archives Laporte.

Note:

1. In the margin of the first page are the following lines which accord with this passage: "Of four people who know the depth of my soul, you are one and you see, except for particular circumstances, everything as clearly as my confessor does. Indeed, from the day we preferred each other, loved each other wholly."



36. To Henri Pessonneaux¹

Lyon, November 1, 1831

Announces his departure for Paris.

Dear Henri,

I leave for Paris tomorrow, Wednesday, at seven o'clock in the morning by Royal Coaches. I arrive Saturday morning between six and nine o'clock at the Bureau of Royal Coaches, rue N.D. des Victoires, from which I will go to my *pension*, Mme. Lecomte's, rue Neuve Saint-Étienne, n. 11 et 13.

I hope you can come to see me during the day on Saturday or at least early Sunday. I am charged with delivering two diamonds to you.

Adieu, your cousin and friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: To Monsieur Henri Pessonneaux, at his father's, Colonel M. Pessonneaux, rue Faubourg Poissonnière, n. 7, at Paris.

Original: Archives Laporte.

Note:

1. Cousin and close friend of Ozanam, Henri Pessonneaux is known to us by the former's correspondence. Mme. Ozanam included a short notice about her husband's friend in the *Lettres* (1912, t. I., p. 282). He died in 1869 after an obscure life.



38. To his father

Paris, November 12, 1831

Visit to Ampère. Proposal to move in. Sends his account and projected expenses. Asks for a monthly allotment for recreation.

Do not be upset, please, good Father, if I so often take the liberty of writing to you. Beyond the comfort I find in chatting with you, I must keep you abreast of my affairs and today I have a very important reason for getting in touch with you.

Tuesday I went to pay a courtesy visit to M. Ampère,¹ member of the *Institut*, whom I had met at Lyon with M. Perisse. After giving me a most cordial welcome, he asked several questions about my situation in Paris, and the price of my *pension*, then getting up at once he took me to a most agreeable room occupied until the present by his son, and there: "I offer you," he said, "table and lodging with me, at the same price as your *pension*. Your tastes and sentiments are compatible with mine, and I would enjoy having the opportunity to chat with you. You will get to know my son who is very much involved with German literature, and his library will be at your disposal. You are simple, so are we. My sister-in-law, daughter and son dine with me, and would be good company for you. What do you think?" I replied that such an arrangement would be very much to my liking and that I would write at once for your advice.

Now, then, M. Ampère lives very close to the *Ecole de Droit*; it would take five minutes or less for me to get there. The room is nicer than the one I have here, on the ground floor with a garden, higher by two steps and very healthy since M. Ampère, the son,² lived here until recently and only left to take up residence in town. M. Ampère is wealthy; his table ought to be well supplied. The company is excellent; I would learn elegance and Parisian manners, and at the same time I would have these two gentlemen whose acquaintances . . .³ time for my second report I was obliged to reinforce my stomach with some pastries which were very expensive.

Received	Allocated	
□ 100fr.	Travel	18fr.
	Arrival	3fr.
	Registration	15fr.
	Hat	15fr.
	Tip to coach conductor	3fr.50
	Trunk	4fr.90
	<i>Institutes, Code, Breviary</i>	6fr.
	Note pads for two courses	2fr.25
	Letter paper	0fr.35
	Paper, pens, fees, provisions	1fr.70
	Ink, inkwell, seals, ruler, crayon	2fr.10
	English handkerchiefs	0fr.50
	Lip salve	0fr.50
	Lecture hall subscription	4fr.
	Two former sessions	0fr.40
	Omnibus on a rainy day	0fr.30
	Pastry (today)	0fr.50
	Repair of my old hat	2fr.
	Cost of a brochure of M. de Chateaubriand for M. Bonnevie, who will reimburse you for it	4fr.
- 89fr.		
11fr.		89fr.

So I have only 11 francs from which I must buy a little wood for here because it gets cold in the evening, pay my next laundry, buy eyeglasses, advance 5 francs for a boy's school entrance fee for M. Brun (who will reimburse you), etc. . . . Note that I have not entertained myself, although there is here a magnificent panorama of the battle of Navarin which I have not dared go to see because the entrance fee is 50 sous. However, I know I have spent a great deal, but what could I do? I would be very obliged if you could give me a little allotment each month for my recreation, as you did at Lyon; I have a great need to distract myself. It is very hard, being alone.

On another occasion I will share with you my comments and observations. Today was the day for serious matters. Give Mamma, Alphonse and Charles a big hug for me. The farther I am from you the more I feel my love for you.

Your son
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 30.

Notes:

1. "André-Marie Ampère, mathematical expert and French physician, born at Lyon. He discovered the principles of electric telegraphy and the fundamental law of electrodynamics . . . (1775-1836)." *Nouveau Petit Larousse Illustré Dictionnaire Encyclopédique*, Paris, 1945.
2. Jean-Jacques Ampère, son of the preceding, French litterateur and historian, born at Lyon (1800-1864). *Larousse*.
3. Words illegible.



43. To Ernest Falconnet¹
Paris, February 10, 1832

Intervention of Catholic students in the Sorbonne. First lecture of Abbé Gerbet. Reflections on the necessity of royalty in France.

Do not grumble, good friend, at my long delay in replying to you, especially do not have any thought of forgetfulness on my part. Come, I never forget you. Every day I think of you, speak of you often, and if I fail to write, it is for lack of leisure, not of willingness. More recently I had intended to write you a long and philosophic letter, when serious worry prevented my tackling the project. The negligence of a traveler left me for fifteen days without news of my parents, and so greatly was I upset that I could not write two lines in succession. Forgive me, then, dear friend.

Your letter gave me lively pleasure, which is one of the good things about friendly chats. I see that you persevere in the paths of Catholic philosophy and that you are preparing yourself to be one day its worthy defender. Good. Our ranks are more numerous than we thought. I have found young people here of strong conviction and full of generosity, who consecrate their reflections and researches to this

high mission, which is ours as well. Every time a rationalist professor raises his voice against revelation, Catholic voices are raised in response. There are many of us joined to this end. I have already twice taken part in this noble work by addressing written objections to these gentlemen. But we have especially succeeded in M. Saint-Marc Girardin's² history course. Twice he attacked the Church, first by treating the institution of the Papacy as passing, born under Charlemagne, dying today; second by accusing the clergy of having consistently favored despotism. Our replies read publicly have produced the greatest result, both on the professor, who has all but retracted, and on the audience, which applauded. Even more useful than this is to show the student youth that it is possible to be Catholic and have common sense, to love religion and liberty, and finally to draw it out of indifference to religion and get it used to grave and serious discussions.

But what is better and more comforting for Christian youth are the conferences established by Abbé Gerbet³ at our request. It can be said that light shines in the darkness, *Lux in tenebris lucet*.⁴ Every fifteen days M. Gerbet gives a lecture on the philosophy of history. Never have our ears been attuned to a story more sublime, a doctrine more profound. He has given so far only three sessions, and the hall is full, full of famous men and eager youngsters. I have noted Mm. de Potter,⁵ de Sainte-Beuve,⁶ and Ampère the younger receiving with enthusiasm the teaching of this young priest. The Lammenaisian⁷ system expounded by him is not that of his provincial followers, but an immortal alliance of faith and science, charity and industry, power and liberty. Applied to history, it sheds light on it and reveals the destinies of the future. No charlatanism here: a weak voice, clumsy gestures, good, simple, quiet delivery, but by the end of his discourse his heart is on fire, his figure radiant, the light of fire on his forehead, prophecy in his mouth.

I urge you to subscribe to M. Gerbet's lectures, which will be printed successively: the fifteen will cost 12 francs, post paid, and you will find something for the fullest nourishment of your soul.

In your last letter you spoke at length of politics. I approve your principles indeed. Nevertheless, I do not believe that French society has yet come of age. I do not believe that it can be left to itself without peril to its own proper growth. I believe its character to be such that it needs a monarchical regime to direct it in its wanderings and the heredity of the throne to maintain stability in its progress and unity in its diversity. I believe finally that, for the national destinies to be one, for the tradition of the past to be perpetuated in the future, it is necessary for a family to be its symbol and the scepter not pass from its hands. The king is then for me the symbol of national destinies, the old French idea presiding over the development of society, the representation of the people par excellence. On his forehead shines the glories of France ancient and modern. All our memories are brought together in his head. That is why I venerate and cherish him, whether on the throne or in exile. In exile a majesty no longer surrounds him. That is a misfortune.

It is time for me to give some details about the German books you spoke to me about. Novalis⁸ is being translated; our friend Materne is doing it. The works of Goerres⁹ are too essentially German to be put in French. Two works of [Moeller]¹⁰

have been recommended to me, a life of Gregory VII and a life of Saint Athanasius; both are full of singular details, both written in a Catholic spirit by a Protestant author. I have ordered the first for myself, and the second for you. Saint Athanasius's tome is one of the most obscure and most interesting; you will see that yourself as you read. The books will arrive here in about a month. I know that you work a great deal in German. Tell me something about your other activities. As for me, I am meanwhile translating a little volume of Benjamin (Bergmann).¹¹ You understand that this still follows the plan of our common works.

I have not carried out your commission for the *Meditations* of Lamartine¹² yet, but the *Harmonies* are to appear in 32 format for 7fr., and further, if you want to have all the author's works, it is necessary to buy them collectively since the *Child Harold* and *Chant du Sacre* are not sold individually.

My affectionate regards to your mother, father and uncle, and to your sincere and persevering friendship from your devoted,

A.-F. OZANAM

I have had a letter from M. Noiroi. I will answer him today or soon. In the meanwhile, if you see him, tell him about M. Gerbet's course, and tell him that I have subscribed for six months to the *Revue Européenne* as he wished. Write soon.

M. Ault du Ménil,¹³ former officer and member of the *Agence*, has taken on a course in literature, in which he acquits himself with great talent and deep erudition. He expounds admirably the nature and destiny of Catholic literature and illustrates it by that of Spain. Finally, M. de Coux¹⁴ is beginning a course in political economy. . . .¹⁵

Address: Monsieur Ernest Falconnet, rue de Pusy, n. 9, at the 2^e, Lyon.

Copy: Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 45.

Notes:

1. Ernest Falconnet (1815-1891), distant cousin of Ozanam, was substitute of the tribunal of Saint-Etienne (1839) and of Bourg (1842) before going in the same capacity to Lyon, February 5, 1844. He then pursued his career as substitute at the court of Rouen (1846), advocate general (1849), first advocate general (1852) at Lyon, procurator general at Pau, and councillor of the Supreme Court from 1875 until his retirement in 1890. He wrote several books and edited the works of Aguesseau.
2. Saint-Marc Girardin, called Marc Girardin, literary critic (1801-1873), born at Paris. His *Cours de littérature dramatique* is remarkable for its fineness of perception.
3. Abbé Philippe Olympe Gerbet (1798-1864), disciple and friend of Lammenais, chaplain of the Collège Henri IV, bishop of Perpignan in 1854.
4. The light shines in the darkness.
5. Louis Joseph Antoine de Potter (1788-1859), Belgian writer and politician.
6. Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve (1804-1869), literary critic, born at Boulogne-sur-Mer. He perceived literary criticism as the reconstitution of the proper genius of a particular writer, and brought to it exceptional qualities of taste, elegance and exactitude.
7. Felicité de Lammenais, philosopher, born at Saint-Malo (1782-1854). After taking orders he was an excessive apologist for the theocratic principle, but became the fanatical apostle of revolutionary doctrines by way of liberal Catholicism.

8. Frederick de Hardenberg, called Novalis (1772-1802), German poet, the most brilliant representative of romantic German lyricism.
9. Jacob Joseph Goerres, German publicist (1776-1848), born at Coblenz, defender of Catholicism and the Holy Alliance.
10. Name added by the editor of the *Lettres*. Johannes Moeller (1806-1862), born at Munster, professor at Malines, then at the Catholic University of Louvain.
11. The work of Benjamin Bergmann had been condensed for French readers by Moris in the *Journal asiatique*, n. 823. The result of Ozanam's work appeared in the *Annales de philosophie chrétienne* of March and November 1832 (Galopin, n. 50).
12. Alphonse de Lamartine (1790-1869), poet born at Maçon. In 1830 his work opened the doors of the French Academy to him; in 1834 he entered the Chamber of Deputies. The independence he preserved in the Chamber under the parliamentary regime acquired for him a popularity that his posture in 1848 increased still more, but which dissipated after his alliance with Ledru-Rollin and the Days of July. Member of the provincial government, both constituent and legislative. He retired to private life on December 2, 1851.
13. Georges Leonard d'Ault du Menil, born in 1814, former corporal guard, ordinance officer to Bourmont in Algeria, decommissioned in September 1830. He collaborated in *l'Avenir*. Ozanam became acquainted with him again at Montalembert's home. *L'Agence pour le défense de la liberté religieuse* was a creation of Lammenais and Lacordaire.
14. Charles de Coux (1787-1864), collaborator in *l'Avenir*, professor at Louvain. Collaborated with Ozanam in 1848 in *l'Ere nouvelle*. His course in 1832 was interrupted by the cholera.
15. Words missing.



44. To Ernest Falconnet
Paris, March 25, 1832

Reaction of Catholic students to Jouffroy's course. Vanity of attacks against the Papacy.

Dear Falconnet

I am truly culpable for making you wait so long for my news. I am aware of it and confess it and am sure that you forgive me, since I repent of my fault and am ready to correct it.

I watch with pleasure and I might say even gratitude the interest you bring to our efforts to sustain the cause of the Gospel. I will continue to pursue this subject with you and let you know everything accomplished around us for the triumph of this divine banner. I told you about our skirmishes and rejoice to inform you that we have been joined several weeks now in a more serious battle. The chair of philosophy, Jouffroy's course, has been the field of battle. Jouffroy, one of the most illustrious rationalists of our day, took the liberty of attacking revelation, even the very possibility of revelation. A Catholic, a young man, addressed some observations to him in writing, and the philosopher promised to reply. He waited for fifteen days, in order to prepare his arms without doubt, and at the end of that time, without reading the letter, analyzed it to suit himself and tried to refute it. The Catholic, seeing

that he was poorly understood, presented the professor with a second letter, which he paid no attention to; he only made mention of it and continued his defamatory attacks, asserting that Catholicism repudiated science and liberty. Then we enunciated our true beliefs. It was hastily endorsed with 15 signatures and addressed to M. Jouffroy. This time he could not dispense himself from reading it. The numerous audience, composed of more than 200 people, listened with respect to our profession. In vain the philosopher strove to respond, and confounded himself with excuses, assuring that he had not wished to attack Christianity in particular, that he had a high veneration for it, that he would be careful not to offend beliefs in the future. But he especially stated a remarkable fact, very encouraging for the present era: "Gentlemen," he told us, "Five years ago I received only objections raised by materialism; the spiritualist doctrines brought the liveliest resistance; today minds have changed greatly, the opposition is wholly Catholic."

It is pitiable to see this poor man flounder as he attempts to solve by the forces of reason alone the problem of human destiny: each day contradictions, absurdities, involuntary admissions escaped him. Finally he dared to affirm that it was unjust for there to be afflicted good men and affluent villains in this world. Yesterday he confessed that intellectual needs were immense and that science, far from meeting them, only succeeded in making the whole dimension plain and leading man to despair by showing the impossibility of arriving at perfection. He confessed that natural satisfactions did not suffice our spirit and that after having exhausted them he experienced a great emptiness and found himself relentlessly driven to look for supernatural illuminations. He finally acknowledged that reason could not attain a high degree of development so as to become the basis of our moral conduct. . . . You see how these three facts prove the necessity of a revelation. Oh dear friend, they are frustrated, these philosophers of rationalism; if you knew the monstrousness of their pride, the high idea they have of themselves, what scorn for others, what egoism fills their words and writings! If you could see them connive for the applause of the youth who listen to them and, in the middle of their bombast, be conscious every instant of their weakness, which proclaims the despair that devours them. Despair! If you could hear their attacks against Christianity slavishly disinterred from old Voltarian declamations and their extravagant propositions, if, for example, you could hear them say, in order to combat miracles, that the laws of nature are outside our ken and that consequently we could not appreciate derogations from them, and the resurrection of the dead presents nothing miraculous to the sages of today; friend, if you could hear, if you could witness all that, would you not congratulate yourself that Christianity has such adversaries?

Courage, then, for our adversaries are weak; courage, for the teachers of unbelief can be confounded by the least of our country vicars. Courage, for God's work is operative, it is operative in the hands even of youth: perhaps even our own. Do not be scandalized by what you might hear about the Pope's temporal affairs. Be convinced (1) that the temporal domain must be kept entirely distinct from the spiritual, (2) that the liberal papers grossly exaggerate, enlarging on the discontent of legations, and (3) that the Pope (I have this from Chateaubriand^d himself) is

abreast of the age, that he wishes the good of his subjects, but is hindered on one side by the backward spirit of the Roman people, and on the other by the treasonable intrigues of the nobles and lawyers. Leo XII³ died a victim of his reforming spirit. Gregory XVI⁴ had begun to bestow signal benefits on the legations when French propaganda sowed revolt among them. Whatever happens, it is unimportant that the Pope lose the title of sovereign in the assembly of princes, he will always retain that of father in the assembly of peoples.

As for yourself, prepare yourself for the struggle by practicing that Gospel which you are called to defend; pray, pray for us who begin to man the barricades and who join hands with you (lacuna) . . . in a great and fraternal friendship . . . yes, you are already among friends here who do not know you but who await you and who will open their arms when you come to join them. Visit M. Noirot frequently. Take his advice, abuse his patience; I recently received a fine letter from him.

I have finished translating from the German an interesting little work of Bergmann on the religion of Tibet. I had begun the version of a Tibetan book which he translated into German. It is a genesis, a cosmogonic system which includes strong traces of revelation.

M. de Coux has begun his course in political economy, full of depth and interest. I have subscribed to it for you. They mob his lectures, because there is much of truth and life in them, a great perception of the affliction which devours society and of the remedy which can alone heal it. I read the works of M. Ballanche⁵ with pleasure, and hopefully with fruit. They reaffirm (with a certain number of errors intermingled) the philosophy of history. I read also the celebrated Vico.⁶ Finally, I am pursuing the study of Hebrew. Please, take up seriously historical and traditional research; everything is true.

I did not send your letter to Materne because it seemed to me to be wanting: you must speak to him with an open heart, *sicut amicus ad amicum*.⁷ Write to him in another, you will be sure to please him. I have posted by coach your two German volumes; their price is 12 francs; Papa will tell you when he gives them to you the amount of postage. Forgive me if religious matters have taken up my whole paper. What would you expect? It is the foundation and the crown, the A and Ω⁸, and ever reminds you of your friend,

A.-F. OZANAM

Reply at length when you have time. Give your parents my affectionate regards.

Copy: The Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 48.

Notes:

1. Théodore Jouffroy (1796-1842), philosopher, introduced Scottish philosophy to France.
2. Vincent François René de Chateaubriand (1768-1848), writer born at Saint-Malo. He traveled in America, returned to France at the start of the Revolution, emigrated in 1792, lived in

England, returned to France in 1800 where, except in the beginning, he was on bad terms with Napoléon. At the Restoration he was ambassador to London, then minister of foreign affairs from 1822 to 1824. This great writer had elegance of style, richness of imagination, sensibility, passion, descriptive power and color. His work had considerable influence on the development of romantic literature.

3. Pope, 1823-1829.
4. Pope, 1830-1846.
5. Pierre Simon Ballanche (1776-1847) was a native of Lyon. Ozanam, who had visited him in 1831, is possibly the author of an article, *L'Homme sans Nom*, published by the *Revue Européenne* in June 1832 (Galopin, n. 52). Ballanche, a mystical writer and printer, was one of Mme. Récamier's friends, and author of *Essais de Palingénésie sociale*. He introduced Ozanam to Montalembert's house. Victor Cousin supported his candidacy for the French Academy (Cf. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, *Victor Cousin*, t. II, p. 334).
6. Giovanni Battista Vico, Italian philosopher (1668-1744), born at Naples, author of *Science Nouvelle*, tr., and *des Principes de la Philosophie de l'histoire*, tr.
7. As friend to friend.
8. Greek letters, alpha and omega, the beginning and the end.



45. To his mother
Paris, April 8, 1832

The Cholera at Paris.

Dear Mama,

I received your good letter yesterday and do not have to tell you that it made me *happy*: it is so nice to chat together despite distance and to reflect that a hundred leagues are no obstacle to our conversation.

The cholera has taken a frightening hold. In the space of 14 days it has attacked 3,075 people, killing 1,200 of them. Yesterday there were 717 sick, and in the streets wagons loaded with five, ten or twelve coffins can be seen. Few wealthy people have been struck down, although it is said that it is cholera that M. Casimir-Périer¹ has been ill of these last few days, that M. Lagarde, councillor of state, died of it, and that several medical students have succumbed, but M. Casimir-Périer could owe his illness to his constant labors, M. Lagarde to his voracious appetite, and the medical students probably to their carousing. Nevertheless, the calamity strikes with increasing force: it is feared that it will affect 20,000 people before it runs its course. It seems that it first struck only gambling halls, and that it was created and came into the world in order to punish our guilty city: people are alarmed. Business is down, strange rumors circulate everywhere. I am very much afraid of treasonable activity. More men would perish by the sword than by sickness. Last Sunday I saw revolutionary rabble. *Never* was there seen so frightful a *mob*. *Some* carried sticks and bats, *some* nothing; *many* shouted and raised such a tumult that you would have said all the devils of hell were concentrated *there*. It was a great pity to see this race of

accursed men of whom the tallest was not 5 feet, with weak and ugly bodies, pale faces, sunken eyes with shifty glances, and the women who followed crying like furies, nothing more hideous than those women!

In the midst of these sad spectacles, charity is not wanting. I told you that our noble prelate² has given over the seminary and his country house for hospitals and has contributed 1,500 francs to this unruly populace which a year ago violated his home, ransacking and ruining the archepiscopal palace and shouting death threats against his person. The Lazarists³ have also opened their house to the sick. Many pastors have given over their rectories. Confraternities of men and women have been formed to assist the unfortunate. Twelve thousand francs have been deposited in eight days with the *Gazette de France* for distribution by the Archbishop. Well! men who call themselves liberal and philanthropic have striven to malign this devotion, to pretend self-interest there where only charity operates, to spread abroad the grossest calumnies and blame the cholera on priests, doctors, royalists, and even (horrible thing) on the hospital sisters who sacrifice themselves for the relief of the unfortunate.

It is horrible. I wish that such wickedness were exposed to the eyes of the entire world and that a heavy weight of opprobrium and blame fall on them.

The conference to which I belong has voted a little preliminary fund of 15 francs for the poor to pay their *debts*. I wait anxiously for you to send the 18 francs for my subscription and with Falconnet's 12 francs, I can make my offering of 4 or 5 francs. It is indeed right, when one has a Frenchman's heart, to offer even weak assistance to poverty; not only is it right but even necessary, for people complain, "See, cholera does not afflict the rich, the rich depart and we are left alone in our misery," and with that, if they see a mail coach for Paris passing by, they run after it with shouts, and if money is not given, it will be taken by force. I see the ranks thinning all around me, many young people leaving and going back to their families. As for me, I am very distressed. I know well that the life I lead and the air I breathe protects me more. Indeed my anxiety turns in the direction of Lyon, and the news that the cholera is at Toulouse hardly allays it. I spoke about it yesterday to M. Ampère. That brave man did not advise me to leave; he pointed out the danger of falling sick on the way with no way of assistance. He spoke of the uselessness of my presence in Lyon, of the misery I would put my parents in if I were to fall sick or die before their eyes, the risk of taking the epidemic along and of bringing it to our city. He found my plan, in the end, *rather absurd*. All that did not calm me. I am going to M. Durnerin⁴ today for his advice. I could not in any case leave Paris before Easter. I repeat, I am well and I have nosebleed often and in abundance. It is absolutely only solicitude for those dear to me that would determine me to set out, and if the cholera were very mild at Lyon, as it was in London, I would stay here. These are my decisions for the moment; they may perhaps change in two hours. Nevertheless I will do nothing without having received your formal advice. It is, nonetheless, very hard to be separated at such times. With all finality, please do not fear for me, I am no longer sick to my stomach.

I take only two meals. I would prefer three, but I do not wish to upset things. As

for mineral water, I do not think it necessary since the wine and water here are of excellent quality. Do not forget to get my money to me no later than Saturday the 14th so that I can pay my subscription. I embrace you with my whole heart and soul, and since I am of the opinion that my Charlot³ no longer has the fever, I send him a *slap* on the *seat* by way of a present. My regards to our relatives and friends—and a twist of the ear to Falconnet who does not write.

Your son who loves you,
F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte.

Notes:

1. Casimir-Pierre Pèrier, wealthy banker and politician, born at Grenoble. Deputy of Paris and member of the liberal opposition under the Restoration, he became minister of the interior in 1831, repressed energetically insurrections at Paris and Lyon, supported Belgium against Holland, and stopped the Austrians by the Ancona expedition. He died of the cholera (1777-1832). *Larousse*.
2. Louis de Quèlen, archbishop of Paris, born at Paris (1778-1839), took care of the sick during the cholera of 1832. *Larousse*. (Archbishop de Quelen also in 1832 gave initial approval for the striking of the Miraculous Medal, which the Blessed Virgin revealed in appearances to St. Catherine Labouré, a Daughter of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, in 1830.)
3. Priests and brothers of the Congregation of the Mission, founded by St. Vincent de Paul in 1625, known popularly in France as Lazarists from their original motherhouse of Saint-Lazare and in America as Vincentian Fathers or Vincentians. Their motherhouse, to which Ozanam refers, was located when he wrote at 95 rue de Sévres. Although the house is still in existence and operative at that address today, the superior general and his council now reside in Rome. The Parisian house was where Ozanam and his companions were to establish the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in 1833.
4. Ozanam's doctor.
5. His younger brother.



53. To Ernest Falconnet
Paris, January 5-8, 1833

Significance of the Feast of the Kings. Remedy Catholicism brings to the uncertainties of youth. Conferences of law and history. Evenings at Montalembert's.

Dear Falconnet,

It is Saturday evening, midnight is about to strike, a new day will begin, a great and solemn day, the anniversary of the first homage rendered by the pagan world to infant Christianity. There is something of beautiful awesomeness in this legend of the three magi representing three human races at the crib of the Savior, something venerable in the family feast which consecrates joy, which casts lots in a cake¹ and creates in its bosom a domestic royalty for a while² so as to imitate those Eastern

royalties sent as ambassadors to the Christ Child. Whatever be the place of origin of this custom, even if it comes from the kings of the banquet among the Greeks and Romans, it is always a good occasion for drawing closer relatives and friends to open their hearts. I would love to be seated this day at the same table with those dear to me, with you for example, good comrade, and putting aside my philosophic gravity, shout with all the simplicity of my heart and capacity of my lungs: "The king drinks, the king drinks!" For I enter into everything old and folklorish and experience a depth of sympathy for this primitive naivete, for this good fellowship which fades every day the more counterfeit courtesy develops and takes over.

And you, good friend, would you join these joyous fetes, would you abandon yourself to gaiety and pleasure, or would melancholy ever press like a weight of iron on your soul? You have let me into your secret thoughts, you have told me of your waverings, of your joys and your sorrows. Are you still the same, now lighthearted, frivolous, ardent for whatever sparkles, eager for the liveliest recreations, rejoicing in movement and noise, and then fatigued, out of breath, sunken in inexpressible apathy, casting the most baleful glances on the future? Or are you becoming a man, ready to preserve that evenness of soul which brings happiness and security to life?

Oh, no, not yet, I know you well, not yet the calm and impeturbability of mature age. It is youth with its ardor and tempests: the time of great joys and great sorrows. Like the ship that puts to sea for the first time, unused to the waves which batter it, now it rides quick and light on the crests, now it sinks and disappears in the troughs until a firmer hand takes its tiller and guides it to port. That is what life is like for us beginners. Are we then irrevocably condemned to these anxieties which devour us, to these torments which seize upon us, is there no way of bringing our heart a little peace and consolation?

Understand, good friend, we others need something to possess and transport us, something to dominate and elevate our thoughts. We need poetry in the midst of this prosaic and cold world, and at the same time a philosophy which gives some reality to our ideal conceptions, a combination of doctrines which are the base and rule of our studies and actions. We find this double benefit in Catholicism to which we bind ourselves for our own well-being. It is indeed the point of departure for all the workings of our intelligence, for all the dreams of our imagination, the central point to which they must tend; then that wavering disappears that brings us harm and leaves us helpless before our own weakness. But the realization of our own weakness being one of the principal sources of melancholy, the presence of Catholic thought in our soul is the first remedy to oppose it.

Is that all? Certainly not, in my opinion. Let us not confine our beliefs to a realm of speculation and theory, let us take them seriously, and then our life will be their continued expression. Let us never remain idle, building as it were castles in Spain and gigantic enterprises, but let us not leave our mind without pasture, either. Let us begin with strong study, in depth, on the matter most agreeable to our inclinations, but let us not entangle ourselves too much in revery and literature. These are excellent things, but they cease to have any value when they are not founded on precise ideas and understandings.

I know you must be bored with study! I have the same experience. But look on it as an obligation, as something that will not be useless to you some day. Try to use the spaces between the lines advantageously by reading in a good book or by literary composition, avoid the idle and often tasteless conversations of your colleagues. Take a firm stand; that is the way to settle all disagreements. Go as much as possible to the tribunal; it is my advice that you could do nothing better.

Finally, enjoy the pleasures of carnival,³ but in moderation, a little in the world, a great deal more with your relatives and friends. Watch above all that you are always in control, and especially that you are never caught napping by the thought "What now?" Do not seek to shine, that is the surest way. You have talent, facility, and will one day be successful; you have no need of those artificial resources that can on the contrary compromise your future.

Enough of reflections. Now I am going to give you a few words of what is going on around me so you will know something of the world I live in and you will live in.

As a lawyer and a man I will have three missions to fulfill in the world, three areas, so to speak, where I should work: in order to attain my end I should be legal consultant, man of letters, and social man. Here then is where my apprenticeship starts. Three things should be the object of my studies: law, the moral sciences, and some knowledge of the world looked at from the Christian point of view.

Three means have been given us at this moment of time by Providence to try out this triple career. There are the conferences of law, of history, and the meetings at M. de Montalembert's.⁴

The conferences of law are held twice a week. Controversial questions are argued. Two lawyers assist in each discussion, and a third has the function of public minister. The others judge both the basis of the cause and the merit of the arguments. Reading is not allowed; generally one improvises, especially in reply to questions. There are some very spiritual young men who acquit themselves in an admirable manner. I have already spoken twice and notably this evening (March 8). I have substituted for the absent procurator of the king. Only an hour was given me to prepare. Although it appeared satisfactory enough, I thought myself very weak and hesitant because I did not feel myself master of my subject.

But the conference of history is another matter. Composed of forty members, it meets every Saturday. It is open to everything: history, philosophy, literature, all are acceptable. Every opinion finds an open door, and as a result there is very lively and well-intentioned rivalry. For, if one strives to do well, it is not to seek applause and praise, but to give more solid proofs for the cause one has championed. Then, after each effort has been presented, it is submitted to a committee, which criticizes it, discusses it, and names a reporter who is its voice before the conference. Nothing escapes the severity of its censure; serious probing takes place, and criticism, which is at times very malicious. Finally, a higher committee is established in order to give impetus to the whole conference, to indicate ways of perfection, to make detailed reports, and to unify the results of the common effort. There have already been very interesting disquisitions and some pieces of charming poetry; six or seven compositions are read each session. There has been a proposal that corresponding

members be named in the provinces. If you want to be part of it, let me know; you would have to take no further step. Only, when you wish, send me some little work of yours that I can read in your name at the conference.

There are the studies. Besides, there are evening gatherings for young people every Sunday at M. de Montalembert's. There is much conversation and good-natured summing up by bands of four or five. I intend to go from time to time. Last Sunday I saw Mm. de Coux, d'Ault de Menil, Mickiewicz, the famous Lithuanian poet,⁵ and Felix de Mérode, whom the Belgian nation wishes to have for king⁶; Sainte-Beuve has come, and Victor Hugo⁷ ought to. These meetings breathe a perfume of Catholicism and brotherhood. M. Montalembert has an angelic appearance and a very instructive conversation. The points of doctrine on which Rome has asked for silence are not brought up; the wisest discretion reigns in that regard. But literature, history, the interests of the poor, and the progress of civilization are introduced. One is renewed, the heart is stirred up and lifts itself on high with a sweet satisfaction, a pure pleasure, a soul mistress of itself, resolutions and courage for the future.

But, here, I have run out of paper. Therefore I will close this letter, too long delayed. Please remember your friends at Paris and take heart in dreaming to rejoin them. Future for us young men is only what we are. Let us then bestir ourselves and resist boredom and torments. Let us reflect that the condition for progress is suffering and that friendship sweetens the sorrows we cannot avoid.

Let us walk in the right path, and we will lift a calm forehead to the face of heaven, and our conscience will be the guarantee of our happiness.

Adieu. To your parents my affectionate regards, to yourself my fraternal embraces.

A.-F. OZANAM

Henri is well. Materne has had a terrible sprain from which he is recovering.

Copy: Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 56.

Notes:

1. The *Gateau des Rois*—the Kings' Cake—contained a favor or a porcelain figurine, etc., for which lots were drawn on the Feast of the Kings, or Epiphany.
2. A custom on the feast of the Epiphany whereby king and queen and royal family were chosen for the day.
3. Prentenen festivities.
4. Charles, Comte de Montalembert, journalist and politician (1810-1870), one of the most brilliant defenders of liberal Catholicism.
5. Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855), Poland's greatest poet, born at Zaosie (Lithuania). ("Pikewitz" in the copy.) The poet, then at Paris, was a friend of Montalembert.
6. Félix de Mérode (1792-1857), of an illustrious Belgian family dating from the twelfth century. Montalembert married his daughter in 1836.
7. Victor Hugo (1802-1885), the most illustrious of nineteenth century French poets, born at Besancon.

54. To Ernest Falconnet
Paris, March 19, 1833

Benefits of the exchange of ideas and sentiments. Meetings at Montalembert's. Works of religious history.

Dear Ernest,

Did I tell you that your two letters gave me much pleasure? No, that would be too weak an expression to describe the feeling a man experiences when his friend opens his heart to him and lets him read it. Our friendship has never been troubled. Our souls are like two young stars which rise together and interface on the horizon: a light mist could pass between them and veil them for a few hours, but soon the illusion is dissipated and they reappear pure, white, shining upon each other, and renew their sisterhood.¹ I confess that I was wrong to think what I thought and to write what I wrote. But listen, my friend, friendship is also a timid and jealous virgin, the least puff of cold freezes it, and I, a hundred leagues distant from my dear Ernest, during the time he is cast into the turbulence of feasts and enjoyments, during the time the world shouts so loud in his ears, could I not fear remembrance of me losing place in his mind, and that, too far away to make myself heard, my brotherly words would be lost on the road? No, I do not accuse you. I could understand in some way the possibility of your forgetting. I am your relative, your friend, but beyond that I am too little of anything to you to have the right to reclaim a privileged part in your affections.

The time is past when on a Sunday we found ourselves seated in the same parlor, dreaming the same dreams, wishing the same wishes, the one complementing the thought of the other, and both forming together a single intelligence of which you, you were the laughing, changeable, lighthearted part; I, the center of solid gravity, but heavy. Your ideas capricious, but full of grace and delicacy, your judgments often risky, but always original and sometimes right, were marvelously bound to my more serious, more rigid, more constrained thoughts. But, in the division the best part did not fall to me. Age, in narrowing so to speak the fluidity of your spirit, should give it day after day the equilibrium lacking to it; and I, in approaching the maturity of reason, should strive more and more after vivacity and guard ever less against accommodation. A time will come then when you could very well part company with me and never come to my aid again. That is all true, my friend; recall how in our intimate chats we would always begin by discussing how we could come to agree; then, when we were in agreement, you would wrap in turbulent reveries the principle I had proposed. I would formulate an idea, and you would pursue it and develop it in the most brilliant ways. Today study has given you the ability to formulate by yourself and for yourself; you have read well and worked much; for the year and a half we have been separated, you have made quick progress.

Not only have you caught up to me but have surpassed me in many ways. You

have occupied yourself a great deal with the great social problem of the betterment of the working classes while I have only wished to do so. You know German literature and philosophy much better than I, and you have acquired in proper usage a facility of word far removed from me; and what is much more praiseworthy, you have brought to your new studies in legal procedure a goodwill that will be rewarded later. As for me, on the contrary, except for certain perceptions of orientalism, some very vague ideas about law and legislation, a certain number of new notions of the philosophy of history, and a slight acquaintance with political economy picked up in the discussion of the conferences, these last 14 months in the capital have not yielded me very much fruit. And I know it is my own fault because I have let myself be invaded by a kind of softness and laxity hard to overcome. So you see how little I can offer you and what a weak contribution I can make to this association of two souls for the good called friendship. Do not suppose that I say all this out of jealousy or a fevered mind; no, I have spoken with an open heart. The time has passed when our mutual affection had for its object the giving of a further charm to our enjoyments; now it should be the source of mutual help, a serious alliance between those about to fight the fight of life, and I have wanted to discover what kind of an ally I could be of yours, so as not to let you build up hopes that it seems to be impossible to fulfill.

Meanwhile, if I have nothing of mine to offer, I take satisfaction in hoping that a day will come when I will not be useless to you and that when you come to Paris, I can introduce you to part of a new milieu where you will certainly not find brilliant fetes, nor joyful tumult, but where you will be well served by an exchange of purer, sweeter, more fruitful enjoyments. You know what was, before my departure from Lyon the object of all my desires, that I aspired to the formation of a meeting of friends working together for the building up of knowledge under the banner of Catholic thought. The idea long remained sterile. One friend only introduced me to a literary group sparse in numbers, the last remnant of the old Society of Moral Studies, but its unscientific procedures left scarcely any place for philosophy or serious investigations. A small number of us of like mind regrouped. In a very short time there were fifteen members attending the gathering regularly, and the exalted questions of the future and the past began to lift their heads.

Today, thanks to the zeal of certain former members, numerous auditors assist at the meetings and the large room is crowded. We thought it proper to require very strict conditions for admission of candidates, yet applications multiply and we are taking in young men of superior talent. Some, precocious travelers, have visited many parts of Europe, and one has even been around the world. Some have profound theories of art; others plumb the problems of political economy. The greater number give themselves to the study of history, some to philosophy. We have even two or three of those chosen souls to whom God has lent wings and who will be poets one day if death or the temptations of life do not get in their way. The tumultuous realm of politics is foreign to our discussions. But beyond that, full and total liberty. Indeed, serious questions arise; some young philosophers call to account

the doctrines and works of Catholicism, and then seizing the inspiration of the moment, one of us faces up to the attacks, develops Christian thought badly understood, unfurls history to show glorious examples and, sometimes finding a source of eloquence in the grandeur of the subject, establishes on solid bases the immortal union of true philosophy with faith. Understand that it is not theological propositions, but the scientific and social import of the Gospel which are principally discussed. The lists are open and all opinions, for example even those of the Saint-Simonians,² are admitted to judgment. At all times, since the Catholics are of equal number to those who are not, and show besides more ardor, zeal and assiduity, the intellectual victory is always decided in their favor; and also, there is among them a frank and intimate cordiality (with the others, always benevolence and courtesy), indeed a sort of totally special brotherhood.

There is a special dozen of us bound more intimately still by the bond of mind and spirit, a kind of literary order, devoted friends who have no secrets, who open their soul one after another to tell of their joys, hopes and sorrows. Sometimes when the air was purer and the breeze milder, by the light of the moon shining on the majestic dome of the Pantheon³, in front of that edifice which seems to pierce the sky and from which its cross has been removed as if to destroy its influence,⁴ the policeman might cast an uneasy eye seeing six or eight young men, arms interlocked, take the air at a late hour in the deserted square. Their brow would be serene, their walk leisurely, their words full of enthusiasm, sensibility and comfort. They would be speaking earnestly of the things of earth and heaven, exchanging many generous thoughts, many pious recollections, they would be speaking of God, then of their fathers, then also of their friends left behind at home, then of their country, then of humanity. The stupid Parisian who passed them on the way to his pleasures would not understand their language. It is a language few people know here. But I, I would understand them, for I would be with them and, in understanding, would think and speak as they did and would feel my heart expand. It would seem to me that I could be a man and could, weak and pusillanimous as I am, catch some sparks of energy for the works of tomorrow.

Another source of life and virtue are the assemblies of the young and excellent M. Montalembert. There the most illustrious champions of the Catholic school open the treasures of their discussions to us. Sometimes those who have defended with the sword and watered with their blood the realm of their allegiance, young Belgian or Polish officers, distinguished diplomats, attend. Then, men of another school come as pilgrims from another empire to gaze for a few moments on the spirit of union and sweetness which reigns among their adversaries. Attendees include Beaufort, Ampere the younger, Alfred de Vigny,⁵ Ballanche, Sainte-Beuve, young Savigni de Merode, and d'Eckstein.⁶ Last Sunday Lerminier⁷ was there. I even spoke with him for a little while. Then there was a very interesting chat between him and M. de Montalembert. We stayed until midnight listening to them. Victor Considérant,⁸ one of the most able interpreters of the *Phalanstère* and a very able economist, was also there. A great deal was said about the actual misery of

the people and somber presages for the future drawn from it. For the rest, very little was said of politics and a great deal about knowledge. The young men are numerous, and M. Montalembert does the honors with a marvelous grace. He speaks very well and knows a number of things:

A swallow in flight
Has learned a great deal: whoever has seen much
Should retain much.⁹

That has been his fate, and he would be very unhappy, he who has traveled the world from Rome to Berlin and from Stockholm to Dublin, to have returned with empty hands. Join to that a well-heated punch and fine pastries and you would assure me that to be in such company is not so bad.

In way of comparison, as my interior and domestic life is relaxed and lazy, so my social life is active and pleasantly occupied. Two conferences of law a week where I am often obliged to plead, one conference of literature on Saturday where few meetings pass without my speaking or reading, Sunday at M. Montalembert's gathering, two or three times at M. Montgolfier's evening parties, some visits to M. Durnerin and M. Pessonneaux,¹⁰ such is the result of my locomotion.

Since I think it interests you, I will confide in you some of my actual travels outside the sphere of jurisprudence. I occupy myself by laying out in broad strokes a picture which I intend to paint some day, and at present I am visiting as a novice scout the miserable army of my intellectual faculties. Metaphor apart, I am doing for the conference an abridged history of religious thought in antiquity, and already China and India have passed through my hands. I discover from time to time immense mines which can be worked later on, and this learning, some of little importance, is of great use to me in reforming my general ideas. As for the rest, the result is always the same. After having traversed the avenue of the Sphinx, after having traced in imagination the long labyrinth of myths and allegories, the eye discovers at the foot of the sanctuary the mysterious genius of the human race which is the divine word. Pleasure gives me courage enough for these kinds of research, but when I must write down my thought, digest my sentiments, a great discouragement seizes me, and it is necessary for time and the hour to pressure me. Then I put my thought on the sheet of paper like the prisoner on the rack, twist it, put it to the torture, and stretch it with interpolated phrases until it has attained the respectable dimension of a chapter, which is at least ten pages.

There is where I stand, my friend, in better than average humor and uncertain health, calm mind and bad stomach. I often grumble and scowl but I always end up coming to terms with my venerable personality which would, however, make a poor father. I hope nevertheless to do a lot better: by redoubled effort I will earn success, and my friendship will not be unfruitful to those who cultivate it. I would be very unhappy if you thought for a moment that I had any disagreeable memories of my trip to Bourg. I thought nothing of it, and your secret stays in my heart, not as a burden, but as a counterweight in the balance. The rather cold style of some

of your letters hurt (not irritated) me. Your love of pleasure especially worried me, but your last two letters amply repaired the damage so far as the first point is concerned. The second no longer alarms me as much since I have confidence in God in your virtue.

And now, dear Ernest, our hands are more entwined than ever. The future is before us, gray as the ocean, but immense like it. Hardy marines, we sail in the same vessel and steer together. Before us religion, bright star given us to follow, before us the glorious wake of great countrymen and coreligionists; behind us our young brothers, more timid companions who await the example. Yes, Heaven has not given us the same blood, the same heart, the same thought and even the same age in vain. It is not in vain that it chose us, one at Milan the other at Thionville, to spend our childhood together. We took the road together; we will finish it together. Perhaps some day it will happen that some graces will be bestowed on us and we will be greeted as good men in the assembly of the wise. More seriousness for you, more ardor and energy for me, for both of us the lessons of our fathers, the example of our mothers, and the benevolence of heaven. In the end the time will come when we can talk of everything.

Adieu, excellent friend. Tell all your dear ones how deep is my respect for them, and for you my affection.

A.-F. OZANAM

No need to tell you that your errands are taken care of.

Copy: Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 62.

Notes:

1. Understand *brotherhood*. In French, *étoile* (star) is feminine gender, and Ozanam is forced by correct grammatical usage to write *soeurs* (sisters) rather than *frères* (brothers).
2. Saint-Simonism, called after the philosopher Claude Henri, Comte de Saint-Simon (1760-1825), and his disciples, taught that humanity must be a hierarchy effected by the principle "to each according to his capacity, to each capacity according to its works"; social tension must give way to universal association; hereditary property is suppressed; the state will be the proprietor of wealth and will distribute the instruments of work according to needs and capacities—thus will come about the reign of justice. Divided among themselves and condemned by the tribunals, the Saint-Simonians disbanded in 1833.
3. Celebrated Parisian monument on the hill of Ste. Geneviève, burial place and hall of fame for illustrious Frenchmen.
4. The Pantheon was originally the church of Ste. Geneviève. It became a church again after the Restoration, a Temple of Glory under Louis Philippe, when Ozanam was writing this letter, and again a church under Louis Napoléon, then reverted to secular usage under the Third Republic.
5. Alfred de Vigny, poet, novelist and dramatic author, born at Loches (1797-1863).
6. François Fridric, Baron d'Eckstein (1790-1861), of Danish birth, one of the precursors of liberal Catholicism.
7. Jean Louis Lermnier (1803-1857), professor of legislation at the Collège de France since 1831, was master of requests in the Council of State in 1838.

8. Victor Considérant (1805-1893), philosopher and economist, born at Salins (Jura).
9. *Fables*, La Fontaine. (Jean de La Fontaine, poet born at Château-Thierry in 1621.) t. 1, Fable 8.
10. Businessman father of Henri Pessonneaux.



55. To his mother
Paris, March 19, 1833

His opinion of himself. Joy in friendship. Sermons of M. Combalot. Evenings at Montalembert's. Clothing problems.

Dear little mother,

You are really very good to complain so of the delay of my correspondence with you and to insist so strongly that I do not make you lose your turn. Do not, however, be annoyed if I claim a certain injustice in that regard: many of my letters, though addressed to my father, are written equally for you, often even, besides the times when you read the words *My dear parents*, and when I write them, I truly do not know to which of the two I speak, one before the other. Used to including you in the same affection, is it not natural to include you in the same conversation? Indeed, you have that very delicate, very subtle faculty of even suggesting to me topics of conversation. You seem to be afraid that words fail me, and I do not know what to say to you, that I find myself compelled to write a letter and my thoughts dry up. Please believe, nonetheless, good mother, that it is not at all like that, that even beyond having to reply to questions you ask me, I find many things to recount to you, a wealth of ideas to confide in you, a wealth of affection to confide to your heart.

I will sketch for you the real state of my mind, very happy dweller in a weak house, which indeed recognizes its organs to be a little deranged but is not the sadder for that. I will describe for you the laziness which affects me and the efforts I sometimes make to conquer it, the good will that animates me, the irresolution and weakness which hold me back, my mediocre works, my slight successes, my moments of discouragement, and my quarter hours of ambitious hopes. I will then tell you the story of my petty self-love, its joys and disappointments, how satisfied it is when from the height of a conference bench or under the usurped robes of a lawyer it hears itself speaking, phrasing, making gestures for its own delight; and how it loves to see some forty people give it their attention, and sometimes their applause, to hear that it has spoken well on its feet, when it has had much trouble in untangling its tongue; how it is embarrassed in turn, when returning home, Dame Reason mocks it and says to it something like this: "Ozanam, my friend, you have spoken many words and very little of worth, you were a maker of phrases, a prattler; just between us, they listen to you because you have a good voice and speak with

conviction. But what have you said that is new? What thought that was your own, what oratorical flight that was not an imitation? You have a certain store of great words and sentiments picked up here and there. When you have used it up, on what will your eloquence subsist? And you are a little ridiculous: the other day, for example, they interrupted you by clapping. You were very complacent until a friend unveiled the mystery: they were clapping because they thought you were finished, and that was all. In sum you are very windy, and if you sometimes win the cases you plead, you know very well that they always complain that you are too philosophical and too long. Finally consider what you have learned that is new, the four months you are here, consider what you have done." And at this point the poor devil of self-love keeps a profound silence and disappears very quickly, very cast down, and ashamed until a new occasion.

Oh Monsieur Déric,¹ the good God has given you a little perspicacity, and your parents a great deal of education. If you want to work seriously, you may perhaps be something in this world; at least you can one day earn what makes the soup boil, but you are really doing nothing, and if you work a little bit, it is owing to your conferences. There, enough grumbling, I will work better in the future: tomorrow I will get up at six-thirty in the morning—Hoom! What time is it? Oh, eight-fifteen. Farewell, my good resolutions of yesterday! Yet another day lost—already half gone—let us get quickly to work: *O mon Dieu!* How sick I am to my stomach! What do you say, then, Lallier² my friend, let us do the rounds of a museum.—Here we are back again, four o'clock precisely then, two hours later, dinner, then the conference, then back to your place to fritter away an hour, and then to bed at midnight Decidedly, Monsieur Déric, you are a sorry one! Mama says so!

However, there are many worse than I among all these shams who, instead of doing their law, take strolls. I have very simple and moderate tastes, a circle of friends who gather every day in worthwhile enterprises and whom I love as brothers, from the old childhood companion, good Henri; to Lallier, that excellent young man; Lamache³ the soul of an artist; and practically a knight, Cherruel,⁴ the converted Saint-Simonian, so pure, such a zealous Catholic. What delightful hours we have spent together speaking of country, family, religion, science, literature, legislation, everything beautiful, everything great, everything which ought to be treasured in the heart of man. What satisfaction to be with sometimes about thirty young men at the famous M. Combalot's⁵ sermon, or the evening gatherings at M. de Montalembert's.

To see such eloquent, pious men so deeply obedient to the silence the Sovereign Pontiff thinks necessary to impose on them, to recognize in the young peer of France's rooms the most illustrious lights of religious literature: Baron d'Eckstein who became a Catholic after deep study and who hides an immense learning under the veils of the most beautiful modesty; good M. Ballanche, most poetic when he does not go into hiding; M. d'Ault du Menil, ever the high officer under his citizen dress, bringing with him the smell of powder from Algiers, and with him the amiability of a Parisian litterateur; M. de Mèrode and Beaufort, the glory of Belgium;

Mickiewicz, the leading poet of Poland, brother of the famous Countess de Plater,⁶ who served as aide-de-camp to her husband and who herself fought with the courage of a lion and the piety of a crusader. And amid all that a charm of simplicity and evangelical sweetness. Men of genius chat familiarly with the greenest scholar, conversations of all kinds except for what is unworthy. And then to come home, five or six with arms interlocked, loving one another in life and death, and promising to carry back each to his own province some portion of that sacred fire they share. . . . Is that not time well employed? Is it not delightful, and leaves only a single deep regret, that of not going home to one's family to share some of the sentiments with which the heart overflows?

It is all in order to love God, or at least one believes that he loves Him more than before because one feels a lively gratitude for Him, for Him who on this exile earth, in this capital of corruption, has reserved for us so large a share of happiness and life. It also makes one love more than ever a religion that makes all its children equal and gathers together the great and the small who, despite the proud disciples of egoism hating and quarreling among themselves, inspire you with so much love for humanity. And again, it causes one to love his parents, his friends, his province more than ever: parents because their lessons have conducted us in the right path and their affection kept us there, friends because they serve us as supports and mutual guides, province because one feels compelled to repay benefits received. As for certain enjoyments one has, something tells us that they are not those of the paternal abode, the native town, that they are only refreshment for the traveler, and far from love of home being weakened, it increases every day.

There is something approaching the state of my soul: much sentiment, a half measure of ideas, and very little action. If I worked a quarter of the time I spend reading, listening, speaking or dreaming, that would be excessive for me. Perhaps that is just as well. Perhaps store is being laid up for the future: perhaps it is good to spy out the land before deciding what to grow on it. Nevertheless, I have two persistent faults, weakness and prating.

I have a great need for others. I am so little able to be self-sufficient that if I had unworthy friends they could do with me whatever they wished, and I am forever following others, much more than anyone follows me. I am often afraid of being importunate. I lose time, and I even hurry over things a little, but no matter, I must speak and listen; I must have communication and contacts. Indeed, it is impossible for me to do passable work without having talked about it and discussed it with someone.

With all that, it is evident that I am a good enough child, but not at all a *man of merit* (as you would say), and I have a deal of self-love, but no esteem for myself whatever. I am not certain whether I am right or wrong to write you all this, but, good mother, I have too much need to unburden my heart, and I thought you would be interested in a bulletin of statistics on my moral state. Or rather I did not think about it at all; I began this chapter with the intention of writing two words: and behold four pages already: that is usual with me.

Let us get back to our subjects:

It is not I, good mother, who did the articles signed A and Z. I know nothing whatever about it; I have sent nothing to any magazine this year. I have indeed been asked to collaborate in the publishing of a new literary magazine and am not too sure whether I will. The gazette is advertised before its appearance as the work of young royalists. But it seems to me that literature and philosophy are no more royalist than republican, and I am too young to take such a political stance. Except for six essays read at the history conference, I have written nothing philosophical or literary this year, and those works were only the result of historical researches I have done.⁷

I see a lot of Henri and am careful not to neglect him, first because of the affection he bears me and secondly for my own advantage. We are often together and meet almost every Sunday at M. Montalembert's.

My circulatory tiredness is all gone. The refreshing discipline of Lent has borne its fruit, but the poor stomach has become entirely demoralized, because, I think, of the irregular meals. I certainly do not have a good digestion and have a lot of colic. I have much to do this week so I have put off the leeches until next week. Unless Doctor Durnerin stops them entirely, seeing the change in my health.

On my return from Mass yesterday morning, I found my new coat and trousers awaiting me. I tried on the coat and Master Serre⁸ immediately pronounced it a very poor fit, extremely short in front, and suggested that I leave it with a tailor for alteration. Today Lord Henri⁹ and friend Lallier have reversed the judgment and declared the coat very comfortable. It is indeed two fingers shorter in front than my old black coat, but they tell me that is the fashion, and as a matter of fact, yesterday in the Tuilleries gardens we saw several new coats very short in front. As far as the old black coat is concerned, although horribly ripped in the lining, it is still very good in the shoulders and sleeves, and Henri suggested that I have the lining repaired and a velvet collar put on, so that I should still wear it for a long time for ordinary wear and keep the new coat for special occasions. That seems very reasonable to me and since you wished to consecrate 140fr. for my coat and 33fr. for my trousers, 23fr. remain, half of which will suffice for this serious operation.

Therefore, instead of the 20fr. still to be sent me, it will be 35, but this is entirely up to you.

I have still forgotten to tell you that I had to pay a subscription fee of 15fr. in the month of April. Therefore, instead of 200fr. deposited in the bank, it should be 215. You could add without waiting for another occasion the 20fr. I need to pay the tailor and, if you agree to the repair of the old black coat, 15fr. more; therefore, I ask Papa to send me an order on the bank of 235 or 250fr.

It is a great deal, an enormous amount of money, but it is still 5fr. less than you had figured to spend on the coats, and besides, as I said, I will still be ahead by 70fr. when all is done. And you could hold something back from the 120fr. allowance in the future, so that the domestic budget will not suffer.

As for my departure from M. Ampère's, I prefer to wait until the Easter holy days are over before leaving, since it is painful for me to leave this excellent man before he himself leaves us. For the rest I promise to observe your instructions carefully and especially not to waste money on dinners.

You have expressed the wish, good mother, that some young people occupy themselves in putting together a collection of songs appealing to young people. Such an enterprise seems to me very commendable and useful, and the influence of good and pious music on education is nearly incalculable. But such a work requires much refinement, freshness of imagination, and sureness of style that it should be trusted to no one but true poets. And there are very few of them. However, I will mention it to some of my friends, and perhaps we can put together some verses. . . . As for me, I no longer do them. I have too torturous and difficult a style in expressing my thought. Some day, perhaps, when my ideas are less vague and more mature, it will be easier to set them to meter and harmony. At present I sometimes have fancies that strike me as very poetic but I never have the courage to try to put them in verse.

Tell dear father that I have given his regards to M. de Moléon¹⁰ who is always most courteous, that I have not received at all the letter he sent me by accident, and that I will commend his business to M. Ampère.

I end this letter where I began it by excusing my delay; that is its motif. Yours which I waited to reply to had not come by yesterday noon: the mail leaves at one-thirty, and I wanted to see M. Durnerin who always leaves at one o'clock, thus forcing me to postpone until today the pleasure of chatting with you, a pleasure I have taken expansively and which will probably cost you 22 sous instead of 14, but you are such a good mother that you will hardly pay attention to that.

Adieu, Mama, all to all.

A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte. Excerpted ed.: *Bulletin de la Société Saint-Vincent de Paul*, 1925.

Notes:

1. Apparently a reference to a family joke applying a fanciful title to Ozanam.
2. François Lallier, a Burgundian, met Ozanam at Paris, becoming one of his closest friends. He was one of the founders of the Conference of Charity, and composed (in 1835) the *Rule* of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, of which he was secretary from 1837 to 1839. Lallier (1814-1886) became in 1839 substitute judge of the tribunal of Sens, the city where he had married on April 22 of the same year Henriette Delporte (1815-1890), of whom he had a son, Henri (1840-1864), and a daughter, Lucie, who died at sixteen months on August 18, 1844. He became at Sens, judge (1852) and president of the tribunal (1857) until his retirement in 1881.
3. Paul Lamache (1816-1892), a Norman, one of the founders of the Conference of Charity. He taught law at Strasbourg and Grenoble.
4. Pierre Paul Cherruel (1809-1878) was one of the first members of the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul. A former Saint-Simonian, he was ordained a priest in 1843 and became chaplain of Saint-Louis-de-Français in Rome (1843-1846), when Ozanam came across him again as correspondent of *l'Univers*. Returning to Rome that same year (1847), he was an enthusiastic partisan

of the Revolution of 1848. Curate at Notre-Dame-de-Lorette that same year; he was named vicar general of Perpignan (1854) by Msgr. Gerbet, who had known him at Rome. Relieved in 1858, he exercised the offices of chaplain of the Benedictines of Saint-Sacrament, curate of the Annunciation of Passy (1861), pastor of Saint-Honoré-d'Eylau (1862-1865), then of Saint-Germain-des-Prés from 1875 to his death (Arch. hist. dioc. Paris).

5. Abbé Théodore Combalot, writer and preacher, born in 1798.
6. Two brothers of Emilie de Plater, the "Polish Joan of Arc," frequented the salon of Montalembert; César and Ladislas. The former was particularly friendly with the master of the house. "He joins," said Montalembert, "an excessive religious fervor to a Romanesque courage." (Leacanuët, *Montalembert*, t. I, p. 356.)
7. Six works treating of the religions of China and India are listed in Galopin (p. 21).
8. Serre, a childhood friend of Ozanam, returned to Lyon and died young.
9. Probably a joking reference to Pessonneaux.
10. A friend of Ozanam's father.



58. To his mother
Paris, June 19, 1833

Procession at Nanterre-Saint-Germain. State of health.

Dear Mama,

I promised to tell you about one of my days, and this promise is not the one thing in the world easiest to keep. For, first of all, as the wise man says, the just man sins seven times a day, and I, who am only half just, must sin fourteen times a day: there could then be fourteen stupidities to tell one after another, from the laziness that keeps me in bed in the morning, to the nonchalance which makes me lose track of time in chatting with some friend in the evening. What kind of day should I tell you about, what several obscure hours of the week, a ferial day,¹ or a day of annoyance and civil procedure? Or should it be a bright Sunday with its pious duties and calm recreations? Or, indeed, one of those rare days of festival and rejoicing such as can be spent with pleasant companions under clear skies in the midst of a blooming countryside, only once or twice a year?

Were I to tell you that on the day of Corpus Christi three young fools left Paris by the Champs-Élysées² at eight o'clock in the morning, I would perhaps arouse your curiosity. If I were to inform you that at ten o'clock some thirty students took part in the procession at Nanterre,³ I would undoubtedly edify your piety. If I were to add that at six o'clock in the evening twenty-two of these same individuals refreshed themselves around a table at Saint-Germain-en-Laye,⁴ I would interest you still further. Finally, if I were to reveal to you that at twelve-fifteen or thereabouts three adolescents rapped at the door of Rue de Grès, no. 7, that their spirits were gay, their legs a bit tired, and their shoes covered with dust, and that one of

them entered, chestnut hair, large nose, gray eyes and well known to you—what would you say at once, my good little mother?

You would say, “Oh, oh! There is something of foolish adventure here!” It seems very much like an escapade of foolish young men; were it not for the devotion of the procession I would put on *my wide-eyed innocent stare*.

Well, then, I see that I have touched a chord and have hit upon, of the 230 days of my pilgrimage in the capital, precisely the one which should interest you.

You know that at Paris, as at Lyon, but for much more plausible reasons, processions are forbidden, but, because it pleases certain troublemakers to shut up Catholicism in the temples in great cities, there is no reason why young Christians to whom God has given manly souls should deprive themselves of the more moving rites of their religion. Besides are there not some who longed to take part in the procession at Nanterre, Nanterre the peaceful village, native place of the good St. Genevieve?

The rendezvous was arranged, rather late it is true, and only among a small circle of friends. Sunday dawned serene and cloudless, as if heaven wished to celebrate its pomps.

I left in early morning with two friends. We stopped to breakfast at the Etoile Gate and were among the first to arrive at the rendezvous. Little by little the small group swelled, and soon there were thirty of us. To begin with the entire intellectual aristocracy of the conference: Lallier; Lamache, whose excellent historical works I showed you; Cherruel, Saint-Simonian convert; Delanoue,⁵ son of the former president of the royal court at Tour who writes beautiful verse; des Montis, the best child in the world but the most spiritual and most mischievous I have ever known; then M. Lejouteux⁶ and M. Levassor, both lawyers; then the Languedocians, Franche-Comtes, Normans and Lyonnais, especially Chaurand,⁷ Henri, Lagayte, [sic] Gignoux, and your very humble servant. Most sport moustaches, and five or six reach to five feet eight inches.⁸ We mingled with the peasants who followed the canopy. It was a joy for us to walk arm in arm with these fine people, to sing with them and to see them marvel at our good intentions and be edified by our religion. The procession was numerous and full of an elegant simplicity, and there was a faith, a bit difficult to describe, of good old people who could not join in the procession, waiting along the way. It was for the most part in front of their houses that the altars were erected. The ceremony lasted nearly two hours.

Afterward we assisted at the high Mass, where the crowd flowed even outside the doors of the Church. After the Holy Sacrifice we gathered in the square, and one of us, Henri I think, proposed, that we dine at St. Germain-en-Laye. Six or eight cowards protesting the distance, we left them to talk, and twenty-two of us took to the road. Enjoyment doubled the swift pace, and all gathering strawberries in the woods, we came to our destination. We entered a church for fifteen minutes where they were chanting vespers. Then we visited the magnificent chateau⁹ so rich in memories, so proud in its antiquity. After enjoying ourselves on the immense terrace, we delivered ourselves all together to a respectable restaurateur who filled our insides at forty sous a head. This was the danger point of the enterprise: How

many virtues have fallen with the consumption of dessert! How much wisdom has been shattered against a glass of frothy champagne! As for us, we were eating to avoid the peril of delay, and the modest *Mâçonnais*,¹⁰ doubly baptized by the master of the place and ourselves, was the only liquor admitted to the festal board. Since no one rolled under the table, no one loaded the shoulders of his comrades with an importunate burden, we enjoyed the freshness of the evening, and the moon did not fail to light our way under the trees. It was a delicious occasion. We fulfilled our duties to God in rendering Him the homage due Him, to our brothers by giving good example, to ourselves by witness of mutual friendship. We will long remember every once in a while, chatting together about the satisfying impressions of this day, regretting only the absence of those dearest to us. The visit ended, we vanished from sight, some taking the coach to Neuilly, and I arriving at my residence with two others.—Monday was beginning.

My conscience, witness to all the emotions of my heart, knows how many times I thought of you all that day, one of the most enchanting of my life.

No one, indeed, was overtired because of it, and the next day everyone was as fresh as ever.

But, poor I, I always have to close with a few ominous words. I was very well, and my throat ailment was gone, when last Sunday, on going to bed, I suffered light palpitations. I was not upset at first, but they increased more and more, and as they made me very tired, I went to M. Durnerin the day before yesterday. He told me that it was of little moment yet and the cause was this agitation of the blood which troubles me; consequently he ordered new and more severe bleeding, rest and baths. However, as to the first of these, I would want to have my father's advice, especially since Lagayte told me not to act in haste. Here then, is what I experience: a strong pressure alongside the heart, an area always sensitive and a little painful, and concentrated pain sometimes (they are less today, but the pressure is more bothersome). Heartbeats not violent but irregular. Otherwise, there is no problem with the stomach, nor the head, but the throat problem has returned. I regret very much having also to assail you thus with a list of my ailments, but I do not think I ought to try any serious remedy without my father's advice, and on the other side this illness makes my work very difficult. Since I have experienced it, I have no longer exerted either body or mind.

A.—F. OZANAM

The 20th.—I want to say hello again before closing this letter. I received my father's this morning, and I replied on a little slip of paper, enclosed, where I join with you in greeting him on his feast day. Meanwhile, my distress stays constant, less pain but a persistent pressure.—Be of good cheer, nonetheless, I am not going to die.

The 21st.—My letter not leaving until today, I reopened it to add a word: I no longer have the heart beats, but the pressure is stronger. Lagayte is of the opinion that it has nothing to do with the chest, but that it is all nerves. I always find myself

better after having eaten and slept. I am not upset about it, but it hampers me a great deal. I do nothing, and I would like Papa to give me a quick reply and tell me whether I should follow M. Durnerin in everything.

Original: Archives Laporte, Excerpted ed: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 74.

Notes:

1. Day on which religion prescribes the cessation of work, according to the customs of the Romans.
2. Noted Parisian boulevard.
3. French town outside Paris, near Saint-Denis, birthplace of Ste. Geneviève.
4. French town outside Paris, near Versailles.
5. Gustave Colas de la Noue (1812-1838), a magistrate's son, was the first recruit of the Conference of Charity, presented by Lallier. He died at 26.
6. Edouard Le Jouteux, from Languedoc, a colleague of Ozanam in the School of Law, was later a judge of the tribunal of the Seine.
7. Jean Dominique Chaurand (1813-1878), born at Lyon, made his law studies at Paris with Ozanam, his fellow student at the Collège de Lyon, was one of the first members and secretary of the Conference of Charity (from 1833). Back in Lyon in 1836 and a member of the bar of that city, he was the first treasurer of the Council of Lyon of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (1837). All his life he was busy with politics and good works. He was one of the founders of the *Gazette de Lyon* (1845) and a firm defender of legitimism and of the Pope.
8. Considered tall for those times.
9. A royal residence.
10. A wine from the Maçon region.



67. To Ernest Falconnet
Paris, January 7, 1834

Regards and best wishes. Advice of reflection and calm. Difficulty in choosing a profession. They wish to make him a kind of leader of Catholic youth.

Dear Ernest,

Am I not culpable in your regard, and, always faithful to my principles of laziness, balk at writing a letter like a horse at a ditch to be jumped? However, this time I am less criminal than you might think: your letter only reached me on Christmas Day and I had to allow myself two weeks to reply, for I was very busy. Besides, the delay gives me the opportunity to wish you a happy new year and to enclose a friendly hug.

Indeed, happy new year, friend, that is, comfort, joy, happiness, a strengthening of your delicate health, success in your studies, and fulfillment of your hopes. It is to wish you a calm and virtuous soul, and as reward for your virtues the gift of the dreams of youth, beautiful and ravishing, your mind enriched with high and noble

thoughts, your sensibility firm in depth and power while growing wise and regulated, and your freedom disciplined for the battle of life! Oh! do not be afraid; think of the sacrifices of your good mother. Think of the care with which your father watches over your education. The merits of the one and the devotion of the other will not be lost. Happy child, Providence records the trials and labors of the authors of your days. On your head will be placed the crown due to them, and your happiness will be their recompense. Do you not see how God prolongs the life of her who is dearest to you in the world, in the middle of an illness fatal to so many others? It is because, to assuage her suffering, he lets her witness the happiness of her son. I am sure that she is party to this waiting, and you must make it worthwhile. May the remembrance strengthen and encourage you. Do not let yourself fall into your somber self-searching, into those melancholy reveries which unnerve the soul rather than lighten it, and repress every consideration which, rather than resulting in a positive resolution to do better, brings you doubt and negation.

You say that your future is clouded, and you believe the sun no longer shines clearly on my own. Oh, how wrong you are! I am undergoing at the moment perhaps one of the greatest anxieties of my life, uncertainty about a vocation. Let this be our secret, but the wavering and softness of my natural man is such at the time it is not study, but a kind of toil which has no charm for me and under which I am unable to succeed well without at every moment using up all the faculties at my command and concentrating all my strength.

I cannot occupy myself with anything without thinking of a thousand others, and in the meantime, as you know, no work can be great if it is not organized. Ignorant as I am, I have at times believed that I could be scientist and lawyer and mix the two professions together. Today, as I approach the end of my law studies, I must choose between the two vocations, and put my hand in the urn. Which will I draw, black or white? I am surrounded in this regard by attractions of every kind. People persuade, they quarrel with what I decided on, they place me in an opposite situation, they urge me toward a career foreign to my studies. Because God and education have endowed me with a certain tact, a certain appreciation of ideas, a certain breadth of tolerance, they wish to make me a sort of leader of Catholic youth in this country. Numerous young people full of merit accord me an esteem of which I feel myself very unworthy, and men of mature years have approached me. I must be at the head of all endeavors, and whenever there is something difficult to be done it must be I who bears the burden. Impossible to have a meeting, a conference on law or literature unless I chair it. Five or six groups of journals ask me for articles. In a word, a crowd of circumstances independent of my will assail me, pursue me, turn me aside from the path I have laid out for myself.

I do not tell you this out of self-love, for on the contrary I know my weakness so well, I who am not yet twenty-one years old, and the pressures and eulogies embarrass me a great deal and even give me the desire to laugh at my own importance, but I have no reason to laugh and on the contrary suffer incredible torment when I feel all this smoke rising to my head, reining me in and making me neglect what until now seemed to me my career, to which I was called by my parents' plans, and to

which I was very willing to apply myself. However, can the concourse of exterior circumstances be a sign of God's will? I ignore it and, in my uncertainty, go no further, nor pursue it, but I let it come, resist, and if the inducement is too strong, let myself go.

In the meanwhile I do what I can for my law, and although perhaps I devote too much time to science and literature, I do not leave off considering them secondary to the new order. And so, having passed my licensing examination once, I know no more of my future: everything is darkness, uncertainty to me, but what does it mean? Although I know what I am supposed to do today, how can I know what my duties will be in six months? Must the traveler see the end to discover and does it suffice for avoiding pitfalls to see even ten paces in front of him? Oh, my friend, I have written all this for you, for you alone, who have still three long years of study before taking a position and who are not disturbed by what you will do and what you will not do. Listen to the Master, look at the lily of the fields and the birds of the air; does the heavenly Father ever refuse them nourishment or clothing? Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. See the Israelites on their pilgrimage: forty years they wandered in the desert on faith in the column of fire; in the fortieth year they attained the promised land.

Do not worry about your health; already you have grown better; and the trip to the Midi will consolidate it all at once. It is a particular phenomenon of our time that all young people are tired between 18 and 25. Materne, Pessonneaux, and many others are examples. I myself had four consecutive years of serious stomach disorders. But also, the time passes, the body grows strong, the nervous system is regulated and you acquire all the strength of manhood. Protect your chest, speak little, take milk and other sedatives, and avoid carefully every excess of work and pleasure and especially late hours. I am sure that your too many dances last year and too great literary activity have contributed to making you so ill. Write and reflect, try to acquire a serious manner, never plan anything without having thought it out well and be a little less easygoing. Avoid the phrase and whole expression of meaning for which you cannot fully account, and fight against the quickness of your imagination. Look at the great authors: they had none of that brilliance found in their own books. Their principal characteristic is a grave majesty which is only disturbed when there is reason. It is not the twirling mirror which fascinates the swallows, but the sun which attracts the eagle. Try to acquire that calm and serenity of soul which makes the great men of science, saints in the faith, and good constitutions in hygiene. Health, says Plato, is the harmony between all the power of soul and body.

Have a little circle of chosen friends; join especially with good comrades instead of the world's social gatherings. Some hours spent together before the fire in familiar conversation with open heart does more good and gives more repose than an entire week of parties where you must do one of two things: be affected and harnessed in the forms of a stupid and cold politeness, or abandon yourself to the extraordinary customs that are not without peril. You know the world is a pyre of fire which wears down young lives, do not give it yours. If you believed in nothing, it

could be said to you: short and good, and *coronemus nos rosis antequam marcescant*.¹ But Christian and believing in God, humanity, country, and family, remind yourself that you owe your existence to them and not to yourself and that it would be a thousand times better to languish for half a century, giving others the example of resignation and doing a bit of good by it than to carouse for a few months of brilliant delights and die in delirium. But no, you, you do not languish; the fountain is too sparkling to run dry, your mind too quick to remain powerless. You will succeed, you will do great good; whatever be the career you map out for yourself, you will not slip in bull's blood like Euryale.² If the one you call Nisus is not present to you, it is because he was parted too soon; perhaps, also, his end may come too soon; but you, you also will come to it some day. Perhaps, too, like these two friends, some common sacrifice is in store for us, but is not sacrifice, for him who believes, the shortest path to the true end, immortality?

Dear friend, there is my advice. I do not, above everything, want to assume the air of giving a lesson. We are co-disciples, we are brothers. Neither do I presume on my right of age, and if I have spoken so, it is simply to say what is in my heart, and because between us I think vague sentimental digressions absolutely useless and that it is better to make a few positive applications. Please do the same for me and tell me at this renewal of the year what reforms you would like to see in my character, work, and moral direction. Your advice will not fail in the balance because, together from earliest childhood, you should know me.

Thanks for the interesting details you give on the city of Aix, your habits, occupations, and little trip. I have spoken of you to the gentlemen of the *Revue Européenne* who told me to ask you to send something, especially the article you told me about. You will find it advantageous to join these honorable men, and besides, your published article will be paid for at the same rate paid others. As for me, I have already realized a bit of money for my article on China.³ I am about to do two more on India.⁴ One will be published in the December issue, the other in the next. Lallier and Chaurand are there bobbing away so that I must finish on pain of writing on diverse subjects. They have much affection for you; the one because he knows you, the other because he would like to. I will write more at length later.

I embrace you with a full heart,
A.-F. OZANAM

Copy: Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 79.

Notes:

1. Let us crown ourselves with roses before they fade.
2. Nisus, the young Trojan who accompanied Aeneas to Italy and whose friendship for Euryale has been immortalized by Virgil in the ninth book of his *Aeneid*. The celebrated episode is a masterpiece of pathos. The names of Nisus and Euryale have lived as synonyms for friends devoted even to death. *Larousse*.
3. "Les Croyances religieuses de la Chine," in *Revue européenne*, September 1833 (Galopin, n. 60).
4. "Les Doctrines religieuses de l'Inde à l'époque des lois de Manou," in *Revue européenne*, December 1833 and January 1834 (Galopin, n. 66).

77. To Ernest Falconnet

Paris, July 21, 1834

Happy accord in their religious and political opinions. Principles on which they rest. News of his health and studies.

Dear Ernest,

I have received two visits recently which gave me great pleasure. First, that of your excellent father, who found me in my retreat and showed the whole time of his stay the most cordial and touching affection. I would have liked to see more of him, to serve as his guide in his long Paris excursions, who so many times guided and protected us in our childhood walks; I would like to be of service to him, but my bothersome examination nails me without release to the chair, nor allows me to follow my heart.

The second visit came about the same time, yours, that is your package of nice letters, friendly and sincere chats I enjoy, the opening of your soul, details about yourself in which I am so interested—just what quenches my thirst. For understand, my friend, when two hundred leagues separate one, there is always the fear of being lost sight of, the doubts whether things will be the same upon one's return, the fear of no longer being understood: that is why I have in a way importuned you, why I have nailed my most intimate feelings to the door, and wished to strike the most sacred chord of your heart to see if it still sounds in unison with mine.

Now I rejoice at the experiment because I see that we are still as close to each other, still brothers in thought as well as by blood. I am happy to know after suffering as I have, seeking as I have, that you think as I do. Thus, without seeing each other, we have come, novice pilgrims, by the same routes to the threshold of the same temple.

Except, although it is not the place to explain my idea, I look at Catholicism in perhaps a more absolute way: I see formula as necessary to Christianity, just as Christianity seems to me the necessary formula for humanity. I believe the Church to be above the things of this world, but I recognize her right to mark out for herself the boundary of her intervention and power. I also believe worship to be the expression of faith, the symbol of hope, the earthly result of the love of God. For that reason I practice it as much as I can and according to the habits given me from childhood, and find in prayer and the sacraments the needed sustenance for my moral life amid temptations of a consuming imagination and fantasizing world.

As for political opinions, there, too, we agree, which is to say that with you I would like to see the abasement of the political spirit for the good of the social spirit. Like you I salute the banner of Lamartine and Sauzet,¹ of Pagès of Ariège,² of Hennequin³ and Janvier.⁴ I am without contradiction for the old royalism in every respect even if it is a glorious invalid, but I do not insist on it because, with its wooden leg, it cannot march in step with the new generations. I declare neither for nor against any government combination, but accept them as instruments for making man happier and better. If you want a formula, here it is:

I believe in authority as a means, in liberty as a means, and in love as the end.

There are two chief kinds of government, and these two kinds of government

can be animated by two opposite principles. There is either the exploitation of everyone for the good of a single person, the monarchy of Nero,⁵ a monarchy I abhor. Or there is the sacrifice of a single person for the good of all, the monarchy of Saint Louis,⁶ which I revere with love. There is either the exploitation of all for the good of a few, the republic of Athens and that of the Terror, and such a republic I condemn. Or there is the sacrifice of a few for the good of all, the Christian republic of the primitive Church at Jerusalem, and perhaps that of the end of time. Humanity cannot attain a higher state.

All government seems worthy of respect to me in so far as it represents the divine principle of authority; it is in this sense that I understand the *omnis potestas a Deo*⁷ of Saint Paul. But I think that in the face of power there must also be the sacred principle of liberty, I think its place should be energetically reclaimed, and I think the power which exploits rather than expends itself should be condemned with courageous and unyielding voice. Speech was given as the dike to hold back force, the grain of sand where the sea breaks.

Opposition is a useful thing and praiseworthy but not insurrection. Active obedience, passive resistance: the *Prisons* of S. Pellico⁸ and not the *Paroles d'un Croyant*.⁹

But, we others, we are too young to intervene in the social struggle. Should we remain inactive therefore in the midst of a suffering and groaning world? No, there is a preparatory path open to us: before taking action for the public good we can take action for the good of individuals; before regenerating France, we can solace poor persons. I would further wish that all young people might unite in head and heart in some charitable work and that there be formed through the whole country a vast generous association for the relief of the common people. I will make you happy one day with what was done in this mode in Paris this year and last, and to the point that you consider whether you want to be a part of it.

Your father told me many interesting things about you. I noted behind the reticence of his speech how much satisfaction he had in speaking of his son, and how much more of hope for the future. Congratulations on your literary successes; while they must encourage you, I know well there are no risks of your becoming proud. Do not be upset over your bad nerves; I have frequently experienced the like, and it passes, they say, after 25 years of age. Try to study much, write little and get enough rest. Do not dry up the water too close to the source.

As for me, I have done very little this year, save for my law at which I have worked more than usually. At the moment I am taken up with material for the fourth examination, which is very extensive and gives me no leisure. I am writing in haste. It is one o'clock in the morning, and I must close this letter too short as to conversation and too long and discursive for a letter of courtesy. You will excuse both the one and the other, will you not? And then in less than a month we will speak at our ease about everything the pen renders so badly.

Adieu. Your cousin and friend for life,
A.-F. OZANAM

I have sent your article to the director of *France Catholique* who intends to write to you about it. The *Revue européenne* is being reorganized; after its realignment, I think it will be very satisfied to have you as collaborator.

Address: Monsieur Ernest Falconnet, Law Student, Toulouse

Copy: Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 107.

Notes:

1. Jean Paul Sauzet (1800-1876), Lyon lawyer, was Rhone deputy in 1834, keeper of the Seals in 1836, and president of the Chamber in 1840.
2. Jean Louis Pagès (1784-1866), lawyer at Toulouse, interned in 1815, deputy from the Ariège under Louis Philippe, and from the Haute-Garonne in 1848, he ranked among the adversaries of Louis Napoléon and the Empire.
3. Amedée Hennequin, born in 1812, brother of the Fourierist (from Charles Fourier, philosopher and sociologist), collaborator in the *Quotidienne* and *Correspondant*, one of the pioneers of social Catholicism.
4. Ozanam, in a letter to his father (n. 69, January 17, 1834) calls Janvier "one of the most noted provincial lawyers and a man of prodigious talent!"
5. Nero, Roman emperor from A.D. 54 to 68 (born in A.D. 37).
6. St. Louis IX, king of France, 1461 to 1483 (born in 1423).
7. All power is from God.
8. Silvio Pellico, Italian litterateur, born at Salouces (1789-1854). He spent nine years in the prisons of Spielberg where he wrote the moving book *Mes Prisons*.
9. Inflammatory book by Felicité de Lammenais.



79. To Emmanuel Bailly¹
Lyon, end of October 1834²

Founding of a charitable group at Nîmes by Léonce Curnier.

Mr. President,

I do not know whether you recall that a young man, one of my friends, who came to Paris this summer to assist at one of our reunions of charity, expressed a desire to associate with us by forming a similar work at Nîmes, his native place. The young man's name is M. Léonce Curnier,³ he is the son of one of the better-known businessmen of Nîmes, and he is a businessman himself and is in constant contact with the working class of that city. His excellent heart could not spend time in this contact without being profoundly moved, for there, as in all commercial cities, the misery of the workers is extreme. He therefore bent his efforts to create a society of charitable young people. He informed me yesterday that his efforts had been crowned with success; there are seven of them under the presidency of a venerable ecclesiastic, and they will start their work at the end of November.

To encourage the first efforts of his co-workers and to clarify their first steps, M. Curnier asked me for a copy of an extract from the report read by M. de la Noue in the presence of the pastor of Saint-Etienne du Mont. Please send it to me at once. M. de la Noue would be willing to make a copy of the extract. I would not presume to give him this trouble for myself, but it is for the good God and the poor.

I ask the conference, also, to consider whether it would not be agreeable to draw up a corresponding list of members and add M. Curnier and his friends. M. Curnier deserves this title; he has promised to keep me, by an active correspondence at least, fully abreast of their works. You can well imagine that I would not keep such good news to myself.

M. Biatrix will remit to you my total alms for the past two vacation months. I shall remain one more month before returning to rejoin you. Time truly drags, for here I do nothing for poor people; I am an entirely useless servant, I do only what is enjoyable and taste in their entirety the sweets of *idleness*.

Be very sure, nevertheless, you, sir, and my good colleagues, that if my whole being is not among you, my heart is at least. Please do not, in your turn, forget me.

Your colleague who presumes to call himself your friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

I ask pardon for the negligence with which this letter is written, with great rapidity and in the middle of an animated conversation which surrounds me and in which I am obliged at times to take part.

Copy: Provided by the management of the journal *La Croix*. Another copy from Msgr. Gaston, Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Address: Copied at the beginning of the letter: To Monsieur, Monsieur Bailly, President of the Association of Charity, at Paris.

Notes:

1. Emmanuel Bailly (1791-1861), born at Bryas (P. de C.). His wife (d. 1870), whose maiden name was Vrayet de Surcy, was a native of Berteaucourt (Somme). Paris became their permanent home in 1825. Two of their sons (one, Vincent de Paul) entered the Congregation of the Augustinians of the Assumption. Bailly had founded, under the Restoration, the Society of Good Studies (*La Société des Bonnes Etudes*), which became after 1830 the Conference of History (to which Ozanam belonged), itself the forerunner of the Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul, of which Bailly is considered a cofounder and was the first president. Bailly ran the *Tribune catholique* (1832), which merged in 1834 with *l'Univers Religieux* of Abbé Migne. This was the origin of *l'Univers* of which Bailly was one of the chief editors until succeeded by Louis Veuillot in 1842.
2. Deduced from a letter from Curnier to Ozanam of October 12 (*Lettres*, 1912, t. I, p. 119) and preceding a letter from Ozanam to the same (of November 4).
3. Léonce Curnier, son of a silk manufacturer of Nîmes and relative of Msgr. Sibour (Marie Dominique Auguste Sibour, later archbishop of Paris), seems to have known Ozanam at Lyon. He had, in June 1833, assisted at a meeting of the Conference of Charity. Ozanam kept up a correspondence with him. He died in 1852, a candidate for the legislative elections in the Gard.

80. To Henri Pessonneaux
Lyon, November 2, 1834

Vocation occupations. Departure of friends for Paris. Conference of Charity.

Dear friend,

I received your good letter four days ago with gratitude for your friendship and for the promptitude with which you fulfilled your promise to write me. Thank you for taking care of my errands. I read with pleasure your details about M. Bailly and rejoice in the excellent dispositions in which you found him. But also, perhaps, he was the citizen-soldier that day and had put on with the martial uniform martial thoughts, which he left off the same evening.

Today is my turn to visit. As at other times, going to see you, I burst from the faubourg Saint-Jacques and hurried happily down the rue Neuve de Luxembourg without stopping at beckoning old bookstalls in the rue des Grès, nor at the splendid shops of the rue de Seine, nor at the engravings on the quai Voltaire, nor in the splendid walks of the Tuilleries, so today my mind shakes off its usual idleness and pushes my pen and hurries toward you with all the celerity of the past. You may, perhaps, indict the small size of my paper and the brevity of my letter; and indeed you would be wrong, for just as a finely tapered pen can write a number of words in a limited space, so disciplined thought can be restrained to a smaller amount of words. It is time especially which is lacking and from which comes the classic accident of tearing the sheet of letter paper in two. Chaurand leaves tomorrow, and I do not want to miss such a good opportunity; and I am forced to write between vespers, which finished late, and the family get-together, which begins early.

I will speak of myself first. I continue to taste the pleasures of *idleness*, much like you, when you go to the review, like to watch the battalions succeeding one another and, when they are past, cast your eyes on another until the last one has gone, and then you are glad to have watched, although a bit regretful that there is nothing more to see. So I enjoy seeing my vacation days succeed one another and while two months have vanished, I reflect with pleasure on the third month which is beginning, and when all are gone, I will be happy with the moments of happiness God has given me, although a bit sad that those moments are over. In the meantime I vary my enjoyments: in the beautiful days of September there were the trips to the country, the pilgrimages of adventure, the happy strolls, the friendly conversations prolonged until the moon comes up, the sun, the greenery, the raisins, the autumn with all its treasures; then I went once to stay with the Chaurands on the secluded bank of the Rhone, in a desert place where all the voices of the wind could be heard, later under the roof of the great poet in the most beautiful valley which inspired such religious harmonies, and later still in your own room, my good Henri, through the amiable hospitality of your sister. Other times I would make only a passing visit to the countryside and return to close the evening with carefree comrades. Now the sky is gray and the streets filled with mush. It is cold and damp, and

the evenings are dangerous for weak chests. Nature is dead, but to compensate, society has aroused itself and redoubles its efforts to deceive itself about the sadness of approaching winter. It is the reign of industry. Industry built those pleasant fireplaces at whose corner it is so good to chat together, industry cuts in the forest the wood which flames so marvelously. Even better: in the form of a fine chef, it prepares excellent dinners. It builds edifices of farina and sugar. It dresses in the most seductive ways the bloody carcasses of animals. It makes the champagne sparkle and the coffee steam.

I am about to get to the point: all this was an introduction to tell you that since your departure I have not been lacking in galas. Last week especially was monumental in the gastronomic history of my life. Every day, except All Saints, I had invitations, and today again and tomorrow. They are the farewell dinners of friends: Serre, La Perrière,¹ Chaurand, etc., etc.

Not just patés, nor fowl. In a word, were I not to find excellent company, I would be ashamed of myself, so plunged am I in good cheer and debauchery. But why be ashamed in dining rooms where I meet l'Abbé Noirot and the pastor of Saint-Pierre, Dufrène and the like? But in the course of things, after eating, one must digest, and digestion, difficult operation, demands rest, or even, if it sometimes inspires certain thoughts, they must be analogous. So the other day, having left one of these festive boards and passing in front of the college, I improvised the following verses, parodies of Rousseau.²

I submit these beautiful verses to your taste, but I truly believe them more proper for Marc's *Album*³ than for a lady's. But be sure that if I address you a like specimen of my works, it is only to let you see the unhappy results of the digestion of good dinners.

For the rest I am working scarcely at all and am not a great deal more philosopher than poet. I decipher, nonetheless, some pages of Plato.⁴ I read some excerpts of Klapstock,⁵ and I pursue my course of English lessons. *I assure you, my dear, that I begin to understand and to write English.*⁶ But . . . [enough] of this *langue d'oiseaux*, as Charles Quint⁷ would say; French is the language of friendship. However, if I knew a little Spanish I think I would oblige by writing to you in the tongue of Cervantès⁸ and Calderon.⁹ I very much regret not being able to satisfy my wish in that regard.

Do you not find me very silly? Do you not think this letter ought to be dated from *Antiquaille*?¹⁰ Alas, no, dear friend, all fools are not locked up, and there are more in the world than you would think. Those called wise men are those who have the longest lucid intervals. I will try, then, to have a lucid interval and speak to you a bit seriously.

These are the friends who have left: the Charaunds, the Serres, the La Perrières, already soldiers used to the discipline of study. But still here are entirely new recruits and in need of good advice: Ballofet leaves on the 4th and Falconnet, the 10th. I recommend them to your kindness: M. Bailly will have their address. Give them, please, all the directions they will need; they will be very useful to us one day. Biatrix whom you will have already seen brought us good news: M. Curnier has

established at Nîmes a little charitable society modeled on our own. The letter he wrote me burns with zeal: let us try not to grow cold, but remember that, in human affairs, success is possible only by continual development, and that not to go forward is to fall back. I then favor innovations, subdivisions of conferences, movement, and everything it pleases the benevolent brain of M. Bailly to produce. I hope for success to the point of bravery. I will accept whatever he wants me to do, but I will not go beyond it. I believe that is the surest means of staying within the paths of Providence. If, however, M. Bailly wishes something done, I think it should be done at once: you know the irresolution of this excellent man. On my side, I will pressure him as much as I can and intend to write him incessantly to that end.

As for myself, my poor heart is now tranquil. My imagination is calmed by the consoling word of Abbé Marduel.¹¹ I rejoice in total physical, mental and moral repose. With a little piety, a little love of God, I would be happy. But I am ever dry and cold as marble. I close this letter—miserable provincial that I am: what news could I give you, fashionable Parisian, abreast of everything, at the center of European civilization?

They are pressing me besides, I must finish. Adieu, I embrace you. Write me soon, please. I enjoy your letters very much, and they do not cost you much, for you write very quickly. Adieu, I have talked about myself too much, on another occasion we will chat about you.

Your cousin,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: To Monsieur, Monsieur Henri Pessonneau, at Monsieur Pessonneau, businessman, rue de la Chaussée d'Antin, n. 8, Paris (Seine).

Original: Archives Laporte.

Notes:

1. Paul Brac de La Perrière (1814-1894), born at Sainte-Foy-les-Lyon, of which La Mulatière was then a part, belonged to a Catholic and royalist family of local influence. He studied law in Paris with Ozanam (1832) and was one of the first members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (although not one of the founders) and was its first secretary (1836-1837). Returning to Lyon in 1837, he made his law career there. He was the first president of the Conference of Saint-François at Lyon, then succeeded Arthaud as president of the Central Council of Lyon (1849).
2. Jean Jacques Rousseau, writer, born at Glaeva (1712-1778).
3. Pessonneau's brother.
4. Plato, Greek philosopher (c. 250-184 B.C.), was a disciple of Socrates and teacher of Aristotle.
5. Frederick Klapstock, German poet (1724-1823), born at Quedlinbourg (Prussian Saxony).
6. Ozanam wrote the italicized words in English.
7. Charles V, king of France (1337-1380), came to the throne in 1364 and in 1375 reconquered all the provinces the English had captured. He extended the privileges of the University of Paris and founded the first national library. Ozanam makes a further joke in speaking of English as *langue d'oiseaux* (language of the birds), which is a title appropriated to French.
8. Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616), Spanish writer, born at Alcalá de Henares, author of *Don Quixote de La Mancha*.

9. Pedro Calderon de la Barca (1600-1681), Spanish dramatic poet, born at Madrid.
10. A reference to the Hospice d'Antiquaille at Lyon, which had a wing for mental patients.
11. Abbé Marduel was a curate of Saint-Vizier at Lyon and Ozanam's first spiritual director. He moved to Saint-Roche in Paris, where his uncle, who was the pastor, called him. He lived in retirement in a small apartment on the rue Massilior, where he had numerous visitors who came for spiritual direction.



81. To Emmanuel Bailly
Lyon, November 3, 1834

He announces the departure from Paris of several comrades and recommends his friend Ballofet. He should extend the Association of Charity by dividing it into sections. Articles for the Revue Européenne and the Univers Religieux.

Sir,

You have accustomed us to look upon you as the rallying point, the advisor and friend of young Christian youth. Your past favors have given us the right to count on future ones. Those you have done for me encouraged me to hope for the same for my friends.

Several of my old comrades, good and religious men, are on the point of leaving for Paris. Were I leaving at the same time I would have had the pleasure of introducing them to you, but since they go before me, will you allow me to address them to you and to recommend them to your goodness? They will have need of the addresses of our mutual friends which you know, good advice from you, and after some time, perhaps, of being admitted to our conferences.

M. Ballofet, who is the bearer of this letter, is a childhood friend of mine and had all his schooling with me. A long illness prevented him from going to the capital earlier. He has always been virtuous and will be no different in his new state. His parents not being wealthy, he is little used to the ways of the world, and you will find him very simple and timid. He is not endowed with a brilliant imagination, nor a very striking mind, but has, what is much better, very good judgment, an open intelligence and studious tastes. He will be, I hope, after some time, a useful member of our conference of charity. I do not think, however, that it would be a mistake to talk to him about it right away.

Personneaux has given me your news, which I very much wished. He tells me that you are full of hope for the year about to start. I really believe that the time has come to extend the sphere of good, and if you were seconded by better helpers than we are, I think that the works you have undertaken, your conferences, taking on new forms, called for by new necessities, could render youth great services. The association is already numerous enough to be divided up in sections. The literary conferences, beyond their proper usefulness, could serve as the vestibule of the association of charity. They could be grouped together and multiply themselves more

and more. If you could see, sir, how our good provincial mothers of families rejoice to think that their sons are not lonely in the exile of the capital, that they have friends, and form themselves at the same time in knowledge and virtue! It is to you that they owe this joy. If the *Revue Européenne* is still in existence, I hope that it will transform itself and that, its problems overcome, it will enter upon a most brilliant career. Meanwhile, please send it the enclosed review of a work which had been sent me. I am going to send you two more reviews in my next letter.¹ I remind you of the article for the *Univers Religieux* on the poetry of Silvio Pellico.

I will leave toward the end of the month, and then I will be able to give you fresh evidence of how much your kindnesses to me touch me, and how precious your affection is to me.

A.-F. OZANAM

Paris [sic], November 3, 1834

Address: Copied at the beginning of the letter: To Monsieur, Monsieur Bailly, Place de l'Estrapade, n. 11.

Copy: Provided by the management of the journal *La Croix*.—extract of Msgr. Gaston, Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

Note:

1. See the conjectures of *Galopin*, n. 90, 95, 96.



82. To Léonce Curnier
Lyon, November 4, 1834

On the foundation of the Conference of Charity at Nîmes.

Dear friend,

Your letter has filled me with joy. I have not kept this joy to myself. I have communicated it to certain of my friends who belong to our little society and who are here on vacation. I have written on the matter to members in Paris to give them this good news and to bring about the union you ask. I could scarcely give you information concerning it, I think, before a fortnight and did not wish to let so much time elapse without a reply. So allow me to congratulate you, for the present, on the good you have begun and on what you are prepared to do. You have found colleagues worthy of you, and you have found a wise guide. The field is before you; misery has ploughed deep furrows there; you will sow benefactions with full hands, and you will increase them and bring them to harvest. God and the poor will bless

you, and we whom you have surpassed will be eager and happy to count such brothers. The wish that we had is, then, fulfilled: you are the first echo to answer our feeble voice. Others, perhaps, will be raised soon. Thus the greatest merit of our little Parisian society will be to have given the idea of forming like ones. A thread suffices to begin a weave; often a stone cast into the water becomes the foundation of a great island.

I believe then that you have seized upon all that is good among us by taking up a charitable idea, which was already without doubt in your own soul, but which had not yet been expressed. I think knowledge of our organization and manner of acting is not of great use to you. Your city probably has different needs than the capital and provides different resources. The assistance bureaus are set up differently. Besides, in such a work it is necessary to give yourself up to the inspirations of the heart rather than the calculations of the mind. Providence gives its own counsel through the circumstances around you, and the ideas it bestows on you. I believe you would do well to follow them freely and not tie yourselves down with rules and formulas.

Besides, the end that we set ourselves in Paris is not completely the same as that you set yourselves, I think, in the province. In Paris we are birds of passage, separated for a while from the paternal nest, and upon whom, incredulity, that vulture of thought, swoops to take his prey. We are poor young minds, nourished in the lap of Catholicism and scattered among an impious and sensual mob. We are sons of Christian mothers, arriving one after another within alien walls where irreligion seeks to redeem its losses, and so it is necessary before everything else that these feeble birds of passage gather under a cover of protection, that these young minds find a rallying point during the time of their exile, that their Christian mothers have fewer tears to shed, and their sons return home just as they were sent. It is important then to form an association of *mutual encouragement* for young Catholic people where one finds friendship, support, and example; where one finds again, so to speak, a likeness of the religious family in which he had been nurtured, where the elders receive the new pilgrims from a province and give them a bit of moral hospitality. But the strongest tie, the principle of a true friendship, is charity, and charity could not exist in the hearts of many without sweetening itself from outside. It is a fire that dies without being fed, and good works are the food of charity. So it is in our own interest first of all that our association has been established, and if we assemble under the roof of the poor, it is at least equally for them as for ourselves, so as to become progressively better friends.

Perhaps this motive of personal interest, this egoism which is at the bottom of our work, might cause it to lose something of your esteem. As for you, you seem to me called to a more generous mission. You are in your venerable homes where your infancy grew and which your youth has not deserted, where you breathe a pure atmosphere, where you live amid good traditions and examples. The earth does not quake beneath your feet. You have no need of fresh efforts to strengthen you. Your faith and virtue have no need of *association* to maintain themselves, but only

for development. It is not a necessity for you; it is a free and spontaneous act of a firm will. You will act directly for the poor and not for yourselves. You will, besides, establish a permanent association, not renewed over and over like ours. You will distribute your benefactions in your own town and not in a strange city. Your work will then be at once more disinterested, durable, shining and powerful. You will be better able to select; you will walk more securely. We, on the contrary, are obliged by our situation to accept practically all who present themselves, as long as they are Catholic, without entering into an examination of their zeal or aptitude; we depend a bit on chance in distributing our alms, and we are sometimes rash in our new undertakings. You can stay less numerous, and when you are near more than a dozen, if you are united in true intimacy, you can do great good in a town of thirty thousand souls. We, on the contrary, are forced to expand, even at the risk of relaxation, to take into our circle the greatest possible number of young people.

I do not know whether I am expressing myself intelligibly, but I wanted to call your attention to the difference in goal, because that might call for a difference of means. I go into no more details about our little society in Paris. I think I said it all in conversation. That is all I can recall now, and M. La Noue's report will tell you more than I can.¹ Since we came into existence we have distributed about two thousand four hundred francs, some books and a very great quantity of old clothing. Our resources are the following: first, from collections, we make among ourselves each Tuesday; second, from the alms of certain charitable persons who wish to assist thus in our works; third, from cleaning out our wardrobe. As it is possible that with the beginning of the school year our number will increase and rise to a hundred, we will have to divide up and form several sections which will have a common assembly periodically. When these new arrangements are taken, I will let you know. For, despite what I have said about the dissimilarity that seems to me to exist between our two societies, there must be no diminution of union and harmony. On the contrary, like divergent spokes touching the same center, so our varied efforts tending toward divers ends come together in one and the same charitable mind and proceed from the same principle. There must then be agreement among us in order to double our strength. There must be frequent communications which provide us a laudable example for good and render us a common joy in the success of each one. Thus, in writing to our little society of Paris, I asked that a list of active members be drawn up and your name inscribed on it, and afterward those of your friends when you will be good enough to let us know them. That is not academic formality, but a true correspondence in which you can count upon my exactitude, as I count on your friendship.

Pardon, dear friend, my temerity in giving you some advice. To tell the truth, they are not counsels, for I am not capable of counseling anyone; they are reflections I have had, and I pass them on to you for you to do whatever you wish. At another time it will be you in your turn who will communicate the results of your experience to me.

I thank you very much for Reboul's² beautiful verses. I have read them to sev-

eral friends who have greatly admired them. Mama, to whom I also read them, has asked me to thank you. When I am in Paris I in turn will send you some new literary works. Here on vacation I live like a Beotian.³ I do practically no work. I am out to pasture.

Adieu, good M. Curnier. Please do not forget me, and write when you can.

Your friend for life,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 119.

Notes:

1. Gustave de la Noue, who was apparently writing to Curnier from Paris.
2. Jean Reboul (1796-1864), born at Nîmes. A simple baker, he published poetry in which there is a true feeling for nature.
3. The word *Beotian* (from the ancient Greek country) signifies an uncultivated mind, indifferent to artistic beauty; the Beotians had the reputation of being uncouth.



83. To Emmanuel Bailly
Lyon, November 8, 1834

Recommendation for M. Jouve, who could become a member of the "Charitable Society."

I have the honor to present to you M. Jouve,¹ a friend of M. Génin,² who introduced him to me, and whom I know to be an excellent young man, a very talented and good Christian. I think he could satisfactorily take the place in the charitable society of M. Génin, who may not return to Paris.

Excuse me for writing only these few lines. I have just learned that M. Jouve leaves tomorrow and Génin is with me waiting for this letter. In any case, brevity here is not the fruit of dryness of heart, for no one, Monsieur, is more rightly and affectionately devoted to you than I.

A.-F. OZANAM

Génin sends his regards.

Copy: Provided by the management of the journal *La Croix*. Extract of Msgr. Gaston, Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Notes:

1. Ozanam evidently thought highly of this man, since he recommended him for worthy teaching posts (Cf. letters 376, 381, 455).
2. Auguste Génin (1810-1899), fellow student of Ozanam at the Collège de Lyon and at Paris (1833-

1834), one of the first members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, was president of the Conference of Saint-Pierre at Lyon from 1839 to 1849. Following several periods of trial as a court officer, he took careful measure of the state of things there and thought about entering the magistracy. He finally found a position in the new gas industry, somewhere around 1844, and made a fortune as executive of several companies.



85. To Emmanuel Bailly
Lyon, November 20, 1834¹

Article on Bacon for the Revue Européenne. Opinions of M. Noirot on this revue and on the literary conferences. Increase of the association of charity: it must be divided into groups.

Sir,

I had hoped to be with you by the first of December, but a light indisposition coinciding wonderfully with family enjoyments and idleness by the corner of the fire has made me decide to leave on the day when I had intended to arrive. So my vacation is prolonged, and I am afraid you will accuse me of sloth in the first degree if I do not repay some of my old debts to you. Here then is an article on Bacon's² history for which the *Revue Européenne* has asked a receipt from me. The subject has perhaps, under my pen, stretched beyond measure; and you will perhaps find in it useless digressions, much heaviness of style, many negligences. I leave it entirely to the judgment of those gentlemen and am ready to make all the changes they judge convenient. I who have not counted for much yet in Paris, and am now a poor provincial relegated far from its movement and light, what can I do, or what claim have I to dare cooperate in the great works of the capital? Although to tell the truth, I am anxious to know whether the *Revue Européenne* still flourishes and whether its three hundred and seventy-seven subscribers still keep faith and send their money. Recently the professor of philosophy at the *Collège*,³ who is a very distinguished priest and to whom the young people of Lyon are obligated for the preservation of their beliefs, this professor who likes the *Revue Européenne* told me of some changes it should undergo, some ideas which perhaps will seem to you useful.

He would like to see this review, published every fortnight, devoted to a *faithful analysis* and reasoned criticism of the principal works and more noteworthy courses of the *Collège de France* and the *Sorbonne*. It could be used in the following way to challenge the teaching of Lermnier. The same issue could carry regularly one or two original articles, but the chief end, one which no other periodical magazine offers, would be to *review* everything of some value said or written, be it in the arts or the sciences. The same ecclesiastic insists on the usefulness of the literary conferences as a means of getting work done and bringing the young people together. I see

as a further purpose, what we found last year, a means of getting recruits for our association of charity. I found on my arrival here this association was known and that it inspired a great trust in mothers of Christian families. But do you not think that our charitable society itself in order to survive ought to make changes, and the spirit of intimacy on which it is built and the daily growth it should have can only be achieved by breaking it up into groups which would have a common center and from time to time general assemblies? I am very rash to propose my young man's ideas to you who have a long experience in charity and who are so radically acquainted with our needs and those of the poor. But, temporarily separated from these associations which are my total joy, I can not hold back at least from speaking of the matter, and I am confident that you will not be bored by conversation about charity. In truth, happy as I am with my family, the time of waiting to see you again is long, you who are so good to me and my friends and to whom you give such good example, especially Lallier to whom, please, give my affection. For the rest, I will drop in on you unannounced in two weeks. I am ready to bother you again with my importunities in order to have your counsel, strengthen my wavering resolutions, and to learn about life, so as to understand how to go through it doing the most good possible.

Excuse, Monsieur, the familiarity with which I write you. You have accustomed me to it by your benevolence and my heart is too full of this habit to agree to its loss. Be assured that it diminishes nothing of the respect with which I am

Your devoted servant,
A.-F. OZANAM
Lyon, December 20 [sic] 1834

Copy: Provided by the management of the journal *La Croix*. Excerpted copy of Msgr. Gaston, Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Notes:

1. The copy reads *December 20*, but the text contradicts that date. On December 16 Ozanam attended a meeting in Paris where the Conference of Charity discussed the proposal of division.
2. Roger Bacon (1214-1294), English monk surnamed The Admirable Doctor, born at Ilchester, one of the greatest scholars of the Middle Ages.
3. Abbé Noirot.



88. To Ferdinand Velay
Paris, February 5, 1835¹

Description of the Lyon student colonies at Paris. Regrets at not having heard Lacordaire. Lamartine's speech in the chamber.

Dear Velay,²

I am very late in replying to your letter of December 9, but I note that I am still within the week of New Year's visits, and therefore come on time to present my affectionate greetings. I wish for you the happy days at Metz, the days not heavily encumbered with tiresome studies, that did not seem too long to you, and which left you some leisure to think about your friends the Parisians. As for them, I assure you they do not forget you, and if your military step no longer mounts the stairs of the *Hotel des Ecoles*, if your glorious sword no longer clangs on the tiles of our rooms, if we have no longer on Sundays your regular visit, you live in our memories, you interrupt our conversations. You are quoted, regretted; it is asked when you will return; and when one of your letters arrives for one of us, it is the custom to share it.

The Lyonnaise youth this year have formed three chief colonies in the Latin Quarter and laid the foundations of three glorious empires. To the north and within the confines of our faubourg, on the fifth floor and near the sky, the artists, eagles of genius, have suspended their aerie. LaPerrière is at their head and governs peaceably the flourishing state which he administers in conjunction with an old duenna in charge of Exterior Affairs, the Marine, and Public Works. I say marine, as applied to Wednesday and Saturdays, days on which the aforesaid duenna must purvey to the table of the aforesaid artists fried codfish and by chance sardines.³ Frenet,⁴ Lavergne,⁵ Alday and several others rally under this noble sceptre: religion of one's birth and the cult of Ingres.⁶ Returning to the south and at the end of the rue de Tournon, near the great museum of mummies known as Luxembourg, several other illustrious sons of the department of the Rhone have chosen to sojourn: Ballofet, Accarias,⁷ Arthaud,⁸ etc., etc., living under the same roof and eating at the same table: much politics and literature are talked about there. The Divinity of the place is not yet known. To the east, finally, and near the Pantheon without doubt so as to take only a step after their death, in the immortal *Palais des Ecoles*, behind a polyglot barber, in the midst of an atmosphere of knowledge and beefsteak, rises the metropolis of the three colonies: Chaurand the megalosaurus,⁹ Bietrix surnamed Boirude, Gonon the grimacer, Serre the mysterious, Ravier, Besson and myself; we mold in this fortunate dwelling the model republic upon which France will be modeled some day. To pinpoint the philosophy and doctrine that rules there would be difficult. I have indeed Descartes¹⁰ and Malebranche¹¹ in my library, but Bietrix has in his the *Eau de Monte* and the *Elixir de Graves*.¹² He eats for reasons of patriotism a great deal of Lyon chestnuts. There are continual fetes, but bellicose fetes where disputes abound, and where Chaurand and Bietrix practice the strong-

est tyranny a bit on our shoulders. Certain wandering individuals prowl around these three principal centers: Falconnet, who thanks you for your kind remembrance; Gignoux, whose martial figure makes a remarkable contrast to our childish thoughtlessness; Personneaux, who dreams only of Spain and speaks only Andalusian. I would never end if I named them all, both as brilliant as the stars in the firmament of the capital, and as numerous as the grains of sand at the edges of this vast ocean of civilization. I ask you to reread Homer, *Iliad*, book II, verses 340 and following, and tell me whether his enumeration is more poetic than mine.

But also, Pegasus¹³ is like the geese: he cannot fly for long. From the heights of the epic I must come back to vile reality by admitting that these illustrious Lyonnaise are all more or less under the academic ferule and preparing for examinations. Enough then of statistics as to their number and let us speak of other things.

You regret missing, you say, the conferences of M. Lacordaire. Well, friend, console yourself. We hear him no longer. For reasons unclear to me and which charity does not permit me to sound, the evangelical chair is closed to him this year.¹⁴ It is a great grief to us who have need of the bread of the word, who had grown used to this excellent and hardy nourishment, to be deprived of it at a stroke, with nothing to replace it.

It has caused us even greater chagrin to see those of our errant brothers who, at this powerful voice, had taken the road to truth, return to their errors, shaking their heads and shrugging their shoulders. Perhaps heaven wills this silence, this humiliation of Catholics as a greater sacrifice. Perhaps we have raised the forehead too soon. We put our pride in the word of a man and God puts His hand over this man's mouth, so that we will learn to be Christians without him, so that we will remember to deprive ourselves of everything except faith and virtue.

A slight compensation for these treasures of eloquence which M. Lacordaire lavished on us was offered me recently: I heard M. Lamartine in the Chamber. How grand and beautiful that day! How full of gravity, éclat and harmony was his speech! How far from the vague and evanescent theories they reproach him with! He was simple, logical, generous; more, he was charitable. He alone represented Christian thought in that debate. Odilon Barrot¹⁵ shouted louder. Berrier thundered more. But that calm reason, deep conviction, disinterest of all personal vanity, ardent love of the Good, in what noble and straightforward language it was expressed, how more worthy of admiration it was! Others were great lawyers; he alone seemed to me a great orator. The others could make more noise on the outside; none could better cast light within. The journals speak of the others a great deal, of him they have said little; the journals are echos repeating words thrown to them, not following their good sense, but the strength of the lungs they proceed from.

I have not met M. Motet again. I was obliged to leave your letter for him. He will rejoin you soon. You will have companions to make those two years at Metz worthwhile for you! You yourself will certainly render them every service. You will have more leisure, I hope, than at the *Ecole Polytechnique*; you will be able to see other good and old friends from time to time, history and literature books. Then,

when you will have shaken off the last powder from the sieges, when you will have no longer any service but the brilliant service of the uniform, then you will be very happy, master of your time, delivered from the care of material existence, occupying an honorable rank in society, and will no longer have to engage yourself in intellectual and moral works. I am very envious of your lot from that point of view; I, poor devil, who will be ready to kiss the robe of judge advocates so they may throw me some morsels of cases to plead and who, while waiting for opportunity to come, will be tied to the judicial serfdom from morning until night, except to read from time to time Seneca's¹⁶ chapter on the contempt of riches. I am at present studying Hebrew and Sanskrit rather seriously, but how will it help a client, if you please, for his lawyer to know Sanskrit and Hebrew? It would be better to stick with the Code.¹⁷

Wanting to send this letter in another addressed to my parents, I am obliged to abridge its size. But if paper fails, our friendship will never fail.

A.-F. OZANAM

I send the regards of all our mutual friends. Do not forget me while you are at Metz. Write us from time to time.

Address: To Monsieur, Monsieur Ferdinand Velay, rue de l'Arbre sec, Lyon.

Original: Archives Laporte. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 125.

Notes:

1. It is obvious from Ozanam's mention of its being still the week for New Year's visits in the first sentence, that this letter is misdated and should read *January 5*.
2. Joseph Ferdinand Velay (1814-1900), childhood friend and schoolmate of Ozanam at the Collège de Lyon, studied at the Ecole Polytechnique (Paris, 1830) and Ecole d'Application de Metz (1834), was lieutenant of defense at Montpellier (1837) and Salins (1840), then captain at Briançon (1841), Marseilles (1843), and Toulon (1844) from which he sailed for Algiers (1846). Back in France in 1849 he was stationed successively at Lyon, Entrevaux (1854), Draguignan (1855)—where he was promoted to battalion chief—Montmédy (1861), Ajaccio (1864), and finally Le Mans (1865) until his retirement in 1871.
3. The church law of the time decreed abstinence for both Wednesday and Saturday.
4. A fellow townsman, student and conference member of Ozanam, who died in 1840.
5. Claudius Lavergne (1814-1877), born at Lyon, painter and art critic, was a member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.
6. Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), painter, born at Montauban.
7. Louis Accarias (1809-1878), childhood friend of Ozanam, lawyer at Lyon from 1837, member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and author of numerous works on economic and social questions.
8. Joseph Arthaud (1813-1883), childhood friend of Ozanam, pursued medical studies at Paris (1832-1835). A mental disease specialist, he served at Lyon's Hôpital Saint-Jean-de-Dieu (1835-1842), the mental department of the Hospice de l'Antiquaille (1842) which he headed in 1849. An early member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, he helped establish it at Lyon (1836) and was president of the Conference of Saint-Pierre (1837) before succeeding Ozanam as president of the Central Council of Lyon (1838-1849).
9. The megalosaurus was a dinosaur of enormous height.
10. René Descartes (1596-1650), French philosopher and mathematician.
11. Nicolas de Malebranche (1638-1715), French Oratorian, metaphysician.
12. Mountain water and white wines.

13. The mythological winged steed ridden by classical heroes.
14. Jean Baptiste Henri Lacordaire (1802-1861), secular priest, later Dominican, born at Recey-sur-Ounce (Côte d'Or), one of the most brilliant preachers of the nineteenth century. Lacordaire had indeed been forced to halt the conferences he had given at Collège Stanislas, but Archbishop Quélen, after petitions from Ozanam and some companions, appointed him to the pulpit of Notre Dame on March 8, a month after this letter.
15. Odilon Barrot, lawyer and politician (1791-1873), born at Villefort.
16. Annaeus Seneca, Roman philosopher, died A.D. 65.
17. The body of law.



90. To Léonce Curnier
Paris, February 23, 1835

Loss of the report on the first days of the Conference of Charity. Charity and philanthropy. Role of the Christian in the modern world. Parable of the Good Samaritan.

Dear friend,

Here I am, embarrassed at my delays, very ashamed of having upset you by my negligence from lassitude, of the trouble of your having to write me a second time. It is the height of ingratitude on my part after all the proofs of friendship you have given me, and would be beyond pardon did not my silence have some plausible reasons. Here is the first one.

From the first days of my arrival here I thought of the report you had asked me for. But I never thought of it at a proper time. I forgot several times to speak about it to de la Noue; then M. de la Noue referred me to M. Bailly, our president. M. Bailly searched for the report among his papers, and after a time told me that the search was fruitless. So the document is lost.¹ It is not a great misfortune for us: there was in this abridged history of our work perhaps proud thought. God, who wishes that the left hand not know what the right hand has given, permitted us to lose title to what might serve only to bestow on us ridiculous vanity. Charity must never look behind it, but always before, because the number of its past benefits is always very small, and the present and future misery it solaces is infinite. Look at the greatest society of charity in the world, the Church, which for eighteen hundred years goes on doing good and still has not a history, has not time to think of recounting the works she has done. The immense burden of the future presses upon her and wholly preoccupies her. On the other hand, look at the philanthropic associations: they are only a year in existence when they already have large volumes of resumé. Philanthropy is a vain woman for whom good actions are a piece of jewelry and who loves to look at herself in the mirror. Charity is a tender mother who keeps her eyes fixed on the infant she carries at her breast, who no longer thinks of herself, and who forgets her beauty for her love.

I no longer believe that this loss was harmful for us. It is better for you to raise

your work by your own strength, under the inspirations of your heart, under the influence of local circumstances, under the direction of the venerable priest who presides over you. With all that, you will have passed very easily from a model, a very imperfect one for that matter. You will not be like us; you will be better than we are.

This prediction is not flattery; it is the expression of what I felt while reading your letter so brimming with charity, so full of that apostolic fire which has embraced the world and from which your soul has received so lively a flame. I would have been an egoist and wicked had I kept all this rejoicing to myself. I was obligated to bring your beautiful and generous words to our meeting: I read to my assembled colleagues, in the presence of the pastor of the parish who graciously presided over us that day, a large portion of your letter. The impression it made on them can be conveyed only in these words of one of them: "Indeed, this is the faith, this is the charity of the first centuries." Oh, yes, my friend, the faith, the charity of the first centuries! It is not too much for our century. Are we not, like the Christians of the first centuries, thrown into the midst of a corrupt civilization, of a collapsing society? Are we not as relegated to the catacombs in obscurity and beneath the contempt of those who consider themselves great and wise? Cast your eyes on the world around us. Are the rich and the favored much better than those who replied to St. Paul: "We will hear you another time?"² And are the poor and the populace better instructed and are they better off than those to whom the apostles preached?

The savants have compared the state of the slaves of antiquity with the condition of our workers and proletariat and have found these latter to have more to complain of, after eighteen centuries of Christianity. Then, for a like evil, a like remedy. The earth has grown cold. It is for us Catholics to revive the vital beat to restore it, it is for us to begin over again the great work of regeneration, if necessary to bring back the era of the martyrs. For to be a martyr is possible for every Christian, to be a martyr is to give his life for God and his brothers, to give his life in sacrifice, whether the sacrifice be consumed in an instant like a holocaust, or be accomplished slowly and smoke night and day like perfume on the altar. To be a martyr is to give back to heaven all that one has received: his money, his blood, his whole soul. This offering is in our hands; we can make this sacrifice. It is up to us to choose to which altars it pleases us to bring it, to what divinity we will consecrate our youth and the time following, in what temple we will assemble: at the foot of the idol of egoism, or in the sanctuary of God and humanity.

The humanity of our days seems comparable to the traveler of whom the Gospel speaks: it also, although it took its way in roads marked out for it by Christ, has been attacked by the cutthroats and robbers of thought, by wicked men who have robbed it of what it possessed: the treasure of faith and love, and they have left it naked and wounded and lying by the side of the road. Priests and levites have passed by, and this time, since they were true priests and levites, they have approached suffering themselves and wished to heal it. But in its delirium, it did not recognize them and repulsed them.

In our turn, weak Samaritans, worldly and people of little faith that we are, let us dare nonetheless to approach this great sick one. Perhaps it will not be frightened of us. Let us try to probe its wounds and pour in oil, soothing its ear with words of consolation and peace; then, when its eyes are opened, we will place it in the hands of those whom God has constituted as the guardians and doctors of souls, who are also, in a way, our innkeepers in our pilgrimage here below, so as to give our errant and famished spirits the holy word for nourishment and the hope of a better world for a shield.

That is what is proposed to us, the sublime vocation God has given us. Would that we were a little bit worthy of it and bent easily to its burden. I am speaking of us others, students of Paris, colony of the people of God in a foreign land. It seems that the spectacle of this corruption and misery should make us ardent and strong. It seems that having before us great vices and behind us great virtues, we should be like a serried battalion facing the enemy, ranked under the colors it loves. Unhappily, that is not so. I do not know what languor seizes upon us. I am not afraid to say of the greater number what is true of me in particular. We are stricken with a general discouragement; we fulfill our duties from habit; we carry out our good works by routine, but no more the enthusiasm, the ebullient proselytizing, the rays of charity which at the beginning came sometimes to illuminate and warm our souls. We are very numerous but we lose in intensity what we gain in expansion. There are ordinarily 50 to 60 of us at a meeting, but we do not know one another very well. The session is nearly always concerned with business, it seems long. It is not that our president is lacking in ardor and zeal. It is not that we no longer have a hard core of very charitable members. Rather, it is a general attitude of mind; an intellectual epidemic has struck us. To try to renew our forces, we are going to attempt some reforms. They will not begin for some days. Much has been discussed, but I fear it will accomplish little.

Meanwhile, I hope that God will not abandon us, especially if we have brothers who pray and merit for us. In the name of our society, then, I congratulate yours in its zeal and courage and thank it for the union it wishes to make with us. I ask that it give witness for us by mingling its prayers and good works with ours. Remember our weakness as we remember your ardor. You want to consider your society as a colony of ours: ask heaven then for the preservation and prosperity of your capital, lest it perish. In the beginnings of Christianity the communities of Asia sent the torch of the Faith to the peoples of Gaul, and when Gaul became Christian, Asia ceased to be. *Si parva licet componere magnis*,³ see that it is not so with our Parisian work, that for a long time yet, and always, if possible, it be in this town a home of religion where sons of Christian mothers can come together to preserve together heat and light, so as to increase them in one another and carry them back to their provinces.

I have no new literary news to give you, first because there is little of any importance and then because, closeted with studies far removed from the actual flow of ideas, I would be unable to give you very precise explanations. You would give me

great pleasure by sending something of Reboul's, and greater still by coming to see us in Paris.

Adieu, do not forget me, but forget my negligence; I am the chief of those languishing and discouraged people I spoke of before.

Your friend for life,
A.-F. OZANAM

Your letter arrived too late for me to reply by the same courier.

Postal Cancellation: February 23, 1835, Nîmes 27.

Original: Archives Laporte, Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 128.

Notes:

1. The report was found in 1955. Cf. *Bulletin de la Société de Saint-Vincent-de-Paul*, 1956, p. 66.
2. Acts 17, 33.
3. Although small, it is possible to do great things.



97. To Léonce Curnier
Paris, May 16, 1835

He indicts his weakness. Great virtues and great men are necessary. We are punished for having put more confidence in the genius of our great men than in the power of our God.

Dear friend,

I was thinking of you and asking myself whether you could not be rightly annoyed at my negligence and delay; I was thinking of you the day your friend came to bring me your good letter, thus providing that, despite my faults, you were willing to remember me still.

Thank you for this remembrance and the excellent messenger to whom you entrusted it. I have met with much pleasure a young man honored with your esteem and affection. I first took in eagerly the news he gave me of you, and following that of the little society of which you are the founder. He informed me that it was prospering, that it had already twelve members, that it was embraced by the favor of ecclesiastical authority, and that even now should be functioning. I found in him the zeal of charity which without doubt animates all of you and with which you above all, dear Curnier, have seen fit to embrace your colleagues. I took him to our conference which is no longer small in number, but which is not yet great in its works. He attended one of our meetings; he saw us assembled in a place larger than that where you visited us last year and which is now too confining. He seemed edified at the number of members present; would that he were impressed favorably with their fervor! It is not that you have need of models; soon it will be you who give

them to us; but it would be good for you to hear that your brothers of Paris have not degenerated and are still worthy of you.

Unfortunately, your friend and I did not meet every time we went to each other's lodging; we talked for only a few hours. But for both young men, both Christians, both happy to possess in you a mutual friend, those few hours sufficed to establish between us a bond of brotherhood that absence will not break.

Your letter raises in me the very sweet hope of seeing you in Paris some time next month. I would like to be able to find you a companion for London; I do not know of any, but once here you yourself will easily find someone who suits you among all the travelers who leave each day for England. Come then, dear friend, we will be overjoyed to receive you. All my colleagues are well aware of what you are doing at Nîmes; I have read some of your letters to them, and this reading has given them the liveliest pleasure. You are dear to them all.

I think you were wrong to speak so little about yourself in your last letter and so much about me. What I do is a very small thing. I have great difficulty in working. The ideas I express with great effort are not mine, I try to become the echo of the young Christian people among whom I live. But how weak this echo is, how cold the words slowly put together, in comparison to that luminous faith, that overflowing charity, that courageous hope which beats in souls like yours and those of the many who resemble you!

If you knew how weak I am! How my good will is easily shattered by the shock of circumstances! How I pass from ambitious presumption to discouragement and inaction! What vanity of thought, what puniness of works! What daily abuse of divine graces! What infidelity to generous inspirations! What loss of precious time! Yes, I dare say it: Providence has embraced me with such great solicitude, it has provided me so handsomely with the benefits of education, it has lavished on me such good parents, wise teachers, exemplary friends, that often I am led to reflect that it wishes from me something more than common virtue; and meanwhile my laxity is such that scarcely even this common virtue is mine, and my soul is like a sterile shore which the waves of heaven overflow without fertilizing.

And at all times, in our day, great virtues and strong men are necessary. Undoubtedly the empire of evil is beginning to erode everywhere, and the time is coming when the truth will be greeted by a new queen of the world. But so hard is the earthly life of the human race, evil will not vanish from its midst; evil is ever present somewhere on the earth, now as a tyrant, now as a slave. Never does it redouble its efforts more than when it sees its tyranny slipping away. To seize again its fallen sceptre, it girds all its strength. To every religious reaction there corresponds an opposite reaction of impiety. And so, as the desert encroaches on the impious idols of the 18th Century, so the solitude of our temples is peopled anew, so indifference is overcome and as M. Lacordaire thunders the word of God to a congregation of six thousand men, crowding the great nave of Notre-Dame, rationalism does not remain idle. It multiplies its periodical reviews, it organizes a seductive propaganda among young people, it sends out its emissaries, it attacks our most illustrious men, it triggers the defection of those who were once our glories, it dethrones the Abbé

de Lammenais from those heights where his genius and faith had put him; it makes us anxious about the virginal muse of Lamartine; it begins to wrap in a sinister cloud the reflections of the famous Abbé Bautain.¹

These things are sad, but they are true. We Catholics are being punished for having put more confidence in the genius of our great men than in the power of our God. We are being punished for being vainglorious in them, for having repulsed with a certain amount of fire the insults of unbelief and countered it, in order to justify ourselves in its eyes, with our philosophers and poets instead of showing it the eternal Cross. We are being punished for having protected ourselves with these intellectual reeds, however melodious they were: they have broken under our hand. It is high time we seek our help. It is not a fragile boat we should employ to travel the earth; they are wings, two wings which bear the angels up: faith and charity. Places which have fallen empty must be filled; in the place of genius which has failed us, grace must direct us; we must be courageous, persevering, loving unto death, fighting to the end. Let us not count on an easy victory: God has made it difficult for us so as to make our crowns more glorious.

Alas, dear Curnier, I do not know whether you experience what I do, but I sometimes feel so cast down and helpless that I need to write strong exhortations and resolves like these to get it out of me. I am like children who cry louder when they are frightened. I feel better when I unburden myself to the heart of a friend worth more than mine. So, without being aware of it, you do me much good, and these lines of which you are the object, before reaching you, have reassured my heart some and quickened it for a while.

Adieu, the press of time prevents my being longer, I must take this letter to your friend. I wish that he could take with it some sentiment of the deep and warm friendship I nurture for you.

Yours for life,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 148, lacking name of the recipient.

Note:

1. Abbé Bautain, professor at the Royal Academy of Strasbourg from 1820. He had gathered around him a corps of young priests and laity, of whom Gratry (August-Joseph-Alphonse Gratry, French priest and philosopher, born at Lille [1805-1872]) was one, known as the Society of St. Louis. The group being dispersed in the wake of differences with the bishop of Strasbourg, the Abbé Bautain went to live at Juilly. (On the Ferrari-Bautain controversy, cf. *l'Univers*, January 23, 1842.)



106. To Emmanuel Bailly
Lyon, October 28, 1835

He apologizes for the delay in editing his work on St. Thomas of Canterbury, gives news of La Perrière and Curnier and asks, in the latter's name, M. de Carné's intervention in favor of a young poet.

Monsieur,

When I left Paris you kindly indicated that you would like me to write to you during vacation. I have not availed myself of this permission until now, and meanwhile trust that you have judged my heart too kindly to call my silence neglect. I had been told you were away and that you had a great deal to do, and was afraid my letters either would not reach you, or would arrive at an inconvenient time. Today a special circumstance obliges me to write you some lines: apologies I would make for the past, and a fresh act of charity in the present.

I was commissioned with a work on St. Thomas of Canterbury for the last issue of the *Revue européenne*. The work should have been done during my stay at Lyon. However, you may recall my hesitation about it: I drew back at the beginning before the difficulty of the subject, and believe I had reason to. However that may be, the first six weeks spent here have been entirely given over to the joys of arrival, the pleasures of family, and rest. Only the last four could be devoted to study. Even this study has been interrupted by serious enough illness, enforced absences, and diversions which agreeableness forbids me to evade completely. In the midst of all that the difficulties I had foreseen have proven to be greater still: I have encountered problems which demanded long and painstaking research, and it took a great deal of effort to match up all the disparate elements and lay out a plan of my work. I have begun to write and have already finished several pages; I should send them to you with M. Accarias. This delay should be the last. I should be able to do this, and could still keep that promise. However, in order to coordinate everything in a work of this nature, and in pursuit of my task, I may have need to go back over what is completed, and to change the same more than once. I am obliged, in the interest of my article, to keep it with me some days still. I am not unaware that I am encouraging a serious reproach of negligence and infidelity so far as my promises are concerned, and that this negligence and infidelity might even have a disagreeable effect on the people at the head of the revue. I assure you, nonetheless, that my conscience hardly reproaches me in the matter: I have done what I could, but I am absolutely helpless, as you yourself have seen happen more than once, and should know how discouraged I get, the complete blanks that strike me. Accept it, then, I dare ask, if your indulgence has molded me to promise still after having so many times reneged. If you know how much I have suffered all evening seeing that I could not send you at least a portion of this poor article! How ashamed I am! How severely I am paying for the follies of my self-love! I have been trying to accept it in a Christian manner with humility. I trust that you will be kind enough to accept it with charity, that you will forgive me, and still be patient with me. In the mean-

time, I would much rather that the issue would not wait on me, and would appear without me. Decide what is best to do; I do not think my article will be ready in its entirety before eight or ten days.

Our excellent friend La Perrière has better used the vacation time than I. He has taken up the abandoned construction of a chapel for the locality where he lives, pursued it with energy and brought it to completion. Last Sunday the chapel was blessed and the Holy Sacrifice offered. Seven hundred souls availed themselves of the benefits of religious instruction and the celebration of the holy mysteries. And our friend's name is in every mouth. He was hailed with great and deserved praise in the church itself by the priest who blessed it. I witnessed the moment when La Perrière was about to be carried in triumph, and would have lent a willing shoulder. Several members of our Society assisted at this moving ceremony. I think you would do those who are currently in Paris a favor to tell them about their Lyon colleague's beautiful deed.

M. Curnier of Nîmes, who founded in his town a little association of charity like ours, wrote to tell me that in the last six months they have effected seven marriages between persons living together. That is both a welcome piece of news and a good example. M. Curnier at the same time asked a favor of me which I am asking you to take up if it is possible, and which is in some way an act of charity. A poor young man, a poet and a Christian, has written a collection of verse with some remarkably strong pieces. He is counting on having his collection published soon. But he would like first to publicize it by putting one of his pieces in the *Revue des deux mondes*. He thought that M. de Carné¹ might be able to obtain this favor for him; I do not know what you could do by speaking of it to M. de Carné. I am therefore taking the liberty of sending you the enclosed piece. I do not think M. de Carné has much influence with the *Revue des deux mondes*, but at least an approach would have been made, and this mark of interest would encourage the young author who appears to have a true heart.

Will you forgive me, Monsieur, for being so familiar with you? I do not know. But four years of your kindness have gotten me used to looking on you as a father, or, if you will, as an older brother, and despite the respect your virtues and merits inspire in me, they inspire affection and trust still more. I am about to come back to you again. This year will be the last: I intend to make it profitable, happy if at the end of it, I will be sufficiently nurtured by your lessons to be able to do some good.

Your devoted servant, and if you permit, your friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

Copy: Provided by the management of the journal *La Croix*. Excerpt of Msgr. Gaston, Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Note:

1. Louis Joseph, Comte de Carné-Marcein (1804-1876), Catholic journalist, friend of Montalembert, deputy from 1839-1848.

107. To Léonce Curnier
Lyon, October 29, 1835

The Revue des deux mondes and *M. de Carné*. *Congratulations on the progress of the Conference at Nîmes and on his friend's marriage. Uncertainty about his vocation.*

Dear friend,

I received your good letter last Sunday and would have replied at once but waited to tell you that I have done what I could to carry out your commission. The verses you sent me contain great beauty, and yet I doubt whether it will be easy to have them published in the *Revue des deux mondes*. This *Revue* belongs to a certain coterie who arrogate to themselves the monopoly of publishing, and who are not readily accessible to newcomers. I know that a lot of patronage is necessary for entry to a few pages in this publication, and I do not think M. de Carné, a newcomer himself, enjoys great enough influence for his patronage to suffice. On the other hand, I know M. de Carné personally only slightly, and have had only rare and infrequent contacts with him, so that I do not know whether he is at Paris or where he lives. However, M. Bailly, whom you know, is very close to him and could thus serve as intermediary. I therefore took advantage of an opportunity today to send M. Bailly the piece of verse and asked that it be evaluated. I am certain of his promptitude in carrying out a commission and represented it to him as a good work and recommended it to him as coming from you. There, dear friend, is how I have played my part in this affair; I wish I were better able to fulfill your wishes. While waiting, accept my compliments on the poetic fruitfulness of your homeland. Flowers love the sun, and genius opens more brilliantly and strong under the vivifying climate of the Midi.

But, if poetry takes root easily under your native sun, and spreads vigorous branches there, it seems that charity also germinates there without difficulty; for the grain of mustard seed you planted last year is beginning to grow and will soon become, I hope, a great tree and the poor will rejoice in its shade. There are only twelve of you, you have been together only six months, and already, by your solicitude, seven marriages have been legitimized, grace has descended with the nuptial blessing on seven families, and numerous generations stemming from them will owe you, with the favor of being able to identify their fathers, the prosperity and virtues that God never fails to lavish on marriages contracted according to His law. The work you have done is very great; it suffices to honor your life. Your elders at Paris will be jealous, alas! Their successes far from equal yours. It is true that in a way we have not the advantages of position you have, we no longer have, like you, access to an ardent, passionate, profoundly sensible people, susceptible for that reason to moral and religious emotions. Our poor are cold and despairingly indifferent. They have natures used to material civilization, which are no longer disposed to take to religion, which no longer have a sense of invisible things, which hold out their hands to receive bread, but whose ears remain forever closed to the word we proclaim to them. O how often we speak kindly to people who drive us off

with sticks, even though we could go to others who would listen and understand! But no; these are beaten souls, who always receive us the same way, always with the same reserve at the end of a year as on the first day, who are very careful not to contradict a single thing we say, but who for all that change none of their ways. The good done is among ourselves, who support and encourage one another. We are still only in our apprenticeship in the art of charity. Let us hope that one day we will become able and assiduous workers. Then, in the different circumstances where Providence will have placed us, we will strive to be like those born more blessed and more virtuous around us; then, when you will share your successes with us, we will reply with ours, and from every spot in France there will arise a harmonious concept of faith and love and praise of God.

The great action you are contemplating at present will only serve to redouble your zeal and your strength. "When two or three are gathered together in my name," says the Savior, "there am I in the midst of them." It is in that divine name that you will prepare to unite yourself to a wise and pious wife: the promise will be accomplished in you both. In giving your love to someone who will be justifiably dear, you will not withdraw it from the poor and miserable whom you loved first. Love possesses something of the divine nature, which gives itself without diminishing, which shares itself without division, which multiplies itself, which is present in many places at once, and whose intensity is increased in the measure that it gains in extension. In your wife you will first love God, whose admirable and precious work she is, and then humanity, that race of Adam whose pure and lovable daughter she is. You will draw comfort from her tenderness on bad days, you will find courage in her example in perilous times, you will be her guardian angel, she will be yours. You will then no longer experience the weaknesses, discouragements and terrors which have seized upon you at certain times of your life: for you will no longer be alone. You will never be alone again, your virtue will be shared in legitimate hope, the alliance you are about to contract will be an immortal alliance: what God joins together, what He has insisted no man separate, He will not Himself separate, and in heaven He will invest with the same glory those who here below were companions in the same exile.

But I babble a tongue I do not yet know, I speak of things not yet revealed to me. Imagination has developed early in me, sensibility is very tardy; but if my age be that of passions, I am just beginning to feel their stirrings. My poor head has already suffered greatly, but my heart has not yet known any affections but that of blood and friendship. Nevertheless, it seems to me that I sometimes experience the early symptoms of a new order of sentiment, and I am afraid. I feel in myself a great emptiness which neither friendship nor study fill. I do not know who will come to fill it: will it be God? Will it be another creature? If it is a creature, I pray that she will not delay when I have made myself worthy of her; I pray that she will bring with her what is needed of temporal advantages and exterior charms so that she will leave no place for any regret; but I pray especially that she will come with a fine soul, that she brings great virtue, that she is a great deal better than I am, that she lifts me up and not drags me down, that she be courageous, because I am often timid, that she be

fervent, because I am often lukewarm in the things of God, that finally she be compassionate, so that I need not blush in her presence for my inferiority. There are my desires, my dreams; but, as I have told you, nothing is more hidden than my own future.

Be happy, you whose future is now laid out before you: *Vivite felices quibus est fortuna peracta.*¹ But, when you have a free moment in the midst of your happiness, pray for me who does not yet know where I am bound.

Your friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

I am returning with a thousand thanks and excuses the second volume of *Economie politique chrétienne* which I am most sorry to have kept for so long.

Original: Archives Laporte, Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 164, under the date of October 20.

Note:

1. Be happy, whose lot is established.



113. To M. Gorse
Paris, January 4, 1836

Recalls their relations as students. Hope of a foundation of the Society of Charity at Tulle.

Dear friend,

In the midst of anxieties that must call on the exercise of your profession, in the bosom of the pleasures that you must draw from your family, now all at once active citizen and head of the household, is there enough leisure to think from time to time still of certain young people who knew you at Paris and who bound themselves to you with fraternal and Christian friendship? As for them, they do not forget you, they rejoice at the news which reaches them of your well-being, but they are often sad at seeing your place in their midst empty. The familiar voice, the warm heart, the fine mind which brought to conversation so much good sense and vivacity is missed. Need is felt for that faithful comrade with whom was found on every occasion useful advice and an encouraging word. Yes, my friend, we think of you often, you are always present at our meetings and take part in them by virtue of your remembrance. I especially, who was one of the first to meet you here, keep you

in the first rank of my affections. I place you among those virtuous co-disciples with whom Providence wished to surround me in order to render my sojourn in this capital less dangerous. Under this title I owe you even more than affection and esteem, I owe you gratitude.

Do not, then, be astonished if, at the renewal of the year, you receive my unexpected visit and I try to renew by writing the relationship that your departure seemed to rupture. Give me your news and let us try by a familiar correspondence to exchange as in former days our opinions. Our society has grown and continues to grow under God's blessing. Could you not find at Tulle something like it? Could it not join itself to us? Could not the almsgiving hands be thus united and intertwined despite distances? Would it not be well to form throughout all France a great benevolent and Christian conspiracy for the solace of men and the glory of God?

As for me, I fully intend, when I will be back in Lyon for good, that is in eight months, to preserve close contact with those of my friends who will remain in Paris and those who will have left with me. The sun moves on and the tempest is strong. There is need to feel remembered the ones by the others, to tell oneself that he is not alone. There is need of support, of comfort of prayers. The days of sadness and discouragement are numerous: in these days, then, friendship is precious, especially a friendship like yours. Keep it for me, then, and be assured of a cordial and total reciprocity.

All to you,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: To Monsieur, Monsieur Gorse, Lawyer, Tulle.

Copy: Provided by M. Jeantin of Agen.



118. To Henri Pessonneaux
Paris, May 23, 1836

He invites his cousin to come to the Corpus Christi procession at Battignolles and Nanterre.

Dear Henri,

Chaurand has been to see the pastor of Battignoles and it is agreed that we will go to the Corpus Christi procession at Battignoles, the first day of Corpus Christi, Sunday, June 5. On the octave we will go to Nanterre. The procession will take place at 9:30 in the morning. Please inform the colleagues of Saint Philippe du Roule.¹ I beg you even to prepare them for it by writing, a letter which costs 3 sous makes more of an impression on the memory than words which cost nothing. Be of

their number. The Battignoles are two steps from you and it will be a great joy for the whole Society of Saint Vincent de Paul to be complete on that day.

Give my regards to your parents. Give my excuses to them for not visiting them in a long while: I stand for this miserable examination on the 31st, and it gives me the liveliest anxiety. Pray to the good God a little for me.

Your cousin,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Note:

1. Conference established May 25, 1835, by Félix Clavé. Clavé (1811-1853), one of the founders of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, left Paris in 1835 and after a troubled life died at Paris in 1853.



121. To his mother
Paris, July 23, 1836

Asks for news. His friends all passed their examinations. Feast of St. Vincent de Paul, Mass and assembly. Works of charity. Library errands for his father.

Dear Mama,

It is a long time since we have chatted together like this. What a pity that the long letter you wrote me has been lost. The short one that replaced it comforted me a bit and in the meantime, ingrate that I am, I have not yet answered it. It is also true that I have much to do, and that is my only excuse. It is also true that I care less about giving you my news than knowing yours. How is that dear health? Is it stronger? Does it promise me a joyous arrival? Is little brother obedient and does his docility lessen your anxiety a bit? Are you, in a word, well and happy? How are all the others? Is Aunt entirely better? Is Uncle ever carefree? Was the famous sermon of Alphonse successful? Does Charles bring courage and hope to his compositions? And poor Papa who, when he writes to me never says a word about himself, is he not exhausted with work and running around in the extreme heat at the beginning of the month?

You reproached me, and Papa in his last letter renewed the just reproach, for not speaking for a long time of my friends. Because of examination and thesis time, friends see little of one another. Each one is a prisoner of his duty; fear makes an egotist of him. They forget as far as possible all amiability and social grace, and disagreeable people are nasty people. Meanwhile there are friendships which resist even this experience and which need more frequent meetings. Thus I never stop

seeing either old friend Balloffet who came to visit only today, or cousin Henri, or Accarias, or Charaund or La Perrière, or Lallier.

Did I write you that Lallier had happily passed his second doctorate examination? Today Chaurand passed his first and is not less happy. Serre is preparing to receive his—we will be a legion of doctors. La Perrière is at the point of receiving the licentiate, whose pursuit the death of his grandmother obliged him to delay a great deal; he will scarcely be able to live until around the 1st of September. Accarias is rather close to the same. Henri, who has long legs, comes to see me more than I go to his place. I do not know any news of his poor parents. I do not know either whether Falconnet has returned from Dijon where he went to pass his fourth examination and thesis for license before he leaves. We have made several special visits to one another and see one another at general get-togethers: our Conferences of Charity.

Last Tuesday, the feast of St. Vincent de Paul,¹ we were all together in the morning at Mass in the Church of the Lazarists where reposes the body of St. Vincent de Paul; and in the evening at M. Bailly's to hear the reports of the different groups, to take stock of the status of different works, etc. The pastor of the parish, M. Demante,² professor in the school of law, M. Binet,³ professor of astronomy at the Collège de France, and several other gentlemen who had been invited in order to collect their *ecus*, attended the meeting. The result of the report is that the Society consists of about 200 members visiting 300 poor families, and distributing each year a little more than 4,000 francs in domestic assistance, in the four corners of Paris.

Beyond that, we maintain a house of apprenticeship for printing where we lodge, feed, and instruct ten poor children, nearly all orphans. We pay two charitable persons a wage equal to a half-pension for each of them; meanwhile the establishment costs us pretty close to 250 francs a month. They learn printing in the fine studios of M. Bailly, and some of our members give them lessons in Scripture, calculus, sacred history, etc. An ecclesiastic friend of ours teaches them catechism. There are even two more advanced who understand a little Latin, which is necessary now in order to be admitted as editor and even as compositor in the better printing houses of paris. They have to look after them a fine man and wife without children who are delighted with their adopted family. The husband is employed in a government bureau, the wife does not work; we give them lodging and a little indemnity of money besides. St. Vincent's Day was a holyday for these children and a little supper was given them at which they marvelled. We have reason to hope that the establishment will prosper. Indeed, when it was founded, it seemed to me a great folly, since we had only 180 francs. Providence has provided.

I am now very much convinced that to do works of charity, it is never necessary to worry about pecuniary resources, they always come. Several of our colleagues have been charged by the president of the Civil Tribunal with visiting children detained at the request of their parents. They do what they can. They give them daily lessons, but it is an extremely unrewarding work. These poor unfortunates are corrupt for the most part right down to the bottom of the heart, and the longest time

of detention not exceeding three months, it is impossible to correct them. No matter, one continues to sow, leaving to God the care of making the seed germinate in His own time. If there is little consolation on this side, there are others. The abjuration of a poor, sick Protestant has been effected, and several poor dying souls have made their first Communion. Marriage in the Church and before the civil authority of persons who have lived together for a long time has been effected.

I speak to you freely of all these works because I know you are interested and because I have taken only a very small part in them. Nevertheless, since these are my friends' works, and we are of the same society, they appertain to me also in that sense. In this exchange of charity to which good will admits you, I give little and take much. It is not the same with Chaurand who, not content to contribute very actively to our works, works for others no less excellently as well. The government and ecclesiastical authority have been informed of the existence of our little society and have shown a great deal of satisfaction with it. We have among our colleagues a peer of France, nobles, distinguished artists, a musician who, every month, travels all of London for his concerts, employees of the ministries, former Saint-Simonians, many lawyers, physicians, students, small merchants and even shop salesmen. The only two things they have in common are youth and good intentions.

Shall I tell you now something of my own affairs? I should indeed advise you that I have not done prodigies of work this year; nevertheless, I have perhaps worked more than last year, but I have not come to the end of the task I set myself. I finished, only ten days ago, taking the necessary notes for my thesis on Dante. I am obliged to leave the writing of it to the vacation, and in the course of next year, I will sneak away from Lyon for a month or three weeks to get ready to take my doctorate in letters: I am too seriously involved with it to be able to renounce it. Now I am preparing my thesis in Law⁴ and unhappily new problems hold me back from progressing as quickly as I would like. For some days now we have had extremely humid weather. I took a chill which gave me very violent toothache, and following that much indigestion. It has been severe for three days: the suffering has diminished a bit, but a headache remains which makes work difficult and nearly fruitless. I will go to see M. Durnerin tomorrow for advice to put an end to it.

Perhaps, despite this delay, I will have finished my thesis in sufficient time to be at Lyon the 15th of next month and you can imagine how I am looking forward to it, but it is difficult, because the 15th is a Monday and theses can be defended only on Wednesday and Saturday. It will be necessary then, either to submit it on August 6th, which I find impossible, or obtain a turn by favor for the 11th or the 12th. Since the thesis I have chosen is wide-ranging and important, it well lends itself to the danger of being massacred: since it is my last experience, I would like to undergo it with honor. Whatever happens, little Mama, before a month we will see each other again and will embrace each other at our ease.

I have forgotten to write Papa that I had taken to M. Michaud⁵ the two volumes of *Biographie universelle*. M. Michaud sends his affection to Papa and at the same time his reproaches that he had not sent him articles but notes only, too short for

him to be able to use them. He wants Papa to send him some good, complete notices on the Italian doctors. M. Baillère⁶ has paid me the 192 fr. he owed Papa and I have given him a receipt. I am taking 117 fr. of it for my month of July; 75 is left. I have been informed that the doctoral thesis costs 268 fr. at the school, rather than the 250 for the license thesis, because the duration of the discussion being longer, the professors' fees are greater. With the 80 fr. for the cost of printing, then, I must have 348 fr. and if you are willing I will procure it next week at Mme. Chanhomme's.⁷

I think Papa should write in behalf of his work to M. Miquignon Marvis. I did not send him at the time the letter entrusted to me because his library was destroyed by fire and he would not be in any condition for business. Now the date of the letter is too old: there should be another.

Adieu, good mother; I would earnestly beseech you to remember me, but I do not think you could forget; thus, beseeching is useless. It only remains for me to kiss you in imagination while awaiting to do it soon in reality.

Your son who loves you dearly,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte. Excerpted ed.: *Bulletin de la Societe de Saint-Vincent de Paul*, August, 1925, p. 217.

Notes:

1. St. Vincent de Paul (1581-1660), born at Pouy (Dax), Light of the Clergy and Father of the Poor, founder of the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentian Fathers), the Daughters of Charity, and the Ladies of Charity, and patron of the society founded by Ozanam and his friends. Leo XIII declared St. Vincent Patron of All Organizations of Charity.
2. Antoine Marie Demante (1789-1856), professor of the faculty of law at Paris from 1821.
3. Jacques Binet (1786-1856), mathematician and astronomer, born at Rennes, professor of mechanics at the Ecole Polytechnique and of astronomy at the Collège de France.
4. Ozanam defended his law thesis, *Des Interdicto et des Actions possessoires*, on August 30, 1836 (Gallopin, n. 106).
5. Joseph François Michaud (1767-1839), litterateur, born at Albens (Savoy), author of the *Histoires des Crusades*, and one of the founders of the *Biographie universelle*, which bears his name.
6. From the internal evidence Baillère seems to have been, with his son or brother, Germer-Baillère, the publisher of Ozanam's father's writings.
7. From the internal evidence of letters, M. and Mme. Chanhomme, possibly friends of the elder Ozanam, seem to have been Ozanam's bankers while he was a student at Paris.



124. To Ernest Falconnet
Paris, August 20, 1836¹

Possibilities of assistance for a protégé of his cousin.

Dear friend,

I have just received your letter and your protégé: both have interested me very much. To the common blood and ideas which unite the two of us, it would be very agreeable for me to be able to add some good works in common and I promise to do all I can toward that. Unfortunately this is the time of year when our society of charity is reduced by vacations to a very small number of members, obliged to visit and assist a very great number of families. I will, meanwhile, gather information in order to find a place for M. Lefevre,² but I have not much hope. I told him to come back to see me in a few days, then, if I have found a place for him, I will give him some monetary assistance which I could not offer him today. If he lives in the Roule and Tuilleries Quarter a section of our society established there could be recommended to him, if it is not also decimated like ours by the approach of autumn. In any case, after vacations, there will perhaps be a means of assuring him regular assistance. Also, dear friend, what miseries surround us, and how sad the heart not to be able to soothe them! What is our little obol³ cast into the great abyss of poverty? But are we not happy, nevertheless, to be able to offer this obol? So many have not the good fortune to give alms.

Adieu, then. Thank you for your fraternal communication. I would go to see you were I not excessively occupied with the composition of my thesis.

All to you forever. Your cousin,
A.-F. OZANAM

Copy: Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Notes:

1. Year written in parentheses in the copy.
2. The gentleman sent to Ozanam by Falconnet for assistance.
3. A small French coin.



125. To M. Gorse
Paris, August 22, 1836¹

Announces his return soon to Lyon. Friendly regards.

Dear friend,

M. de S.-Avis shall not leave here without bearing some lines from me. These few lines will inform you that I am on the eve of taking the doctorate,¹ that this reason alone prevents me from writing you at greater length, and that I am about to return to Lyon where, deprived of the company of my Paris friends, I must seek consolation in a sustained correspondence with certain of them. You are indeed of that number and far more. Please—do not forget me, then, as I do not forget you. I believe that congratulations are in order on your new fatherhood, and I also rejoice in the merited successes you have had at the bar. Our little Society of St. Vincent de Paul, in which you are always interested, prospers: Lallier especially sends many affectionate regards.

Adieu, your friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

Postmarked: Lyon, rue Pisay n. 5, September 2, 1836.

Address: Monsieur Gorse at Tulle
Kindness of M. de Saint-Avis

Copy: Communicated by M. Jeantin of Agen.

Note:

1. Doctorate in law, defence August 30.



132. To Léonce Curnier
Lyon, October 3, 1836

Recommendation for M. du Las de Montvert, director of the Université catholique, who is entering the Grand Séminaire de Nîmes. News of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and sends its rules.

Dear friend,

In the two short interviews permitted me on the occasion of your last visit to Paris, I expressed the lively desire to renew a correspondence which, during the preceding years, had pleased me a great deal, and which our occupations had slowed up a bit this year.

Here an excellent occasion is offered to me. One of my better friends in Paris,

M. du Lac de Montvert,¹ director of the *Université catholique*, desiring to consecrate himself entirely to God, is preparing to enter the seminary at Nîmes, and he is very anxious, when he arrives in that town, to be put in touch with some young Catholics whom he can visit from time to time and who will inhabit his clerical solitude a bit. To whom could I recommend him better than you? To whom could I recommend you better than he?

Two copies have been sent you of the rule of our little Society of St. Vincent de Paul, which now consists of five conferences at Paris, one at Nîmes, one at Lyon and one at Rome: total, about 250 members. See how the good God has blessed it! Would that He continue to bless it and to reunite all who compose it in that bond of charity which absence can never break nor loosen. Would that He bless especially the friendship which unites the two of us, you and me, dear friend, and which I look upon as one of the greatest benefits with which He has favored my poor soul. Time, which presses, forces me to be short today. I will be longer another time, but I embrace you with all my heart.

Adieu, do not forget
your very faithful friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Léonce Curnier, at Monsieur Curnier's, his father, merchant, or at M. Sibour's, Canon, Nîmes (Gard).

Original: Archives Laporte.

Note:

1. Melchior du Lac de Montvert, one of the chief editors of *l'Univers*, assigned the religious section of the journal.



133. To Léonce Curnier
L'Il Barbe, near Lyon, October 10, 1836

Visit from his friend's cousin. Chair of business law. Lyonnaise friendships. Trip to Switzerland with his brother, Alphonse. Next sojourn in Paris.

Dear friend,

The date of this letter will serve to excuse the paucity and raggedness of this half-sheet on which I write. In this small and verdant enclosure which the Saône embraces with its waters, closely watched prisoner of my poor mother, I must make weapons of whatever falls to my hand, and I would delay two days were I to wait to

search in the town for elegant vellum which alone would be worthy of being unfolded by your friendly hand. But I could not reconcile myself to such a delay, eager as I am to thank you doubly for the good visit you arranged for me and the amiable lines which accompanied it. Unfortunately my stay in the country did not permit me to see your cousin as frequently as I would have liked. Nevertheless, some short conversations sufficed to rediscover in him a great part of yourself: it is enough to tell you that he overwhelmed me. I especially saw him gladly for the long details he gave me about you, and your family as well as your town which is dear to you; and besides for the interest with which he informed himself of all that concerns me, letting me understand that he was charged to render an account to your friendship: he acquitted himself well.

It is then useless to speak here of my situation which has for the most part changed little for a year: the establishment of the Chair of Business Law, lengthily decided upon by our Municipal Council, belatedly sanctioned by the minister, seems to have trouble in being realized. The nomination of the professor will take place only in December and January next. I hope, meanwhile, not to have lost anything by waiting; and perhaps time has multiplied my chances. I do not deceive myself about the weight of the burden I ask to be laid on my shoulders, and I admit that I am often frightened at even the possibility of my success. The months preceding this vacation were passed in a number of professional occupations, in cases that the fragile health of my mother and our domestic affairs demanded from time to time, in the numerous trips my candidature demanded and in some study interrupted too often. Under this superficial badge of my existence, I unfortunately still find the same permanence of defects in my character and wandering of my mind. Always the troublesome contract of a lively imagination and a weak will. From that the constant failure to execute my better plans.

But I would be unjust to Providence if I were silent about the consolations that its hand was so willing to mingle with my trials. After those of religion, I must count among the first blessings those which I find in the benevolence with which I am surrounded. My father throughout his laborious career has planted the seed for his children; the public gratitude now falls again on our heads; I have ever been aware of it in the exception which has many times handsomely made up for me the vexation of official channels. I find these affectionate dispositions more living still in the very small circle of my friends and family; and I am happy in the thought that they remain ever faithful despite the absence of some of those excellent hearts who work in Paris, Renne, Toulouse, and finally Nîmes. Charity, then, makes itself the consoler of my afflictions, and I am very ungrateful not to correspond better by my efforts to its benefits.

A particular circumstance has especially marked with a long and pleasant remembrance the vacation which is coming to an end. My ecclesiastic brother,¹ for whom laborious occupations made necessary a stronger distraction than usual, wanted to hike in Switzerland, and I was his natural companion. That pilgrimage in William Tell's² country was perhaps of special interest, in the middle of the political conditions in which we find ourselves; but, except for the ramparts of Geneva

manned by a most ridiculous militia and most peaceful cannons, this beautiful country only showed me an admirable nature and hospitable inhabitants. I could not but admire, besides the eternal snows, the black firs, rushing torrents, green pastures fresh and pure as the herbs of a garden, the crops cultivated with scrupulous care, and the multitude of little chalets of wood gracefully shaped by rustic architects, carved like the stalls of a cathedral, haven of strong, simple and good men. The time which hurried our work did not permit us to stop in the towns, but I think I saw in them all the seeds of the sorrows and vices which devour our civilization. Nevertheless a sign of happy augury is appearing on Switzerland's horizon: that is the progressive dissolution of Protestantism, daily overcome in two different senses by nationalistic tendencies which reign in Lausanne and by Catholic tendencies which are awakening in the countryside of Berne. A large number of rural communities have replaced the cross on their steeples, uncrowned for three hundred years, and no longer wait for the hour when governmental intolerance will cease to oppress them for recalling the priest, the true, the only shepherd, as they say in their simplicity, *him who has the true words*.

In a few days I will undertake a journey less rapid and more serious. Several affairs altogether oblige me to spend six weeks in Paris, and in four days, the steam train will carry me in the direction of that vast capital of which I spoke only evil formerly, but for which I no longer hold back from preserving a profound attachment since I have left so many friends there. I hope to publish while I am there a little work, miserable fruit of my solitary vigils and which perhaps recalls sadly the Lyonnaise air where it had birth.³ I will also see again some of those who encouraged with their advice and example my first steps in the adventurous career of knowledge. But especially I will visit again with old companions in study whose strength sustained my weakness, whose ardor and energy brought out what was in my mind only as a passing wish. I will visit again there the founders of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, now surrounded with the marvels of their success, counting three hundred associates in the capital and three hundred in the provinces. Allow me to believe that more favorable circumstances will permit you anew to increase this number and to cooperate with all the heat of your zeal with this movement of youth who are restored by it, and who perhaps will sooner or later restore our whole country to the paths of truth.

Although it be so of those around you, we know well that you, dear friend, have never grown cold, either in regard to God, or the poor, of yourself. Especially I who have ever responded so feebly to your expansive affection, I know how much I owe you, and unable to pay you otherwise, make payment in wishes for your welfare. These wishes, repeated before Him who can do all things, have nothing of the frivolity of regards which teem among those who are people of the world: they are prayers. And as unworthy as they are of Him who hears them, nevertheless, they appear agreeable to Him in consideration of him for whom they are said. May there be accomplished in you, dear friend, the habitual order of Providence who rewards here below the works of His servants! It is enough to say that you rejoice then in all the good things which can thrill the heart of the man of God. Preserve for me al-

ways a place in your affections, and to see for yourself whether I do likewise, come as soon as possible to visit our poor city.

Your tenderly devoted friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

My mother was extremely touched by your good remembrance.

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Léonce Curnier, Kindness of M. Brunel, Nîmes.

Original: Archives Laporte.

Notes:

1. His brother, Abbé Alphonse Ozanam.
2. William Tell, legendary hero of Swiss independence, beginning of the fourteenth century.
3. Probably *Droit public: Des Biens d'Eglise*, work which appeared in *l'Univers religieux* of April 20 through August 5, 1837 (Galopin, n. 110).



134. To Henri Pessonneaux
Lyon, October 21, 1836

Thanks. His cousin's future projects. Beginnings of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Lyon. Uncertainty as to his future.

Dear Henri,

A good many days have passed since you faithfully accompanied me to the coach which was to take me far from you. However, the days have not been so many as to make me forget the offices you rendered me during the leg problem which kept me prisoner in my room. I feel myself constantly burdened with a great debt of thanks and have already tried to acquit myself of it somewhat by telling all our mutual friends what you did for me. But actions are not requited with words. I would like to show you more solid evidences of gratitude. Especially at this time when your thoughts are undoubtedly on taking a temporary position lucrative and honorable at the same time, where the point of return could be favorable to your wishes, would I very much like to help as much as I can, which is little. If you wish I could write to M. Bailly to urge him to look for a position for you with one of those respectable and wealthy families he knows or his friends might know. We could also speak to M. de Montalembert about it. I could be wrong, but it seems to me it would be better to associate yourself thus with a family than give lessons to different people. You would have a more secure, calmer and more leisurely life; your moral worth and virtues would be better appreciated, things of great merit where education is concerned. There is no point in telling you, you know well, that your er-

rands were done on my arrival. I saw your cousin who keeps very well, but seems always preoccupied and rather sad. I saw Madame Gayet¹ also, at Saint-Genis and had a long chat with her about you and your family; I gave her news of you, but now I would like to have some, for it seems like an age since I left. Write to me then, please, and tell me at length about the state of your health, studies, and projects; tell me about your parents for whom you know my respectful affection, and do not forget Marc and then our other friends; Quatruffo, Clave, Heim², etc.

From my side I will bring you abreast of what is happening at Lyon. And first you should know that our city, independent of all its intrinsic merits, has been honored during the vacation with the visits of three illustrious strangers: Lallier, Dulac, and Le Taillandier.³ All three have been very satisfied with their visit and Lallier and Le Taillandier have received a lively desire to settle down here some day. We would have further need of you to strengthen an enterprise now in its infancy: the propagation of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and the establishment of a conference in Lyon. The conference is established, but its numbers are few. We are hardly a dozen, only eight members being most assiduous. We are meeting at Chaurand's on Tuesday evenings at 8 o'clock. We have, as at Paris, the table, the green cloth, the two candles, the goods, the old clothes, etc. . . . but the room is almost empty, the treasury also. We have experienced the little contradictions we foresaw. Some pious and some grave personages are frightened. They have complained, and have said so, that a cabal of young Lammenasians who succeeded in imposing M. Lacordaire on the Archbishop of Paris want to take control of Lyon, that they have solicited all the Sisters of Charity in the city to draw up lists of poor, that there are at least thirty of them, that some of them are not even Christians, that they are about to discredit all other works of charity by the poor way in which they conduct their own, etc., etc. . . . Alphonse has tried to calm these recriminations a bit. I have done what I could for my side. Following the advice of our rule we have made ourselves small and humble, we have protected our inoffensive aims, and our respect for other works, except that we will not succeed, because we have no law of secrecy. We have for that matter done the proper thing by informing the pastor of Saint-Pierre that we are meeting in his parish. I hope we shall succeed despite the ominous prophesies, not through secrecy, but through humility, not through numbers but through love, not through patronage but by the grace of God. There is good will, there must be zeal; there are families assisted, there must be many more of them; there is room for every possible work of charity, and without them . . . We will recruit our forces from among certain Lyon residents, especially from most of the former Parisian members living here, and will reassemble all who have graduated from M. Noirot's philosophy class and will try to prepare these young men for their stay in the capital, and when they get there they will be recommended to you in order to make good and faithful confreres of St. Vincent de Paul. Isolated as we are, we feel our weakness more than ever, and the necessity of preserving proper rapport with the center of the society. We are proposing for this purpose to send four times a year at the times of the general assemblies a report of our works and the results we have obtained, hoping to receive from Paris in exchange

some good news and some good advice. It would be desirable that the same correspondence between the society of Paris and the conferences formed at Nîmes and Rome be established. A bond should be forged, too, among the members dispersed in the provinces, and too few in numbers to form conferences. Articles 1 and 2 of the Rule suppose in principle that every young Christian man, even if alone in a town, can associate himself with the work. Mr. Bailly or certain other people should draw up an instruction for young men who are in this situation. They could be put in contact with the Paris conferences or those in towns closest to them by means of reports, circulars, etc. See to it and do what your wisdom dictates, but do something. You are the head and the heart; we are the members. Speak about it either to your colleagues or to M. Bailly and write to me about it. I have already given it a great deal of thought.

Do not, meanwhile, go supposing that my thoughts are all of a serious nature. I am at Lyons nearly a month and a half and during all that time I have done scarcely anything but rest and amuse myself. After a stay of three weeks at Quillon where I kept Mamma, who has regained some of her health and strength there, company, I went on a trip with my older brother; we went together to Saint-Etienne and admired all the masterpieces which industry pompously displays on the way and within the walls of the city. We then traveled around a bit of the Beaujolais and Maçonnais areas and dined nine days ago today with M. de Lamartine. We breathed the good mountain air, fresh air, perfumed with thyme, serpalet, genet and bruis. We saw in out-of-the-way places which the wind of Rationalism has not yet ruffled, believing and pious inhabitants, churches where the men were more numerous than the women, and who recalled somewhat, around some humble pastor, M. Lacordaire's audience of bald heads. Now, on my return here, I should find happiness and joy at the memory at least. Well, such is the infirmity of our poor nature, with so many reasons for contentment I am seized with a somber, melancholy humor . . . I do not know whether it is the proximity of the real life which saddens me so, but the bar seems constrained to me, the tumult of business insupportable, material life boring. The Chair of Business Law project is not abandoned. It is advanced by wise and benevolent hands, but it is advanced slowly. And even (dare I say it?) this position appears agreeable to me only because there is nothing exclusive or definite about it. More than ever I am afraid of all decision, all determination which would involve not turning back. The entire absence of vocation, or desires contrary to various vocations, strikes me more than ever. My spirit approaches repose only in thinking about work on the *History of Religions* that I have been considering for seven years. Pray for my parents, too. I will do the same for you, as much as my poor heart can. My malaise is such that, despite the tender friendship which binds the two of us, I had trouble deciding to write and trouble to finish this letter. Reply soon and give me a little courage. Adieu, Your cousin,

A.-F. OZANAM

Genon, whom I am about to visit, and who is better, recommends himself to your remembrance.

Original: Archives Laporte.

Notes:

1. Herminie Gayet, Pessonneaux's sister.
2. Possibly François Joseph Heim (1787-1865), painter, member of the Institut (1829), professor at the Ecole des Beaux Arts.
3. Auguste Le Taillandier (1811-1885), son of a Rouen businessman, studied law at Paris, and was a member of the Parisian bar until 1846. Returning to Rouen, he dedicated himself to charitable works. One of the seven founders of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. He was married in 1838.



135. To Emmanuel Bailly
Lyon, October 22, 1836

Recommendation for a young Lyonnaise, Auguste Stadery, who is going to Paris. Conference of Lyon. Suggestions for maintaining a bond among the dispersed members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Atmosphere of Lyon. Impressions of Saint-Etienne, the Maçonnaise and the Beajoulaise. Publicity for his book.

Monsieur,

Perhaps the respect which your multiplied duties merit should forbid me importuning you so often, and, at least command me to wait for your reply before writing you anew. But independently of the need I experience of conversing with you, here is an occasion which practically forces me to take up the pen again at the risk of making you curse my intemperate assiduity. A young man of our town is leaving for Paris, and is going to make a long stay there. He is good, a believer, and simple, and yet his family trembles, and it has reason, for this young man's brother killed himself last year. This young man must be surrounded with friends who will make him forget so horrible an example, who will give him better brothers, present him in the faith and virtue, those two flowers a puff suffices to freeze. Some recommendations have been asked of me for him: to whom should I recommend him better than yourself, you who, with the good M. Ampère, have exercised such a happy protectorate over me, you whom so many mothers who know you bless because you have preserved the religion of their sons?

Receive then M. Auguste Stadery who bears this letter as you would receive me. His studies at l'Ecole Centrale des Arts will probably locate him in a quarter far from yours, but you have a long arm and a big heart. He undoubtedly fulfills all his Christian duties with a most fervent piety, and if you judge him suitable, you can little by little invite him to be a part of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in the conference closest to his dwelling.¹ Then you could invoke on him the special benevolence of the president of that conference, you could inform yourself about him from time to time, you could look after him with paternal regard. Pardon me this

request: although your humility will murmur at it, God has so made you as to be the moral tutor, the guardian of a great many of His young servants. It is a noble ministry. Allow us to make use of it for those who follow us, as we have profited ourselves from it. Frequently in the future these young men of Lyon, these sons of the town of martyrs, will come to you. We have already a certain number here who have had the pleasant experience of your advice and example, and we will be forced to procure the same benefit for the generation of whom we are the elders. That will be one of the principle ends of the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul established in this town in union with the society of Paris. Our work here is nascent, but it is living. It is feeble, but it can become strong by preserving its bonds with the mother work. It has need of that, if only to surmount the obstacles it meets here from good people who are afraid.

It is our intention, then, to keep ourselves tightly bound to you. To this end, we will address you at the times of the general assemblies, and on the first one, December 8, will render an account of our operations. We hope that the two conferences of Nîmes and Rome will do the same. You could, in return, send us some advice from Paris along with some encouragement and news of general interest. It would perhaps be useful also to bind together the dispersed members of the society who live in the provinces and who are not numerous enough to form conferences. It would sustain them in their isolation while waiting to have collaborators. In that way, ten years from now, we could be more than a thousand, united in works and prayers and the strength of this union would be very great. Could we not decide on a short prayer that all members would say on certain days, and require all of them to send once or several times a year reports to the central society? Look it up: articles 1 and 2 of the Rule lay down the principle. Do or have done something to put the application in practice.

Let us work to increase and multiply, to become better, more tender and stronger; for just as days follow one another, evil is seen to add to evil and misery to misery, the disorder in society becomes more and more apparent; the social problems, the conflict between poverty and riches, between self-interest which wants to take and self-interest which wants to keep, succeeds political problems. And the confrontation between these two self-interests, the poor who have the force of numbers and the rich that of silver, will be terrible if charity does not interpose, become a mediator, if Christians do not dominate with all the force of love.² Beyond doubt Providence does not need us for the execution of its merciful designs, but we, we need it and it promises us its assistance only on the condition of our efforts. Not without reason has it raised in you the thought of founding our work, and that it makes it grow under your auspices. Carry on the work begun and work for its propagation and consolidation; please, in the name of all our friends.

It is especially precious to me to preserve the intimate relations of mind and heart with those I loved at Paris and who were willing to love me. I have told you how precious to me was the daily reading of *l'Univers*.

I am grateful to M. Sainte-Chéron³ for the few lines he enclosed and thank him again for the research he was kind enough to undertake on my behalf and the long

letter he wrote me. I would like to have something to send to *l'Univers*, but everything here is calm, peaceful, and consequently of little interest to readers, people who love new things, noise and sometimes a little scandal. Besides, claiming the right of vacation and obeying my instinct for laziness, I have just spent here a month of the most complete inertia of spirit. I have also betaken my leisure into the environs of Lyon to considerable distances. I visited Saint-Etienne where I saw industry in all the apparel of its most laborious works, and carried away a sad impression, considering to what horrible toil millions of men apply themselves to put bread between their teeth, and procure opulent well-being for a small number of the fortunate; and how the intelligence must be brutalized and the heart hardened in the midst of those machines and the immense deployment of material force. Nevertheless among the innumerable factories which cover this part of the Department of the Loire, there is one which singularly consoles the eyes of the Christian. That is an iron foundry belonging to a pious and large Saint-Chamond family, the Nerand family. Two hundred and fifty workers gather there to engage in the roughest work you could see, casting molds in order to refine and laminate the iron. These 250 workers form a community to which only good men are admitted. The strictest regularity governs their actions. They have their chapel and chaplain, and good brothers attached to the establishment who instruct the children employed there.

I also traveled extensively in the Maçonnaise and Beaujolaise districts, where nature still preserves an unhoped-for beauty and freshness under an autumn sky, and where there are people as good and fine as the sun which shines on them. Last Saturday I was in a village situated on a laughing lake formed by the highest mountains in our Department: at the time for high Mass the church was invaded by so close-packed a crowd that houses meanwhile were deserted. At the bottom of the nave were the men, and they the more numerous. It was gratifying to see those brown and sturdy figures, heads uncovered, grouped at the foot of the pulpit of the good pastor, recalling a little in this regard the hearers of M. Lacordaire at Notre-Dame. Those who go about saying the faith is dead in France have never seen, I think, the good people of these countrysides, nor the good people of other countrysides like them. There are people who only know Paris, and a certain circle of men of this kind and stripe in Paris, who repeating themselves like echoes of another, end up by believing innumerable things.

A few days ago M. Perissè received 50 copies of my little work from Debecourt. M. Perisse wants to know how much of the price of copies is his. Overall he is very disposed toward me and is actively engaged in selling them. I have been promised two articles in two journals here, the *Courrier de Lyon* and the *Reparateur*. I hope that you have no reason to repent of being responsible for this poor book, but should not announcements and articles be placed in the Paris journals? Is something being done? No one can sell what is unknown. Please push M. Debecourt on this matter. Mme. de Lamartine', at whose home I dined ten days ago, was very complimentary of me: would that everybody thought as she does! If you are good enough to reply, tell me whether we are having any success. Tell me also, please, the

l'Univers
l'Univers

present address of Abbé Gerbet; I want to write to him. Pardon the indiscretion of all these requests.

Lallier, Le Taillandier, Dulac, and Bonnety have stayed sometime at Lyon during vacation; they were all pleased with our town. Come yourself to see it one day; you will find beautiful views with glorious pasts, and many people closely attached to you, and among whom I beg you to account me in the front rank.

Your devoted and
respectful servant,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Copied at the bottom of the letter: Monsieur, Monsieur Bailly, rue des Fosses S. Jacques, n. II, Paris.

Copy: Provided by the management of the journal *La Croix*. Extract of Msgr. Gaston, Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Notes:

1. L'École Centrale was then housed in the Hotel Sale, rue de Thorigny. The nearest conference was that of Notre-Dame-de-Bonne Nouvelle, founded in 1835—if, however, Stadery lodged near his work.
2. The same thought is found in nearly identical words in several letters of the following months: to Lallier (November 5), Janmot (November 13), and Curnier (May 9, 1836).
3. Alexandre de Saint-Chéron. He had belonged to the Saint-Simonian school, and at the breakup of the group separated from d'Enfantin (Barthélemy Prosper d'Enfantin—[1796-1864] a founder of the school) to follow Bazard (Armand Bazard [1791-1832], founder of the political party called Charbonnerie française, and also a propagator of Saint-Simonism) whose daughter he married. Saint-Chéron had a good rapport with Guizot (François Guizot [1787-1874], statesman and historian, minister under Louis-Philippe), and collaborated with him in the *Journal général de France* (a doctrinaire magazine). Saint-Chéron became an ardent Catholic, and a director of *l'Univers*, entrusted with the political section of the journal in particular.
4. Wife of Alphonse Lamartine.



136. To François Lallier
Lyon, November 5, 1836

Reflections on the role of Christian vis-à-vis wealth. Social question. Choice of profession. Jocelyn placed on the Index.

Dear friend,

I began to write to you on Tuesday evening. That was the feast of the Communion of Saints. Perhaps, and the supposition is not offensive, perhaps it is why by a singular exchange, at the moment I finished the first page of my letter, one from you arrived. And so your thoughts came to converse with mine at the right time, just

like those Sunday evenings when we gathered at du Lac's or La Perrière's. But never did clock answer clock in so different a chime than your letter, so welcome, to my unfinished one. Still preoccupied with the rather sad news La Perrière had had from you, I was bewailing and at the same time blaming your melancholy; and I was devoting long echoing thoughts to the subject and was making conjectures, in the style of the pastor's homily on the gospel of the day. And behold, in one of those cheerful moments which seize upon you often in the wake of your periods of boredom, you write me a thousand happy things and chatter on affably like a man without care or things to do. Make me, then, burn the page I had scribbled to conform to your sadness and trace lines more agreeable to the present hue of your mind.

Your departure has left a great void among us and we are waiting impatiently to learn of your happy arrival: the loss of your sack is the only serious accident to trouble your trip, and I will be consoled about that if you have not lost at the same [time] your notes on the Lyon hospitals. If you found the grapes half grown, your work will be that much lessened, and I would be happy about it. It would seem that you can compensate for this poor harvest by harvests of another kind, and that pursuing the conquest of nature under every form, now you harass the flying denizen of the air, now track to his subterranean lair the complacent fossil which allows itself to be handled. It also seems that the Beotians of your parts are acquainted with gold mines and prefer to see the Pactole¹ rather than the Parnesse² flow there. For that matter the torrent of wine which flows from the hills of Saint-Jacques might well carry along some scraps of precious metal, and from what you say, the citizens of Joigny have ecus³ because they save them and are afraid to spend them.

I am fully of your opinion and call it folly to fill one's days accumulating what cannot be enjoyed, folly even to amass for one's children. For children who see a mound of gold growing behind them are sorely tempted to sit by and fold their arms, and to build them a fortune is often to lead them to the sin of sloth. And then, children are sometimes hardly a respectful pretext; remove the veil and you will see underneath the selfishness which finds in propriety a means of extending and in some way immortalizing a character who is well pleased to have a great deal around himself in the present and to leave a great deal after himself in the future. Happily such does not apply to any of those to whom I owe love or respect, although the vice is common in Lyon.

I am filled with thanks to God for having brought me into the world in one of those situations on the border of hardship and of ease, which is used to privations without permitting enjoyment to be completely unknown, where one can go to bed with all his wants assuaged, but where one is no longer distraught by the continual clamors of necessity. God knows, with the natural weakness of my character, what dangers the softness of the wealthy or the abjection of the indigent classes would pose for me. I also feel that this humble position in which I am at present has brought me to serve like persons better. For, if the question which disturbs the world around us today is neither a question of political modalities, but a social question; if it is the struggle between those who have nothing and those who have too much; if it is the violent clash of opulence and poverty which shakes the earth

under it, our duty to ourselves as Christians is to throw ourselves between these two irreconcilable enemies, and to make the ones divest themselves so as to fulfill a law, and the others accept as a benefit; to make the ones cease to demand, and the others to refuse; to make equality as operative as is possible among men; to make voluntary community replace imposition and brute force; to make charity accomplish what justice alone cannot do. It is then good to be placed by Providence on neutral ground between the two belligerents, to have paths and minds open to both, without being forced in order to mediate to ascend too high or to descend too low.

Meanwhile, in writing this, it seems that I did some violence to myself, and the numerous erasures encountered in the last lines give evidence that a contrary thought distracted me. At the same time that I was recognizing in my past life providential conduct which I did not weary myself in admiring, I could not prevent myself from casting a defiant and rather somber look on the future. The moment of choosing a destiny for oneself is a solemn moment, and everything solemn is sad. I suffer from this lack of vocation which makes me see the dust and stones of all my life's paths as well as the flowers on each. In particular, the one I am closest to now, that of the bar, seems less enchanting to me. I have chatted with some business men. I have seen the troubles to which you must resign yourself in order to obtain employment, and the other troubles that go with the employment. It is customary to say that lawyers are the most independent of men; they are at least as much slaves as others, for there are two kinds of tyrants equally insupportable: the procedural officers in the beginning, and the clientele later. I am still making myself unhappy at the sight of my father, who needs rest, and my mother, who needs more careful attention, being obliged to live still by work and economy because of me, when I could have relieved them of supporting me and left them to enjoy the rights of old age sooner if I had chosen a profession at the same time more comfortable to my tastes. There is constant good will employed in providing a Chair of Business Law for me, but up until now the employment is slow and cold, and I do not know why I have little hope. Enough, dear friend, enough of my murmuring, enough of the anxieties of a man of little faith; and if you wish that there be no blame for having communicated them to you, receive them as a kind of confession, as an avowal which asks for advices, friendly encouragement, and reproaches when needed.

Do not think, however, that those troublesome preoccupations take up all my time. My hours have passed by sweet and varied for some time. I have taken two charming little trips with my older brother: one to Saint-Etienne where I saw the miracles of industry, the other to the Maçon and Beaujolais region where I encountered, along with the hospitality of M. de Maubout¹ and the society of M. de Lamartine, a beautiful autumn nature, and populations astonishing in their fidelity to the faith and religious practice. I saw our dear Taillandier on his travels. I worked a bit at the organization of our little Conference of St. Vincent de Paul. I brought mama home from the country. But on the other side I have seen my older brother leave for his missions, my little brother for his *pension*, Ballofet and some others for

Paris. Mama is constantly [weak], although not suffering as much. The bad weather prevented La Perrière and me from visiting each other as much as we would like. On the other hand, I have Chaurand and Dufieux⁵ for neighbors. I am leaving this evening with the latter to return for a day or two's stay with M. de Maubout who had strongly urged me to repeat [my] visit. There is good example for you.

It is possible that at Joigny you yet have to learn from me of two literary events which are undoubtedly old news in Paris, but which left a lingering bitterness with me; I speak of *Jocelyn's*⁶ being placed on the Index⁷ and the appearance of a new work by M. de Lammenais.⁸ Rome acted courageously in striking the first; she is hardly afraid of the other; she is not afraid of genius because more than genius is hers, the Holy Spirit which ever inspires her. But it is sorrowful to see genius solemnly desert her and defect, a traitor, to the enemy camp; useless traitor for, by renouncing the faith, he is renouncing his past and consequently his glory and strength, a double grief for those who loved him. And now, who will take the places such ones leave vacant? Where are the Ambroses,⁹ the Jeromes,¹⁰ the Augustines,¹¹ who would come to seat themselves on the deserted chair of Tertullian?¹² Who will dare pick up the lyre fallen in the dust and complete the hymn begun? I know that God and the Church have need of neither poets nor doctors; but those who do need them are the weak believers whom the defections scandalize; those who do not believe, and despise our poverty of intellect; ourselves who sometimes need to have in our sight greater and better men, whose foot traces the path for us, whose example encourages and bolsters our weakness. Young Christian people that we are, we cannot think of replacing these men; but can we not profit by it and fill to overflowing with numbers and work the void they left in our ranks?

This question, in which my own self-love finds something to its own advantage, is however raised especially in your interest. I have often admired in you a humble opinion of yourself, a despising of earthly things, whose excessive consequences I would often then deplore. Dante has said somewhere of the devil that he is an adroit logician, and it is true. From the most laudable principles he can draw the unhappiest results, which is why he can fasten on serious and just souls. He makes abjection of humility, and forms distaste for life from abnegation. At meditation he produces reverie, and from reverie boredom, lassitude and idleness. Is there not some of that in you? Be careful.

Yes, we are unprofitable servants, but we are servants, and wages are given according to the quality of work we are doing in the vineyard of the Lord in the portion assigned to us. Yes, life is despicable if we consider it according to how we use it, but not if we recognize how we could use it, if we consider it as the most perfect work of the Creator, as the sacred vestments with which the Savior has willed to clothe himself: life then is worthy of reverence and love. Let us pray for each other, dear good friend, let us conquer our boredom, melancholy and dissatisfaction. Let us go in simplicity where merciful Providence leads us, content to see the stone on which we should step without wanting to discover all at once and completely the windings of the road.

You know how hard it will be on me without you this year; let us often soften

the distance by thought, let us write, advise and support each other. I think you need that, since you are human, but I need it still more.

When you are in Paris be my spokesman with all our old friends. Be kind enough to give the theses left with you to those who ask for them. Call, please, on Debécourt and Bailly to find out whether it is selling. Do not fail to see Lachomette if you can: *you will be useful to him*. Dufieux has also recommended a young man he must look after to you. Let me know about our little apprentices. Do not forget to tell your cousin and my own about me. Forgive so many errands.

I have had news of DuLac, and it is very good. La Perrière has sent you a reply. All your friends here want to be remembered to you. My father and mother send back in affection what you asked me to tender them in respect. Adieu, dear Lallier, may I see you again soon.

A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur François Lallier, lawyer, doctor of laws, at M. Lallier's, Dr. en médecine, rue St. Jacques, Joigny Yonne.

Original: Archives Laporte. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 190.

Notes:

1. A small Lydian river which ran with gold and from which Croesus derived his wealth. According to the fable it had this property because King Midas dipped his hand in it. *Pactole* is used today to designate a source of wealth.
2. Local river. (?)
3. French coins.
4. There were three Maubout brothers, Jules, Alexis, and Melchior, all old friends of Ozanam. This is undoubtedly Jules Chappuis de Maubout (1809-after 1875), a law student with Ozanam (1834-1837) and former member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, who largely shared Ozanam's thought as well as that of *l'Ere nouvelle*. Landowner and local notable, he shared his time between a home in Maçon and his manor d'Escole (Saône-et-Loire, arr. et cant. Maçon, com. Verze). Alexis de Maubout (1803-1849). Melchior de Maubout (b. 1812).
5. Alexandre Dufieux (1806-1857), Lyon friend of Ozanam, born at Vaise, entered his father's firm, took part in literary circles, urged on by the wish to defend his political and religious beliefs. Collaborated in *Reparateur* and the *Gazette de Lyon*.
6. Poem of love and sacrifice in the form of a confession by a poor country priest, by Alphonse de Lamartine, Ozanam's friend and supporter.
7. The Index of Forbidden Books: condemned works judged as harmful to faith or morals by the Holy See. It has been suspended since Vatican Council II. The Index decree condemning *Jocelyn* was issued on September 22, 1836.
8. *Les Affaires de Rome*, Paris, Cailleux, 1836, in-80.
9. St. Ambrose (340-397), Latin church father, Bishop of Milan, born at Treves. Following the massacre of Thessalonica, he imposed public penance on the Emperor Theodosius.
10. St. Jerome, doctor of the Church (c. 331-420), born at Stridons, was a vigorous apologist for the Church and is the author of the Latin Vulgate edition of the Bible.
11. St. Augustine, doctor of the Church and Bishop of Hippo (354-430), one of the Church's great minds, author of the *Confessions*, *The City of God*, *On Grace*, etc. He was converted from a profligate youth by the prayers of his mother, St. Monica, and the sermons of St. Ambrose.
12. Tertullian (c. 160-c. 240), father of the Church, noted for his genius and powerful writing style, born at Carthage. He abjured his faith for the Montanist heresy.
13. Boys raised under the aegis of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

137. To Louis Janmot¹

Lyon, November 13, 1836

Umbria. St. Francis and Charity. The social problem, role of the Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul. Conference of Rome. Studies on Dante. St. Peter's at Rome and religious art.

Dear friend,

Here it is about two months since I received your good letter and perhaps you are addressing some lively reproaches my way for my delay. I find my excuse, however, in your far-ranging pilgrimages which have left me in total ignorance of where I could reach you. Your own mother was without news for a month. At length, a few days ago, there was news of your return to Rome and suddenly I am put in the way of paying you a visit. Poor visits made thus, in haste and blindly; stupid conversations in which one speaks only of oneself, replies to words already forgotten by the other correspondent, moralizes so as to make him laugh and laughs when one ought to comfort. Friendship is obliged, however, to remain content with this last resource remaining to it, that is, finding the words for the impressions of the hour and putting hearts in rapport and conversation in harmony.

I have an idea, then, that at the moment these lines will be reaching you, you will still be under the lasting influence of the fine trip that you just made through Umbria. It is indeed, if I am not mistaken, one of the most admirable countrysides of admirable Italy. The majesty of great mountains crowning sweet and smiling valleys, the changing climates descending in steps to give way to all the richness of vegetation, from the pine and hardwood to the orange and lily, the cities seated or suspended here and there in superb attitudes, and each city, each hill, each rivulet, each stone trodden on, full of memories. Spoleto, whose humble gates barred themselves to Hannibal,² just as those of Capua opened at the very sound of his steps, the lake of Thrasymeno where two giants fought with strokes so terrible that, during the combat, a trembling of the earth tumbled towns and went unheeded, Orvieto and its Etruscan antiquities, heritage of a dead civilization that has left no history, the desolate lake of Balsano and the isle where a queen died of hunger, and then the Christian traditions which have purified and perfumed all these places; here the miracle immortalized by Raphael,³ or the marvelous legend of St. Margaret of Cortona,⁴ but above all, the great memory of St. Francis⁵ must be exalted.

I do not recall rightly whether it was at Foligno that was displayed the rosebush upon whose thorns he lay for a whole night and which has since bloomed with flowers constantly renewed. It was on Mount Alvernia that the glorious stigmata imprinted itself on his hands and feet. It was on these roads along which you passed that he went coaxing the little birds of heaven to sing the glories of the Lord, and buying at the price of his cloak the lamb the butchers were taking to slaughter. But it is Assisi especially that must be full of him, Assisi and its cloister which formerly enclosed six thousand monks, and its two churches, symbols of the two lives of the Saint, the earthly one and the other, the other immortal and resplendent; those

two churches where the good and pious painting of the Middle Ages has its development from birth to maturity, from Cimabue⁶ and Giotto⁷ to the time of Perugino⁸ and his disciple; for it seems that nature and history had done not yet enough for this blessed country and that art wished to shine there with a three-fold and no less brilliant aureole. The Umbrian school seems to me as to you, save the mistakes in which my ignorance traps me, to have advanced with him who painted the *Campo Santo*,⁹ in the true path laid out for it at the time of the Renaissance. You could not have crossed the thresholds of the sanctuaries of Assisi without reading the magnificent history of St. Francis in canto XI of Dante's *Paradise*.

Dante must be the necessary interpreter of Giotto, his contemporary and friend. What men, what painters, and what voices for celebrating the name of the Poor Man,¹⁰ a beggar who was taken for a fool! He was that, according to the word of M. Lacordaire; he was such a one, he was the fool of love. His immense charity embraced God, humanity, nature and, considering that God was made poor in order to live on earth, that the majority of humanity is poor, and that nature itself in the midst of its magnificences is poor, since it is subject to death, he himself wished to be poor: it belongs to love to assimilate the things loved into itself.

And we, dear friend, do we bear no resemblance to those saints we love, do we content ourselves with deploring the sterility of the present time, although each of us carries within his heart a seed of sanctity that the simple wishing will suffice to disclose. If we do not know how to love God as they loved Him, that should be without doubt a reproach to us, but yet our weakness is able to find some shadow of excuse, for it seems to be necessary to see in order to love and we see God only with the eyes of Faith and our Faith is so weak! Both men and the poor we see with the eyes of the flesh; they are there and we can put finger and hand in their wounds and the scars of the crown of thorns are visible on their foreheads; and at this point incredulity no longer has place and we should fall at their feet and say with the Apostle,¹¹ *Tu est Dominus et Deus meus*.¹² You are our masters,¹³ and we will be your servants. You are for us the sacred images of that God whom we do not see, and not knowing how to love Him otherwise shall we not love Him in your persons? Alas, if, in the Middle Ages, sick society was not able to be healed except by the immense effusion of love shown in a special way by St. Francis of Assisi, if much later new sorrows cried out to the soothing hands of St. Philip Neri,¹⁴ St. John of God¹⁵ and St. Vincent de Paul, how much charity, devotion and patience do we not need at present to heal the sufferings of these poor people, poorer than ever, because they have rejected the nourishment of the soul at the same time the bread of the body was lacking to them.

The problem that divides men in our day is no longer a problem of political structure; it is a social problem; it has to do with what is preferred, the spirit of self-interest or the spirit of sacrifice, whether society will be only a great exploitation to the profit of the strongest or a consecration of each individual for the good of all and especially for the protection of the weak. There are a great many men who have too much and who wish to have more; there are a great many others who do not have enough, who have nothing, and who are willing to take if someone gives to

them. Between these two classes of men, a confrontation is coming, and this menacing confrontation will be terrible: on the one side, the power of gold, on the other the power of despair. We must cast ourselves between these two enemy armies, if not to prevent, at least to deaden the shock. And our youth and our mediocrity does not make our role of mediators easier than our title of Christian makes us responsible. There is the possible usefulness of our Society of St. Vincent de Paul. But why lose myself in vain words when you must have thought of all these things at the foot of the tomb of the holy Apostles when you slept on the heart of the mother Church of all the churches and felt the warmth of being so close to them and drew in their inspirations?

You have already done an excellent work in establishing the conference down there and were favored with an admirable instinct when you gave it for its purpose the visiting of poor Frenchmen in the hospitals of Rome. God will give you the blessing He himself gives to all first works: "Increase and multiply." To grow is not, however, important; there must at the same time be unity in proportion as the circle widens, each of its points connected with the center by unbroken spokes. There is a conference, as you know, at Nîmes; another is about to be formed at Lyon; we are fifteen, almost all old friends; we have much to do, and have done little. They are five conferences at Paris. There must now be correspondence to rally them all. I do not know whether you have the Paris rule; if you want it, I will have it sent. Besides, at Paris there are common feasts and general assemblies; it is possible to assist at Mass in a body on feast days, and to send to the general assembly a small account-rendered of operations up to then. We propose to do this for the next feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8. Can you not do the like and send for that day to M. Bailly (rue des Fossés S-Jacques, 11) a short account of how the state of your work came about? Our confreres at Paris would be very pleased.

I am very ashamed, dear friend, to use such urgent language when I myself am so cold and lax. You ask me what I am going to do, and I scarcely know myself. I have finished my fifth year of law and have received the doctorate; now here I am settled in Lyon where I am content. But there is no career for me here beyond the bar, and believing it too difficult for me, I am trying to prepare for another which suits me better: I mean teaching. It is possible that Chairs of Law or Letters will be established here, and I will try to be ready, and at the moment, I am busy with my thesis for the doctorate in letters which I could not pass this year for lack of time and for which I will return to Paris for some weeks. I think I told you already that one of my theses is on the *Philosophy of Dante*.¹⁶ This has led me to a long study of the poet whom I admire more and more. I am also studying his times, and am compelled to delve a bit into some of the obscure questions encountered there, and I cannot help but admire the action of the popes of the Middle Ages. I admire no less those of modern times and have read a very good book of M. Arthaud on the life and pontificate of Pius VII¹⁷ where I discovered some very heroic things that the world knows little about. Happy are those whose life can be consecrated to the research of truth, good, and beauty and whom the vulgar thought of monetary usefulness does not importune!

Even in this research one is sometimes seized with a skepticism which paralyzes the intelligence: it happens to me when I consider the instability and dissimilarity of human judgments in the matter of beauty. Fénelon¹⁸ compares gothic churches to bad sermons; you make of St. Peter's a great colossus which does not make sense. Which should I, an uninitiate, believe when the high priests dispute? Nevertheless, up to the new order, and fearing neither the epithet of eclectic nor the reproach of inclining to tripartite divisions, I admit three legitimate forms of Christian architecture: the Roman form of the beautiful churches of ancient Rome, the type of which, from my memories, is St. Clement;¹⁹ the gothic form of the cathedrals of Milan, Lyon, Paris; and the modern form of domes, a symbolic form realizing in its own way an image of heaven which, essayed for the first time in St. Sophia of Constantinople,²⁰ repeated at Pisa and Venice, grew bolder at Florence, and finally came to rest majestically as a crown on the brow of the Eternal City. For of all St. Peter's it is the cupola only that I find irreproachable. It is the same with that of the Invalides,²¹ the only one where the arch strikes me as perfectly harmonious. As to the apparent mediocrity of the interior of the basilica,²² it is not to my liking, but the effect, in sum, by virtue of which the grandeur of the church appears ever to increase in the measure that one attends to the details, is such that one ends up by being overwhelmed at its immensity.

Enough on that point; I no longer want to pick a fight with you on the subject of the Italians. I could reply to the trait you have informed me of with one more frightful, of which Chaurand, La Perrière and I have been witness at Paris. But to what purpose to give thus a bad opinion of humanity? Let us not do as Cham; let us rather cover its sorry nakedness.²³ And let us leave one another more auspiciously, since here I am at the end of this letter. You were not ignorant of the fact that Lallier spent a month of vacation at Lyon. Your friends here embrace you, do the same to our friends down there, especially Frenet and Lavergne. Remember me a little, too.

A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Janmot, painter, at Melle Rosa, Via Capo de Case, 56, Rome, Italy.

Original: Archives Laporte. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 197.

Notes:

1. Louis Janmot (1814-1892), Lyon painter, pupil of Ingres. Two sketches of Ozanam, at 20 and 40, are his.
2. Hannibal (247-183 B.C.), Carthaginian general. He wintered in Capua during his invasion of Roman territory.
3. Raphael Sanzo (1483-1520), Italian painter, sculptor, and architect.
4. St. Margaret of Cortona (1247-1297), Franciscan tertiary. The legend relates that she was converted from a sinful life when a dog led her to the shocking discovery of her murdered lover's body.
5. St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226), founder of the Franciscan Order.
6. Cenzo di Pepe, called Cimabue (1240-after 1302), Florentine painter, master of Giotto.
7. Angiolotto di Bondone, called Giotto, Florentine painter born at Calle (1266-1336), friend of Dante.

8. P. Vannucci, called Perugino, (1146-1524), Italian painter, born near Perugia, one of the masters of Raphael.
9. Famous Pisan painting of the thirteenth century, artist unknown.
10. St. Francis of Assisi.
11. St. Thomas.
12. You are my Lord and my God.
13. St. Vincent de Paul constantly reminded his priests and Sisters that “the poor are our masters.”
14. St. Philip Neri (1515-1595), founder of the Congregation of the Oratory at Rome, known for his wit and good humor.
15. St. John of God (1495-1550), founder of the Order of Charity, born in Portugal.
16. Dante Alighieri, greatest of all Italian poets (1265-1321), author of *The Divine Comedy*.
17. Pius VII (Chiarmonte), Pope from 1800 to 1823. He signed the Concordat with Napoléon in 1801, came to Paris to consecrate the emperor, was held prisoner at Fountainbleu, and did not return to Rome until 1814.
18. François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, Archbishop of Cambrai, writer and preacher, born near Sainte-Mondane, Dordogne (1651-1715).
19. Roman basilica.
20. Byzantine basilica, now a mosque.
21. Hôtel des Invalides, Parisian monument built by Louis XIV as a home for invalid soldiers. Its architect was Jules Hardouin-Monsard.
22. St. Peter’s.
23. Reference to Genesis 9, 21ff. Cham saw his father uncovered while drunk and made fun of it to his brothers Sem and Japheth, who respectfully covered their father without looking on him. When Noah awakened and learned of the incident, he cursed Cham thus: “Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.”





1837-1840

141. To Pierre Ballofet
Lyon, January 23, 1837

New Year's wishes. Advice on preparing for the law examinations. Hope for the future of the Conferences of Saint Vincent de Paul at Paris. Debut at the bar, at Lyon.

Dear friend,

I do not want to let January go by without sending you my greetings for the New Year and my reply to your letter. The delays may perhaps seem excusable to you if I tell you about the occupations which have held me back until now. But I am more anxious to tell you first how pleased I was to receive news of you; it is like new proofs of your old friendship, it reunites me a little with those I loved at Paris and who are still there. For to tell the truth, after the annoyances of the first year, the capital had many consolations for me, and time I spent there is not counted among the unhappiest days of my life. Happily, this good fortune is not lost forever. Most of my friends come back one after another to resume their place here, and if we could attract two or three whose birthplace was not Lyon we would be complete.

The illnesses which made you miserable the first weeks of your stay in Paris will not hang on. The winter will be mild enough, I hope; look after your health, and if you keep to the house a bit by a measure of prudence, Vachon¹ and the others will pass agreeably the hours that Justinian² does not absorb. Do not be too preoccupied with that examination, it is not a very difficult experience: the Latin text and Ducauray's³ commentary suffice, and the reading of Gaius⁴ could be added to it, but as a *deluxe* object. Two months with five hours of work a day is all the time needed to get ready. For all that, experience gives me infinite sympathy for anyone undergoing examinations. I have known the terrors of the green table, and the black robe has been for me like the robe of Nessus.⁵ Among other wishes of the New Year, I make then one that the white balls fall in number in the vote of which you will be the subject, and that success will not be too dearly bought by the anxieties of preparation.

The information you give me on the different conferences would upset me if I did not hope that this state of trial would pass. It is natural that the simultaneous withdrawal of several members of a society should cause a little trouble, some weakness beyond what should be. But the cleared ranks are soon filled with newcomers who replace their predecessors to advantage, and whose more ardent zeal, new ideas, and original insights prevent routine from setting in and the primitive fervor dying. Besides, I have observed each year in the conferences cold seasons and better ones; there is change as in all human things. I at least hope that this Society of St. Vincent de Paul, founded in such an unforeseen manner and increasing in a fashion just as providential, in which we have found so much good example and so much joy and which has been allowed to do a little good, will continue to prosper under the divine benediction. ✓

It is this thought, the knowledge of that numerous society of Paris, already old at four years, which sustains and encourages the Conference of Charity that you

saw formed here. I do not know whether you attended, on December 11, the general session where a report was read which I had sent about our situation and works. Since then, we have increased: we are 25, are seeing a great many poor, money is not wanting, but especially we love one another greatly, and is not that happiness: to love, to be loved and to be aware of it?

You ask whether I have taken the first steps in the ponderous arena of the bar. M. Brun spoke for me. Through his kindness I have had a pretty...case in which I pleaded once—my debut—and must plead again Wednesday next. It is about opposition to a marriage by parents because of the insanity of the future husband. I speak for the intended husband who indeed has the most stupid appearance you could imagine, but who does not appear in any way devoid of intelligence when you converse with him. I have also defended at the assizes a poor devil threatened with forced labor for life, but he was lucky enough to be acquitted. Finally, I had a day in the service of the military court where the accused, judged beforehand, have a defender for form's sake. These are my debuts in jurisprudence. A clientele is not yet importuning me, which leaves me time for other occupations. The most serious of these latter is to attain the project which I spoke to you about, of a chair in commercial law, and thank God, things are going well. It could happen that, fifteen days from now, I would be in Paris; I told you I was about to receive my Doctor of Letters, and so it happens. Add the get-togethers with family and friends for conversation, the little details of daily life that cannot be itemized, and which take some hours, and you will be abreast of my present existence which, for that matter, is pleasant, peaceful, and consequently does not vary much—nothing interesting except for a childhood friend, a good friend like you.

Assure those who are willing to keep some remembrance of me that, on my side, I do not forget them. Accept yourself the affectionate witness of old comrades who are here.

My parents maintain a lively interest in you, and I reserve a place in the best corner of my heart for you.

Adieu. Your old and sincere friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur P. Ballofet, Student in Law, Hotel du petit Luxembourg, rue de Tournon, 18, Paris.

Original lost: Ed.: Abbé Dalud, *Six lettres inédites de Frédéric Ozanam à un ancien ami de collège*, in *Bulletin historique et archeologique de diocèse de Lyon*, new series, t. XVI, pp. 209-211.

Notes:

1. This Vachon was for a time a member of the Conference of Saint-Etienne. (See letter of Ozanam [181] to Lallier, August 1, 1838.)
2. Justinian I, emperor of the East from 527 to 565. In law, he compiled *The Digest*, *The Institutes*, *The New Laws*, and *The Code*. He also built the marvelous Santa Sophia basilica.
3. Ducourroy or Ducauroy, professor of law at the Sorbonne.
4. Gaius, Roman lawyer, author of the *Institutes* which were the basis of the *Institutes* of Justinian (second century).

5. Nessus, centaur of mythology. The robe of Nessus means, figuratively, an evil against which there is no defense.



142. To Léonce Curnier
Lyon, March 9, 1837

Reflections on friendship and on the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Role it should play in the social conflict.

Permit me to renew this correspondence too long interrupted and formerly so dear to me. I am not too happy with myself, and yet I find in myself something, the only thing which does not displease me: that is the need to love, to have and keep brothers who love me. Especially when friendship forms itself, so to speak, by a confluence of unforeseen circumstances, and by the will of God who makes use of circumstances to bring two men together, then this friendship seems to me more precious still, and in some way sacred. Such is that which formed itself between us six years ago, and time and distance have not lessened it. Right? ✓

It must be agreed, however, that friendship being a harmony between souls, it cannot subsist in a prolonged absence, unless it is given from time to time certain signs of good accord, and these signs can be two-fold: words and actions. Words borne on faithful paper apprise him who forgets that he is not forgotten. They dissipate anxieties, mingling common annoyances and sorrows. It is truly an epistolary meeting where one always gains and never loses. However, there are bonds stronger still than words: actions. I do not know whether you have observed that nothing creates intimacy between two men than to eat together, travel together, and work together; but if purely human acts have this power, moral acts have it even more, and if two or three come together to do good, their union will be perfect. Thus, at least, He assures us who says in the Gospel: "Truly, when you are gathered together in my name, I will be in your midst."

It is for this reason that in Paris we wished to found our little Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and it is also for this reason perhaps that heaven has seen fit to bless it. You will note, in the enclosed circular letter which the society of Paris addresses to the societies established in the provinces and which I have been charged to send you, that under the auspices of our humble and illustrious patron two hundred and twenty young men are already joined together in the capital, and that the work has amassed far-off colonies, at Rome, Nantes, Rennes, and Lyon. Here, especially, our intentions prosper and come to fruition; we are more than thirty, money is not wanting, and the good will of the ecclesiastical authorities, after some wisps of clouds, is shown us in all abundance. You will note that at Paris they wish to

reseed this confederation of men of good will by establishing regular relations among them, so that they will know, encourage, and sustain one another by the force of example and prayer. The society of Nîmes, the firstborn among the provinces, will not reject this fraternal invitation: its brothers¹ will be happy and proud to be in communication with it.² Be pleased, then, dear friend, to send to Paris some notes on the state of your work for the general assembly of the second Sunday after Easter. You can address them to M. Bailly, rue des Fossés Saint-Jacques, n. 11, or to M. de La Perrière, rue de Bussy, n. 12 and 14.

Alas! we see each day the schism started in society become deeper: there are no longer political opinions dividing men, they are less opinions than interests, here the camp of riches, there the camp of the poor. In the one, self-interest which wishes to keep everything, in the other, self-interest which wishes to take everything from everybody; between the two, an irreconcilable hatred, rumblings of a coming war which will be a war of extermination. One only means of salvation remains, that is, that in the name of charity Christians interpose themselves between the two camps, that they fly over them, going from one side to the other doing good, obtaining many alms from the rich and much resignation from the poor, bringing presents to the poor and words of gratitude to the rich, getting them used to looking upon one another as brothers, infusing them with a bit of mutual charity; and this charity paralyzing, stifling the self-interest of both sides, lessening the antipathies day by day, the two camps will rise up and destroy the barriers of their prejudices, throw away their angry weapons, and march to meet each other, not to battle, but to mingle, embrace, and become one sheepfold under one shepherd: *Unum ovile, unus pastor.*³

I close now. Pressing duties lay down a law to me to be short and spare you the long list of many things which are wholly personal and of little interest. But, please, reply, speak at length of your friends, of yourself, of your town, of your Reboul, and of so many other things which your friendship will understand to be of great interest to me. May I presume to ask you to deliver the enclosed letter to M. DuLac, at the seminary?

Your friend who recommends himself to your remembrances before God,

A.-F. OZANAM

This package comes to you by the kindness of M. Pasquet & Co., which has business relations with you. If the lasting friendship you have so often shown me could reach out to my friends and make us all one, I would especially recommend to you this young businessman⁴ who was my companion in study at college, who is now our colleague in charity in the conference of St. Vincent de Paul, and to whom I am very attached. And if your business house could render service to his, by increasing advantageous consignments in his favor, I would be very obliged and you would be truly grateful. See what you can do, then, good friend, and please do all you can.

Copy: *Archives Laporte*. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 219.

Notes:

1. Ozanam wrote *soeurs* (sisters) to agree grammatically with *société*, which is feminine gender. In English, too, institutions are spoken of as feminine, e.g., "sister college."
2. In the *Lettres*, a paragraph from the letter of November 9, 1837, is inserted here.
3. One fold, one shepherd.
4. For a follow-up of this recommendation of Pasquet see Ozanam's letter (163) to Curnier of November 9, 1837.



145. To Ferdinand Velay
Paris, April 9, 1837

Recent illness. Progress of Christian ideas and practice.

Dear friend,

I do not know where this letter will find you. I only know that you indicted my delay a thousand times. I was, however, worthy of excuse. Arrived here on Holy Saturday. I was seized on Easter Tuesday with a violent fever which lasted four consecutive days and then left me with an eruption and a malaise which have not entirely passed. Every class I had to take, every errand committed to me became impossible for a time. I took up the course of my affairs only the day before yesterday, and my first care was to take the letter to M. Dautancour's,¹ who sent me the epaulettes yesterday, and as it was too late to send them by the day's mail, I left them at the Messageria Lafitte² for morning's departure. Hoping that you might be detained some days more at Lyon, I addressed them to you in the latter city. The price is 46fr. plus 50ct. freight which I ask you to reimburse to my father. Now will you pardon the inconvenience that brought about my enforced slowness? Be sure that I regret it very much; had your letter had M. Dautancour's exact address, I would have hastened to the post office, and things would have been done sooner.

Behold, you are quitting Lyon, too, without having time to put down roots there; do you not find, like myself, that these leave-takings are always sad and that our poor city with all its faults is able to captivate the heart? That is because the human heart easily allows itself to be captured by love and there is always much love there where there is much faith. This is especially verified in the religious assemblies like the one you speak of and in which one feels accomplished so well the promise of the Savior: *There where several are gathered in my name am I in the midst of them.*

Here there is much more knowledge, and much less love: illumination of mind, and dryness of heart. The intellect and the spirit are, however, at the moment exercising a favorable initiative. The intellectual movement toward religious ideas con-

tinues and is acquiring intensity as well as speed. Proofs abound: I will cite only the streaming to the conferences of Notre Dame, like that of other years, despite the inferiority of talent which occupies the pulpit³; the *Course in Embryogeny*⁴ given by M. Coste⁵ at the Horticultural Gardens which this young and learned professor is using to suffuse the study of nature with Christian spiritualism; the multitude of Catholic inspiration of the people who, eight days ago, expelled a spectator who had given vent to an impious epithet from the Théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin. There is what is happening in the area of ideas, and little by little the beneficent influence is descending into the area of sentiment and that of action. There was the Easter Day disturbance at church doors, yet the number of faithful who made their Easter duty increased. From observing God's laws is emanating naturally the urge to minister to man's miseries; the societies of charity increase and multiply also, and ours in particular prospers more than ever under blessings from on high.

The retirement which my illness forced on me prevented me from being able to learn more about this Parisian world so mobile, so varied, that one scarcely recognizes it after six months absence. In another letter I will converse with you more at length. Today the post is hurrying me. I must say adieu while assuring you that La Perrière and Lallier are very touched by your remembrance and that you always have devoted friends in this country. I want to be counted one of the most sincere.

A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Ferdinand Velay, lieutenant in the 1st Corp of Defense (Genie), at M. Velay's, merchant, rue de l'arbe sec. (Rhône). Urgent.

Original: Archives Laporte.

Notes:

1. Apparently a supplier to the military.
2. Coach line.
3. Cf. the judgment of Mme. Swetchine (letter to Lacordaire, April 18, 1857): "I have heard M. de Ravignan and greatly admired him....He was a true grace from God in his role of Christian orator, but, in making so lofty a position his own, has M. de Ravignan made it lose something?"
4. The study of the stages by which plant or animal passes from spore or egg to adult life.
5. Victor Coste (1807-1873) was inducted into the Academy of Sciences in 1831.



146. To his mother
Paris, April 11, 1837

Solitude. Progress toward the Chair of Business Law. He has seen Gouraud and editors for his father. Works of charity.

Dear Mama,

Your charming little letter which I received today is everything I like, but yet do

not prefer to your voice. For more than ever I am experiencing this year that feeling of exile which nothing perfectly consoles. I have taken such solid root near you that I cannot acclimate myself here. I have a great longing to see you. How I miss the absence of those caresses and solitudes with which a good mother surrounds me, and how sad is the solitude of my little room, and how angry I am at the pain this news will cause you! Today and for several days my health is restored. Even so, my head, which seems to have undergone a profound illness, does not permit me to prolong my work beyond the ordinary. I think that fine weather would complete my recovery, but it is snowing constantly still and springtime this year seems as impossible as the work.

But, without work nothing is achieved, not even a Chair of Business Law. I have meanwhile paid visits to the deputies from Lyon, and they are all sincerely impressed by the project and the man. I have encountered among them far more sympathy than I had hoped for. M. de Lamartine has promised solid support, and the young M. Ampère has already taken helpful steps for me. Every means of petition and intercession, then, is joined in my favor. Let us trust that He who without my cooperation has prepared all the paths so well will conduct the work to its completion. There will be no committee, the ministers always reserving a first nomination to themselves. Nevertheless, my thanks to Dufieu, for letting me know that he wished me well, and especially for having procured for me the opportunity to know M. de Boissieu, who is going to recommend me through M. Bryon, our procurator general.

In looking after my own affairs, I have not neglected those of my father. I have seen the younger M. Gouraud, who told me that he was going to publish in his journal three months from now an article on *l'Histoire des Epidêmes* and was getting ready to publish another one at the same time; I will have the printed article sent to Papa. Levrant, Treuttet, Wurtz, and M. d'Annet have received the letters and packages destined for them. Germer-Baillère replied at first that the arrangements Papa proposed were not agreeable to him: he has changed since and is thinking about it. The other Baillère was away. M. Bechet,³ after reading the pertinent letter, said that he will see to the matter. I have also done the other errands which different people entrusted to me, but several were taken care of belatedly because of my indisposition. I especially sent Velay a pair of epaulettes for which I paid here the amount of 46fr. and 50cent. freight charge and which should soon be reimbursed you. Be good enough to send me by M. Vallellion this little sum augmented by whatever you judge proper to buy a collar which I need.

My occupations are not without rest and pleasure. The pleasure of *seeing again*, especially, friends who have not forgotten. The supper hour at La Pierrière's is the best time of the day, certainly not because of the table which is frugal, but because of those assembled there. I found my last year's works of charity alive and flourishing: six conferences established, 14 children in the house of apprenticeship, and as always M. Bailly, who does so much good with so little show. Last Sunday, the feast of the Good Shepherd, was one of the society's feasts. In the morning we assisted at a Mass celebrated at the foot of the *Châsse* of St. Vincent de Paul by the archbishop⁷

and united ourselves to our brothers of Lyon and the other provinces who at about the same hour were praying together with us. At noon, in the presence of a glittering gathering, a lottery was drawn which realized three thousand and six francs for our adopted children.⁴ In the evening there was a general meeting of all the conferences, reports being made by the six presidents: the account of the works of the provinces were made and I was the reporter for the Lyonnaise. Mathevon⁵ was there also. It was a fine and pleasant day. Yet, among the consolations I experienced, many times my thoughts were a bit saddened and reached out to you.

But you, good mother, do not be too upset over our separation, which will not be long, nor useless, and which is perhaps the beginning of mercies Providence wishes us both to share. Be happy with Papa, my brothers, my aunt, my uncle, my cousins: let us be together in a heartfelt spirit, loving one another and aware of it: the best union is that of souls. Soon we will be together again face to face and enthrall one another at leisure, perhaps with many little signs of affection. Do not be sad lest you fall ill; take care of that health which is not your own, but beloved to your children; do not expose it to the intemperance of this bad season; please, do not tire yourself. Give me a lot of news, tell me about yourself. I like my little brother's wisdom; I predict the happiest future in the world for him; I would be very glad to know what my older brother is doing; it is upsetting to learn that Papa is traveling the streets at night, in the lingering sleet which is so dangerous. But it pleases me to picture uncle coming to keep you a little company in the evening, and I am not unsatisfied to think that sometimes I am the butt of the conversation. Oh! how attached I am to all that family life, and how little I have of the solitary temperament of my patron St. Anthony!⁶ Still the good Saint had an occasional companion, but I, in my little room, do not hear a living breath, see no living creature stir: my pen running across the paper is the whole society in which I live, a society frequently boring. Have no fear, I will not delay too long coming back to you.

Adieu, dear Mama, I embrace you with respectful tenderness.

Your son,

A.-F. OZANAM

I have forgotten to tell you that my book is selling and a steady sale, slow but sure, of the complete edition is expected.

Postal cancellation: Paris, April 11, 1837—Lyon. April 13, 1837.

Original: Archives Laporte. Ed.: *Bulletin de la Soci  t   de Saint-Vincent-de-Paul*, 1914, p. 120.

Notes:

1. Charles Bryon was then procurator general at Lyon. He had formerly occupied the post of substitute (1825), then advocate general (1826). He returned there in 1849 as first president.
2. Dr. Gouraud, one of the most distinguished pupils of Dr. Recamier, fellow in medicine (Cf. *Almanach Royal*, 1941), physician of the Coll  ge Stanislas. He was to be Ozanam's physician after the latter's installation at Paris. Gouraud's descendents include, besides several noted doctors, General Gouraud, French commander in World War I and, from 1923-1937, military governor of Paris.

3. Parisian bookseller.
4. St. Vincent de Paul made use of a lottery to support foundlings (one of the tickets is still preserved), as did St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, when she was treasurer of the Protestant Widows Society in New York.
5. Friend of Ozanam, president of the Lyon Conference in 1841 (See letter 314, Ozanam to Ozanam, May 19, 1841).
6. St. Anthony of the Desert (251-356). Ozanam is probably making joking reference to the many visits of the devil through a number of seductive images of women said to have plagued Anthony.



150. To Emmanuel Bailly
Lyon, May 20, 1837

Asks prayers for his father's soul. Works for l'Univers.

Monsieur,

The tears I shed in leaving you were only too justified. You must have known the next day what I learned after three sad days of travel. My poor father is dead. But I am writing to you to let you know that the liveliness of his faith, the piety he showed in a special way so very recently, the religious consolations he received, give us reason to hope strongly for the welfare of his soul if the many prayers go up to God in whom he ever hoped.

Those prayers, I write to ask you for them. My father knew from its beginning and loved our Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. He rejoiced to see his son called as one of the first to take part in it. He often encouraged by his advice and example my inexperience in good works. He himself always welcomed and assisted the poor, whose unanimous sympathy is today one of our comforts. Perhaps those titles and friendships which most of our associates bear me give them the right to propose to you the following.

1) M. de La Perrière, with certain obligations he was going to pay me, requests a Mass for my father at Saint-Etienne du Mont, Saint-Sulpice, Saint Merry, Bonne Nouvelle, Saint-Roch and Saint-Philippe de Roule. The presidents of the conferences have agreed to ask the members to assist at them. 2) In the two conferences of Saint-Etienne and Saint-Sulpice where I have many friends the *De Profundis*¹ is to be said for my father at three meetings, as well as a *Pater* and an *Ave* for my mother who is ill and for my family. 3) That we be recommended there to the special prayers of members, even those in the provinces, whether Jean, Antoine, or François is written.²

Forgive, Monsieur, so many requests all at once. But if it is allowable to be importunate with the rich in order to extract from them the obol which pays for the bread of the poor, is it not natural to press those who are rich in faith and charity in order to obtain some pious words which will pay for the deliverance of a poor soul

so dear? We have great need for my poor father first of all, for my suffering and downhearted mother, and for us others, three sons so strongly used to family life, to be prayed for, so disoriented are we in our solitude, so upset at no longer having anyone among us to temper our existence, focus our thoughts and desires, so bereft by the tragedy and at the same time burdened with so many serious duties. It is not only I who begs you so. It is my brother also who loves and respects you, and who has done much here for the establishment and maintenance of the work of Saint Vincent de Paul. It is my mother, so grateful to you for your kindnesses to me, and herself a benefactress of our society. Do not, then, refuse us. But the day you receive this letter—that should be Tuesday—be so kind as to work out with M. de La Perrière what you can do, and since you have not time to write, let me know, please, through him.

For the present, my mother and little brother will continue to live comfortably enough. But I must be self-supporting and earn the bread that I received until now from so hardworking and loving a hand. Please, then, continue for that end, Monsieur, the steps you have pursued for me at Paris. In a week I will resume the work I interrupted.³ When that is finished, please give me some more until the Chair I am seeking, or a possible clientele, puts me in a position of taking complete care of my needs. Until a new arrangement, M. de La Perrière will be willing to receive whatever the editors of *l'Univers* owe me. I very much wish to continue receiving that journal. As my mother and I are getting ready to move, *l'Univers* should be addressed to my brother: M. Ozanam, missionary priest, at the Chartreux Lyon.

Adieu, Monsieur. After my poor father who raised me so tenderly, God gave me two persons to take his place at Paris at an age and during a stay filled with dangers: M. Ampère and you. Of the three, only you remain.⁴ Allow me, then, to transfer to you, as much as I can, all the unbounded confidence and unreserved and sometimes indiscreet affection I had for them.

Your respectful and devoted servant,
A.-F. OZANAM
at my brother's, The Chartreux

Copy: Provided by the management of the journal *La Croix*. Extract of Msgr. Gaston, Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Notes:

1. "Out of the depths..." Psalm 129, said regularly in the liturgy and in private as a prayer for the dead.
2. Given names of the deceased. Dr. Ozanam had died on May 12.
3. *Droit public, Des Biens de l'Eglise* (Galopin, n. 10) had begun to appear in *l'Univers* of April 1 and May 4 and was completed in August 1837.
4. André-Marie Ampère had died in 1836.



157. To Auguste Le Taillandier
Lyon, August 21, 1837

Congratulations on the marriage of his friend. Uncertainty of his own future. He hopes that Le Taillandier will form a Conference of St. Vincent de Paul at Mans.

Dear friend,

You have reason to be astonished at my silence. Believe, however, that only urgent and continual business has prevented my reply. Some sorrowful, which became my standard occupations for the last three months, and a happy one, the event you shared with me—this contrast should not inhibit our exchange of ideas, because for us Christians the most diverse events of life appear in the same light, relating to the same principle, which is God. In His sight there are no inconsolable sorrows, no more than there are unmixed joys; there are no suffering hearts nor contented souls who cannot converse in the admirable language religion provides. Since, then, you have partaken of my sorrow in the middle of laughing projects, I, too, in the middle of my sadnesses, have smiled at your approaching happiness. For your happiness is not for you what common men dream of: it would be serious, sought in an order of joy where sacrifices abound, and would bend to new virtues you are about to practice: the blessing of heaven will be upon your head, but cares unknown until now will wrinkle your forehead: fatherhood is at the same time a kind of royalty and species of priesthood. Your vocation is difficult but beautiful, serious but certain; you are fortunate to see yourself so near the end of those agitations which torment so great a number of us, anxious and ill-assured of the destiny Providence is preparing for us in the world.

*Vivite felices quibus est fortuna peracta!*¹

Alas, dear friend, two years ago we were living together like brothers, and the memory of that time is sweet. Our two lives were mingled and, after so little an interval, see what a frightening divergence has already come about. You are about to have two families, both prosperous, both full of hope. And I see the only one I have dissolving; emptiness surrounds me; my poor mother is ill, and my two brothers are away from me for the greatest part of the year.

You are on the brink of a future that promises you everything brilliant and I, the loss of him who sustained me stays me on the threshold of my career and leaves me hesitant, uncertain, abandoned to my own advice. I am not jealous, however. May God be blessed for having strewn roses on your path, and if He has put thorns on mine, may He still be blessed! As long as His eye watches over us on one side or the other, His charity is with us. As long as He prompts us to remember one another here below, He will reunite us one day in another place!

You have many friends here who are rejoicing in your happy alliance, but who complain at the same time, seeing you destroy the hope they had fostered of coaxing you among them. I speak especially of Chaurand, La Perrière, Arthaud, etc., for if I named all who are fond of you, I would have to list the entire Conference of St. Vincent de Paul. For the conference of Lyon is tightly bound to the Society of

Paris: this union is our strength which increases every time a new conference is formed somewhere, as in recent days at Dijon and Toulouse. Is nothing happening at Mans? Will you not give us brothers, you who are one of our fathers, who were, I recall, the premier author of our society? Look to it, and do not do as others whose family makes them forget everything else. You have enough love in your heart to spread it even outside your domestic circle; you will need many more graces than in the past, which will not be reason for doing fewer good works. As each of us grows older, may we also grow in friendship, piety, and zeal for good! May our whole life be spent under the patronage of those to whom we consecrated our youth: Vincent de Paul, the Virgin Mary, and Jesus Christ our Savior.

Adieu, I love you ever tenderly,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Robillard de Beaurepaire family. Ed. *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 226.

Note:

1. Live happy, you whose future is cast.



158. To Emmanuel Bailly
Lyon, September 11, 1837

Sends an article, "l'Origin du Droit" by Michelet, published in l'Univers religieux.

Monsieur,

In sending you in haste the review of M. Michelet's¹ work, I have two excuses to make.

One for my delay which was occasioned by an unforeseen departure for the country.

The other for the length, the cause of which is advice I received from M. Douhaire.² Before letting M. Michelet, who is well-disposed toward me, see the review, I have been very conscientious and taken pains, so as to establish the right to be very critical. You could divide the review in two by stopping at the bar on page four, or in three by making whatever divisions you please. I assure you that a work has seldom caused me so much time and research; I hope that it will not dishonor *l'Univers*. You will make whatever other corrections you judge convenient. But I would like the proofs delivered by yourself or possibly by someone with some knowledge of Law.

Please preserve the friendship with which you honor me and which gladdens me so often. We will soon be sending you young brothers whom the Society of St. Vincent de Paul will receive, we hope, with pleasure. You will do for them what you

have done for us. We are always what we absorb, and I especially will remain my whole life.

Your devoted and grateful servant,
A.-F. OZANAM

I will gladly accept some other task for *l'Univers* and acquit myself of it with even more diligence.

Copy: Provided by the management of the journal *La Croix*. Extract of Msgr. Gaston, Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Notes:

1. Jules Michelet, historian and litterateur (1798-1874), born at Paris. His liberal opinions twice forced the suspension of his course at the Collège de France. In his *Histoire de France* and *Histoire de la Revolution* he effected "an integral resurrection of the past."
2. Abbé P. Douhaire, who had reviewed Ozanam's *Deux Chanceliers d'Angleterre* in *l'Univers* (March 26, 1837) had published in *Correspondant* (t. XXIII, 1881) an article on Ozanam's relations with Augustin Cochin. Cochin, a member of the Parisian bar, was a member of the societies of St. Francis Xavier, of Charitable Economy, and of St. Vincent de Paul (vice secretary general in 1847). Mayor magistrate of arrondissement X in 1848, he was named in 1849 a member of the commission entrusted with preparing a proposed law on primary teaching.



160. To François Lallier
Pierre-Bénite near Lyon, October 5, 1837

Sorrow caused by the death of his father. Family situation. Professional difficulties and projects. Problems of vocation and marriage. Role of joy in Christian life. Orientation to be given the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Dear friend,

Your letter was welcome. You know I waited for it a long time. But be assured that I did not wait on ceremony, and would have anticipated it if time and circumstances permitted. Which starts me on a chapter which you yourself began, that of my affairs; and since you wish it, I am going to bring you up to date on my life since the time I left you.

You do not know how lasting some griefs are. When the wings under which we have rested for so long and the shade in which our head sought protection is all at once wanting to us, and we must bear the burdens of the heat alone, it is not astonishing that affliction is waiting for us at the beginning of each day. That great emptiness which the absence of God leaves in the soul of every man becomes greater for us with the absence of a father or mother, and I have no doubt, dear friend, that that is not the only cause for the interior grief we both bear.

The health of my mother, who is threatened with the slow loss of sight, is also a great worry to me. I have had other family problems which would take too long to enumerate. And three day ago news came to me that brought me to tears and which will upset you as well: our friend Serre, who spent six months with me at M. Ampère's and whom I had seen return at vacation time happy and content, is dead after a short illness and had just enough time to return to his religious duties unfortunately neglected. Pray for him; he was very good.

Alongside these matters which touch so closely the interests of eternity, how little and miserable temporal interests seem, and how much it costs to be occupied with them! The whole administration of our little fortune unhappily devolves on me, and my inexperience makes the burden all the heavier. Except for disputes among brothers, we have had all the annoyances of a succession where a minor is involved. A process had to be instituted. Every day still unsettled bills must be pursued before the justice of the peace, tenants disposed to decamp must be watched, bondings must be renewed, etc., etc., all affairs not lacking in spite and moral sickness. Added to that, an old octogenarian took the notion to die and bequeath us a sum capable of making us rich, but under conditions capable of embroiling us with half the town.

Independent of these problems common to every family, I have those of my profession. I have pleaded about a dozen times this year: three times only in the civil court, where I won each time, and notably in a case of opposition to marriage and deprivation of rights which provoked a great deal of obstinacy on both sides.¹ The troubles of pleading are not unattractive to me, but payment does not come easy, and the relationships with officialdom are so disagreeable, humiliating, and unjust, that I cannot submit to them. Justice is the last moral haven, the last sanctuary of contemporary society; to see it surrounded with corruption is for me reason for indignation each instant renewed. That sort of life irritates me too much, and I almost always return from court deeply disturbed. I can no longer resign myself to behold the evil which is allowed to go on.

Nevertheless, I am far from wanting to give up a profession which real circumstances have made more than ever a necessity. I am even obliged to supplement the slowness of its results by seeking resources elsewhere: the indirect news you have of me by way of *l'Univers*, which mangles me horribly, and *l'Université*, which cuts me in two and leaves me to languish. (You will understand then, by way of Parentheses, that my articles have been tailored for M. Michelet personally, who sort of recommended himself to me, and not for the priests. You will apprehend also, Doctor in Law, that *ordeal* means judicial proof by fire and water. Finally, to finish with this point, believe that my style never ceases to cost me a great deal of effort, that the work is not worth the effort, and that your comments, a bit more detailed and critical, will be useful to me.) On the other hand, I am taking your example and, after vacation, I will teach law to three young men whose ecus I hope to see and who consider themselves lords too great to sit upon school benches.

That does not limit the horizon of my future: it is larger, but rather stormy. The Royal Council of Public Instruction having sent the request to the minister of com-

merce, this latter, actively solicited by Mm. de Montalembert and Lamartine, has not shown himself intractable and has let it be understood that he would be disposed to encourage with monetary assistance the establishment of the Chair, if the Chamber of Commerce and Municipal Council are willing to assume the principal expenses. The proposal was then submitted to the Municipal Council which received it favorably and is now discussing the amounts which the chamber, the council, and the ministry will contribute. The establishment and endowment once decided, which will take a long time, the nomination will be taken up. Then I will make my presentation surrounded by those who wish me well, and it could be singularly unfortunate for me not to succeed.

Whatever results these negotiations might have, they will always have that of proving the affection of all my friends, for the wishes of some have been no more wanting than the efforts of others.

It is very probable that the necessity of soliciting (the word must be taken literally) will bring me back to Paris next year. Then I will try to defend those blessed theses with which I gave you a headache. Perhaps also, drawing advantage from these experiences, if I fail in my principal affair, I will engage the interest of the gentlemen of public instruction and obtain some advantageous assignment, hopefully at Lyon...

For the rest, I am holding myself passive in all this. I am experiencing a kind of religious, perhaps superstitious, respect for the real uncertainty of my destiny. I consider it confined to the bosom of Providence, and fear to take a hand. It seems to me that the happy or unhappy outcome of this affair will determine whether I remain in the world or leave it when events leave me free. You see the rashness of my reveries and what sacred ground they dare to enter. But, in truth, I envy the lot of those who devote themselves entirely to God and humanity. And on the other hand, the question of marriage presents itself frequently to my mind; and it never departs without leaving behind unbelievable repugnances. I am weaker than many others, and the wanderings of my imagination have the power of leading my heart far astray. Nevertheless I feel that there is a virile virginity which is not without honor and grace, and there seems to me a kind of abdication and opprobrium in the conjugal union.

It could be that there is some unjust disrespect for women there. While the Blessed Virgin and my mother and some others bring me to pardon the daughters of Eve many things, I admit that in general I do not understand them. Their sensitivity is sometimes admirable, but their intelligence is of a light and despairing inconsequence. Have you ever seen conversation more capriciously interrupted, less logical than theirs? And to bind oneself to an association without reserve and without end, with a human, mortal, infirm and miserable creature, however perfect she be! It is this perpetuity of the bond, especially, which is a thing of terror for me and it is why I cannot help shedding tears when I attend a wedding, and the same when I attend an ordination or the taking of the habit. I do not enter into the gaiety one is used to encountering at weddings, and at Dufieux's especially, I had heavy thoughts. Well, I am happy in yours and, if I felicitate the marriage of your sister, the

felicitations are not routine, but the same that I sent recently to our friend Le Tailandier. I rejoice with you as I rejoice with her that the nuptial blessing falling upon a pious brow prepares the way for a new Christian family, by which the will of God is accomplished and a vocation is consummated. This joy is not without a mixture of fear, and the fear calls out prayer, and mine is never wanting at these young unions, as I want the prayers of those acquainted with me if I ever find myself in a like situation.

You see that life does not seem strewn with roses to me, and if your sky is cloudy, mine is scarcely less. I will tell you, so that nothing is hidden from you, that even blacker thoughts come sometimes, and because of a rather violent stomach disorder which has lasted for the past two days, last night I thought I was dying and recommended my soul to God. For a little more than a week now prolonged brooding on my interior and exterior misfortunes has so upset my mind that I am incapable of thinking and acting. My head is on fire, every sense is flooded with depressing thoughts, and the most depressing of all, perhaps, even thought of my real state (of soul). The excess of evil brings me to have recourse to the doctor, to the doctor, I mean to say, who holds the secret of moral infirmity and the disposition of the balm of divine grace. But, after I have exposed, with a vehemence which is uncommon for me in these cases, my sadness and the subjects of my sadness to this charitable man whom I call father, what do you think he replied to me? He replied in the words of the Apostle: *Gaudete in Domino semper*.³ Is that not, now, strange advice? Behold a poor man about to suffer the greatest misfortune in the spiritual order, that of offending God, and the greatest misfortune in the natural order, that of finding himself an orphan. He has an old and sick mother whose actions, looks and tendencies he keeps an eye on every day so as to know for how much longer he can preserve her. He sees himself separated by absence or death from many friends to whom he was tenderly attached and other separations more dreadful threaten him. Even more, he is in every anguish of undecided destiny, prey to cares and affairs of which the happiest does not fail to crush him. If he withdraws into himself to flee the unnerving spectacles without, he discovers that he is full of weaknesses, imperfections and faults, and the secret humiliation and suffering that he brings on himself is not the least painful of all. And then he is told, not to resign himself, not to console himself, but to rejoice: *Gaudete semper!*⁴ It takes all the audacity, all the pious insolence of Christianity to speak like that. Nevertheless, Christianity has reason.

Sadness has its dangers: it often confuses itself, as you know well, with idleness, and even takes the place of this latter in the ancient list of capital sins. I have in front of me a passage of St. Gregory the Great who says in words worth knowing and retaining: *Initium omnis peccati superbia. Primus autem ejus soboles, septem nimirum principalia vitia, ex hoc virulenta radice proferuntur: scilicet, inanis gloria, invidia, ira, tristitia, avaritia, ventris ingluvies, luxuria.... De tristitia, rancor, malitia, pusillanimitas, desperatio, torpor cinea praecepta; vagatio mentis cinea illicita nascitur*.⁵ Are the effects not there of a certainty, and is not the cause also, happily, indicated? There are, in my view, two kinds of pride: the one grosser and an easy trap for people, that

is, satisfaction with oneself, the other more subtle, more easily insinuated without being noticed, more reasonable, hiding itself amid the displeasure one takes in his own miseries, displeasure which, if it does not turn to contrition, turns to contempt. We are desolated because we cannot be self-sufficient, our conscience is a witness making us our own accusers, we are angry at being of such little moment, because we have inherited some of the first culpable esteem of our first father, and we want to be gods.⁶ In this state, we reproach ourselves for the imperfections which depend least on our will, we would rather despise than condemn ourselves. We willingly blame the Creator for not having endowed us more advantageously, we are almost jealous of the talents and virtues of others. Thus love grows weak and self-love hides beneath this trumped-up austerity of our regrets. We are displeased with ourselves so violently only because we love ourselves too much. And, in fact, note how much pleasure one takes in melancholy: first, because in default of merits one would like to discover in oneself in order to admire them, one is happy at least in entertaining regret at not having them. It is a sentiment of honorable *mein*, a kind of justice, almost a virtue. And then, it is easier to dream than to act; tears cost us less than sweat; and it is sweat that the inexorable sentence demands of us.

It could then be the beginning of wisdom to make man probe himself anew, and indeed the ancient pagan wisdom knew that precept; but if one does not wish the man so probed to die of shame and discouragement, a ray from on high must be allowed into the prism. Something which is not human is needed, which, nonetheless, comes to visit man in the solitude of his heart, and makes him go out to do: that something is charity, it is that alone which changes *remorse* to *penitence*, which waters sorrow and causes it to flower in good resolutions, it is that which effects confidence and courage, for it dissolves that view of ourselves which shames us in the sight of God, with which it invests us, in which it makes us feel, be and move: *In ipso movemur et sumus*,⁷ who enlightens us with His light, and strengthens us with His strength. In those high regions, everything changes in aspect and, looked at in the economy of the divine wishes, the most desolating events are explained, justified, and reveal a comforting sign. Thus those evils before and behind which we suffered recently no longer affect anything but our sensibility, the lowest floor of our soul; its highest part raises itself above; the best preoccupations dwell there; a joy, grave but true, surrounds it; and the prodigy is accomplished, the precept of the Apostle realized; *Gaudete semper*,⁸ because God Himself is the cause of this joy unknown to nature: *Gaudete in Domino*.⁹

Perhaps, dear friend, that could be very much considered a sermon. But indeed what worthier occupation could friendship have than to seek together the remedy to those maladies which seem mutual? I believe, then, again that the division is threefold, that there are three kinds of ways of life from which one must choose: the external life which is dissipated in material pleasures, and which belongs to pagans and the lowest class of humanity: *Epicuri de grege porci*¹⁰; the internal and reflective life which concentrates on the consideration of the soul's infirmities and needs, but which is sterile and void if one stops there, like the philosophers of antiquity and some weak minds of our day; the higher and Christian life,

which draws us out of ourselves to lead us to God, where we find the point of departure for all our thoughts, the point of comparison for all our thoughts and actions.

Now, if you accept it, you should rank with me in the second category, from which it is easy to fall into the first, unless raised to the third. Let us help each other, then, dear friend, with advice and example. Let us strive for confidence in grace equal to our defiance of nature, and not only in the order of religious virtues, but even in our temporal affairs. Let us make ourselves strong, for the malady of the age is weakness. Let us consider that we have lived probably more than a third of our existence by the benefit of others, and must live the remainder for the good of others. Let us do such good as is offered without ever drawing back through false humility.

And you especially, dear friend, do not fail our hopes. You know the measure of us to whom you have given them. If circumstances make you a lawyer in Paris (we would prefer it was in Lyon), you can exercise a good influence at the bar. But if you can, you should exercise another. Your hand has been given the happy faculty of translating the thoughts of your mind, and of opening early to the miseries your heart understands. Without abandoning your profession you can produce good writing and good works. You must cultivate the art of economy for which you have been given a special aptitude: later on, perhaps, you will be called upon to put into action resurrected theories, your particular kind of benevolence will be charged with representing and directing public benevolence. Prepare yourself for both these missions. Continue to write, and write a lot. I am, in truth, an interested party in this advice. Separated as we are here, correspondence, so rare between us there, is not enough for me. It is a great comfort, a boon to have you again, to have once again your beloved words, intelligence and sensitivity in certain pages which come to me from Paris. I enjoy finding there your cherished habits, even your mannerisms, even possibly your small defects. In this sense I find Buffon's¹¹ words most true: "The style is the man." Write, then, a *torrent of articles*, in my interest, in your own, and perhaps a bit in the public's. Do not be hard on yourself because of the academic-mythological triumphs of M. Verollot the younger. Your best judges are not at Auxerre.

Keep up your works of charity, too. Our little Society of St. Vincent de Paul has grown large enough to be considered a providential fact, and it is not without reason that you occupy a place of importance in it. Do not fail it. As secretary general, you are, after M. Bailly, the Society's soul. The unity, and from it the vigor and perseverance, of the different conferences depend on you. See, then, the great responsibilities imposed on you, and action is the first of all.

Attend particular assemblies frequently; see the presidents from time to time; take part in the meetings of the administrative council; prod sometimes the excessive tranquility of the president general;¹² do not neglect correspondence with the provincial conferences. If you think as I do, when a conference fails to write by a designated date, you should write to it yourself a little in advance of the next date, to ask it to be more faithful in communicating. No longer allow the circular letters to be delayed too long. The one you sent me two months ago was very good and

responded to an urgent need; visiting families is not as easy as it seems; instructions in this regard are extremely useful, and it would be good to repeat them. You will have read in *l'Université catholique* some lines of that poor M. Morvonnais¹³ who seems to me very successful in contrasting the system of bringing help to the home and the public workhouses. Perhaps some day there will be agreement on it, and a better organization of the welfare offices will resolve the very troublesome question of what forms public charity should take. Think about these questions, but do not ask me for light, for, in my opinion, I well perceive the problems but the solutions hardly at all. There is a difficult balance between prudence and weakness in religious matters, between extreme reserve and extreme familiarity.

We have conferences here which have succeeded admirably in establishing a salutary influence over their families, others which have fallen victim to their excessive kindness, and others, finally, whose negligence is deplorable. Some exhortations from you will be profitable to them; what comes from Paris enjoys great authority: *Major e longinquo reverentia*.¹⁴ I do not approve less your intention of talking to us in a future letter, not precisely in way of a sermon on charity, which is an entirely Parisian problem, but on the exterior spirit of the Society, the lack of secrecy and the necessity of remaining hidden. It would be good to establish this principle from the beginning: that humility obliges associations as much as individuals, and to support it with the example of St. Vincent de Paul, who severely reprimanded a priest of the mission for having called the Company: "our holy Company." "We are unprofitable servants" is the witness those who unite to serve God and men ought to render. Next it is necessary to dwell upon the characteristics of humility and to show how it must exclude that collective pride which so often disguises itself under the name of *esprit de corps*, as well as those imprudent revelations to strangers under the pretext of edification and proselytism. On the other hand, it could be noted that secrecy is not the necessary sign of true humility, and is often even contrary to it, for one hardly keeps silent about what one thinks is important, and compensates himself inwardly for the admiration that cannot be sought after outside.

So: "Do not make known, but do not dissimulate" is what our motto could be, and it is not unlike what is encountered in the maxims of a great apostle of charity, St. Francis de Sales.¹⁵ We have especially had occasion here to apply and appreciate this doctrine, caught as we are between two kinds of peril: the rivalry on the one side of certain other pious societies who preserve secrecy and who reproach us for imitating them in that, and on the other side the rather expansive zeal of certain new colleagues who go about singing everywhere the praises of our infant work. Their inflated reports render us suspect to the ones and ridiculous in the eyes of the others. It has been prophesied that publicity will be the death of us, but, thanks be to God, the prophets of doom have lied; we are made to look small, we have aroused pity, but we have been allowed to live. Our number has increased, and our alms as well; a bit of moral good has been done with our help, and we are distinguished from purely philanthropic associations.

I will tell you, in a letter I will send M. Bailly for the administrative council, of a

work we have undertaken without prejudice to the family visitations, and which it would be desirable to see established everywhere conferences exist. It is concerned with the propagation of Christian instruction among soldiers in the garrisons. We have founded here a library and reading school, with writing and calculus for the military, and already the results are consoling. We have several young friends to send you after the vacation.

But send me your exact address so that they will find you right away; tell me, too, at what time you will be available.

Granier,¹⁶ remembered with joy, passed through Lyon some days ago and came to pay me a visit; I was very touched by this remembrance. Be sure that you are still held here in most faithful regard. Dugas,¹⁷ Dufieux, La Perrière, Charaund, Arthaud, Bouchacourt,¹⁸ I would never finish if I were to name all those who love you. My elder brother wishes to be inscribed among the first, and Charles also wants a place on the list. As for Mama, she has instructed me to tell you that she is counting on your return to Lyon, and wants to find a wife for you. And I, the intermediary of all, believe me when I tell you on my own behalf and call myself, in embracing you, your tenderly devoted friend,

A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 229.

Notes:

1. See letter 141, Ozanam to Ballofet, January 23, 1837.
2. St. Paul.
3. Rejoice in the Lord always.
4. Rejoice always.
5. Pride is the beginning of all sin. First, however, its fruits, namely the seven principal vices, spring from this virulent root; namely, vainglory, envy, anger, *sadness*, avarice, gluttony of the stomach, luxury....From sadness, rancor, malice, *timidity*, despair, torpor concerning precepts, and *wandering of the mind* toward illicit things are formed.
6. Genesis 3, 19.
7. In Him we move and have our being.
8. Rejoice always.
9. Rejoice in the Lord.
10. Epicures are a herd of swine.
11. Georges Louis Le Clerc de Buffon, naturalist and writer (1707-1788), born at Montard. The phrase is from Buffon's inauguration into the French Academy: "The style is the man himself" (not "The style is the man").
12. Bailly.
13. Hippolyte de la Morvonnais (1802-1856), cousin by marriage to Lammenais, poet. A volume was dedicated to him in 1912 by Abbé E. Fleury.
14. Reverence is greater from afar.
15. St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622), bishop of Geneva, born at the Chateau de Sales near Annecy. Friend of St. Vincent de Paul, he founded with St. Jane Frances de Chantal the Order of the Visitation.
16. Probably Bernard Adolphe Granier de Cassagnac, imperialist journalist and politician (1806-1880).

17. Prosper Dugas (1810-1875), friend of Ozanam's youth, belonged to the business world of Lyon. His father helped Ozanam to get the appointment to the Chair of Business Law at Lyon.
18. Dr. Bouchacourt, physician at Lyon (1811-1892), studied at Paris, practiced at Lyon from 1839, then became professor of the faculty of medicine in that city. He had been one of the founders of the first conference of St. Vincent de Paul at Saint-Etienne-du-Mont when he was studying in Paris.



161. To François Lallier
Lyon, November 1, 1837

Recommendation of two Lyon men and details on the conference. Asks intervention with the journal l'Univers.

Dear friend,

You asked recently for recruitment of good Lyonnaise. Here is the start of our reply. Here are two young people whom we received at the end of their classical studies, who have belonged to our conference for two months and who are noteworthy for their zeal. They are two brothers; their mother is accompanying them to Paris, but I suspect that she is not quite used to the expansion of her sons' ideas. They are timid in manner, but not in mind, and it would be helpful to find people who both understand and support them. Very pious indeed, and capable of edifying in their turn those from whom they have received edification. We only regret that we got to know them belatedly. See that they join others of their age. I have also recommended them to M. Bailly and the younger Demante.¹

The conference has endured terrible squalls in recent days. Now the tempest is quieted. We are assured that the archbishopric is very happy with us: and the archbishop himself has been kind enough to show his paternal satisfaction. The work we have undertaken for the Christian instruction of the military is succeeding very well. On Mondays we have twenty-four soldiers who are learning to read or write, an equal number come to ask for books, and already some among them are coming together to hear a pious exhortation. Try, then, to do something like it.

I hope that you will write to me soon; let me know your precise residence. Be kind enough also to see M. Bailly and ask him to entrust you with a reply that he owes me if he cannot write himself. I wanted him to get me some work for *l'Univers*, and to pay me for the articles I gave him. If there is no way of my receiving this money, take it yourself and send it to me by postal order. I ask pardon for these commissions. But it strikes me that you sometimes accuse my friendship of waiting too much on ceremony. Have you any news of Pessonneaux?

Adieu, your devoted friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte.

Note:

1. Auguste Gabriel Demante (1821-1909), lawyer and writer on legal questions. He seems to have been a member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.



163. To Léonce Curnier
Lyon, November 9, 1837

Recommendation for M. Chaigne of Lyon who is going to stay in Nîmes. Thanks. News of the Lyon Conference.

Dear friend,

An occasion arises to ask of you fresh evidence of that friendship you lavish on me. I do not wish to be importunate, and do not assume that you are the committed host for all the people I know who pass through Nîmes. However, here is one of my relatives, M. Chaigne,¹ lawyer and distinguished citizen of our town, excellent man otherwise, and whom the recent loss of his wife renders still more worthy of attention. He is forced for reasons of health to spend the winter under your beautiful southern sky. He knows no one in the place he is going to: he needs, therefore, the benefit of discreet guidance, and many useful introductions which are beyond the limits of a hotel manager's accommodation and capacity. He especially needs, in his sad physical and moral situation, certain sympathies, and without being a very fervent Catholic, he is religious enough for a religious voice to be sweet to his ears. To whom, then, can I send him but to you? I was considering these past days recommending to you, in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's name, a poor family which is going to your town and which needs bread. Here is a more beautiful work and more worthy of your charity. There are sorrows to console, a ravaged health to regain, perhaps, by the help of a friendly word; this is a soul newly reattached to our beliefs, to be cemented more firmly there by the charm of good advice and good example. See then, excellent friend, what you can do. M. Chaigne is a very shy man who will never be indiscreet with you. He no longer has political passions, although he is rather *moderate*.² He asks the honor of your acquaintance and is at your service.

You explained perfectly and I already understood the difficulties which prevented you from mixing in M. Pasquet's³ affairs. Again, when I wrote you in his behalf it was as the St. Vincent de Paul Society member, not the businessman. I am beginning to understand sufficiently the delicacy of business relationships not to dare to take on myself the responsibility of such a recommendation. M. Pasquet,

for that matter, is quite satisfied about this conversation with you. And I well know that, if prudence reigned in your relations with him, friendship certainly had its part.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul has been sorely tried at Lyon these last weeks; objections have come to it from several good people from whom approval could be hoped for; defections have saddened it; the laxity of certain of its members have weakened it. However, new recruits have come to repair the losses; very recently it received encouragement from diocesan authority and Divine Providence has blessed certain of its works. I wish I had the needed time and space to tell you about our efforts for spreading Christian instruction among soldiers. There has been established by magic a library, a primary school, and a weekly religious gathering to which the military came in small numbers first, then in abundance. Thank God for the favor of having wished to use our cooperation to work these things and pray Him that we will not become less worthy. We are continuing the home assistance which is growing larger still this year, although fortunately the immense misery of last year does not seem to be repeating itself.

Give me your news. We trust that the end of vacation and the return of your absent friends will allow you to resume your assemblies. Our brothers of Paris also count on you not to forget the epoch of December 8.⁴ Do you not find it marvelously sweet to feel one's heart beating in unison with the hearts of four hundred other young people under the sun of our France? Do you not find that in casting the good work one does, like a humble penny, into the common treasury, one enjoys seeing it last among a thousand good works deposited at the same time, and all mingled with one another in one single offering to Him from whom all good proceeds? And independent of the present joy resulting from this community of charity, are there not great hopes for the future, for even the earthly future of the Society when this new generation is about to take its place, and for the eternal future of each of us who will be credited with what all have done?

Dear friend, your letters are still a great personal comfort to me, and you know whether I need them. Tell me at length about yourself. Tell me also of my friend Du Lac. I do not know what has become of him and strongly wish neither to be abandoned by him nor left out of his prayers.

Adieu! You have bound me to yourself for longer than life.

A.-F. OZANAM
rue St. Pierre, 4

Original: Archives Laporte.

Notes:

1. There is no more known of M. Chaigne than what Ozanam recounts in this letter except for his "bad habit....of serving rabbit. It is a dish which strongly repels me. When I see those four paws and head in the sauce, I always seem to hear 'Meow.'" (Ozanam to his mother, April 24, 1834.)
2. The French word is *juste-milieu*. At the time it had proper reference to the government of Louis-Philippe.

3. See the postscript to letter 142.
4. What follows to the end of the paragraph was inserted by the editor of *Lettres* (1912, t. I, p. 211), in the letter of March 9, 1837.



164. To Emmanuel Bailly
Lyon, November 30, 1837

Sends an article on the opening lessons of the Faculty of Theology of Lyon and four articles on Protestantism and liberty. M. Miolland at Paris. Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Necessity of union.

Sir,

In conformity with your letter, which I have just received, I have drawn upon the administration of *l'Univers*, upon presentation, for a sum of 125 francs by intermediary M. Haraneder, Paris businessman.¹

I was touched more than I can say by the fresh evidence of the kindness you lavish on me: I had to reply.

The courses of our reformed Faculty of Theology here began today. I am sending you an article on the two opening discourses of M. Pavy² and M. Vincent³ who chose to take an elevated and grand overview of their subjects. The Cologne affair⁴ which has alarmed us all very much might be a good occasion for beginning the series of articles I spoke to you about on Protestantism and freedom; there would be no more than four articles, which you can publish at your convenience.

The loss of M. Miolland⁵ will be great for us, as great as will be his acquisition for your diocese. It will be easy for me to arrange the introduction to him you wish.

I promise to write more at length in four or five days, on the occasion of the feast of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.⁶ You will see how God has blessed our efforts for the instruction of soldiers and how easy it would be to establish the same work in Paris.⁷

We have learned something about your difficulties with M. Annot. We beseech you to be firm. It is you who are the heart of the Society. It is from you that we draw life and warmth. It is to you that our affections and dearest thoughts turn. After the archbishop of Paris,⁸ it is on you we depend. To maintain this union which makes for our independence we have here sustained rude assaults, not from ecclesiastical authority which is on the contrary favorable, but from the imprudent zeal of the pious laity. Make sure that our trials happily overcome do not remain useless for you. Love is strong as death, says a sage of the Old Testament. It is even stronger since the latter was vanquished by the divine author of the New Testament. But the death of societies is division: and your charity for us triumphs then over this danger as it already has over so many others. Our gratitude will be the earthly recompense, but not the only one, for all your suffering. Even those of our

brothers in St. Vincent de Paul who do not know you are tenderly attached to you: a few lines from your hand are a joy to them and, next Monday, what you have written me about them is going to be a true benefit. Chaurand and Arthaud ask that you not forget them and I, who have such special obligations to you, beg you to forgive my inability to show myself worthy of it.

Your most devoted servant,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: (Copied at the beginning of the letter): Urgent. Monsieur, Monsieur le Directeur de l'*Univers religieux*, rue des Fossés S. Jacques. no. 11, Paris.

Copy: Provided by the Management of the journal *La Croix*—*Extract of Msgr. Gaston: Society of St. Vincent de Paul.*

Notes:

1. A member of the Haraneder family, importers and exporters, who were close relatives of Ozanam. Mme. Haraneder (nee Benoitte Nantas) was the sister of Mme. Ozanam (nee Marie Nantas), Ozanam's mother.
2. Louis Pavy (1805-1856), Lyon priest, had just assumed the Chair of Ecclesiastical History. He was named bishop of Alger in 1846.
3. Abbé Vincent had also just assumed an assignment in dogma.
4. At the Consistory of October 10, 1837, Gregory XVI had protested against the measures taken by the king of Prussia against the archbishops of Cologne and Gnesen.
5. Jean-Marie Miolland (1788-1859) was superior of the community called Carthusians. His nomination to the bishopric of Amiens was not effective until 1838. He died as archbishop of Toulouse.
6. Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8.
7. The report referred to here was published in the *Bulletin de la Société de Saint-Vincent de Paul* in April 1910, p. 89.
8. Louis de Quélen.



165. To Emmanuel Bailly
Lyon, December 27, 1837

He sends news of the Lyon conferences by a young Lyon man, Lacour, who is going to Paris. Preaching of M. de Ravignan. Allocutions of the Pope. Announces a work on Protestantism.

Monsieur,

It certainly seems that Providence is sending to Paris a pleasant fellow who attracts and holds captive the Lyonnaise. Those who have met him once do not fail to feel his power, even despite the numerous differences separating them, and sooner or later, they capitulate. As you remember your friend Bouchacourt, so you are going to find young Lacour,¹ who brings you this letter. He brings at the same time

the good and faithful regards of those here, and all of us express to you wishes for a good and happy New Year, fruitful in divine grace and human prosperity. You will wish in your turn to be the carrier of these regards, of which a particular debt of gratitude makes me the principal voice, to all those around you whom we have loved. It belongs to you to maintain these bonds of Christian affection which you have cemented among friends who did not seem fated to know one another. On you, and your courage and charity, rests this Society which we beheld so little and frail and which now seems called to make itself heard and vigorous. You have been told what we have done here, the success of our division into two conferences, and the revival of the spirit which seemed to be weakening; but be assured that our strength resides in the thought that we are not alone, and that our works and prayers are surrounded with much better works and prayers, which protect them against corruption from without and draws upon them the blessing of heaven.

M. Miolland is going to leave soon for Paris. You have every desirable facility for meeting and entertaining him. I will write to you about it. You are too kind to honor and publicize my letters. But this honor has its perils. The Archdiocese has been offended by the conjecture, so far in advance, of a vacancy.² I have been told that I was hoping Msgr. d' Amasie would die, which is certainly very far from my intention.

You are certainly not unaware of the success won by M. de Ravignan³ in the Advent sermons. Our metropolis is filled with his voice. He repeated his conferences of last year here: they have effected two kinds of good: First, they have a happy effect on some serious minds whom the discourses of M. Cambalot had not been able to touch; second, they have caused some of the new formulas recently so severely proscribed to be accepted by the timid intelligences who abound here.

We have read the allocation of the sovereign pontiff with great joy.⁴ The patience of the Holy See seems rewarded by even the favor of circumstances which contrived to give it a hearing. It could not make a better impression.

Alexander III had not the same success in the St. Thomas of Canterbury affair.⁵ Perhaps, for that matter, the Europe of today is more perceptive than the Europe of that time. A pistol shot fired at a royal personage could scarcely awaken echoes anymore, and there you have the hand of the prince arousing throughout all Christendom a persevering outcry for having laid hold of an ancient episcopal see which was thought to be obsolete. It seemed to me an excellent opportunity for the work I had spoken to you about: "On the Political Activity of Protestantism, its Influence on Public Liberty." I have been working at it for some days; it will be about four articles in length. But, as you wish the series to be sent all at one time, and on the other hand, the research must be irreproachable, I cannot send it to you for two weeks. Allow me to renew on this occasion my thanks for the reception you have given my articles and especially for the very prompt publication of the discourse of Abbé Pavy. I think it produced the desired effect, and I attest to the gratitude of the author with my own.

Adieu, monsieur, yes indeed, to God.⁶ There is the natural refuge of those who love without being able to show it as they would like to. There is the refuge which

will restore to us the years that have gone, if we have had the good fortune not to suffer shipwreck on the reefs with which they are strewn.

Your most devoted servant,
A.-F. OZANAM

Copy: Provided by the management of the journal *La Croix*. Extracted by Msgr. Gaston's hand, Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Notes:

1. Ozanam sends greetings to "young Lacour," who is in Paris, in a letter to Arthaud, August 22, 1835.
2. See letter 164 where Ozanam tells Bailly that Miolland is going to Paris.
3. Gustave Xavier Delacroix de Ravignan (1795-1858), lawyer, became a Jesuit in 1822. Renowned as a preacher, he succeeded Lacordaire in the pulpit of Notre Dame for the famous Lenten Conferences from 1837 to 1846.
4. See letter 164, note 4.
5. St. Thomas à Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, was murdered in his cathedral by four of King Henry II's knights for his defense of the Church against the King's encroachments (1117-1170).
6. The literal meaning of *adieu*.



169. François Lallier
Lyon, February 7, 1838

Resumé of steps for his candidature and future projects in case of success. News of the Lyon conferences and reflections on the work of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Dear friend,

Janmot will not leave without taking some lines from me, not for himself—you well know how much we all love him for you to need to be reminded of him—but to the end of acquitting me of the debt I incurred recently with you by writing you so short and curt a letter.

The business I spoke to you about is coming to an end. The Municipal Council is only waiting for the town budget's approval by the minister of the interior to proceed with the naming of candidates. I have made more than sixty visits and have seen thirty-four municipal councilors. I have had recourse to every kind of intrigue and, thanks to the kindness of many people, I am practically certain of being on the list. As soon as it is decided upon, perhaps in a month or six weeks, it will be necessary to go to the capital; if you can in the meantime take the special step I indicated, it will be very useful. It is important for me to circumvent my rivals. I do not know why I feel compelled to mix you up in this business, especially since you know already the hope with which I flatter myself. If I should get this post, for which every-

one tells me about the lining up of a clientele I do not wish to exploit, I will certainly be able to help the advancement of my friends. If you want to, it is up to you to share the advantages of this post with me. In a city where reputations are made quicker, where you already possess so much affection and have acquired esteem, and where an honorable position will be easy for you later on, you will find yourself better off than in Paris, where your recent letters and Du Lac's tales tell of your sad and ungrateful situation.

This proposal is serious and conscientious on my part, even if it might appear self-serving. With the ruination of the family God has given me, I need what friendship has given me and cannot be let go of. Every day I witness the most sorrowful of sights, the sapping of my mother's strength; as she loses her sight, her moral energy weakens; her sensitivity seems to increase with all her anxieties, all the sadness that cannot be conceived in a soul like hers. Instead, then, of finding asylum in her, the needed support for my age and first steps in the world, I must sustain her, in word and arm. My older brother's constant missions deprive me of the help of his advice, and the designs of God on him may take him away from me further still. The benevolence of certain of my father's relatives and friends have been of some financial help, such as lessons in Law which I teach a young man obliged for family reasons to do his first year here. Others have obtained a little tribunal business for me. Finally, a greater number have shown toward my current requests an efficacious zeal and affection I had not expected. But it is especially the give-and-take of feelings and thoughts, sympathy, intellectual stimulation and moral assistance—these are the intimate offices of friendship lacking to me, and whose rarity causes me a great deal of suffering.

I meet them, however, though less frequently than is needed, in our Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Those weekly evening meetings are one of the greatest consolations Providence has left me. And especially my sessions, too infrequent to satisfy me, with Chaurand, Arthaud, and La Pierrière, recalling for me the best Paris days. Our works are self-sustaining but, if they are increasing, it is according to the quotation: *Incrementum latens*.¹ The division into two conferences has not had troublesome results, except that the results have not given us lively satisfaction here. Four meetings of a less serious kind have occurred this winter to bring together members so far apart, multiple, mutual partnerships, and put somewhat on our side that powerful ally which so often is placed at the service of our enemies: pleasure. Your letter has reanimated the work with the military whose zeal was beginning to languish. You would not believe what magic there is in words from afar and in the approbation of so great a number of friends. The bonds which attach us to the society of Paris are like those which united those famous twins whose separation meant death:² blood and life intermingle interiorly. The thought that we had taken five tickets in your last lottery prompts us to send you some in a lottery whose results should prove the difference in making up our *deficit*. The number of the tickets is in proportion to yours. Two prizes will be yours *as a matter of course*, and will be sent you promptly.

Courage, then, dear friends, our elders in the practice of good, be our models

always. It sometimes seems to me that the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, situated as it is at the schools' gates, that is, at the wellsprings of the new generation, that generation destined one day to occupy positions where influence is exercised, can give such happy stimulation to our poor French society, and through France, to the whole world. It strikes me that Lacordaire is the Peter the Hermit³ of the crusade upon whose camps and banners it is about to set its seal. See how, from the towns of Ireland to those of the Rhine, the rallying signs are repeated; it belongs to our cities to carry them in their turn to Spain and failing Italy. I would have liked to see a demonstration of Parisian youth on the Cologne affair.⁴ Do you remember the day when Lacordaire asked God for saints? Had you been given Thomases of Canterbury, would you not have hailed them with a cry of admiration? It especially seems to me that in this attack the Saracens of rationalism have given us a beautiful opportunity for combat, and the occasion for crying: "God wills it."⁵

It is your duty, by age and office in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, to reanimate it from time to time by new inspirations which, without harm to its primitive spirit, foresee the dangers of too monotonous a uniformity. Let us be careful not to straiten ourselves with customs too hidebound, within bounds impassable in number or density. Why cannot the conferences of Saint-Etienne and Saint-Sulpice go beyond fifty zealous members? Why cannot the Society here get larger than scarcely forty members? Think about it.

Adieu, dear Lallier, I allow myself to entertain an impetuosity that might perhaps appear very childish to you in a man who this past year should have grown much older. Adieu, I must close. I do not close, I assure you, without remembering you and praying for your welfare to Him in whom I am ever

Your friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 242.

Notes:

1. Hiding the increase.
2. Siamese twins. It was not thought possible to separate them at the time.
3. Peter the Hermit (c. 1050-1115), religious born at Amiens, principal preacher of the First Crusade.
4. See letter 164, note 4.
5. The rallying cry of the Crusades.



170. To Henri Pessonneaux
Lyon, February 7, 1838

He has defended his cousin to the latter's uncle. Creation of the Chair of Business Law at Lyon. Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Dear friend,

Pardon if a host of occupations prevented me from replying sooner to a letter in all of whose sorrowful impressions I have shared wholeheartedly. What you asked of me I have accomplished in part. Some days afterward, while visiting your uncle, I reassured him on the points, few enough in number for that matter, about which a very imprudent friend had raised his anxiety. That friend having made the same kind approaches to me already in the past, I countered them with all the condemnation they deserved; my relationship with him is not intimate enough to permit me writing to him. But I have seen your uncle again and witnessed anew to your religion and virtue. I found him very astonished at the pain his letter, which he said had expressed not even grave suspicion, had caused you. Unfortunately, really, there comes an age when weakened sensibility can no longer understand the sensibility of someone else. He did for that matter agree with me about his inappropriate suppositions being a mistake, and assured me you had lost nothing either of his esteem or affection, and gave me immediate proof in chatting about your troubles and interests, your present and your future. On this ground we had a mutually agreeable conversation. It seemed to us that you ought, if possible, to find a place where you have some leisure, to use it in taking the licentiate in law and the doctorate in letters, and finally to compete in the aggregation, certain that, even if you did not win, you could obtain a niche in the university. You could thus be in a secure situation which could become brilliant. If it is true, as I have heard reported, that M. Combolet is in Paris, you could make use of his good offices for your father in regard to that letter I sent you last year, or, if needed, I could send you another. We always receive news of your family eagerly, and we will be glad to learn that it is happy again. At least convey to it the wishes its Lyon friends send it.

As for myself who, in my last, spoke of myself at length, I have only one important change in my situation to tell you about. The Municipal Council of our city finally brought itself to vote a Chair of Business Law. When this resolution shall have received all the necessary administrative approbations, the council will nominate three candidates and I have already taken numerous steps to make sure of a place on this list. The choice will belong to the minister; at that time I will be obliged to go to Paris for some days so as to make sure of being preferred. The hope of seeing so many friends again would be a great pleasure of the little trip, were it not troubled by the thought of my poor mother in constant suffering. I now understand what absences can cost, and what returns can be.

I am sure that you continue to be an active member of the Conference of Saint-Philippe de Roul. We are praying for you insistently, we your provincial brothers; do not let it fail, nor let those works it performed for our consolation and which hold

so dear a place in our remembrance, languish. Your thought is our strength, your merits our birthright, your name alone has been a powerful protection for us against the attacks which threaten our first establishment here. There is need in our short and evil days of putting in common the least good that each one does. Can it be said that the societies of charity where merits accumulate so as to report an immense interest on the day of reward are the *caisses d'épargne*¹ of eternity?

Adieu, dear friend, it is getting late and this letter must go tomorrow morning by the kindness of Janmot. Adieu, many love you here. I am sure I am among the first. Pray for me.

Your cousin,
A.-F. OZANAM
rue S. Pierre, 4

Original: Archives Laporte.

Note:

1. A bank account made up of small deposits which generate low interest, and whose interest is added to the capital at the end of each year.



173. To François Lallier
Lyon, April 9, 1838

Hazards of the lawyer's profession and new professional outlooks. Sufferings of solitude attributed to literary works. Activities of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Religious events in Germany.

Dear friend,

I had hoped to bring myself the reply to your last letter, but delays still multiplying and not permitting me to decide in a precise way the time of my trip, it was necessary to write to prevent a lapse in our correspondence which is so dear to you.

First, accept my very deep gratitude for the good offices you have rendered me in regard to M. de Jouanne. I am aware of the sacrifices made in Paris for commissions from the provinces. But if anything could reward you for your pains it is undoubtedly the good results they have had. M. Ampère, who wrote to me a few days after you and who had seen the minister, assured me that he had found him extremely disposed toward me, thanks to the recommendations that came to him from several sources. M. de Lamartine and the two most influential deputies from Lyon have also given me confidence in benevolent patronage. My matter seems to be gathering a very good chance of success in Paris. Unfortunately the chances are not as numerous at Lyon and the delays which are multiplying, multiply the competitors also. The Municipal Council can draw up its slate of candidates only after the town budget, approved in Paris, is returned with the implicit approbation of the

government for the establishment of the chair. But the budget's return is still awaited, and delays about another month the time when the proposed slate will oblige me, as I understand it, to leave to solicit the preference. I have great hopes, seeing in this something providential. The most difficult part is over, and I never cease to be astonished that a poor boy such as I have become will create a chair. It remains to be careful not to add a fifth verse to the *Sic vos non vobis* of Virgil.¹ If, nevertheless, it should come to that point, after all the human means imaginable have been employed in my favor, I will still be grateful to God's will, and easily comfort myself. This whole affair is for me a question of vocation: I am waiting for the solution with respect, and I hope to accept it calmly, whatever it may be.

It is nonetheless true that a considerable temporal interest is involved, for I am experiencing like you the anxieties of the *Res angusta domi*² and, what is worse, this anxiety is not borne by myself alone, but extends to my little brother and mother, whose needs increase in the measure that her health grows weaker. And I who, after so many sacrifices made by my father for my education, ought to be able to take his place today and become the support of my family, I am on the contrary more of a charge than ever. A law lesson which I give every day is the surest of my incomes. Clients give me great leisure. With the exception of two criminal cases which resulted in more noise than money, two suits that I have been able to initiate, one that I pleaded in business court last week, a rather considerable debt on which I got a settlement in a suit between merchants, and finally a certain amount of free consultations, there is all the business the worthy law profession has given me for five months, a profession where a goodly fortune is made in the end, if you do not die of hunger in the beginning. And meanwhile, I swear to you that these cases, rare as they are, annoy me still; I cannot get used to the atmosphere of chicanery; the discussions of pecuniary interests bore me; it is not a matter of a good cause or mutual wrongs; nor of legal argument or of failing to cover up certain weak points. There exist customs of hyberbole and reticence of which the most respected members of the bar are the exemplars, and to which one must submit; every figure of rhetoric is put into practice before the tribunals, which understand no other language. It is expected that 200 for damages be sought when fifty are hoped for, that the client surely has reason for his allegations, and that his adversary is a fool. Make your presentation in the most rational terms, and you will be considered to have made concessions and surrendered; colleagues reproach you; the client pretends to be betrayed; and if you meet one of the judges outside who has presided in the case he will accost you with, "My dear man, you are too shy!"

But it seems that I am back to a chapter you have for a long time always found in my letters, my vexations. I have much to tell you: always the same external sorrows and my mother nearly blind, always the same sorrows within and the discontent my incorrigible nature brings on. At the moment I am suffering a malady which will appear strange in a town where I have so many relatives and friends; I mean isolation. For, on the one hand, I cannot speak freely to my mother, whose extreme sensitiveness gives rise to very harmful agitation, to every anxiety and worrisome thought in me; I cannot put them on my brother,³ for he is nearly always

away, and I scarcely ever see him alone; if I were to speak to other relatives it would be to ask their advice which they would give as an order. My friends, happier than I, no longer need to leave their fireside, where they dwell content; there no longer exists among us that need of mutual confidences experienced at Paris. Nothing saddens me more than the long Sunday evenings my mother spends at her sister's, where I see happy groups drawn by the return of spring filling the pavements, while I sit alone, knowing no more disagreeable company than myself, and closet myself with a magazine or a book. I appreciate now by its privation the whole value of the spoken word, how much more it cultivates thought than the dead letter of the greatest writers. I need conversation and I do not come across it, be it at home, or church, or in society, except for trivial and poverty-stricken words. I feel myself still too young to deprive myself of models and masters, but I rarely encounter models and masters I wish to accept. But I would deprive myself of them if I could find any compensation in the speech and preferences of young people my own age. Of those I love the best, La Perrière, always ill, stays out of sight at Mulatière; Chaurand and Arthaud are more and more absorbed in the business of their professions. How it annoys me, excellent friend, that you are not a Lyonnaise!

A distraction remains in the literary works I am still able to read, but with so many interruptions and such difficulty in achievement, that I am often afraid of being attached by self-love alone to this ungrateful pen that it might be better to destroy. I have written for *l'Univers religieux*, which has promised publication, four articles on the history of Protestantism; they have been gone for a month, and I have heard no news.⁴ I have written M. Bailly to ask him, first whether they had arrived, and second whether when I get to Paris I could stay with him. I have had no reply. Would you be kind enough to ask him for a response *as soon as possible*? I have yet another favor to ask of you. In about three months I shall have finished copying my thesis on Dante which has turned into a book. Allow me to send it to you and to request that, after you have read it, you take it to M. Le Clerc, dean of the Faculty of Letters,⁵ for the examination to which it must be submitted. Thus I would lessen proportionately my waiting to go to Paris.

To send you my thesis by coach or some opportunity, I will need your exact address, which I do not recall. Will you be good enough to give it to me?

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul also owes you thanks for the promptitude with which you sent the last account-rendered. This poor Society has its trials, too.

Because of its members whose negligence often makes it languish; because of its heads whose duty of situation or personal inertia render them helpless to give it the needed stimulus; especially from outside, where attacks whose authors are difficult to find do not cease. It would take more energy and open-mindedness than my temperament and affairs allow me to figure it all out; and yet there are circumstances which prevent my relinquishment of a presidency so badly accomplished. Otherwise we have had consolations of more than one kind. Four happy meetings have this winter reunited members of the Society around a fraternal table, where the bonds of charity were strengthened as much as purses were opened. And our lottery met with such success that it reached nearly 1,300 francs. We shall not forget

your part in it. The two prizes set aside for you and which will give you no reason for complaint are waiting for an opportunity to be sent to you: it will probably be my own.

Our moral strength, however, comes from other conferences in Paris and the provinces. This solidarity raises us in the eyes of the world at the same time that it gives us confidence. The Lyon conference wrote recently for information on the work with the military which we sent at once. By contrast, a letter from M. Curnier tells me the Nîmes conference has no hope of reestablishment. See if you can rekindle the smoking flax and lift up the bruised reed.⁶ The existence of three new groups at Paris has caused us much joy. The two Mm. Guillemin⁷ I recommended to you seem very content and sincerely attached to the work, if one can believe their letters. How marvelous association is, my friend, and how it alone reassures and comforts this isolation which I complain of every hour! How important it is not to allow the basic elements to disperse, nor to relax the attraction which brings them together! It was in the interest of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, to stir up heat among young Catholic youth that I proposed to you a manifestation like the open collection by *l'Univers religieux* for the archbishop of Cologne. I know well that neither he, nor the Church, nor God, have need of our approval. The finest approval he could wish, the glorious prelate, is the retraction of his colleagues, and the arrest of the archbishop of Posen. This is a very solemn hour for the Catholicity of Germany, whose imminent downfall is loudly announced. Look at Ireland which extends a hand to Poland in the middle of the Belgian and Rhenish provinces. I read some days ago a vigorous protest of the archbishop of Tuam against the system of perversion which Anglican Protestantism exercises on Irish youth. The day before yesterday I had in my hands the letter of the archbishop of Posen, and yesterday I saw the Pope's bull to the archbishop of Malines ordering him to transmit it to the Prussian clergy. Is it not admirable to feel all the North moving and the breaking of the ice Protestantism had amassed there? The debacle is close. Then you will see those proud and idle existences which the false shepherds had, and the authority usurped by kings, overthrown and crushed to powder; then you will see those crowns which aspired to become tiaras, those crosses which had aspired to be swords, float in rubble upon the abyss with the abundant riches which the Reformation had provided, and the millions of lying or altered books which they read to their people.

Is it not also remarkable that this necessary and desperate struggle between the sovereign pontificate and absolute monarchy comes at a time when mad friends or adroit enemies are engaged in confounding their causes? In which of the two camps lies liberty? In the one where all the traditions of Joseph II,⁸ Louis XIV⁹ and Henry VIII¹⁰ are joined with the rationalism of Kant,¹¹ Hegel,¹² and Goethe¹³ under the cloak of Frederick William?¹⁴ Or in the one where behind Gregory XVI reappear the great figures of Pius VII, Innocent XI,¹⁵ Innocent IV,¹⁶ and Gregory VII¹⁷ with the faith of St. Ambrose, St. John Chrysostom,¹⁸ and St. Thomas¹⁹? For us Frenchmen, slaves to words, a great thing has been accomplished: the separation of the two great worlds which seem inseparable, the throne and the altar. The old royal-

ism, what does it think of its prophesies? And what would not M. de Lammenais give to withdraw his own? Oh! How God is laughing at our wisdom and how He confounds our impatience! But, dear friend, entirely useless servants that we are, we are not allowed to be idle servants. Woe to us if we do not cooperate in all the great works which can be done without us! Let us be on guard lest humanity be, under the guise of good, the easy pretext for indolence. When the Savior died on Calvary, He could have had at His command twelve legions of angels, and He would not; yet He willed that Simon of Cyrene, an obscure man, carry His cross and so contribute to the great marvel of universal redemption.

Do not be discouraged, then, dear friend, nor let yourself be a prey to your customary worries. Do not bury the father of the family's talent.²⁰ You have duties to the young men of your generation who have received the promises of your first successes. You have duties to your friends, who count on you a great deal to help them keep faithful and good in a dangerous age. You should do much because you are much loved.

On my part, I never receive Communion without praying especially for you.

Adieu, we shall meet, I think, next Sunday at the rendezvous of the Holy Eucharist.

A.-F. OZANAM

I have charged M. Pasquet,²¹ member of the conference and one of my best friends, who left for Paris before I could write you, to go to see you. You will certainly receive him at your best. My friendly wishes to you.

Original: Archives Laporte. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 247.

Notes:

1. Thus you, not yours.
2. Confinement to the house.
3. Abbé Ozanam.
4. These articles appeared in *l'Univers* from December 1838 to July 1839 (Galopin, n. 115). They are found in t. VIII of *Oeuvres*.
5. Victor Le Clerc (1789-1865), Latinist and historian, had been dean of the Faculty of Letters at Paris since 1832.
6. Cf. Is 42:1-4; Matt 12:20.
7. Two brothers. One of them, Alexandre Guillemin (1789-1872), a lawyer at the court in 1813, in the Council of State from 1823 to 1830, renewed at the court in 1830 until his retirement in 1856, was president of the Conference of Saint-Sulpice, 1849-1872. (*La Conférence de Saint-Sulpice* in *Bulletin de la Société de Saint-Vincent-de-Paul*, t. LX, 1908, p. 188, and notes from the president of the Conference of Saint-Sulpice.)
8. Joseph II, son of Francis I and Maria Theresa, emperor of Austria from 1765 to 1790, famous despot. Favorable to the philosophical ideas of the eighteenth century, he attempted premature reforms in his states which failed.
9. Louis IX, born in 1638, king of France from 1643 to 1715.
10. Henry VIII, king of England from 1509 to 1547 (born in 1491).
11. Emmanuel Kant, German philosopher (1724-1804).
12. Georg Wilhelm Frederick Hegel, German philosopher (1770-1831).
13. Wolfgang Goethe, Germany's most famous writer, born at Frankfort-on-Main (1749-1832).
14. Frederick William III, king of Prussia from 1797 to 1840 (born at Berlin in 1770).

15. Innocent XI, pope from 1676 to 1689, had lively quarrels with Louis XIV over the king's taking possession of the temporalities of bishoprics during vacancies.
16. Innocent IV, pope from 1242 to 1254.
17. St. Gregory VII, born Hildebrand, pope from 1073 to 1085, one of the greatest of the Roman pontiffs, noted for his struggles against the German Emperor Henry IV whom he humbled in the famous meeting at Canossa.
18. St. John Chrysostom (347-407), Greek Church Father, patriarch of Constantinople, persecuted by the Empress Eudoxia.
19. St. Thomas Aquinas, from the context (which concerns faith and cites two other doctors of the Church.) Thomas, the greatest of Catholic theologians, was born in the castle of Rocca-Secca. His *Summa Contra Gentiles* and *Summa Theologica* are the most perfect expression of Catholic philosophy (1225-1274).
20. Reference to the parable of the talents.
21. M. Pasquet was a Lyon merchant and a member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (see letters 142 and 163).



174. To Henri and César D'Aillaud¹
Lyon, May 13, 1838

Announces their admission into the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

I have the honor to inform Messieurs Henri and César d'Aillaud that they are admitted into the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and that I will take them tomorrow, Monday, at 8 o'clock in the evening, to present them at the meeting.

I beg them to accept meanwhile the assurance of my affectionate devotion.

A.-F. OZANAM

Original: d'Aillaud Family of Caseneuve.

Note:

1. Two brothers. Henri d'Aillaud de Caseneuve founded a conference of the Society in Aix-en-Provence in 1839. (See letter 214.)



175. To François Lallier
Lyon, May 17, 1838

Recalls the bonds formed during their student days. New organization of the conferences of Lyon. Suggestions for the rules of the society, and problem of isolated members.

Dear friend,

Your fine letter of Easter Day has long been soliciting a reply. The report and some lines I have just received from you leave no excuse for my silence. But especially the need I always have to converse with you coming wider awake as the subjects of conversation multiply, the most importunate occupations must give way and make a place of some hours for the duties of friendship.

For I assure you, Lamache put it well, and you can thank him for me, those friendships formed under the auspices of faith and charity, in a double confraternity of religious discussion and benevolent works, far from languishing as the result of prolonged absence, look inward and focus in some way; they feed on remembrance, and you know that remembrance embellishes everything, idealizes reality, purifies images, and more willingly preserves sweet impressions than painful emotions. Besides, all those humble scenes of our student life, when they come back to me in the half-light of the past, have an ineffable charm for me: the evening meetings at M. Gerbet's conferences, which had something of the aura of mystery, and in them our first bonds were forged; those historical and philosophical disputes where we stimulated an ardor of such high quality, where the successes brought us together in so great a heart, the little meetings on the rue de Petit Bourbon Saint-Sulpice, the first of which took place in the month of May,¹ something that Lamache said, I supported him, and you felt obliged to insist that I was superstitious; and that famous evening when we attended the closing of the Academie de Saint-Hyacinthe as spies and resolved on the spot to present the petition to Monseigneur; and that unheralded visit when we presented ourselves in trembling, mounted such an unprepared attack, and left so upset; and Lacordaire's debuts at Stanislas, his triumphs at Notre-Dame which we somehow considered our own, and the editing of the *Revue Européenne* in M. Bailly's studio, and the vicissitudes of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, that famous meeting at the end of December 1834 when the division was discussed, when Le Taillandier wept, La Perrière and I were hard on ourselves, and it ended with an embrace friendlier than ever, wishing one another a happy new year for the next day. Add to all that the midnight Christmas suppers, the Corpus Christi processions, the eglantines blooming so handsomely along the road to Nanterre, the relics of St. Vincent de Paul carried on our shoulders at Clichy, and again so many favors exchanged, so often the overflowing of open hearts in conversation that the courtesy of the one allowed the other to ramble on; the advice, the example, the secret tears shed at the foot of the altar when gathered there together, and the piety of some provoked a pious jealousy; and finally the walks among the lilacs of the Luxembourg (gardens), or on the square of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont when the moonlight brought out in bold relief the three great buildings.

All that, dear friend, serves me as the base of a tableau of my thoughts; all that casts a soft light and a rather sorrowful one on my present life, which loses a great deal by comparison. I think I really understand how history becomes poetry for the human mind and why people guard their traditions with such filial attachment. I have in these things, if you please, my golden age, my fabled time, my mythology—for fable necessarily is intermingled—nor should all the trivial things intermingled with those scenes I guard in memory be effaced. But truer, more serious, striking deeper roots not only in the imagination but to the bottom of the heart are the affections formed during this period of life. I surprised the proof of it in myself with the two recent losses of Serre and La Noue, which provoked more tears than others more plausible, in the general order, of my attachments. Each day I acquire new confidence, when some letter of yours arrives, some article of Lamache's in a magazine, some news of Le Taillandier, Pessonneaux or others like them; it makes me forget all the anxieties of the present time, and were it not ridiculous to use the expression at twenty-four, I would say, it makes me young again.

As a matter of fact, I feel older in several ways since the day of our last separation: that was May 15 a year ago, dear friend, when you, knowing the tragedy; which I did not, went with me to the coach which left carrying a distraught son and deposited me here an orphan. Have I lived since then, or indeed, and I beg God to consider it such, have I had only a long dream? I do not want to tell you all the anguish; you know them all.

But they are not over. Eastertime, which is also the change of season, has been terrible for my mother's health; for two weeks I have watched her threatened with a stroke. A multitude of remedies easily procured by our friend Arthaud alleviated it for us; she is presently in a much less alarming state; but we are told to be fearful for the autumn; the future, which is the meeting ground of hopes, is the point for us where all our fears come together. She often says that the success of my steps for the professorships has prolonged her days, and I do not know whether this latter means of keeping her in my life will be given me. For about two months the Municipal Council has not bothered about the candidate list, and I have reason to fear the delay is a maneuver of my rival's, who would like to wangle the presentation for the holidays, a time when several of the councillors favorable to me will be in the country, and the deputies in Paris who are interested in me gone back to their provinces. I am meanwhile taking new steps where I have reason to expect a better result. Notwithstanding, I cannot pinpoint the time when the candidates will be designated, nor consequently when I should leave for Paris, and God knows I wish it were soon! To these dominant preoccupations are added others less serious but often irksome and which, taken together, have worked adversely on my temperament. No serious illness, but a succession of small, annoying indispositions. From that, a general abatement of physical and moral strength, little courage, little more intelligence. This lassitude has affected my work and my interminable volume on Dante which you should have had two weeks ago will hardly be finished in the same amount of time. You will notice traces of the malaise I am talking about. For the rest, thank you for your good offices, and especially the hospitality you extend to this poor

Dante. It is apparent that during his lifetime and around the year of grace 1290, he spent some time in Paris; he attended while there some lectures of a man named Sigier (the Cousin² of the day), in the rue du Fouarre. But I have been told that the capital has changed a bit since then, and besides the poet has grown very old and would be seen there as acting very awkwardly; add to that that the Sorbonne of the present little resembles that of St. Louis, and that Dante would run the risk of making a bad impression, if he were alone, at the door of M. Le Clerc, who is not a St. Thomas Aquinas.

So delayed as it has been by the press of circumstances this work would not have failed to satisfy me, if the help I had at Paris had not been totally lacking here. Our library is adequate enough, but our current literature is singularly poor, and the small number of trained men we have, surrounded with something like disfavor in society, obliged to talk to themselves, contract habits of barbarism which make them inaccessible. I could not then obtain from M. Noirot, our former professor of philosophy, the advice I needed. For the rest, none of that discipline, no trace of that general enthusiasm, of that exterior life which at Paris sustained and supported me. I think that if one had a stronger intellectual constitution, better nourished with preparatory studies, this solitary labor would have its advantages, would preserve an originality which is lost in something like contagion of style when one is exposed to it at Paris; it would acquire a little more control of thought, of those meticulous opinions, which breach it, or at the very least round it out, and weaken it by constant wear. The mind is better cultivated where you are but it is meant to be used.

As for me, I am not yet qualified to work alone; I am in worse company than it seems, for I am never bored except with myself. And although the books follow one after another, at the end of several hours I am tired of the dead word. I need to hear living voices; they alone have the ability to move souls profoundly. Prestige goes just so far with me, and on balance the writings of a living author strike me infinitely more than those of the most illustrious who are dead.

I am also obliged to you for the interest you have shown my articles. The pattern of long quarantine they undergo is easy to understand. I am especially annoyed that they languish in the files of *l'Univers*. They form half of a little work I have undertaken on the political history of Protestantism, in which I have taken much pleasure and whose conclusions charm by a seeming paradox. Indeed, it is impossible to be too astounded at how greatly history is ignored and especially that of the last three centuries; and by some miracles of foolishness on the one side and credulity on the other, the most impudent lies have become positive facts.

I assure you, nonetheless, that my impatience is not less reserved for your articles than for mine. I am awaiting F's and L's at the bottom of the articles in *l'Univers catholique* and all serials in *l'Univers*. Their appearance would not be less agreeable to me than it used to be for those kind forfeits of Abbé Migne³ who printed your initials for those of M. de Lammenais. I indeed compassionate all your tribulations proportionately easier because I experience the like. How happy we would be, La Perrière and I, if we could convince you of faring better here! Meanwhile, if Le Tail-

landier is easily available, tell him that the archivist of our court of commerce, having lately lost his son, would willingly sell his post: the post is very lucrative, and he who holds it a most respectable man who has given careful attention to the charge committed to him. If Le Taillandier would authorize and instruct me, the business could be taken up: Chaurand, who knows the individual slightly, would also help bring it to a successful conclusion. If he should find the offer interests him and decides whether he will come to settle among us, he will find himself surrounded with friends he parted from in Paris, and I almost dare to say: and the best of them. Make him my excuses, I have not the time to write him.

This letter threatens to become deadly boring, not for me who have let the pen run away with me, but for you who find in it all those repetitions of things spoken twenty times between us. Nor would there have been the annoyance of costing you your wallet fourteen sous and your eyes an hour's reading, did I not have to speak to you from afar about the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. I have noted with extreme pleasure that Msgr. de Quélen was represented at your general meeting by his vicars general, and I am sure that this solemn approbation will produce the highest effect here. But, behind the official notices, I would like to see some official information on the reasons which prevented Msgr. from attending himself; I would like to know whether you will have him on July 19, and finally whether the vicars general were truly satisfied. Things must be properly understood. It is wrong, for example, to announce as Lamache did in his report, that the archbishop of Lyon has formally approved the Society, when he only dropped a word of satisfaction in a private conversation. Illusions cannot be created; the Society has encountered defiance everywhere. If it has never incurred blame from the ecclesiastical authority at Lyon, if indeed several venerable priests have encouraged it, it has not ceased to be the object of annoyance from many lay people, the important people⁴ of orthodoxy. Council fathers in coat, trousers and spats, doctors who make pronouncements between reading a magazine article and discussions around the merchandise stalls, between the pear and the cheese; people for whom new arrivals are always bad arrivals, for whom anything that comes from Paris is presumed corrupt, who make their political opinion a thirteenth article of the Creed; who appropriate works of charity to themselves, and who modestly say in place of Our Lord: "Whoever is not with us is against us." You could not believe the meanness, the villanies, the subtleties, the petitions, the public insults of these people, with the best faith in the world, and we have suffered much even from those who love us. We have, however, no reason to complain when we traffic with a world where M. Lacordaire is anethematized, M. de Ravignan pronounced unintelligible, Abbé Coeur⁵ is suspect, and M. Combalot frivolous.

Chaurand and I, as chief founders and directors of the work, have been constantly in the breach, and we find the post exhausting; there is always a trace of bitterness left in the mind, and charity is wounded in the discussions on the matter thrust upon you. On the other hand, there is a responsibility attached to these commitments, however modest they are; the mistakes made are doubly serious when they can reflect on the works directed. The heads of pious associations ought

to be saints to draw down the grace of God on them. I often ask myself how I, so weak and sinful, dare to remain the representative of so many young people. That is why I long for the time when it will be possible to relieve me of the presidency. If Le Taillandier were here, we would vote unanimously for him. For there is, and perhaps the only positive good we have effected, an extreme attachment of the Lyon members for their friends, even those they are unacquainted with, in Paris. M. Couvin, of Saint-Sulpice, having spent some days at Lyon, was welcomed and feted at the conference of Saint-Pierre and made to feel as if he were with his usual colleagues. Enclosed is the interior organization drawn up for the rest of the year. Accarias and Chaurand secretary and treasurer generals, Arthaud president of Saint-Pierre, and La Perrière president of Saint-François. They have made up their special committees of excellent young people of the town who have let themselves assimilate in a special way the general and primitive spirit of the institution. With a council of direction formed of such elements, I could do nothing better than convene it often. The happiest ideas are proposed and adopted in their most genial meetings. We are now reading, in place of the *Imitation*, the *Life of St. Vincent de Paul*, so as to better imbue ourselves with his examples and traditions. A patron saint is really no more a trite emblem for a society than a St. Denis or a St. Nicholas for a cabaret. He is not even an honorable name for preserving a good appearance in the religious world; he is a model one must strive to imitate, as he himself imitated the model of Jesus Christ. He is a life to be carried on, a heart in which one's own heart is enkindled, an intelligence from which light should be sought; he is a model on earth and a protector in heaven. A two-fold devotion is owed him, imitation and invocation. It is under these conditions only, of appropriating the thoughts and virtues of the saint, that the society can escape from the personal imperfections of its members, that it can make itself useful in the Church and give reason for its existence.

St. Vincent de Paul, one of the most recently canonized,⁷ has an immense advantage by reason of the nearness of the time when he lived, the infinite variety of benefits he bestowed, and the universality of admiration he inspires. The great souls who come nearest to God assume something of the prophetic. Without a doubt St. Vincent de Paul had an anticipated vision of the evils and needs of our age: he was not a man to build on sand, nor to build for two days. The benediction of the fourth commandment is upon the head of the saints; they honored their heavenly Father here below, and they will have long life. An earthly immortality is accorded them in their works. That is why the Augustines, the Benedicts, the Brunos, the Francises, who are sleeping fifteen, twelve, eight, and six centuries in the grave, do not fail to possess their spiritual posterity, their living representatives amid the ruins of the past. The star of St. Vincent de Paul, risen much later on the horizon, is not destined, surely, to accomplish a shorter career. Let us work in his light: let us honor our father in this *patron* so worthy of love, and we shall live long. We shall perhaps see one day the children of our old age find ample shade under this institution whose frail beginnings we have seen. We inhabitants of the provinces especially will thrill with joy at being able to assure our sons of that sweet

Parisian hospitality which reassured our mothers. Around us will rise, ever increasing, the flow of the Catholic generation, and we will behold the time when it will overflow to inundate and renew the face of our poor country. The need for it is great. Does not the evil herb of egotism seem to multiply without ceasing? Is not avarice taking on, under the name of *economy*, a philanthropic mask? As a matter of fact, I rejoice in seeing the turns⁸ and the hospital gates shut, in the name of philanthropy. The usurper is showing herself up, denouncing herself to public common sense abused for some time; she must, sooner or later, give way to her legitimate sister, holy charity.

But, to assist this change, have we nothing to work on, nothing to change in ourselves, nothing to improve? I do not understand how my letter to you arrived only the day after the meeting, and I attribute it to negligence on the part of the postman or concierge.⁹ You would have seen that it was written in view of the presumed presence of Monseigneur. It dealt for that reason in generalities, and I could not include a certain number of observations which the council of direction had commissioned me to transmit to you. I will do so now:

1. We have wholeheartedly endorsed the decision you took in regard to the diploma, and for the reasons you advanced for making it.

2. The sermon on charity, whose history you so favorably recounted, has encountered general rejection among us. We thought that Parisians like you ought to have been better aware of the banality into which the sermon on charity has fallen for some time. Of little fruit because it is too frequent, of little edification because of the self-love in the works, the collectors, even the preachers it employs, of little use especially to a society enamored of obscurity and simplicity and humble by reason of necessity and situation. If, then, a sermon is preached for the poor of a parish like Saint-Merri and the pastor confides to the conference the distribution of alms—fine. But to have our poor name proclaimed on high from the Christian pulpit is not acceptable to our ears: and the name, history, and merits of the society being the common property of all the members, we do not think a particular conference should be able to exploit it despite the opposition of others.

3. The rule, written before we had experienced the misfortune of losing some of our friends, has no provision in it regarding the deceased. This juvenile lack of foreseeing death has experienced some sad denials. Cannot some general policy be taken in this matter? For ourselves, considering that the three other solemn assemblies have been accompanied by a religious service, and that it is really proper to gather in the sanctuary at the same time you gather round a table, we have decided that a Requiem Mass will be celebrated every year, the first Monday of Lent, the day after the assembly, and that all the associates should attend. We do not know whether you have the same custom and, as it seems the right thing to us, we frankly propose it to you.

4. I have been requested to inform you that the breaking off of the custom introduced last year by which a circular containing instructions on the points most of interest to the Society was to be appended to the report is regretted. Letters of the kind were read with respect and often bore fruit in practice: they tended to spread

among the different conferences a happy uniformity of customs; they could not be sufficiently replaced by the comments of the presidents included in the report but of necessity very much abridged in the editing. Consequently you are requested to restore immediately this correspondence which possessed something of apostolic times, and which you had suspended, perhaps in following that too great modesty against which I warred without pity.

5. You would do well to read over the copies of the report which the mistakes of the copyist often make unintelligible.

6. The Lyon conferences, on the loss of two of their members who went to live in neighboring towns, have revived a thought which they had already mulled over several times: that is, to try to reattach associates isolated by force of circumstance to the center of union. The usefulness of such ties is incontestable; they prepare from a distance the elements for forming new conferences later on. Two young people of Paris are going to settle in Lille or Montpellier: alone, they no longer carry on there the work of St. Vincent de Paul. The following year, two others join them, and two more the year after: there will be enough to band together if the first two have not grown cold and relaxed, if some relations with their former confreres had held them, and if they had continued to consider themselves as one in intention, prayers, and merits with the others. See, then, you who are at the source, how the channels can be multiplied. The need is special, and it belongs to you to fill it. For ourselves, it has seemed to us that it would be possible for isolated members: first, to continue to do some good where they are staying; second, to unite themselves in thought and prayer by reciting once a week the proper of St. Vincent de Paul; and third, to write once or several times a year to the Society at Paris, to render an account of what they had done.

On the other hand, the secretary of the Society could make a collection of these letters and, in a short report which would fill out the reading of the correspondence of the provinces, make a report of the most interesting of the particular works. Every year, on the date of July 19, there would be rendered at Paris a summary of the Society's state, whether in the capital or outside of it; a small quantity of copies could be printed, and sent first to the conferences, then to the isolated members who had written and sent their news. Thus there would be an exchange of ideas, feelings, and consolations from all parts of France where the sons of St. Vincent de Paul are found; strength would be increased by number, and merit by perseverance; the Society of Paris would no longer be a passageway by which one left sometime after entering it; you would not have to count more than 200 former associates now lost, you would be the top of a pyramid enlarged at the base to touch the four corners of the country; and the French youth of the nineteenth century will have raised up a monument pleasing to God's eyes under the sun which the last century's youth have so outrageously profaned.

Finally, and I speak here in my own name, I have just seen the announcement of a petition signed at M. de Lamartine's against the suppression of the turns. This petition, written by M. Guiraud,¹⁰ is Catholic. It has for its end the reestablishment of one of the most merciful works of St. Vincent de Paul. Would it not be proper for

all young lawyers who make up society, all young physicians also, vying with one another in this matter, to come forward to sign the petition? Is that not an homage rendered to the memory of our holy patron at the same time that a good action is performed? If you do not want to propose this idea yourself, have someone else do it.

Adieu, and about time; you ought to be used to my wordiness, my avidity for new things, and the thousand other faults I am well aware of, and which I even have the pride to admit for fear of seeming very stupid if I am ignorant of them. Dear friend, who will deliver me from myself, if not He whom we ask to deliver us from evil? Let us ask together, and we shall receive. Ask for me these coming holy days, for my mother also, and for all my own, and for my poor father whose sorrowful anniversary we are about to commemorate. Count on a rightful reciprocity. There are a multitude here who love you. They do not forget for long Le Taillandier, Lammache, the younger Demante, Boblet,¹¹ Leprévost,¹² Catrusso, Pessonneaux, and so many others you would do well to greet for us.

Your friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I.

Notes:

1. Ozanam was mistaken here. The meeting had taken place on April 23, 1833. (Cf. *Bulletin de la Société de Saint-Vincent-de-Paul*, 1956, p. 146.)
2. Victor Cousin (1792-1867), philosopher and politician, born at Paris, head of the eclectic spiritualist school.
3. Abbé Jacques Paul Migne (1800-1875), scholar, born at Saint-Flour, editor of a large number of theological works, such as *Patrologie Latine* and *Orateurs sacrés*.
4. Sarcasm. The French expression is *gros bonnets*.
5. Pierre Louis Coeur (1805-1860), Lyon priest, distinguished preacher, professor of sacred eloquence at the Sorbonne (1842), bishop of Troyes (1848).
6. *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis.
7. Vincent de Paul was canonized in 1737.
8. Places at the doorways of orphanages where babies could be left without the person leaving them being seen.
9. A porter and caretaker, still found at the entrance to European apartment houses.
10. Possibly Alexandre Guiraud, poet (1788-1847), born at Limoux, author of the elegy *le Petit Savoyard*.
11. Louis Gustave Boblet, born in 1813, former medical student and member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.
12. Léon Leprévost (1803-1871), official in the Office of Worship, one of the first recruits of the Conference of Charity, president of the Conference of Saint-Sulpice, vice-president of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, one of the founders, in 1845, of the Congregation of Brothers of St. Vincent de Paul.



177. To Emmanuel Bailly
Lyon, June 3, 1838

Hope of a trip to Paris soon. Meeting of students at the seminary of Saint-Nicolas du Chardonnet. Articles on Protestantism and liberty.

Monsieur,

I profit from the departure of Bouchacourt to remind you of a poor provincial lawyer whom you may have forgotten. And you would have done well, for he is sometimes so discontented with himself that he would like to forget himself.

This lawyer, whom it would be natural to think was a Gascon if it were not known that he was a Lyonnaise, promised you a visit soon. But his trip depending upon a municipal decision, which depends upon a reply from the minister, who himself depends upon times and committees, he still does not know when he can leave: in four days or four months?

This lawyer of a most curious character would like to know the key to an article of four lines inserted in *l'Univers* some days ago, reporting an assembly of students held at the main seminary of Saint-Nicolas¹ under the presidency of M. Dupanloup.² Was it by chance some offshoot of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul? Some enterprise of our lay independence? The conferences of Lyon are disturbed about it.

This same lawyer, whose self-love and cupidity should not be pardoned, is frequently impatient at finding no trace in *l'Univers* of four articles he had sent you three months ago on Protestantism. The latest thought to strike him is that he was perhaps too strong on the question of liberty and this was the reason that prevented its publication. In that case he requests that you return him the aforesaid articles so that he can find some other use for them. Otherwise he would be very obliged if a day were set to advertise them in your columns. He has already explained to you the reasons whereby we justify the *auri sacra fames*³ at his house. The reasons are still valid. Finally this talkative lawyer who has taken up the pen for two lines and who feels ready to write a regular letter, herewith closes abruptly and charges Bouchacourt to receive and transmit your replies.

Your devoted servant,
A.-F. OZANAM

Copy: Provided by the management of the journal *La Croix*. Excerpt of Msgr. Gaston: Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Notes:

1. Seminary of Saint-Nicolas du Chardonnet was founded in 1619 by Adrien Bourdoise, a friend of St. Vincent de Paul.
2. Abbé Dupanloup, then superior of the Petit Seminaire Saint-Nicolas du Chardonnet, favored the creation of a conference in this parish. It was joined to the Society in 1839. Felix-Antoine-

Philibert Dupanloup, born at Saint-Félix (Haute-Savoie) was later bishop of Orléans. Orator and journalist, he defended liberal Catholicism and the freedom of teaching (1802-1878).

3. The sacred fame of gold.



180. To Emmanuel Bailly
Lyon, July 19, 1838

Appendix to a report on the conferences of Lyon. Chair of Business Law.

Monsieur,

The last report I had the honor to send you on the works of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at Lyon having gotten to you too late to be read in the assembly of the second Sunday after Easter, I did not think it necessary to write it up again: it suffices to send you a succinct notice of certain changes to make in the amounts I had then listed.

Thus, from Good Shepherd Sunday until today, the

Conference of Saint-Pierre has seen its numbers

increased from 32 members to 36

The Conference of St. François from 12 to 16

52

The Conference of Saint-Pierre has visited 48 families

That of Saint-François about 28 Total 76

The Conference of Saint-Pierre has received 380.66

It has dispensed 1180 livres of bread, 315 of meat 303

Extraordinary assistance 11

314

There is in the bank 66.16

Saint-François has received about 250

It has expended about 800 l. of bread

250 l. of meat 220

Extraordinary assistance 20

240

In bank 10fr.

The military library has acquired 50 volumes. The number of readers listed since a year ago is 500; about 25 have been restored to the practice of their religious duties. We hope that some new measures will give a new development to this work.

The conferences of Lyon count among the fortuitous events which mark their past three months the historic report they have received from you on the origin and

progress of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul—the news of the approbation given by the archbishop of Paris, that of the establishment of two conferences at Metz and Nancy, the friendly relations that the president of Dijon has wished should unite us since the time of his stay in our town, and the steps which have been taken and which appear probable of success for the propagation of the society at Moulins and Marseille. In the measure that we multiply our ties, they reproduce themselves.

If you would now permit me to speak of myself a little, I swear to you, Monsieur, that since my last departure from you I have spent one of the saddest years of my life. And without dwelling on those troubles toward which you have been charitably compassionate, I tell you that one of the most painful has been the continual uncertainty of my position. Despite the numerous efforts of persons of good will who took pains to create a Chair of Business Law for me, the affair has greatly languished, and I count on going to revive it myself, if possible, to Paris into the ministry bureaus where it lay asleep, until, by the efforts of M. de Montalembert and M. Cornudet,¹ it reached a fairly advanced stage here, and no more than two weeks were necessary to bring it to its conclusion. That is why my trip was put off until the beginning of August. So at length, if Providence permits, I will have the joy of embracing you, and if it pleases you, I will also have that of living under your roof. I cannot yet decide whether to send ahead the little work which I reclaimed from your presses. Meanwhile the time for making the plate is approaching, and after making more necessary additions and corrections to my manuscript I will send it Sunday or Monday to our friend Lallier. Please look for it from him and thank him too, in my name, for all the trouble he has taken in my behalf. The friendship of so beautiful a soul is not one of the least benefits for which I am indebted to you.

The words would hurry on under my pen if the hour and obligations did not make me stop, and especially if I did not have the assurance of refreshing myself soon, more at ease in a sweeter conversation: *a facie ad faciem*.²

In the meantime accept the assurance of my respectful and tender affection.

Your devoted servant,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte.

Notes:

1. Leon Cornudet (1808-1876), at first associated with Martin du Nord, procurator general of the royal court at Paris, and his bureau chief in the Ministry of Public Works (1836), he pursued the remainder of his career in the council of state; auditor (1836), master of requests (1839), councillor (1852), section president from 1867 to the council's suppression in 1870. Intimate friend of Montalembert and Ozanam—who, when he was dying, entrusted his daughter to Cornudet's protection—he belonged to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, as a member in its beginning, on the General Council (1840), and vice-president general (1844). His son and son-in-law were also members of the Society.
2. Face to face.



181. To François Lallier
Lyon, August 1, 1838

Directions for delivering and printing his theses. Report of the latest activities of the conference and the various positions of its members on the question of rapport with the clergy.

Dear friend,

Enclosed at last is the blessed thesis which comes to seek your good offices again. I had hoped all along to be able to spare you the trouble by bringing it myself with my own baggage to Paris. But, thanks to the admirable machinery of the administrative system under which we have the good fortune to live, the municipal council has not yet decided my lot. It has been promised finally that the list will definitely be published on the 9th and I have every reason to believe that I will not be the last one. In consequence I expect to celebrate the feast of the Assumption with you. Whatever happens, it will be impossible for me to receive the doctorate if my thesis is not sent immediately to go through the formality of criticism and the other rite, not less interesting, of publication.

Be so kind then, dear friend, as to accept the manuscript which will come to you postage free and for which you will be asked to sign, and take it the same day to M. Le Clerc's. I would like you to take the time to see the latter and give him also the enclosed letter. Give him the excuses for my delay and inform him of my wish to take the examination the last three days of the month. As for the Latin thesis, I will bring it to Paris with me; it will be very short. If he agrees to this, have the goodness to pick up the manuscript at his residence at the end of next week and deliver it to Père Bailly's printing house.¹ Request first, that it be printed within two weeks; second, that the proofs be sent to you in my absence; third, that the volume be laid out so as to make 250 to 300 pages in octavo; fourth, that the introduction be in different type with special pagination; fifth, that suitable and proportionate spaces be made between sections, chapters, and paragraphs; and sixth, that the heads and subheads not be printed yet.

We have just celebrated our patron St. Vincent de Paul here. On the morning of the 19th¹ about thirty members from the two conferences met at the cathedral in the chapel where the saint's heart is preserved.² After Mass, at which a rather large number communicated, we venerated the relic. In the evening we reassembled in still greater numbers where our general meetings are held. The report of your last assembly was read and provoked lively interest. The presidents of the two conferences made their reports and the pastor of Saint-Pierre spoke some edifying words. Finally, on the following Sunday a joyful get-together took place in the country where, after spending a long evening cheerfully, a rather decent meal was shared according to local custom; but love of the place could not make us forget the health of our brothers at Paris and the provinces nor of the president general. You will not think, however, that all our charitable zeal ends in feasts and dissolves in toasts. For some time we have been holding frequent meetings of the Council of Direction to

put an end to several serious discussions which have arisen on the part the clergy should play in our affairs. Some are already complaining of invaders, while others still accuse them of indifference and coldness. We have a right wing which would like to live in the shadow of the biretta, and a left wing which is still living according to the *Paroles d'un croyant*.³ Outside both is your servant who, as you know, is rather centrist, finds himself greatly embarrassed, and calls on the help of your prayers.

Thus, you see, friendship requires your whole being, body and soul, at his service; it is true, if excuse could be made for him, that he would wish to give the whole world in return. Remember that, if ever you need to. All to you.

A.-F. OZANAM

A certain Vachon, former member of the Conference of Saint-Etienne, should have delivered the prizes won by the lottery tickets you took around Easter time. Did you receive them? A word of reply, please. I am also enclosing the note given me by a member of the conference.

Original: Archives Laporte.

Notes:

1. The feast of St. Vincent de Paul was celebrated then on July 19. The current feast day is September 27, the day of the saint's death.
2. The heart of St. Vincent de Paul had been spirited out of Paris during the French Revolution, hidden within a recess cut out of a large book, and turned up unaccountably in Lyons, where it was preserved in the cathedral until 1947. That year Catherine Labouré, the saint of the miraculous medal who had also received visions of St. Vincent's heart, was canonized, and the mother general of the Daughters of Charity asked Cardinal Gerlier of Lyon to restore the relic to the Daughters for the canonization celebrations at their motherhouse. The cardinal later acceded to her request that it remain permanently in the Chapel of the Apparitions, 140 rue du Bac, Paris, where it is today. (Cf. Joseph I. Dirvin, C.M., *Saint Catherine Labouré of the Miraculous Medal*, pp. 69-70.)
3. Book by Abbé Lammenais that expounds the liberal Catholicism which led to his defection and apostasy.



182. To François Lallier
Lyon, August 11, 1838

Report of the meetings of the Council of Direction of Lyon where the relations of the clergy with the conferences and of the provincial conferences with Paris were determined. Directions for the printing of his thesis.

Dear friend,

It is first as president of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at Lyon that I am obliged to write to the secretary general to report to him on the proceedings of the

Council of Direction. Relayer of several opinions which I have not always agreed with, I must be brief in order to remain impartial.

Following our last general assembly of July 13, some troubles of more than one kind arose in the bosom of the Society. I thought there was reason to convoke the council. Certain members complained of the laxity of many in regard to religious celebrations; they thought it would be good to stimulate piety and the spirit of Christian brotherhood by means which would preserve our conferences from degenerating to welfare bureaus. Others on the contrary were alarmed at certain acts of ecclesiastical protection, which seemed to them outside encroachments, and which could assimilate the Society into certain religious congregations, undoubtedly praiseworthy in themselves, but absolutely different in their end. At length, there was found a way of taking both kinds of apprehension into account at the same time, and drawing up unified measures capable of giving our work a character at once profoundly Christian and absolutely lay.

Four meetings of the council followed in a period of three weeks, and I can attest that it was never more serious, either in the choice of its component members, or in the twofold preparation of reflection and prayer, or in the frankness of discussions, or finally in the lively charity which never ceased to reign. Without going into detail on the allegations made on one side or the other, I am going to report only on the decisions which resulted.

1. From the time of the next general assembly, the active chairmanship of the meeting should be exercised not by the pastor of Saint-Pierre but by the president of the Society. The report will carry these words: "The pastor honored the meeting with his presence." A place will be looked for within the two parishes of Saint-Pierre and Saint-François to avoid the inconvenience of meeting in a sacristy.

2. The presidents of the conferences are authorized to conduct themselves in the future with regard to members of the clergy the same as in the past: their proceedings are to be approved. They are requested to remind frequently the meetings over which they preside that the end of the Society is especially to rekindle and refresh in the youth the spirit of Catholicism, that fidelity to meetings, and union of intention and prayer are indispensable to this end, and that visiting the poor should be the means and not the end of our association.

3. Since the conferences of Paris enjoy during the two octaves of St. Vincent de Paul indulgences of which the provincial conferences are deprived, the Council of Direction of Paris is asked to request from Rome with the briefest delay indulgences applicable to the whole Society.

4. In a different vein, the paragraph that deals with the deference owed ecclesiastical superiors, contains the following words: "They will accept with an *absolute docility the direction that the superiors will judge proper to give them.*" Once we had received from the president general a clear interpretation, discussion was terminated on the sense which should be given it. But, since these words seem to *exaggerate* the thought they ought to present, the Council of Paris is asked to modify them in a next edition by bringing them into accord with the rest of the paragraph.

5. Finally, the Council of Paris is adjured to give itself a more vigorous and ener-

getic life, to meet more often and to enter into a more active correspondence with the provincial conferences, so as to prevent isolation and extreme individuality in some, and to rekindle languishing zeal in others. In what concerns them, the conferences of Lyon protest that they never permit themselves an important act like the reprinting of the rule, a sermon of charity, a manifestation tending to compromise the obscurity of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, without being assured of the approval of the Council of Paris. They understand that their strength is in union and that the entire uniqueness of their work is precisely in its universality.

Now, dear friend, I would like for all the world to converse with you for two hours and tell you a thousand of those things which are said and not written. The real dangers we can run into at Lyon, and the imaginary ones we are more preoccupied with: the Lamennaisian defiances and resentments of some and the rather clerical ardor of others. My moderate system displeases everyone and raises daily recriminations against me, without nevertheless my rebuttal being permitted, my consequent fears, and especially my hopes. For it seems to me that with a strong organization which you other Parisians can easily give us, we will begin to accomplish the work of regenerating student youth. See then what responsibility is imposed on us by an evil we would not prevent, and a good we would not do. God knows how many ideas cross my mind and how better their execution would be achieved by lodging in yours. You undoubtedly understand by my regrets, dear friend, that our projected interview for August 15 is postponed again. I assure you that for two years I have had a hard apprenticeship in a virtue which was unfamiliar to me—the abandonment of my self to the divine will. One after another my plans have been changed, without however being so completely ruined as to prevent taking them up and pursuing them again. This time, for example, after having voted the salary of its professor (2,500 fr.), the Municipal Council has not yet drawn up the list of its candidates; and then it recesses without fixing a meeting time. This delay, together with the advice you passed on to me in behalf of M. Le Clerc, and especially with the less than shining state of my health, has decided me to put off again my departure until the first days of October. Be kind enough, then, in continuing the good offices for which I do not know how to thank you, to suspend the printing and take my manuscript back to M. Le Clerc with the request that he be willing to read it again so as to give me his latest counsel; and get it back when you return from Rouen and put it in the safe place you told me of from the 1st to the 8th of October. You will earn title to thanks without end if, taking into account the trouble I am having with my trip, you yourself seek me out. Yes, on your return from Rouen, after a month spent with your family where you have matters to take care of, you should come down the length of the beautiful Saône as far as the Ile-Barbe which I have shown you. There in a little house whose praises we sing, there will be this time as much room to receive you as there is in my whole family, enough friendship to rejoice long at your coming. You are aware that a little farther on, where this same river loses its color and its name, another welcome no less friendly awaits you; balanced thus on the soft flowing waters between our dwellings and affections, greeted by so many others who love you here, received in our confer-

ences by those who do not know you, you should spend some days among us; then I will take you back, happy in our prolonged reunion, to that capital which fascinates and holds you against our wishes.

Farewell: All to all of yours and to you yourself first of all.

A.-F. OZANAM

The post presses me and forces me to close.

Original: Archives Laporte. Excerpted ed: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 273.



183. To Auguste Le Taillandier
Lyon, August 19, 1838

On his friend's marriage. He hopes he will found a conference of St. Vincent de Paul at Rouen.

Dear friend,

I have known for a month as coming, of the great solemnity which you tell me is over, and which marks a new era in your life. Your youth was too meritorious not to close with a happy event which itself is about to serve as the point of departure for still better days. It seems to me that the pomp of a wedding, so sad and insignificant for the common run of men, ought to be, when it joins two young Christian souls, a kind of triumph where virtue, victorious over the passions and troubles of youth, receives as reward the sweetest happiness here below. Love outside Christianity is an idol and therefore a demon: within Christianity it cleanses itself, and its baptismal name is charity; it sanctifies those it unites. The family according to the great Apostle's word, should be the image of the Church: the husband and father holds the place of Christ. There is, then, as much glory as good fortune in the new state in which you are established, and I do not doubt that the qualities of her who has been given you will help realize within both of you this magnificent model of marriage.

Otherwise, I do not feel for you those fears that cast a bit of melancholy into the hearts of friends present at nuptial feasts. There is often apprehension that the new cares of father of the family will make him forget the remembrances of being a co-disciple; it is obvious that his door will always be open, but there is fear that there is little place left in his thoughts. Yours are too magnanimous, dear friend, for a like calamity to befall us! You have no need to reassure me of it. It is not in striving to love more that you would allow your old affections to grow cold. You have given me guarantees that I could not forget. Perhaps I can soon take advantage of the invitation that so kindly ends your letter. The business you are aware of will proba-

bly bring me to Paris in six weeks, and I have planned for a long time, on the occasion of that trip, to visit the port of Havre and especially your beautiful Rouen churches. You must believe that, while admiring the parish, I will not forget the parishioner who is perhaps its most beautiful ornament, although he is certainly not gothic.

Another hope is not less dear to me: that is, that, as founder of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, you would want to do in the capital of Normandy what God had you do at Paris and procure for the use of that great town the benefit whose author you were among us. Thus new bonds would be forged which would unite us more strongly than ever. Thus this rigorous fate of absence, which we have wished in vain to elude, will be overcome by the majority of us. United in work and prayer as we always are in affection, how can we be absent from one another except for sight of one another? And who knows whether Providence, to encourage our efforts, will not sometimes give us such a boon? Thank God, today's generation is mobile and transient: it enjoys itself on the rails and aboard the packet boats; industry multiplies the meetings; curiosity also determines much of it. I bless heaven for having put me here in a town which is on all the routes of business and pleasure: recall, dear friend, that I am at the gates of Provence, Italy and Switzerland; I hold the keys to them, and you could not enter any of those charming countries without being my tributary.

I assure you that newly marrieds like you should make frequent pilgrimages to expiate their good fortune: you cannot go to St. James of Compostela²; the war will not permit it. But Notre-dame de Fourvière Notre-dame de la Garde, Einseindeln, Loretto, Rome—what beautiful places where devotion cannot fail to lead you, if the fear of meeting me on the road does not hold you back? In the meantime, we have perhaps a surer means of attracting you by keeping your brother here; we will try to succeed more for him than for you. There are many of us interested: Chaurand and Arthaud want to be counted among the first.

Adieu. If you have occasion to see some of our Normans, especially those of Rouen, assure them of my constant friendship.

A.-F. OZANAM

Postal cancellations: Lyon, August 22, 1838. Paris, August 24, 1838. Rouen, August 27, 1838.

Original: Robillard de Beurepaire Family.

Notes:

1. St. Paul. Eph. 5:22-33.
2. The shrine of St. James the Apostle in Spain.



184. To Henri Pessonneaux
Lyon, August 21, 1838

Moral suffering. Completion of the thesis. Project on a history of St. Louis suggested by his cousin. On the Middle Ages. "Enchanted isle."

Dear friend,

Your good letter of last month would not have stayed without a reply, if I had not hoped to bring it to you myself; and your last missive, which came to me by Abbé Maret, asked me to write to you at greater length if I could not in my turn count on your imminent arrival. This is why you receive these short and overdue lines; under those two titles they are their own excuse. Especially because I could no longer bring myself to prolong my silence further: it would have seemed most ungrateful of me not to respond to so many advances of yours. Many thanks to you that that contagion of neglect, so common in Paris where more than anyplace else the poor absent ones are ever wronged, has not overcome your soul, since, with so many backbreaking cares and domestic problems, you have kept a remembrance and a tear for the friend of your childhood. Be assured that I would keep a just reciprocity, and among the consolations that might render my departure from Lyon less painful, I would put in first place the pleasure of seeing you again.

Indeed, on the one hand, the new postponements my business has met, and on the other, the advice of M. Victor Le Clerc which Lallier has passed on to me, have made me decide to take a second look at such a fabulous trip at the beginning of October. I amuse myself, as with a pleasant dream, with the idea of strolling with you, escorting you to your door, as was our old Parisian custom. But who knows whether this idea may not evanesce like so many others? For eighteen months I have been learning the hard way, or rather I have been forced thus to learn, that science of abnegation which has always seemed so difficult to me. Uncertainty, like our winter fogs, cuts down my horizon to four steps; I who could not close my eyes and end the evening without having planned for tomorrow the last detail of my day, I who delighted in building, outside the narrow limits of the present, the capricious edifice of my future. My projects change like the fantastic figures the clouds form in the distance. I am beginning to know how much man's will avails when circumstances are not at its service. Would to God that I be able to confide as well in Him who makes me doubt myself!

Otherwise, my calculations excepted, little of me or my surroundings has changed. If, rereading one of my past letters, you should have sympathy for those former pains, perhaps one of those marvelous intuitions which bind hearts from a distance would draw your interest unaware to my present afflictions. My mother, suffering as always, with the chance of further suffering, already long drawn out, coming to a dreadful end; my brothers nearly always far away; the anxiety of insufficient funds; some friends but with scarcely one of them a complete likeness of tastes or similarity of habits, and the duties of family and profession which separate and isolate have replaced the bonds of scholarship which should unite us. Consequent-

ly, my literary works suffer as I am deprived of encouragement and advice, yet there are too few law matters to distract and draw me away from the preoccupations which have dominated my young life up until now; with all that stubborn poor health which often affects the unavoidable difficulties of my position, and wearisome¹ pursuit of a nomination promised to me as certain and indefinitely suspended, the contradictions to which the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul is constantly exposed, all of which fall on me as the president. Finally, my moral weaknesses, and the perpetual discontent of my personality. See you, dear friend, it is an old and monotonous story: troubles which have not even the trite comfort of being able to complain because they have already done so.

It would be unjust of me, however, not to tell you of the alleviations divine Providence has been kind enough to supply, and, to be brief, I will mention two: first my happiness in having finished my thesis or most of my work on Dante's philosophy; and secondly the stay I had some days ago in a delightful little country house which we have taken on the Ile-Barbe for the holidays. I would, however, be less happy were I not persuaded that your untiring agility would bring you to consider the distance as negligible and allow you to come visit me often.

But I have said enough about myself. I am anxious to learn in my turn about you and your affairs. Louis, whom I saw today and who unfortunately is suffering a renewal of his stomach trouble, gave me detailed news of your father and mother. Please inform her how much I share in her accident. Debécourt, who is here on business, also told me he had seen you. I had the embarrassment of finding myself in the country when Abbé Maret came to the house, and I have looked for him in vain since my return. Your friendly pages have undoubtedly been a boon but that is still far from what I would like which is to be put abreast of your situation and ideas. Let us talk about this history of St. Louis. He is, in my opinion, one of the most beautiful subjects for treatment, but will six months be enough for you? Believe me, the Middle Ages are something like the enchanted isles of which the poets speak; they are visible from time to time and only for a few hours; but there are fruits to be gathered there, flavors to be tasted which the country, that is, modern times, has forgotten.

Or, to put it in a simpler way, one is held captive by the charm of facts, customs, and traditions, detained by the multitude of documents. And as for me, I know that my studies on Dante have given me proof of it, something like my trip to Rome: the sweet and voluntary slavery which enchants the soul among the ruins, and fact taking its pleasure in the midst of resemblance. And are not the memories really different from other ruins, sadder and at the same time more interesting than those completely hidden by shrubbery and ivy?² And is it not pious to linger at the legends and traditions of our fathers who took their ease among the debris of aqueducts and temples whose antiquity our own sun planted?

But what good is it to expatiate on paper in ever elaborated phrases the ideas which will surface more lively and spontaneous in our next conversation? What good is it to prolong my solitary vigil when soon, perhaps, we can exchange *tête-à-tête* far sweeter and better precisions. The lamp which is my light is letting me know

by flickering that I should get that rest of which my ills have made me feel greater need. Adieu, dear friend. Not knowing your exact address, I am sending my letter to M. Prié. Thank him for me for his great good will. Assure your parents of my regards; and while awaiting the brotherly embrace, accept my renewed promise of being all my life,

Your faithful friend and cousin,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Prié (for M. Henri Pessonneaux) rue Duphot, 15. Paris

Original: Archives Laporte. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 278.

Notes:

1. Ozanam inadvertently wrote the word *fatigantes* (wearisome) twice.
2. Ozanam wrote the names of specific French plants: *le lierre et la mousse*.



189. To his mother
Paris, December 9, 1838

Asks for news. Marriages of Arthaud and Chaurand. A certain optimism about the times. Anxiety over the doctorate.

Dear Mama,

I have been waiting for you to write your usual letter, and meanwhile a delay which is not without alarm deprives me of this consolation and forces me to answer you before knowing what you might tell me. You will easily understand, good Mother, the difference between our two situations: on your side unsettled health and the leisure to send your news frequently: on my part health practically steady and overwhelming occupations. There cannot be perfect equality in our correspondence, then, and the regularity which is impossible for me is easy for you. Besides, what is there to do in your solitude except write to your scattered sons? At least that in our absence you have not changed in customs and dress, and that you are launched in the world, haunting fetes, giving and accepting balls and dinners, occupying yourself with *wedding feasts and banquets*?¹ And, apropos of that, it seems to me that my suspicions could not be stripped of versimilitude in regard to the *banquets*, if the rumor is true about a certain St. Catherine's feast² at my aunt's, nor in regard to the *wedding feasts*, since you have traitorously married off my worthy friend Dr. Arthaud, who undoubtedly, if I were present, would have dared nothing of the sort. A loud murmuring is spreading at the same time and is about to apprise me that the distractions of lawyer Chaurand could well have an analogous cause. I begin to fear in truth that on my return I will find the Conference of

St. Vincent de Paul wholly doubled; in which case I submit my resignation of the presidency, totally ignorant of how to control, especially so far as silence is concerned, a conjugal assembly.

The conclusion should be to hasten my departure, and I would do so if the blessed printing house would let me deliver my thesis on the day of my choice. However, the delays can hardly last longer and my next letter will probably acquaint you with the time of my arrival in your presence. Believe indeed that I do not seek to multiply the hours of my stay here, although the allurements of friendship are not lacking. Family affections have something stronger in them which powerfully calls me back to Lyon, for have I not indeed, along with you and my brothers, uncle and aunt and all their family, and several other relatives who in these recent times have proven their attachment by their good offices?

We are enjoying here a mild temperature and serene sky, things very rare in a Parisian month of December. All is tranquil, and even the student revolt, which a short while ago closed down a professor's course and was rightly condemned by public indignation, can be counted among the reassuring symptoms of the present time. Doing good is unceasing among young people, and whatever be the tendency of self-love to deprecate things in which it has no part, I am obliged to recognize in the bosom of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at least as much zeal as in my time. Yesterday's patronal feast of our association³ will contribute, I trust, to bringing upon it blessings from on high. On that day, dear Mama, I prayed earnestly for you, counting well on the fact that you would be doing the same for me: at the foot of the holy altar, under the protective wings of the Immaculate Virgin, distance disappeared and souls found themselves reunited and mingling in a mutual prayer and love.

I have need of the one and the other to encourage me to face the difficulties of this doctorate which I am now sorry to have arranged. Recent examples increase my fears. If I fail, I will undergo that disgrace as a penalty which my ambition had merited, and the most sympathetic person in the world, accepting my pretensions, will accept my reverses as well. From another angle this trip will not have been useless. I will have finished in one way or another the business of Papa's books, and that of my position will be settled.

Tell Charles⁴, please, that I always have a good impression of him and allow no place in it for his little vacation stupidities. I am sure that, as he grows, he will control his head and heart: there are signs of it already, good will and God's grace will do the rest. Remember me, please, to my uncle and aunt and accept for yourself, good Mother, the respectful caresses of your son,

A.-F. OZANAM

Do not forget to open the letters which are addressed to me at Lyon and send me the most important.

Original: Archives Laporte.

Notes:

1. The French is *noces et festin*. *Noce* is the word for marriage and its accompanying festivities. Ozanam could be making a family joke by referring to, perhaps, a child's mispronunciation.
2. The feast of St. Catherine of Alexandria was then observed on November 25.
3. The feast of the Immaculate Conception.
4. Ozanam's younger brother.



201. To Emmanuel Bailly
Lyon, April 5, 1839

Asks for report of the general assembly of the Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul. Praise of l'Univers. Direct selling of Dante et la philosophie catholique.

Monsieur,

Forgive me if I am about to intrude on those few moments of leisure the multitude of your occupations doles out to you. Lallier's silence, most justified by his matrimonial cares, obliges me to have recourse to your goodness concerning the needs of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. It is the custom, following each of your general assemblies, to address a report to all the provincial conferences which, in their turn, read it at the next solemn meeting which follows. Thus, on Good Shepherd Sunday we should read your report of the First Sunday of Lent. Our feeling of deprivation was increased by the fact that the presence of Msgr. Gilles and Abbé Lacordaire rendered that meeting most memorable. Although I should have received a copy two weeks ago, it has not yet come, and I presume that Lallier has neglected to send it to me or even to write it. Be so good, then, Monsieur, as to look into the matter and remedy it by committing someone specifically to dispatch copies at the beginning of next week, and if the registers at our absent friend's are shut up, Lamache or especially Boblet should have the *concierge* open up so as to retrieve them and thus prevent a longer delay both for us and for our provincial brothers. For the rest, except for inevitable collisions with preexistent charitable societies and some temporary difficulties with certain members of the clergy, we continue to prosper and you will have the proof in the report I will send you in less than a week. Monsieur Lacordaire on his travels has given himself to us. Throughout two whole days he has walked with us, dined with us, said Mass for us, and finally, spoken at our gathering. His speech made the happiest and, I hope, lasting impression.

I had the honor of visiting M. Foisset,¹ of Beaune, yesterday, and we spoke at length of you and our mutual friends. Mm. Wilson² and de Champagny³ have written me kind and cordial letters. What do I not owe you, Monsieur, for having introduced me to this small and cherished family of the *Revue européenne*, where the

youngest brothers are treated as affably as their elders, where on the very first visit is found accord of mind and heart, of the same kind, to tell the truth, as the three things, which today make up the new Catholic school: *l'Université*, *l'Univers*, and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

You should receive more than your share of sincere congratulations for the firm and sure stance your journal has taken for several months. It seems to me that it has grown in stature as the other magazines, given over to the concerns of a political clientele only, have regressed. I believe that the two articles you still have of mine will be sufficiently in line with those opinions which have occupied your columns in recent days as not to be poor successors. Everything considered, I owe them for my subscription to the journal: keep them, then, please, for this purpose and hold me to account only for the preceding ones. I ask you at this time to inform me as soon as possible, either yourself or by M. Soyez or someone else, whether you have received the order of four hundred francs I sent you two weeks ago as the first installment on my printing costs. I am very upset and ask myself whether my letter might have been lost.

Someone has written to me in your name and that of M. Debecourt⁴ to ask when my book will appear. As I have already explained, persisting indispositions have delayed my work. Now it is taken up again and progresses: I hope to send it on before the first two weeks of May. There only remains to estimate how long the printing of seven or eight editions will take. I myself think that if inquiries are made at the printer's, those interested can be asked to return in about two months. By that time, I think, politics will cease to absorb everyone's attention and give a better chance than now to advertisements in the journals. I would like, however, for the present, that an excerpt from my book, for example, the portraits of Albert the Great,⁵ Roger Bacon, St. Thomas, and St. Bonaventure⁶ in chapter 11 be published in *l'Univers* with this copy: "On the press etc. *Dante et la philosophie catholique au XIII siècle*." See if it can be done. It will be a further obligation joined to all those I owe you already and do not know how to repay except by praying to God for you at the least cold times of my weak piety. During the Easter feasts, for example, for your welfare, the happiness of your family, and the prosperity of everyone and everything dear to you.

I am, Monsieur, with all the sentiments of a filial affection,

Your most devoted servant,
A.-F. OZANAM

Copy: Provided by the management of the journal *La Croix*. Excerpt from the hand of Msgr. Gaston: Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Notes:

1. Théophile Foisset (1800-1873), friend of Ozanam and biographer of Lacordaire.
2. E. Wilson, former editor of the *Revue européenne* and future editor-in-chief of the *Correspondant*.
3. Comte Franz de Champagny (1804-1882), French historian and novelist, son of the Duc de Ca-

done, successor to Talleyrand as minister of foreign affairs. His social Catholicism had Orleanist leanings.

4. Debecourt et Perisse, publishers.
5. St. Albert the Great (Albertus Magnus), Dominican friar, theologian, philosopher, and scholar, the teacher of St. Thomas Aquinas (1193-1280).
6. St. Bonaventure, friar general of the Franciscans, cardinal, theologian, philosopher, papal legate to the Council of Lyon, friend of St. Thomas Aquinas (1221-1274). Called the Seraphic Doctor.



205. To Joseph Arthaud
Paris, July 9, 1839

Activities and growth of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Exhortations that Arthaud accept the presidency of the Lyon conferences.

Forgive me, dear friend, if my reply is late.

The delicate attention which prompted you to write me as well as to calm my fears of every kind would seem to merit on my part a more efficacious gratitude. But, since my arrival I have given myself with Alphonse so vagabond a life on the king's highway that time has been entirely lacking to me to harvest any reflections alone capable of giving a bit of interest to my letter. At length, my respectable older brother having set out on the road to Lyon, I was able to visit with M. Bailly and M. de Baudicour¹ entirely at leisure and to learn from their conversation the actual status of the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

The increase in numbers is truly marvelous. Three conferences have been formed in a few months in the parishes of Saint-Séverin, Saint-Louis d'Antin, and Saint-Médard. This is meant for the students of the Ecole polytechnique and the Ecole normale which count 18 members, nearly a third of its membership. Add to that that it is perhaps the most pious conference, and they have asked as a favor to join to the usual prayer a special prayer for the conversion of their comrades. What a happy future for university youth! Saint-Sulpice has 50 active members who are going to divide up next year into three sections. The number of our brothers in Paris is about 450. A like stirring is afoot in the provinces. Bordeaux is organizing, and several other points are beginning to branch out. A score of foreign societies are hoped for next year. Even Algiers is answering our call, and an association, of which Clavé and several of our old friends compose the nucleus, is forming under the auspices of its saintly bishop.²

In view of this expansion there is felt the need to strengthen ties, to bind the provinces to the capital and dispersed members in other towns to the provincial conferences. Good will is not wanting in this regard. The presidents of Lille and Nancy came to talk with the secretary general the other day. Dijon is corresponding with much zeal and I have personally had a very friendly letter from the

secretary and another member asking a slight favor with every effusion of Christian brotherhood.

Regulation of communications is being taken in hand and the new edition of the rule which will be out on the 19th contains a list of instructions to this end. M. de Baudicour, if he has not the greatest talents for speaking nor an attractive style, compensates for it as a man of leisure, action, and perseverance. The same can be said as well of the new treasurer general, M. de Riancey.³

I have noted with pleasure that our conduct this year, whether in our relations with the archdiocese or with other societies, has the complete approval of M. Bailly. Tradition is being maintained. The society should never wish to be either a grouping or a school or an association, unless it be profoundly Catholic without ceasing to be lay. The preservation of this spirit in the provinces is desired, which is why the opinion is that you are the only suitable president for Lyon. That is M. Bailly's idea, and also Lallier's, whom I had the good fortune to run into, and it is the wish of everyone who knows the state of our affairs. I appreciate all the magnitude of the sacrifice you are making in renouncing the advantages of another association. But be assured that with the many graces you will experience there will also be many trials, and your devotion to us will often be hindered by the sensitivities you are aware of. On the other hand, the change of diocesan administration could singularly alter the destinies of charitable societies. Finally, when my eyes are witnesses of what is happening here, it is plain to me that the work of St. Vincent de Paul is growing in importance without stop and that a magnificent mission has been given it, that it alone, by the multitude and status of its adherents, by its stable existence in so many diverse ways, and by its abnegation of all philosophical and political interest, can rally youth to the right paths, bring a new spirit little by little to the upper classes and the most influential actions, resist the secret associations which are menacing the civilization of our country, and perhaps in the end save France. Prodigy of that divine mercy which (according to the epistle of our patronal feast⁴) chooses obscurity, weakness, and nothingness to confound the powers of evil: "*Ea quae non sunt elegit Deus, ut ea quae sunt confunderet.*"⁵

Such may appear a bit overlaudatory in view of our Lyon conferences, so timid and tormented. But here at the center of all the spokes the possible extent of the circle described can be judged. The wisest and least presumptuous, M. Bailly first of all, are beginning to say so out loud. It only remains for us to humble ourselves in gratitude for having been chosen, frail and weak as we are, as instruments of so great an enterprise. It especially remains for us to render ourselves worthy.

Enough of sermons. It is only that I need, as a lawyer, to preach, you see, and am addicted to that figure of speech called communication in words. Besides, your humility will not take offense. I only beg you not to refuse the nomination. Accept the votes which will be preliminary indications for you and, if you do not want to vote for yourself, do not vote for a serious contender. Do violence to your personal diffidence in the general interest. I am unhappy that La Perrière has put himself in the running; you know how fond is my love for him, but his place is in the Conference of Saint-François.

When the Society is reformed, it must make its preparations for the arrival of Monseigneur d'Isoard⁶ who will undoubtedly be very inclined to protect everything that he finds well-meaning. That prelate is indeed praised here, and we have been told that he will have no part of the coadjutors there, but a complete change in the structure of the archdiocese. The ministers had presented a candidate preferable until now, Monseigneur Gousset,⁷ bishop of Perigueux. The king did not find him a sufficiently great personage for the primacy of the Gauls.

Alphonse, who will be at the house on Sunday, will give you news of excellent friend Bouchacour. He will also tell you that we dined with Lallier. My troublesome worries in his regard are dissipated. He is about to obtain a place in the Parquet⁸ of the Tribunal of Sens, and seems disposed to pursue his career in the active magistrature with vigor. He no longer abandons his intellectual works. He is especially faithful, like you, to friendship. His conversation . . .⁹ hours have permitted me to see an attachment to us and the St. Vincent de Paul Society that his other ties have not loosened. His wife seems full of merit and grace, and he, who before seemed always sunken in melancholy secret thoughts, is now happy with so calm and pure a good nature that I was deeply moved by it and will count the too short a time spent with him among the sweetest moments of my year. How Heaven has blessed you, young heads of Christian families of the future! Now much better generations will succeed ours because of you! No longer will be seen that sad and frequent spectacle of badly advised fathers who see their faith resisted by their sons as the result of a narrow education, nor that other spectacle more sorrowful still of sons weeping at the unbelief of their fathers!

Accept my very lively thanks for the care you are taking of my mother and little brother: the visits you make them reassure me more than my presence could. I note with pleasure that they do not resist your attentions, and that their health is maintained and grows better. As for me, since my departure, despite the inevitable drafts in boats and coaches, I have had no toothaches until yesterday evening. I do not know whether my guardian angel Alphonse's departure may have brought me misfortune, but I had scarcely put him aboard the *messageries*¹⁰ when I felt the first pangs of an attack which lasted all night and led me finally to the dentist's where the great operation was performed. One of my bad teeth had loosened, the other was better as the result of bleeding. I am better now and can begin my business which I had not taken up to the present.

Lallier is departing. He visited the Conference of Saint-Etienne before leaving Paris. You see that your good example is being followed. Adieu, my regards to your house. To yourself the ever grateful friendship of your completely devoted brother in our Lord,

A.-F. OZANAM

It is understood that I am still in the country. When I have finished something important to my business, only then do I want it known that I am in Paris. Be so kind as to send me, for the feast of the 19th, M. Aillaud's¹¹ letter, and ask Eugène

Rieussec¹² to make the usual report for our confreres. He should address it here to Monsieur Louis de Baudicour, rue d'Enfer, 43.

Original: Archives of the Arthaud family.

Notes:

1. Louis Collette de Baudicour or Baudicourt (1815-1883) was secretary of the general council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul from 1838 to 1849, having replaced Lallier. He was intimately connected with the administrative changes introduced into the society with its expansion. Moving later to Algeria, he established a small Catholic colony near Blida, and was on occasion a defender of the Maronites of the Near East.
2. Msgr. Dupuch (1808-1856), born in Bordeaux, bishop of Algiers in 1838, was forced to resign his bishopric because of financial difficulties and lived in France until his death.
3. Henri Léon Camuzat de Riancey (1816-1870), lawyer, did much in favor of freedom of teaching. Deputy from Sarthe in 1840.
4. Feast of St. Vincent de Paul, then July 19.
5. God chooses those who are nothing in order to confound those who are something (1 Cor 1:27).
6. Cardinal d'Isoard (1766-1839), archbishop of Auch, had been named archbishop of Lyon on June 13. He died at Lyon on October 7.
7. Msgr. Gousset (1792-1866) later became archbishop of Reims and Cardinal.
8. Area of a courtroom enclosed by the judges' seats and the lawyers' bar.
9. Torn in the original.
10. Coach lines.
11. Henri or César Aillaud de Caseneuve.
12. Eugène and Alfred Rieussec were members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at Lyon. Alfred died in 1840. (See letter 224, Ozanam to Lallier, February 15, 1840).



207. To his mother
Paris, July 26, 1839

Anxiety about his health. Asks news. He has renewed and made contacts. Society of St. Vincent de Paul now numbers 500 in Paris. Letter from Montalembert.

Good mother,

You are suffering, then, and this horrible heat has made you ill. The news I have received has made me uneasy. I am afraid that you need me and absence becomes intolerable to me. Most urgent business keeps me here or I would already have taken the road to Lyon, but I cannot stay here to its finish unless I receive letters a bit more frequently. You complain of my delays: I know that, but, good mother, I am alone and there are three of you, and you have more leisure. Write me, then, twice a week for the two weeks remaining. For I count on leaving, if you do not need me, on the 10th: you [see] that is not far off. Meanwhile, the time here seems long to me; oh! [that is]¹ certain. Count on it, I will embrace you on the eve of your feast day. But, please, prepare to look well for me.

I do not know whether Alphonse² is still with you, nor his address at Antun: please God he did not leave with his sore throat. Trials have certainly not been lacking in our poor family this past year. Happily, Charles³ are over; he is well again. Is he still at home? Has he gone to seek prizes with the Minims?⁴ I am still asking myself that. When I want to think about that little gentleman, my imagination does not know what road to take. The same problem with uncle: is he back in Lyon or gone to Florence? Answer all this for me, for at the end of our weeks' absence I find I have lost track entirely.

My stay here will not, I think, be useless. I have renewed some good acquaintances which had slipped a bit, and formed others. As for my little book, I am about to have an advertisement in a revue, which will probably sell some copies for me. I am personally overseeing the printing which is not dragging too much and should be finished in twelve days. I am very unsettled by visits; they are very inopportune when they come one after the other as the other day, five or six following one another; but they are very consoling because of the ongoing affection they evidence. There, good mother, I am sure you are happy yourself to know that I am so much loved, and pardon my delays which are the result.

It has been especially evident in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. We have solemnly celebrated our great feasts. We are 500 here and 400 in the provinces. Is that not a small army? But what is especially touching is that the young men of the Ecole normale, chained every week by a vexing toil, also wished to have a conference on Sunday and come to spend two hours of it working for the poor. They told me at the assembly the story of our Persans,⁵ and showed great satisfaction at the 700 francs collected for them in two days. I also heard that Alphonse had done wonders and that the Ladies of the Sacred Heart⁶ had recounted how much the remembrance of his instructions remained imprinted in the memory of their pupils. There is your eldest who, like his younger brother, has friends everywhere. Undoubtedly it will be the same with the youngest. It is nice to have a place in the hearts of good people.

M. de Montalembert, who is not at Paris, has written me a charming little letter. M. de Cazalès⁷ and M. Ampère have also shown me kindnesses, and father Bailly never stops treating me the best of all; nevertheless, all that does not hold me captive, all that does not amount to one of your kisses, even if a little tobacco is mingled with it. I am, besides, often bored. I especially have need of your letters; my heart *really* races with the worry your health gives me. Write me, then, please.

A thousand regards to all of ours, among whom I include the excellent Doctor Arthaud. My best wishes to Marie. I am very happy that Mlle. Anastasie⁸ has come back to you. May I do the same as soon as possible! I am very well and have no more toothaches, but pray for me to be wise.

Your son who loves you most tenderly,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte.

Notes:

1. Illegible words.
2. His older brother, a priest.
3. His younger brother.
4. Religious order founded by St. Francis of Paola around 1440. Established at Cosenza, Italy, under the name of Hermits of St. Francis of Assisi, their constitutions were approved by Pope Sixtus IV (1474). Charles Ozanam apparently was attending one of their schools.
5. Persan was a commune of Seine-et-Oise near Pontoise which supported steel and construction mills.
6. Religious of the Sacred Heart (called Madames of the Sacred Heart in America).
7. Edmond de Cazalès (1814-1876), magistrate, journalist, and professor, who became a priest in 1843, and deputy under the Second Republic.
8. Governess of Abbé Alphonse Ozanam.



211. To Lacordaire
Lyon, August 26, 1839

On Lacordaire's entry into the Order of St. Dominic. Catholic movement. Nomination to Lyon. He could follow Lacordaire into the cloister.

Monsieur,

When your letter from *La Quercia* came to inform me of your happy arrival at the end of your pilgrimage, your entrance into the family of St. Dominic, and the memory you wish to keep, among so many serious occupations, of the associates of St. Vincent de Paul, I hesitated for a long time between the need of showing you my gratitude for this unhopd for honor and the fear of troubling, by an indiscreet importunity, the laborious repose of your novitiate. But during a trip to Paris from which I have very recently returned, I learned that your friends had not stopped corresponding with you and, although you have not deigned to give me this title, I thought it possible to take the liberty which is its result.

There are too few months since you left our great capital for the impressions of a traveler of yesterday to present anything worthwhile to you. You know that, without needing to hear it repeated again, the movement to which you have given, from on high in the pulpit of Notre Dame, so powerful an impulse has not ceased spreading among the intellectuals. I have seen at first hand these men of republican Carbonarism,¹ now humble believers, these artists of ardent passion asking for the regimen of associations. I have noted the disorganization, the discredit of the rationalist school which reduces it to helplessness and forces its two principal organs, the *Revue française* and the *Revue de deux mondes* to seek the collaboration of Cath-

olics or, as M. Buloz² puts it, of honest men. At the same time that M. de Montalembert arrives to reunite a phalanx ready to fight for good in the Chamber of Peers, M. de Carné is assuring fifty votes soon to be granted the Chamber of Deputies in favor of religious questions. On another side, the little Society of St. Vincent de Paul sees its ranks growing in surprising fashion. A new conference has been formed of pupils of the Ecoles normale and polytechnique; fifteen young men, about a third of the university seminary, have asked as a favor to spend two hours each Sunday, their only day off, in working for God and the poor. Next year Paris will count fourteen conferences, and we shall have an equal number in the provinces; they will represent a total of more than a thousand Catholics, impatient to march on the intellectual crusade you will preach. The copies of the *Memoire*³ have been gratefully received, read with ardor, and zealously absorbed in the circle of our acquaintances. Even the sympathies of the weak in faith are on your side; you can have no doubt of the legitimacy of your ascendancy; Providence has permitted article 291 of the *code penal* to be revised so as to expressly favor the monasteries and religious orders. Meanwhile, trials, which are the seal of holy works, are not lacking to you; the ignorant piety of some people certainly prepares a situation of very unhappy resistance for you. Nevertheless, our town will not be, as you would perhaps expect, one of the livelier forums of this deplorable opposition. There has been a singular change of mind in Lyon. Three faculties of theology, the sciences, and letters, established a little while back, have awakened, despite the imperfection of their teaching, a taste for speculative studies that seems to have stifled the wholly practical preoccupations of our citizens. Among the clergy there increases every day the number of those who understand that virtue without knowledge does not suffice the sacerdotal ministry. Among the influential laity who, during these past years, so often intervened in our diocesan affairs, certain ones are beginning to see that the faith suffers from that alliance with the political interests and passions by which they had compromised it. One of the most esteemed among them, having traveled to Paris recently, was put in touch with friends of M. Buchez⁴ and M. Bastide⁵; he admired the purity of their religion and conceived a real enthusiasm for them personally, and upon his return here propagated his new sentiments; and a dozen of our most inveterate absolutists have subscribed to the *National*.⁶ The nomination of H. E. Cardinal d'Isoard has perhaps contributed to finishing the work of conciliation between past and present, the reuniting of those who believe and love under the same banner on which the devices of a school or the colors of a party are no longer blazoned.

For me, humble witness of so many things full of hope, I am probably settled in at the post I long wanted: I am professor of business law, and pleased with a position which keeps me with my good old mother, and which will not tear me from my inclinations, unfortunate perhaps, but obstinate, for philosophical and literary works. Despite the extreme difficulty of writing which holds my pen to the page without limit where my eye discovers countless faults, and in spite of all the signs wherein I should perhaps see a will contrary to Providence, attachment, and custom, self-love, and the encouragement of certain friends, have brought me back a

thousand times to projects a thousand times abjured, and I greatly fear to lose in useless efforts time I could more modestly and surely employ for my salvation and the service of the neighbor. I feel more than ever the need of a spiritual direction to supply my weakness and discharge my responsibility. And, to speak frankly, more than once already, watching my mother's illness take its desolate course, when the possibility of so terrible a loss comes to my mind, I no longer see why I should stay in a situation that filial love alone solicits and the uncertainty of my vocation recurs more anxiously than ever. It is this interior malaise from which I have long been suffering that I recommend to your charitable prayers; for, if God indeed wishes to call me to Himself, I see no finer militia in which to serve Him than the one you are sworn to. I would even be happy to learn in advance, for my help, with my confessor's advice, the conditions for joining: the rule of the Friars Preachers⁷ is not in our library; can you enlighten me as to how to find it? You will thus obligate once again one who already owes you so much.

Accept, with my respects, those of my Lyon friends for whom I am at this time the envied emissary,

Your most humble and devoted servant,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieut, Monsieur l'abbé Lacordaire, at the Rev. Dominican Fathers of Le Quercia, Viterbo, States of the Church.

Original: Archives Laporte. Ed. *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 299.

Notes:

1. Adherents of the *Charbonniers* or *Carbonari* (so called because they met at first in the woods), a secret political society which arose in Italy at the beginning of the nineteenth century and was introduced into France at the time of the Restoration. Its principal object was the triumph of liberal ideas and the unification of Italy.
2. François Buloz, literary figure (1803-1877), born at Vilbens (Haute-Savoie), founder of the *Revue des deux mondes*.
3. *Le Memoire pour le Retalissement en France de l'Orde des Frères Prêcheurs* was written and published in the spring of 1839.
4. Philippe Buchez, philosopher and politician (1796-1865), born at Matagne-la-Petite; he withdrew from Saint-Simonism to found a neo-Catholic school.
5. Jules Bastide (1800-1879) founded with Philippe Buchez in May 1847 *la Revue nationale*, which attempted to reconcile religion and democracy, Christianity and revolution.
6. Liberal political journal founded in 1830 by Thiers, Mignet, Carrell, etc.
7. The Order of St. Dominic.



214. To Henri d'Aillaud Caseneuve
Lyon, September 3, 1839

He congratulates him on the efforts put forth to found a conference of St. Vincent de Paul at Aix-en-Provence.

Monsieur and dear friend,

Pardon me if I have waited so long a time to fulfill a most pleasant duty, that of congratulating you on your charitable efforts to establish in the town of Aix a little colony of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Your letter, communicated to our brothers in Paris, has moved their piety in a lively way; they have asked me to tell you how much the establishing of this new house of faith and love in the middle of religious Provence interests them. As the threads are multiplied, so is woven step by step the tissue of fire with which we want to clothe the sun of our country. You will fill a vast void between Lyon and Toulouse. Sooner or later Marseille and Montpellier will join themselves to you, and we will have a line to the Midi, just as Rennes, Paris, Lille, Nancy, and Metz form one in the north. Even the middle does not remain indifferent. Nantes and Angers, Dijon and Moulins are prospering. Bordeaux is about to organize. We think that Poitiers will not hang behind and that soon all towns that gather a studious youth around certain chairs will also have a conference to gather together Christian youth.

Thus, perhaps, it will be given us one day to form, on the ruins of the schools and parties which still clutter the earth of France, a school, a Catholic party whose only motto will be the glory of God and the peace of men of good will. Thus, by the strength of an association, simple in its makeup, humble in its origin, but sustained by the power of grace, will we have contributed to the destruction of the work of impiety that a scholarly, secret, and universal conspiracy has raised up.

In the face of so magnificent a goal, the obstacles however numerous will dry up and disappear. Let us be patient because we are immortal. The cause we serve is sure of victory, it is not in a hurry. The results you have attained in such a little time should sustain your courage. You have undoubtedly received from our friends in Paris communications which have consoled your charity. The Lyon conferences . . .¹ to be united in a special bond . . .¹ I doubt a great good among you.

As for me, I personally congratulate myself on having had the good fortune to know you and I know that absence will never destroy that of loving you.

All to you in N.S.²
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: d'Aillaud de Caseneuve family.

Notes:

1. Torn in the original.
2. Our Lord (Notre Seigneur).

221. To François Lallier
Lyon, December 25, 1839

Account of his mother's last moments. Consolation of a Christian death. Hesitations between religious vocation and marriage.

Dear friend,

This beautiful day could not pass without my fulfilling a most cherished obligation delayed until now by the most demanding duties, or which perhaps seem so to me, because they are less pleasant. God undoubtedly permits on this great solemnity, when He lavishes upon us graces from heaven, that we spread a little good will on earth and what purer good will than that of Christian friendship?

You came, then, to visit me in the first days of my sorrow and had the most rare courage to give me true and grave comfort. Alas! how I needed it and what ravages this death has made on my heart! Or, rather, I am wrong: what demoralized me was, from its start, that long illness whose daily, relentless progress destroyed one after another my last hopes and which, dare I say it? seemed to want to dishonor the sacrifice before consuming it, by snuffing out the intellectual faculties and weakening the moral feelings: this thought was horrible, but it assailed me constantly, and I thought I would see the soul die at the same time as the body. Happily, the trial was short: in the last moments the interior force revived, and Christ, in descending for the last time into the heart of his well-beloved servant, left there the strength for this supreme struggle.

She hung on almost three days, calm, serene, murmuring prayers or answering by some words of ineffable maternal goodness to our caresses and attentions. Finally came the fatal night: I was the one watching by her. Weeping, I would suggest to this poor mother acts of faith, hope, and charity, which she had made me lisp once when I was very small. After about an hour new symptoms alarmed me. I called my older brother, who was sleeping in the next room. Charles heard us, and got up. The servants came running. All of us knelt around the bed. Alphonse said the heart-breaking prayers to which we replied with sobs. Every help which religion holds in reserve for this solemn hour, absolution, indulgences, were bestowed once more. The remembrance of a blameless life, and the good works which perhaps too many and too tiring had hastened its end, three sons preserved in the faith in the middle of so outrageous a time, and brought together there by an almost providential coincidence, and then, finally, the hopes already upon us of happy immortality—all these circumstances seemed joined to sweeten the horror and brighten the darkness of death. Neither convulsions nor agony, but a sleep which left her face almost smiling, a light breath which began to abate: an instant came when it was stifled, and we were left orphans. How to describe the desolation then and the tears streaming down, and yet the inexpressible, the ineffable interior peace we enjoyed, and how a new happiness seized upon us in spite of ourselves, and not only us, but the dearest members of the family; then that immense crowd at the funeral, and the tears of the poor, the prayers spontaneously offered up on all

sides without waiting for us to ask for them, and finally, to come back to you, the loving ardor of friendship which was undoubtedly amazed at finding us so calm in our grief.

Happy the man to whom God gives a holy mother!

This dear memory has not left us. Even in my real solitude in the midst of the lassitude which often ravages my soul, the thought of this august scene comes to remind me, to raise me up again. Considering how short life is, how little distant undoubtedly will be the reunion of those separated by death, I feel the temptations to self-love and the evil instincts of the flesh vanish away. All my desired courage for one thing only: to die like my mother!

And you, dear friend, you should share this precious memory with me just as you have already shared in so many others, and if my pen suffered pain in depicting things which are the same as interior scars for me, on the other hand your affecting sympathy, on which I counted in advance, should become a new balm to heal them, or at least cleanse them.

How I experience now the truth of your words, and how happy I am not to have deserted that bed of suffering and benediction to run after the doubtful promises of a university promotion! When, at the price of that negligible sacrifice, I could only have bought the favor of spending some months longer with my mother, to find myself at this final night I have been already paid too much. I had such regret at not being able to close the eyes of my poor unfortunate father! May they now be reunited in a common happiness, as they were here below in common works and troubles! May I continue with them in thought, faith, and strength that intimacy that nothing could interrupt, and may there be no family change except two saints more! Pray *for us*, then, excellent friend, for all of us: for me especially, who so greatly loved that sheltered life of the paternal home who, surrounded by my brothers and my numerous confreres, cannot get used to seeing no longer those of the preceding generation, and who find myself so alone!

Work comes to my aid somewhat: the demands of my course in business law takes the greatest part of my time. I began only on December 16. The lecture was successful; it was printed¹ and you will have a copy in time. The two subsequent lessons were compromised a bit by that hesitancy of speech which I cannot overcome; there is no dissatisfaction, however, and the hall which seats 250 people, was not large enough. The rankings will soon be classified, no doubt, and I am not without unease about the solidity of the pecuniary situation which depends entirely on the Municipal Council. It is possible for me to pursue and obtain Quinet's² chair: it will be vacant at Easter; or I can even try to attach my course to the university with the usual remuneration of 4,000 francs. Finally, Abbé Lacordaire will be returning in a few months, and then if the old desires change themselves into a real vocation, I will try to correspond with it. My perplexity is very great: already they are speaking to me on all sides about marriage. I do not yet know my own mind sufficiently to come to a solution. Give me your advice: you know the responsibilities and the consolations of the state, you know my character and the consultant's past; tell him, please, your opinion with the same frankness which he formerly ex-

exercised toward you. Do not be afraid of the responsibility: I do not promise you that your advice will be decisive.

Apropos of this, you have heard, perhaps, that Chaurand married a million in the person of Mlle. Serre, sister of our dead friend.

You have given me for Christmas a rendezvous that I did not fail. I have prayed to that merciful God who visited me amid the ruins of my poor family to visit also the young home where yours is being formed, to live with you as He did with Joseph and Mary, and to bless the first hope of your union. I composed there, in the sincerity of prayer, the wishes that many will be addressing you in the language of the world, here some days hence.

Accept my regards for a happy new year. Be kind enough to present them to Madame Lallier, as those of one of the most devoted friends her husband could have; a thousand wishes, too, to your excellent brother, whom you will probably be seeing at this special season. My older brother embraces you, and so do I, with regret for having to end so soon the conversation begun with you.

Adieu, reply, and do not forget

Your old comrade
A.-F. OZANAM

You have told me and M. Bailly has reminded me that you were very willing to busy yourself with a work on my book. Accept my lively thanks for it. Pardon this large paper; I have no letter paper; it was a holiday, and it could not be renewed; I would have preferred making you pay a lesser postage.

Original: Archives Laporte. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 318.

Notes:

1. In the *Revue de lyonnais*, 1840, p. 148, corresponding to vol. VIII of *Oeuvres* (Galopin, n. 125).
2. Edgar Quinet (1803-1875), writer, born at Bourg (Ain). Cosmopolite litterateur, idealist philosopher, and liberal historian. In 1839 he was holding a chair created for him at Lyon.



224. To François Lallier
Lyon, February 15, 1840

Asks for news. The Conference of Lyon and its members. Delivery of a piece of verse. Report on his teaching and work.

Dear friend,

My last letter, written in haste, between work on a course for its inauguration and the official duties of a new year, lent itself poorly to the flow of a long and

friendly chat. I therefore return to visit: *ecce iterum Crispinus*,¹ and if you are willing we will converse at our ease as in those good Paris evenings that we spent pleasantly by the corner of the fire, the checker board before us and the box of candy you brought.

What have you been doing? But should you not first be seriously greeted with the title *father* which was once given you as a happy nickname? Has not God given you the ineffable consolation of seeing your youth reborn under the appearance of infancy in the person of a son? Happy the first-born in their green years; he will only see their white hairs at the age when he himself shall have matured and the tomb's farewell will be in way of a nearer reunion! And you will also have the leisure to reflect on your finished work. After the education of adolescence, you will be at your child's side during the hard initiation to a man's age and, in the social career he will enter before you leave it, he will find the recent and still recognizable path you have left. If the responsibility of parental obligations frightens you, the time when they will become difficult is still far off, and until then it is not a burden God gives you but a little angel whose presence sanctifies your house, and brings you the most loving constancy and life more free of care.

For that life, with its positive needs, its conventional stances, with the tainted interplay of men and things, must often be irksome for you. Your work, especially, constantly exposes you to the least attractive sides of humanity. You probably reap hatred in the criminal court and distaste from the civil; and, if I am not mistaken, you bounce from the virtuous indignation of the public minister to the firm impartiality of the judge. More than once as well, I imagine, your position as colleague in the local magistrature must be called upon, and Sens is too small a town for you to show either much or entire sympathy. You undoubtedly find happy compensation in family joys, but I also dare to hope that you do not disdain to seek it as well in the relations of friendship. Our old Paris acquaintances sometimes have news of you, and perhaps you will not forget the Lyonnais . . . I would take your word if you only assure us.

On our side, we will strive to keep burning that sacred fire of Christian brotherhood you built among us in former days. The little Society of St. Vincent de Paul is alive and growing; the extraordinary needs of this winter have reinvigorated the activity of our almsgiving. We are making progress in the art of stealing from the rich for the profit of the poor. A lottery and a concert this year increased our usual budget by some two thousand francs. A great many of our members have volunteered to help young ex-prisoners, and the excellent La Perrière is engaged in establishing preventive assistance. But all that is slight, dear friend, in the face of a population of sixty thousand workers, demoralized by poverty and the spread of evil doctrines! Freemasonry and republicanism are exploiting the troubles and anger of this suffering multitude, and God knows what future is waiting for us if Catholic charity does not intervene in time to halt the slave uprising which is bearing down on us.

Unfortunately, there is a wider gap in our ranks: a small number of defections, several departures, and a death. You are aware of this death, undoubtedly, and

share in our sorrow: that of Alfred Riussec. His talent, rapidly developed in dispute at the bar, foretold the honors of great oratorical fame at the same time that his good fortune was readying him for probable access to the highest political office. Amidst such flattering hopes and the seductions of a world which forever courts nascent greatness, he preserved his simplicity, his rather shy benevolence, his faith and regular religious practice. He was ours, not by a meticulous attention, but by an ever-present helpfulness, the generosity of his alms and the openness of his affection. An illness which had seemed to run its course a moment before striking the final blow, thus took him off in his prime, and the tears which accompanied him to his last resting place are evidence enough of how hard a loss it is to us. Pray for him!

While this poor friend took the road to eternity, another bound himself tighter to earth by casting the golden anchor of a beautiful and rich marriage. I speak of Chaurand, you understand. God has rewarded him for his many virtues by bringing together for him all the good fortune here below. The nuptials, celebrated within two respectable and truly Christian families, were extremely moving. Nothing of the riotous joy of a wordly celebration, but a sweet atmosphere, a sort of reminder of Isaac and Tobias,² a picture of Cana. Even I, in the midst of my sorrows, found myself strongly stirred, which made it possible to put into verse an idea which came to be a long time ago about the marriage of my friends, and which I had wished to express for Dufieux, Arthaud, and myself in turn. It is a symbol common to all pious unions, your story as it is theirs, which is why I could not resist the desire of sending you the enclosed piece, thinking besides that you would enjoy showing to Madame Lallier what your friend thought on April 22, 1839.³ It is the literal truth. Also, you see, these verses are the last harvest of my defunct poetic verve and I have for them something of that weakness which accompanies the paternity of old men. However inaccurate the form, the thought pleases me and, not wishing to profane it with a publicity that, besides, it could not support, I am reserving it for the strictest intimate communications.

You will receive by the same bearer the opening lecture of my course. As you will see, it is less a work of art than a practicality: it is a delicate enough position to take vis-à-vis the public and the university, for local pride to accept cautiously and the important personages of Paris to pronounce favorably upon. Along with the flatteries possible without lying, there are the concessions that leave room for personal dignity. In the main the outline has not gone badly, judging by the results. Now that the wave of amateurs and curious have retired, I am left with a serious audience of about a hundred and sixty persons, who completely fill the lecture hall and rather choke the entrances, so as to give a look of affluence. You will picture me down below, decked out in the usual costume of law professors (as the academy wishes), perorating with an aplomb that astonishes me, and making me think I am dreaming, recalling when I was on the bench yesterday. I force myself to enliven the teaching of the letter of the codes by their spirit, by historical and economic examples; I even encroach on the social economy, your old domain: I endeavor to inspire my hearers with the love of and respect for their profession and consequently the duties it imposes; I tell them hard truths, and their good will graciously gives me the

right. A great many take notes, letters are written to me, there is zeal and work. Added to that, the rector has taken a wholly paternal affection for me and, as is most Christian: I confide in him completely. It has been decided to establish my chair more solidly and to provide me with the 4,000 francs other professors receive; and it would not be beyond the realm of possibility that, during the time of vacation, I might not substitute for M. Quinet in the Faculty of Letters. Thus God, "who tempers the wind to the lamb" seems to be opening up a better prospect for my future. Why must it be that those whose solicitude has prepared it can no longer enjoy it!⁴

You are most kind to occupy yourself with my poor *Dante*. As regards treating with Debécourt for the remainder of the edition, I would need, in order to have a better climate, the magazines to speak up a bit, especially *l'Univers*, to insist upon the usefulness, as far as I see it, the study of the philosophy of the Middle Ages can have for the theologians. If your duties do not allow you to carry out your kind plan, be good enough to tell me as soon as possible: I will understand despite your good intentions and La Perrière can take over the business immediately. I would prefer you, but in any case a word of reply and also your personal opinion as to format and type.

Could you not find an evening of leisure and write me four or five of your satisfying pages? You would thereby do me the greatest of favors, since friends' visits are not overabundant now. While my little brother is still living this year in his *pension*, which he leaves only twice in ten months, my older brother, suffering from a bad larynx which while not dangerous has become annoyingly obstinate, has had to go into exile for a while in Italy and no doubt on the day I am writing is in Naples. The first reports of his trip were good, and I am optimistic that I will embrace him, perfectly well, in two months. But the interval will be especially long. I am beginning to know that malady you have experienced, boredom. Ask the Sovereign Guardian of souls that he preserve me from the dangers of isolation, that He give me light to know His plans for me, and the strength to carry them out. May His will be done on earth as it is in heaven, that is, with faith and love!

Adieu, dear friend, count always on my lively and brotherly affection, and preserve yours for me, lest the hour when we met each other become a lost hour in those of your life, but be numbered among those remembered until death.

Your most devoted,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 329.

Notes:

1. Behold Crispin again! Crispin is the name given to a valet in a comedy, Italian in origin, who became the pleasant valet type, but bold and unscrupulous.
2. Cf. Gen 25ff, and Tob 3ff.
3. The date of Lallier's marriage.
4. Referring to his deceased parents.

227. To Henri Pessoneaux
Lyon, March 13, 1840

On friendship. Vocation. The Dante book a critical success. Steps to be taken for stimulating articles and for Ozanam's career. Abbé Maret's book.

Dear friend,

Forgive me if your last letter has lain three weeks without an answer. Seeing your brother and drawing out friendly chats with him, I found myself again in a way in your own company. I forgot the nuisance of separation and the privations of absence, and also felt more insistently than in the past the need of those incomplete recreations which tire the pen without being able to satisfy the superabundance of the heart. And then, the extreme goodness of my relations and acquaintances who sought to distract my solitude by inviting me to their family celebrations, cast some disorder into my days' work. The dinners and evenings greatly enlivened the work hours, nor even permitted the mind to reflect as seriously as usual when one returned to the silence of the study. Although the circle of these somewhat worldly pleasures are confined, for me, to a small number of intimate groups, the only ones it pleases me to frequent, I am nevertheless not sorry to see it close and give way to the strict customs of Lent. My duties are better fulfilled, and my leisure also. I can dedicate to my distant comrades a little of the time I have lost with nearby friends. It is not a profane joy, that of writing, and our correspondence can revive during the pious forty days without breaking the prescriptions.

First, I hasten to satisfy a wish which I presume to be quite lively by telling you how I found Marc like himself, which is to say like you, that is, an earnest Christian, excellent friend, artistic in his tastes, although immured in melancholy which has not abated. His conversation pleased me greatly, and I intend to seek this pleasure often and reaffirm our bonds, in so far as circumstances allow; for, you should not be unaware that his future is filled with incertitude, and we still do not know from what direction that breath of God called vocation will blow. If he is able to settle here, that would perhaps be more of a reason for you to return from time to time. We would find our wealth doubled—we, for I have the very good custom of identifying myself with my friends, of providing a second family for myself, of going the rounds among them to close the gaps misfortune has made for me. In the measure that the generation which preceded us and protected us, so to speak, is falling away and leaving us, newly come to manhood, face to face with the enemy, we need to close our ranks, and seeing ourselves vigorously guarding one another, we shall attack head-on the obstacles and perils of life with the greatest courage. And that is so strongly felt in the difficult days in which we find ourselves that the ordinary attachments of marriage and fatherhood no longer suffice rather generous souls, and going out from the domestic sanctuary where they come together to relax and pray, they continue to search in associations of another kind the strength to do battle. Thus do we see with satisfaction Arthaud, Chaurand, Frenet, etc. persevere in

their old affections: they are not lost, neither to us, nor the poor, nor the great work of the regeneration of French society.

As for me, I am observing custom without secret reflection, determined not to occupy myself with the question of *position* before the end of the next vacation time. I certainly owe a year of mourning to the memory of my poor mother. Thus I would have time to see Abbé Lacordaire return from Rome and better assure myself whether divine Providence might not wish to open the doors of the Order of St. Dominic to me. At the moment I should wish for that purpose by a more religious conduct and more austere habits to acquire the right to some light from above and some rule over the lower passions, and by these means a reasonable certitude of acting under legitimate inspiration. I am inviting my friends to assist me with their prayers in these grave and decisive circumstances. You will allow me to count principally on you. You have given me proof enough that no commission would appear too weighty to your friendship.

Thus, you have done for my recommended Regaldi more than he had a right to expect. Thus, too, are you willing to share my paternal solicitude for my poor *Dante*. From all I have heard, it seems that the book is winning what is called a *succès d'estime*¹; comforting thing to the self-love of the author, but little benefit for his bank account. Only the magazines can by their notices cultivate the literary market for a satisfactory sale. But it is difficult to curry their favor. Nonetheless, I am hoping that through your good offices the *Débats* will not delay in publishing Alloury's² review and that I will soon have the pleasure of reading yours in the *Gazette*. There remains the *Revue de deux mondes* where Ste-Beuve could write some lines for my good. When you see Ampère could you urge him to obtain this useful courtesy from his friend? You seem to think that my work would please M. Alfred de Vigny and would be circulated in his circle of acquaintances. If, when you are chatting with him you see that the idea really interests him and that he would be desirous of carrying it out, you could without any difficulty procure a copy for him at M. Debecourt's—at the same time you could cajole this worthy editor to get on with the rest of my edition. We are conferring with him about this.

Besides, I was about to ask you to pay a visit to this young professor³ whose friendly reception you boasted of to me, and you would not perhaps be unwilling for me to furnish the occasion for a new interview. I wrote to him . . . three weeks ago: first about succeeding Quinet, and asked him to see M. Cousin for this purpose and second about a proposed work whose title might be: "On the Guelph and Ghibelline Poetry in Italy from the 13th to the 16th Century." Wishing to spare him the trouble of a long letter, I told him that you would be kind enough to drop by his place and take his verbal reply. Now, if I have not already presumed too much on your kindness, would you fulfill a promise? In that case, you could tell M. Ampère that the change of ministry has completely upset M. Quinet's plans, that Fortoul⁴ has reversed himself on the possibility of a faculty at Aix, and that, as far as I am concerned, I am willing to wait for the opening of some other happier opportunity, and finally, that I am strongly of the opinion that the political circumstances in which M. Cousin⁵ finds himself would not permit approaching and chatting

with him, and that I am distressed to have importuned so awkwardly the unceasing kindness of M. Ampère. You could then solicit his opinion of the little work I have written him at length about, find out whether he approves the general ideas, and what sources of research he would advise. Indeed you should profit from the course of the conversation as far as your own studies are concerned.

The way taking you to the Faubourg St. Germain, you could be good enough to drop off the enclosed note at *l'Univers*, rue du Vieux-Colombier, 29. Forgive me one more time the multitude of my commissions. Among my many friends in Paris you are the only one whose exactitude and energy gives me hope of intelligent, prompt, and entire service. And, you understand without my having to say it: accustomed to our mutual sharing of desires, thoughts, and even dreams, you are like another self to me, barring the faults; I therefore could have no more faithful and honorable an envoy.

Abbé Maret's⁶ book arrived a few days ago; I have read it with lively satisfaction. This work has the rare merit of treating a subject which is at the same time present and eternal, of seizing upon the spirited side of religious polemic which makes it interesting to contemporary minds while it points to all the aberrations of humanity. Pantheism is the intellectual temptation of every age and every civilization; it is what unites under idolatrous forms 300 million Buddhists in the Orient, has resisted for three centuries every effort of Christian proselytism, and drowns in their blood the Tonkin and Cochinchina missions, just as it formerly consigned the infant churches of Japan to the flames of an immense pyre. It is also what, under the guise of philosophy, menaces Europe to attract it in the name of progress to the doctrines of Alexandria or Elea.⁷

An erudition never pedantic, a dialectic never insolent, a subtly animated style in no way pretentious, render M. Maret's work accessible and acceptable to every intelligence burdened in some way with great problems upon which depend the salvation of man and the future of nations. One could wish for more energy and a bit of that powerful oratory which, twenty years ago, made the *Essai sur l'indifférence*⁸ a prodigious success. A thousand thanks from me to the author, and the promise of my efforts to propagate his excellent writing.

The bishop of Algiers⁹ is with us; this evening he will attend a meeting of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Undoubtedly, some of those ardent words of charity which know how to embrace souls, even of miscreants, will be heard. Yesterday, in a short audience with which he honored La Perrière and me, he spoke to us much of Clavé for whom he has a boundless love. Give me in your turn news of that dear traveler and inform me when I can offer him the bed and board of hospitality.

I am per[haps the first] to tell you that Père Lallier, assuming the name or . . . is in possession of a little boy who preserves . . . name. Lamache's existence is a problem for me. I [hope] . . . to know where to take him. Not a line anymore from M. Bailly: without . . . and Dulac I would begin to doubt whether Paris, anticipating the catastrophe announced by the prophets of 1840, has not been swallowed up in a deluge of fire . . .

Marc is about to arrive, and in a moment we will be going together to the meeting which the bishop of Algiers will honor with his presence. Two weeks ago I spent a pleasant evening with your uncle. Your mother-in-law and your sister were there. Louis continues to take care of his health with cheerfulness. Your brother astonished us by how well he played the piano after three whole years away from it—which reminds me . . . ¹⁰is all at once a fictitious member as far as the conference is concerned.

Original: Archives Laporte. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 335, under the date of April 13.

Notes:

1. A critical success.
2. Louis Allourey had already reviewed it in the *Débats* issue of July 26, 1839.
3. J. J. Ampère.
4. Hyppolite Fortoul et Huchard (1811-1856), born at Digne, was Ozanam's fellow student at the Collège Royal de Lyon, and corresponded with him from time to time. First taken up with traveling and literary criticism, he became in 1841 professor on the faculty of letters at Toulouse, and then at Aix where he was dean. His political career was characterized by his attachment to the prince-president, then Emperor Louis Napoléon. He was grand master of the university from 1851 until his death.
5. Cousin was, since March 1, minister of public instruction in Thier's second ministry.
6. Henri Louis Charles Maret (1805-1881), preacher and writer. He became a professor in the Faculty of Theology at Paris in 1840, then in 1848 one of the editors of *l'Ere nouvelle*, and thus played a political role. Named titular bishop of Suza in 1860, he was numbered among the opposition at Vatican Council I. Ozanam refers here to his *Essai sur le panthéisme*.
7. Alexandria in Egypt and Elea in Italy (birthplace of Zenon and Parmenides) were citadels of Hellenistic philosophy. Parmenides taught that the universe was eternal, one, continuing, and immobile; his disciple Zenon opted for mobility.
8. Also by Abbé Maret.
9. Msgr. Dupuch.
10. The ends of seven lines are torn off in the original.



229. To Henri Pessoneaux
Lyon, April 1, 1840

Chair of Business Law. Financial difficulties.

Dear Henri,

Just a few lines on urgent matters. The modest but ongoing success of my poor Chair of Business Law has me taking advantage of M. Cousin's tenure in the Ministry of Public Instruction to have it erected *with university status*. Vigorous steps are being taken. They may perhaps require a trip to Paris for me during the approaching Easter holidays. I would not undertake it, however, without finding out the

minister's dispositions toward me in advance. If M. Ampère tells you anything, you must pass it on to me with frankness, or if you have not been able to see him, go there as soon as possible. You could also seek out for me M. Wallon,¹ conference master at the Ecole normale and member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and ask him to find out through his friends as quickly as possible how I am getting on. I am awaiting your reply *by next Wednesday at the latest* so as to book passage if necessary. If you are not able to talk with Wallon, let me know what you were able to learn from Ampère at least. A thousand pardons for my insistence.

Your mother-in-law is sharing your real problems with me. I would like to help lessen them otherwise than by advice. But I am still in the greatest financial difficulties, some 3,000 francs in debts to pay here by the end of the year. Nevertheless as soon as that deficit is made up and, liquidation over, I have settled with my brothers and am master of my small resources, you can count on me with the free confidence of an old friend who well knows that everything is mutual in service as in affection, when he himself has many times been the one owed. Your brother is fine and will stay with us, I think. Adieu, I am in a hurry.

To you for life,

Your cousin,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte.

Note:

1. Henri Alexandre Wallon (1812-1904). French historian and politician. Connected with the Sorbonne, the Collège Royal Louis-le-Grand, and the Ecole normale supérieure, he was later deputy and minister in the Second Republic and senator in the Third.



231. To Théophile Foisset
Lyon, April 12, 1840

Joy in friendship Foisset evidences for him. Opinion of the Lyon faculty. The Propagation of the Faith's contribution to Eugène Boré's school.

Sir and very dear friend,

I received your excellent book and no less friendly letter with lively gratitude. I could not glance through the one and read the other without being convinced, by a comparison in which I am on the best side, that your thesis is true and that Christians are the only ones who know how to be friends. The title you so kindly give me I accept with joy and do not hesitate to reciprocate it. It expresses a sentiment already ten years old, for from the time I began to read the *Revue européenne*, you

have shown me in the editors' behalf something like family affection. For, young as I was then, with consciousness of my weakness and uncertainty of my future, I especially looked for support, advice and example among that society of intelligent and hardworking Christians, most happy to discover among the oldest of them that they did not disdain to accept me as a brother. It was not just the trite impression of esteem that the title of something written makes on the thought of a novice reader; there was a sincere tendency of my poor nature which, of little energy, timid, and doubtful, strove constantly for something to elevate it. You could not believe how much, without prejudice of self-love, I delight in the shadow of someone greater: soldier of the second rank, the first line must protect me for reassurance. Besides, I experience a strange anxiety, in the measure that gaps occur in the previous generation and I find myself face to face with the perils of life. Thus, the loss of my parents left me, aside from the soul's incurable wound, a singular sensation of moral solitude which the solicitude of my friends could not drive away: they surround me, but they do not protect me. Even more, among them I more willingly attach myself to those whose greater age or eminence of merit strike me as protectors. There is, then, as much a need for me to respect as to cherish, and these two things sometimes come together too powerfully for me to reject them. You see, therefore, (and begin perhaps to forgive me for talking at such length about myself) that you will not be able to renounce a right of age whose recognition is an increasing joy to me, and that to banish from my letters that respectful nuance you proscribe so severely would be to fetter me and falsify the natural bent of my heart.

Those mentioned in your lines, M. Pèricaud¹ etc., thank you for your kind regards. The Faculty of Letters which you have been kind enough to take note of, is not held in equal esteem by everyone, and it could not be said that it exercises real influence. Talent and knowledge are not lacking, public favor is no longer missing, but what is to be regretted, what cannot be in any way supplied, is uniformity of teaching and firmness of belief. The dean, M. Reynaud,² a letter from whom, if I am not mistaken, can be found in the first volume of the *Revue européenne*, is an ardent and distinguished Catholic, but he is the only one, or what amounts to the same thing, what with the indifferent and hostile. Hopefully the audience often understands only half and our Christian ladies leave edified at either pantheistic homilies or eclectic conferences: it is taken for granted that a word of religious feeling has been proffered, and one makes the sign of the cross on the way out as if one has just heard the preacher in vogue.

Apropos of preachers, I know none more courageous and courteous than our dear and learned Eugène Boré.³ You will be happy to know that the Work of the Propagation of the Faith, not content with allotting the sum of six thousand francs to his school, has already taken in its interest several steps which will not be fruitless. But the Work insists that its activities remain secret until their publication in the *Annales*, and nothing could harm our mutual friend more than the clumsy obsequiousness of those who publish his most intimate correspondence down to the last detail in *l'Univers* . . . sometimes to my great embarrassment.

Forgive the lack of order in these two pages and the abrupt break-off that ter-

minates them. Several members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul are about to take their ease in my sitting room. It is six o'clock in the evening and tomorrow at five o'clock in the morning I leave for a trip of several days. I would reproach myself if I were to undertake it without satisfying my obligations: none has more hold on my heart than this one. You will not be hard on me, and will give me time to do better. You will do even more and acquire new claims upon me by thinking of me before God during the approaching holydays. I close with this hope and beg you to believe in the deep and cordial affection your kindness has inspired in me.

Your most humble and devoted servant in N.S.J.C.⁴
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives of the Foisset Family. Ed. by Jean Morienvall, *Sept Lettres inédites d'Ozanam à Théophile Foisset*, t. XXXV (May 1, 1933), pp. 185-220.

Notes:

1. Antoine Pèricaud, Lyon archeologist (1782-1865), librarian of the city of Lyon, also wrote on the history of the city.
2. Jean Reynaud, French philosopher and politician, born at Lyon (1806-1863).
3. Eugène Boné (1809-1874). Friend of Lammenais until 1836. Member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and of the Asiatic Society of Paris, substitute in the Armenian Chair at the Collège de France, he was, as one of the great Orientalists of the day, entrusted with scientific missions in Persia by the Academy of Inscriptions and Fine Arts from 1837 to 1841. He was considered at this time for the French consulate in Jerusalem. During his numerous sojourns in the Near East he joined the Congregation of the Mission's (Vincentian Fathers) Province of the Orient at Constantinople, and eventually became superior general of the Congregation.
4. Nôtre Seigneur Jésus Christ (Our Lord Jesus Christ).



235. To François Lallier
Paris, April 26, 1840

Thanks, and asks for interview.

Dear friend,

Two words only so as not to miss the post. I am staying on here until Monday, May 4, and happy to spend some time with you in these final days: I have *need*, besides, to consult you about my personal affairs, nor would your presence be useless to the interests of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

I have seized this occasion in haste in order to thank you for your brotherly reception; be kind enough to give Madame Lallier my thanks and respect.

Your devoted friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

At what hotel will you be staying and when?

Postmark: Paris, April 27, 1840.

Original: Archives Laporte.



236. To Joseph Arthaud
Paris, April 28, 1840

Activities of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Wish to obtain encouragement from the pope.

Dear friend,

Will my slowness in sending you these addresses so long awaited serve you to excuse the negligence of others, or include me in the same anathema? I do not know, but console yourself for having waited until now since I can reply at the same time to your excellent letter of last Saturday.

First, accept my thanks for the friendly vigilance which you have been kind enough to exercise over the poor absentee's affairs. You will forgive the indiscretion which made me entrust these cares to you; it would be impossible to put them into firmer hands. Indeed I shall not prolong the inconvenience of the situation and will be returning by Tuesday, May 7, at the latest. Please inform those aware of my trip, that is, the whole city probably, for in that fine city of mysteries and secrets it would seem that the walls have ears.

So, I will spend the feast of the Good Shepherd here: Lallier should be coming to rejoin me for that day. The occasion should provide me with some insight on the present status of the Society. It would take too long to write what I have learned up to now. Much good is being done in Paris. Very distinguished presidents have been bestowed on several conferences: M. Tissier,¹ whom you told me about, Cornudet, master of requests in the Council of State, Ferrand,² physician, and Wilson, former editor of the *Revue européenne*. The conference of presidents meets every month for their common interests which are, I am sure, worthily discussed. Several new works have been born, notably a patronage of apprentices, a library for soldiers, and a free placement bureau. But I am about to pronounce the word which indicates trouble. Which is, that certain bureaucratic tendencies and useless paperwork, which I have already warned against, are threatening intrusion. The lithographic press is constantly complaining about letters, tables, formulas, bulletin, etc., etc. . . . I promise myself that I will say a couple of words about it at the general assembly. Then, there are many meetings being held under sacristy roofs; but this clerical tendency is abating a bit as M. Le Prévost's influence wanes. The withdrawal of his title of vice-

president general has been managed,³ which is important, for this officer is practically designated in advance to succeed as president. Besides, M. Bailly is hesitating in his choice of a worthy member to fill this post, and his hesitation delays the *definitive* formation of the general council of the Society.

In the meantime some great and efficacious ideas have been born; there is the thought that the central authority, before ruling the association now so numerous, should have some kind of consecration. The pope's brief to Lord Shrewsbury, president of the Catholic Institute of England, has given rise to hope that the like could be done for us, and within two weeks two members will leave for Rome, at their own expense, to seek an act of this kind, which would erect us as a *confraternity* and at the same time honorably sanction our existence.⁵ Then, as M. Bailly says, the council, with this kind of support behind it, could coordinate a correspondence of direction with the provinces, who are now perhaps not so willing to have it intrude on their affairs.

In what concerns the rule, we should obtain complete satisfaction with the paragraph on the end (Article 59), the establishment date, the maintenance of the ordinary council and certain other related points. Our opinion in what concerns the election of the president general may seem impractical, and that is Lallier's opinion. Finally, the actual format could not be modified to agree with the former rule, because fifteen new provincial conferences and half the active members at Paris are familiar only with the new one. For the rest, mistakes have been recognized and for the future it is promised that amendments will be made only by way of additions. The immense number of members is no mean obstacle to a work so lowly in its early ambitions.

Père⁶ Bailly seems more occupied with it than in the past; and as for M. de Riancey, I have no other knowledge of him except that he has very remarkable literary talents.

You can share this letter with those of our confreres you judge suitable to peruse it and, in reply by Wednesday's post, you could give me some fresh instruction for the general meeting. Firmness, I hope, will not fail me, but it is time which betrays me. My affairs eat up a great part of it, and the rest is absorbed by invitations of friendship, too sweet not to be accepted. I am singularly touched by the overwhelming reception. . . Why must the death of our poor friend Fornet (?)⁷ come to sadden these brief moments of happiness? He will be prayed for Sunday. While we remember our dead, we shall not forget the living. It is enough to say all here who are from Lyon are recommended to your affection and prayers: Roe,⁸ Gaillaud, Bougeon, Hignard,⁹ etc., and, last of all, he who all his life will be your devoted confrere and grateful friend

A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives of the Arthaud family.

Notes:

1. Possibly one of the Tissier brothers, builders of heavy machinery at Paris.
2. Amadée Marie Auguste Ferrand de Missol (1805-1882), physician (1828), had belonged to the Society of Good Studies before joining the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Ordained priest in 1856, Dr. Ferrand was director of several charitable works.
3. Le Prévost retained his post of vice-president general when "the *definitive* formation of the general council" was effected in December 1840. He seems to have been replaced by Cornudet before May 9, 1844 (Foucault, *La Société de Saint-Vincent de Paul*, Paris, 1931, p. 76).
4. Henry John Chenwynd Talbot, eighteenth earl of Shrewsbury (1800-1868), marine officer, member of the House of Commons (1830-1833 and 1837-1849), and peer.
5. This project was not carried out. The approach to Rome began only in 1842 and came to a conclusion three years later (Foucault, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-83).
6. An affectionate nickname.
7. The question mark is in the French edition. The name Fornet is not listed in the index of proper names at the end of the second volume of that edition. It is obviously a mistaken writing for Frenet.
8. Henri Roe, magistrate of Lyon origin, first president of the Court of Chambéry in 1877.
9. Louis Henri Vincent Hignard (1819-1893), native of Lyon, student and professor at the Collège de Saint-Etienne (1841), then at Lyon (1843), substitute professor (1864), then professor (1867), in the Faculty of Letters of Lyon.



241. To François Lallier
Lyon, June 21-28, 1840

Improvement in his financial condition. Picture of the religious life at Lyon.

Dear friend,

The great feasts, while they prompt us to think more seriously of God, also make us remember men more effectively. In approaching the holy altar it is natural to profit from this privileged hour for oneself and his loved ones. But one is not held to write in the evening to the friend who was remembered in a special way in one's prayers in the morning. However, I could not go to bed, even if it is very late, without writing some lines to tell you that you are not forgotten, and to ask the same in return. For that blessed conversation at Sens and Paris is already like a dream to me: your charming hospitality of twenty-four hours which I would have liked to make twenty-four days at your inconvenience, and your friendly visit at such an opportune time before my departure, all that is no more old story, as far as I am concerned. Time is interminable until I know what has become of you since the day of our last separation. Since Providence does not, unfortunately, permit us to take the same road, we can at least, from our distance, keep an eye on one another and abreast.

As for me, I would fail in this duty, were it not for a happy event which will not be without influence on my social condition, nor consequently without interest to

your friendship. Just a moment! do not think there is question of a wedding. In that regard, I rejoice even more in total freedom, freedom sometimes troublesome, in the sense that one is exposed to the matrimonial speculations of others and finds himself compromised without being aware by the most embarrassing advances. Such, then, is not the question; it could be said, however, that it is not something unfamiliar, and indeed something *subsidiary*; for it is a matter of subsidies. The Lyon Chamber of Commerce, at the request of the rector,¹ is really about to vote me a supplementary fee of 1,500 francs; with the 2,500 I receive from the city—4,000 in all—the salary of the faculty professor. This decision, worthy of attention so far as the stew pot is concerned, is valuable from the point of view of public consideration in a city where men's merit and actions are measured entirely by monetary profit. The course in business law profits from official approval, not without necessity in the midst of a fairly considerable lack of attendance which has been troubling me for some weeks, and which I have had the modesty to attribute to the extreme heat, campaign, trips, etc.

For the rest, wanting to be sure of double the space under my feet, and to cooperate with new efforts by M. Cousin from whom I had a letter here, I am continuing to prepare myself for the event of literature, with the goal of accumulating (does the word not scandalize you already?), of accumulating, I say, two chairs, if the head and chest are equal to it. The rector and other grave personages are prodding me, and I am devouring a notable quantity of Greek and Latin without prejudice to the usual doses of the business code and commentators. It is enough to tell you how much my hours are fought over, and how greatly I run the risk of losing common sense, if God did not come to my aid. At the same time the *Propagation of the Faith* could not be neglected, and in next July's issue of the *Annales* you will find a long work, often detectable as to form, but important at bottom, which I did to establish as well as possible from trustworthy sources a *General Statistics of the Missions*.² I call it to your attention as authoritative.

And since we have now come back to religious matters, you should know that Lyon is wholly in the odor of sanctity these days. We have just had our processions³ which were magnificent and especially well received by the people. We are beginning an octave. During it, on next Wednesday, our new archbishop, M. de Bonald,⁴ will arrive. It is time, for it is impossible to describe with what impatience he is awaited. Much is hoped from him for the new institutions, and we in particular for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Up until now we have been carrying out our works in a hidden manner amid many disappointments and obstacles. The distribution of good books among the soldiers and the preventive patronage of young apprentices is entirely successful.

For the rest, with the exception of Rieussec and de Frenet whom God has called to Himself, the core of the society is made up of those you are acquainted with: you have not ceased to be cherished by them. I was hard put to satisfy the questions of La Perrière, Arthaud, and Chaurand; all wish they had been on the trip. Your son is the cause of great entertainment; he is already pictured clothed in his father's gravity, and compliments are sent you through me.

Be kind enough to join my regards to all those I send you and, in excusing the brusqueness of this ending which the already advanced hour of night demands, present my respects to Madame Lallier and accept once more the assurance of a friendship of which you have no doubts.

Your devoted,
A.-F. OZANAM

I have forgotten three things: an enclosed note to which you are asked to reply by Dufieux, the news of my brother's happy arrival after four month's sojourn in Italy, and Baudicour's reproaches, who complains of not having a word from you.

The 28th. Dufieux's note, mislaid at the time I needed it, has delayed the departure of this letter. Now I profit from the delay to ask you for some comments on the abuses indicated and proposed reforms in the legislation on commodities. You have done a work on this subject intended for *l'Univers*. If you could tell me the principal sources you drew upon and the results obtained you could easily supply me with a lesson I must give in eight or ten days in my business law class.⁵

Original: Archives Laporte. Excerpted ed.: Lettres (1912), t. I, p. 343.

Notes:

1. M. Soulacroix.
2. "Etat général des missions," in *Annales de la propagation de la foi*, July 1840 (Galopin, n. 130).
3. The processions and benedictions of the Blessed Sacrament on the feast of Corpus Christi.
4. Louis Jacques Maurice Cardinal de Bonald (1787-1870), bishop of Puy (1823-1839), archbishop of Lyon from 1839 until his death.
5. Ozanam devoted his forty-third lesson to commodity firms in *Notes d'un Cours de droit commercial* in t. VIII of *Oeuvres*.



242. To Gustave Olivier¹
Lyon, July 11, 1840

Suggestions for the distribution of his work on Dante. Hope for a religious revival in the diocese of Lyon with the arrival of Msgr. de Bonald.

Sir and dear friend,

Will you forgive a long silence which scarcely agrees with my promise to work actively for the success of the poor work with which I burdened you some two months ago? The multiplicity of occupations all at once which a course to give and an assembly to prepare imposed on me, in no way allowed me to engage in a correspondence with you even more agreeable to me because it would cultivate a new and much esteemed friendship. However, it seems to me time to give you at least a

sign of life. Besides, a fortuitous occasion has been afforded you, that is, the appearance in the Roman *Annales des sciences religieuses*, the July issue, of a major article on the blessed Dante. The author, Père Piancini, Jesuit, and professor of the Roman college, has been good enough to devote nearly thirty pages to analyze, quote, and recommend your servant's work. And since this publication enjoys in Italy a high reputation for orthodoxy and learning, this approval, which infinitely consoles me and reassures me in reply to the alarms of conscience inseparable from publicity, could also serve to protect me vis-à-vis the religious public.

See, then, whether it is not convenient to have mention made of this article in *l'Univers*. The *Annales* issue can be found at Bonnetty's.² The time for distribution of prizes could, it seems to me, help the distribution of some of my volumes in the upper classes of the minor seminaries and colleges. Finally, do you not think it suitable to try some overtures at Piatti in Florence, the bookstore which carries the latest literary works of France and Germany, as Debecourt does at Rome? A review in the *Gazette de France*³ would be very useful to foreigners; it is done and accepted. But it is to be feared that publication will languish if it is not urged. We will try to do something with the college here. But the city of Lyon is a very mediocre market for scholarly books.

The same reasons make it ungrateful ground for the spread of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Until now science and religion remain in this country two elements practically irreconcilable, and it is hardly understood that a Christian can be learned or that literature could enter the service of Christianity. Nevertheless, with the cooperation of a respectable ecclesiastic, professor in the Faculty of Theology, I hope to be able to organize the little core of correspondents you wish. The coming of Msgr. de Bonald to the archepiscopal see of Lyon, by giving new life to the clergy, new guidance to the pious laity, and a powerful impetus to Catholic studies, could perhaps prepare us for a near future of more favorable dispositions and fruitful resources. His pastoral letter generally received with a delighted admiration, the satisfaction of those who have been able to enjoy his first sermons, the reputation for talent and virtue which preceded his arrival, all these things seem to presage better days for us when our fine diocese will at length take part in that religious movement which happily dazzles part of France. Happy if, of the number of these consoling spectacles chosen to assist in a time of reconstruction, we know how to make ourselves actors in the great scene presented to our eyes, if we know how to relieve the moral ruin of our friends by uniting our forces to restore among other men the empire of holy beliefs alone capable of giving them understanding, courage, and well-being.

The late hours when I write these lines and the sleep which blankets my thought as it makes my pen falter oblige me to close. I could not do so, however, without asking for a word of reply. Be kind enough to write me whether M. Bailly has sent you all the volumes you should have, whether M. Debecourt has received his balance, and whether you are satisfied with the sale. You would sweeten the pains of distance by giving me news of my old and new friends left behind in Paris, especially Mm. Wilson, Gouraud,⁴ de Gazalis,⁵ Veuillot,⁶ etc. . . . Finally, do not

forget yourself and tell me whether I can always count on that good and kind affection of which you have given me so many proofs and which I consider as one of the most precious results of my last trip to Paris. As for me, I never cease being, with all Christian energy and fraternity,

Your most humble servant, and since you are kind enough to wish so, your devoted friend,

A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Royal Library of Prussia at Berlin.

Notes:

1. Gustave Olivier, publisher and partner of Debecourt.
2. Eugène Bonnetty, noted orientalist and director of the Société des bons Livres, clearing house and library for important Catholic publications.
3. *Gazette de France*, or originally *La Gazette*, journal founded by Théophraste Renadot in 1631 under the patronage of Richelieu. This magazine, the first in France, ceased publication in 1914. It represented royalist principles.
4. Henri Gouraud (1807-1874), physician (1832), attached to parisian hospitals, member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, friend of Ozanam, was also one of the founding shareholders and the house doctor of Collège Stanislas. In 1848 he was on the editorial board of *l'Ere nouvelle*.
5. Either a slip on Ozanam's part, or a misspelling in the French edition for Edmonde de Cazalès.
6. Louis Veuillot (1813-1883), Catholic publicist, born at Boynes (Loiret), director of *l'Univers* and an ardent champion of ultramontanism (religious opinions favored by Rome) as against Gallicanism (French views).



243. To Ferdinand Velay
Lyon, July 12, 1840

Trip to Paris. Praise for l'Univers. Development of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Prospects for the future. Preparation of the Agrégation des lettres.

Dear friend,

Here is a poor letter which comes, timid and ashamed, to ask yet again forgiveness for its lazy author. If you hear it out to the end, perhaps you will find a response to some of your just reproaches: it will inform you at least of several things whose effect has been to ruin decisively my leisure for the present and my projects for the future.

The blessed arrival of the Easter holidays had interrupted my course and tendered my locomotive faculties their entire freedom when the need of putting certain library affairs in order, of establishing my university position in a more satisfactory fashion, and of breathing perhaps also the intellectual air of Paris made me undertake a little trip there incognito; three weeks' business, recreational dis-

traction which should improve health, and well worth the expense, since it especially had to do with finalizing the sale of my book. Indeed, everything turned out as I had wished, and over and above the unhopèd-for happiness of coming across as I went along the majority of my old friends: Lallier at Sens where we spent twenty-four hours together; at Paris, M. Bailly, Cazalès, and the entire *Revue européenne*, Saint-Chéron at *l'Univers*, Bonnetty and the *Université catholique*, and finally Montalembert. Everyone happy and open, much activity in the religious press, new writers like Veuillot, those snatched from the enemy and enlisted in a good cause, especially and in great number the converts of the pastor Desgenettes; the sacred chair occupied by M. Coeur, who presides today, Bautain, Ravignan, and an Abbé Mercelin, very capable, who to judge from his debut, will one day be in the lead of everyone.

Thus, the faith alone remains whole amid the splintering of parties and schools. Already more than three shades of opinion are counted among the legitimists,¹ and more than six distinct categories among the dynastics.² That is the way hateful division is now showing itself to the republican opposition. On another side, the days are far gone when the *Globe* rallied the elite of the young press to rationalism, when the triumvirate of Cousin, Guizot, and Villemain³ took over the Sorbonne, a tribune no less powerful than that of the Palais-Bourbon.⁴ Now, no assembly, no court strong enough to formulate a doctrine; more a middle ground between a sterile criticism and an impudent libertinage: that is the whole *Revue de deux mondes*. In such a situation, the ground will be ours if we have sufficient men, if those men unite to marshal their strength, and if they are supported by outside sympathies. But that is precisely, unless I am mistaken, what is in the offing for days already upon us. The humble efforts of the little and the most obscure have perhaps helped to point the way to great things and great men. It is clear that the movement which has evolved under different forms, in their turn feeble or violent, timid or indiscreet, philosophical or literary, the movement which has produced the *Correspondant*, the *Revue européenne*, the *Avenir*, the *Université*, the *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*, *l'Univers*, the Conferences of Notre Dame, the Benedictines of Solesmes, the Dominicans of Abbé Lacordaire, and even the little Society of St. Vincent de Paul, assuredly very unequal in importance and merit: it is clear, I say, that this movement, corrected, modified by circumstances, begins to entrap the destinies of the century. Justified from the beginning by the proselytism which it waged among unbelievers, by the firmness of the faith in many souls, who would have lost it perhaps without that, strengthened by the progressive adherence of the most distinguished members of the priesthood, behold it encouraged by the protection of a new episcopate; and the three-fold nomination of Msgrs. Affre, Gousset, and de Bonald⁵ to the three premier sees of France necessarily raises for the clergy the long quarantine that our ideas, a bit suspect, have had to undergo.

On another side, the orthodox propaganda of England and America and the Catholic resistance in Ireland, Spain, and Germany are in accord with us as to their trends, polemic, and manifestations, and the most cordial union reigns upon all points among all those whose influence steers events or guides opinions. The *Cato-*

lico of Madrid, the *Revue de Dublin*, the *Journal des sciences religieuses* of Rome, the *Catholik* (sic) *Miscellany* of Charleston, the *Courrier de Franconie*, all extend their hands to us. And the latest public acts of the Holy See: the allocutions against Prussia and Russia, the bulls to suppress the treaty, the encouragement given to all the new foundations in the Church, to all the reforms in religious art; these, I say, managed to clarify position and to signal, at the time where we are, a remarkable transition.

The era which is ending is that of the Renaissance, of Protestantism as far as dogma is concerned, of absolutism in politics, of paganism in letters and the sciences. Here at home, it is the school of Louis XIV, of the eighteenth century, of the Gironde,⁶ of the Empire,⁷ and the Restoration,⁸ which, certainly diverse and incompatible in their goals and means, had nonetheless that common primitive vice of aspiring to highhandedly enthrone antiquity again and abjure the Middle Ages.

We are entering upon a period whose vicissitudes no one can foresee, but of which it is impossible to mistake the arrival. Nevertheless, it is a happy augury for it that it has begun by justice rendered to the past. Filial piety brings good fortune. By binding itself by traditional bond to the eternal verities of religion, to the toilsome conquests of human experience, it should follow from this point with less peril to progressive instinct which must enrich, not repudiate, that glorious heritage. The sciences progress at a more rapid pace when they do not contest the ground of first principles, and talent is no longer wasted by putting in question, in the nineteenth century of our era, the problems to which Christianity has given the definitive solution, after they had consumed all the strength of genius in vain throughout four thousand years of ignorance and doubt.

I have spoken of *l'Univers*, and I should probably frustrate your attention were I not to tell you what the most intimate connections have made me think of the worth and future of that journal. All the editors are acquaintances, and introduced me during my trip to the situation and resources of their work. Work and not enterprise, for the journal has long been sustained only by the sacrifices of certain generous men who saw in it the only organ acceptable to our doctrines. The results of its editorial position have won it a considerable increase in subscribers, 600 in the last nine months, and the approbation of the pope personally, three cardinals, and more than sixty French and foreign prelates. Without contradiction, there is still a great deal to be desired, and a little to be regretted in the platform and format of this magazine; but, at least, it seems to me to offer the most satisfactory general ensemble possible, to the real situation of minds which perhaps a more tolerant allure or more emphatic stance might frighten off. They have, for that matter, enlisted me among their most ardent propagators, and I have the consolation to see here the number of subscriptions increase every day despite the incredible machinations of adversaries. The most intelligent of pious lay persons are beginning to assemble under this banner where no parasitic logo intrudes to compromise the primitive simplicity of the cross.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul was not any longer one of the lesser subjects of joy and hope I found on my last stay in Paris. The occasion of one of its solemn-

ties, the Second Sunday after Easter, permitted me to see it assembled together, and in the whole dimension of its rapid increase. I saw, gathered in the meeting amphitheatre, more than 600 members who are not the totality of its Parisian personnel. The majority made up of poor students, but with some contrast in the addition of the highest social positions. I rubbed shoulders with a peer of France, a deputy, a counsellor of state, several generals, and some distinguished writers. I counted twenty-five pupils of the *Ecole normale* (of the sixty-five it has), ten from the *Ecole polytechnique*, and one or two from the *Ecole d'état—major*. In the morning, about 150 associates approached the holy table together, at the foot of the chase of the holy patron. Letters were received from more than fifteen French cities where already conferences are flourishing; almost an equal number are being organized this year. We see nearly 2000 young men engaged here in this peaceful crusade of Catholic charity. It is, as M. de Coux has said, a Christian free-masonry under the open sky. It is to be hoped that the strength of association, unfortunately so powerful for destroying the belief of our fathers, will find a way to raise it among us and our children. Thus, in this proud age of ours, it is wonderful to see develop, outside all political and philosophical systems, a tight-knit group of men determined to use all their rights as citizens, all their influence as educated persons, and all their professional knowledge to honor Catholicism in time of peace and defend it in case of struggle.

When, finally, rampaging pauperism comes, raging and desperate, face to face with a financial aristocracy whose bowels are shut, it is good to have mediators who can prevent a collision whose horrible disasters cannot be imagined, who can make the two camps listen, and who can bring to the one, words of resignation, and to the other, counsels of mercy, and to all the word of order, that loving reconciler.

There is what we will accomplish if we are worthy of it. But how far we are still from so beautiful a vocation! What lax habits to vanquish! What niggardly ideas to abdicate! What elevation and purity of character to acquire in order to merit becoming the instrument of Providence in the execution of its most admirable designs!

But I am forgetting the news heralded at the start of my letter, that which especially should serve to excuse myself to you. Having arrived in the capital—provincial style—I could not fail to pay my regards to my most honored patron, the minister of public instruction. I received the most affable and cordial reception from him. After having me to lunch at his ministerial table, he was kind enough to inform himself of my position and views, and told me of his intention to have me succeed Quinet next year. (I have the impression that it would not be a question of giving up my present chair for the purpose.) But he is putting a price on his favor, and naturally he there holds the upper hand. He has asked me to come to Paris in September to cooperate in the *Agrégation de littérature*,⁹ a new institution whose success he, as its instigator, holds dear. He has repeated his invitation through several friends, then the rector, and finally in a formal letter, so that it is impossible for me to stay away. But meanwhile the difficulty of the program, bristling with the thorniest Greek texts, has already made me despair several times, and with the

work my course gives me, I have had infinite trouble finding the time strictly indispensable to the most superficial preparation. As a result, complete disarray of my correspondence, my social life, and even my domestic affairs. Another result, more hope of being able to bring to reality that lovely proposed trip for this autumn of which one of the most satisfying episodes would be to meet you on the shores of the Lake of Geneva. The walking stick in hand at the place of departure, knapsack on shoulder, light of foot, face to the wind, walking along those lovely Swiss roads, traversing the beautiful green dells, which the glacier peaks crown with their prodigious heights; turning aside to greet Fribourg, Berne, Thun, Schwitz, Einseideln, and Constance, visiting those marvels of Catholic renaissance art which do honor to Munich, to descend again by the picturesque Tyrolean ways to Venice, Padua, Verona and Milan; to realize at long last that fairy pilgrimage dreamed of for the past six months, an excursion of another kind must be made through the thickets of Greek literature, among the innumerable creations of Latin, French, and foreign letters, an intellectual voyage which would not be without charm could it be done at leisure, staying at the most beautiful scenic views, stopping by the flower clusters enroute long enough to detach the fresh bloom without being scratched by the thorns. But no: all these admirable things must be passed on the run, gathered with a hasty hand at the risk of bruising and spoiling them, such great poetic beauties; in place of a coronal a rude pile must be fashioned, then submitted to the profane elaborations of literary chemistry, infusing, analyzing, grinding to powder by pedantic criticism, swallowing reminiscences like a beverage in the greatest possible quantity, and arriving before the learned university completely saturated in Greek, Latin, and German, in order to give proof of quasi-universal knowledge.

If to these urgent and precipitous studies you join the preparations for my lessons in business law, and if you add the small but numerous demands of business and social life, of which I am nonetheless forced to cheat myself as much as possible, you will understand a little better, dear friend, the nature, and if I can so call it, the distress of the present time.

It would have to be nothing less than that to crave your indulgence not only for the long delay but also for the incredible disorder of this letter partly written at the usual hour for sleep. I see that I have omitted to tell you that my brother is back from Rome, bearing, with a multitude of interesting news, a letter from Abbé Lacordaire. After completing his own novitiate, he directed that of eight young men, all of great distinction, who have returned with him to France. But I especially notice that I have reached the last page without telling you anything about my Lyon friends, and without talking to you about yourself. As regards Lyon, I think others are keeping you abreast. Nothing remarkable has occurred in the little circle of our old comrades, and the matrimonial example of Chaurand remains without imitators. You probably know that Janmot's great painting has been successful and earned for him sufficiently flattering approval from the government. He has been commissioned to undertake painting on lava for the exterior decoration of church facades, and his first attempts have given him hope of satisfying success. I have several times had the honor of meeting up with your father who seems to me to be

enjoying good health, and he has given me news of you. Could the sojourn at Salins not become too monotonous for you? Poor Danoman of whose death I learned with much sorrow would have been able to give you yet another friend, if God had preserved him. Happy the society of good country families who ought to be very content at having you to comfort their solitude a bit. What you have told me of Franche-comte customs does not astonish me. The inhabitants of that province have always been noted for their morality and religion. As for education, there is a difficulty in not finding it in the same proportion there as here. Reading is, besides, a great resource for you. But if the thought of absent friends who faithfully remember you, if the heart's union with those who, of like age, antecedents, sentiments and beliefs are removed from you only by distance of place, if those sweet imaginings of a fraternal and Christian affection could enliven and sometimes distract your isolation, then read these fine sentiments resolutely; they will not be illusions, for it is true that in our recollections and conversations we are with you often, and ask the same place in your memory and also in your prayers.

Be good enough to reply and thus show me that my silence has not too seriously annoyed you.

Adieu, your friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 347.

Notes:

1. Partisans of the elder branch of the Bourbons dethroned with Charles X in 1830 to be succeeded by the Orléans with Louis Phillippe.
2. Partisans of the Capetian Dynasty, which would embrace both Bourbons and Orléans.
3. François Villedieu (1790-1870), critic, born at Paris, professor of the Sorbonne, minister of public instruction from 1839(?) - 1844.
4. Seat of the Chamber of Deputies.
5. On the nomination of Msgr. Affre to the archbishopric of Paris, of Msgr. de Bonald, bishop of Puy, to the archbishopric of Lyon, and Msgr. Gousset, bishop of Périgueux, to the archbishopric of Reims, in May 1840, cf. V. Lecanuet, *Montelambert*, t. II (1919), pp. 640-670. Denis Auguste Affre (1793-1848), born at Saint-Rime-de-Tarn (Aveyron). The archbishop was mortally wounded on the Parisian barricades, July 25, 1848, on which—at the behest of Ozanam and companions—he had climbed to plead for peace and the end of that year's revolution.
6. The Girondins were an influential and moderating party in the French Revolution.
7. The reign of Napoléon Bonaparte.
8. The Restoration of the Bourbons (Louis XVIII and Charles X) from 1814 to 1830.
9. An assembly of men of letters, and a contest. Ozanam came out first and received an immediate offer to teach at the Sorbonne (cf. letter 250, Ozanam to Lallier, October 3, 1840).



249. To Henri Pessonneaux
Paris, October 2, 1840

About his success at the Agrégation

Dear friend,

Judgment is rendered. I have been named first. I do not know where I am. I only know that I embrace you tenderly.

Your cousin,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte.



250. To François Lallier.
Paris, October 3, 1840

About his success at the Agrégation and his next visit to Lallier.

Dear friend,

I do not want you to learn from the newspaper about the wonderful success I have just had. After the long trials in which your friendship involved itself for me, I have been named first in the *Agrégation*. As a result I have been offered immediate entry at the Sorbonne as substitute for M. Fauriel.¹

This event, which surpasses all my hopes, does not fail to embarrass me somewhat, for I have the alternative of either missing a future providentially opened up or disrupting deep rooted habits and affections. I beg God to enlighten me! Join yours to mine and be assured that, on my side, at Communion tomorrow, I will not forget to include your intentions, my friend's intentions, in my feeble prayers.

Have the goodness to send me, also, by post, the address of our friend Le Tailandier at Rouen, if you have it. I am thinking of paying him a little visit next Tuesday with Dulac. You will have your turn, and I am so used to your friendly way of not standing on ceremony to tell you that, Tuesday or Wednesday of the following week, I will come to take advantage of another twenty-four hours of your hospitality, to chat heart to heart, as I need to. I can tell you then, better than now, how much I am touched by the moral solicitude you have shown me and, recalling our friends, common hopes, and duties, we can take some courage perhaps to meet the grave problems the present situation of fatherland and Church impose on the weakest of their children.

Adieu, the post is leaving. There is only time left to present my respects to Madame Lallier and to you the assurance of my fraternal friendship.

Your devoted,
A.-F. OZANAM

Let me know, also, what coaches I can take from here to Sens and at what times, and afterward from Sens to Dijon.

Postmarks: Paris, October 3, 1840, Sens, October 4, 1840.

Original: Archives Laporte, Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I., p. 358.

Note:

1. Claude Fauriel (1772-1844), French critic and historian. Former secretary to Joseph Fouché. Member of the violent Montagnards in the Constitutional Convention of the French Revolution. Minister of police and duc d'Otrante under the Empire. Abandoned Napoléon after the Hundred Days and preserved his ministry under the Restoration. Ambassador to Dresden, which post he resigned. Became a naturalized Austrian citizen and died at Trieste. Fauriel had taught foreign literature at the Sorbonne since 1820. Ozanam had a friendly relationship with him, despite the dichotomy of their ideas.



259. To Auguste Le Taillandier
Lyon, November 3, 1840

About his success in the Agrégation and his approaching arrival in Paris. Establishment of a Conference of St. Vincent de Paul at Rouen.

Dear friend,

Six months ago you had the kindness to share a two-fold birth with me, and while in my role of old comrade I rejoiced in her who came to perpetuate your family, as a brother in St. Vincent de Paul I learned with happiness that this other and more numerous family now counted one more center at Rouen. I would have hastened to reply to this welcome news, except that I then found myself weighed down with work in preparation for an assembly which, besides, by summoning me to Paris in the near future, would allow me the *realization* of one of my dearest intentions: a visit of some days with you. Some urgent business demanding my return deprived me of that pleasure, but is leaving me by way of compensation the near prospect of becoming your neighbor. The result of the academic trials which I entered for another reason entirely, has been my nomination as *agrégé* to the Faculty of Letters at Paris and substitute professor at the Sorbonne. The unforeseen character and extraordinary circumstances of this event have made me look upon it as an

indication of God's will which my friends see evidence of and to which I submit, not without a great deal of hesitation and regret for what I am leaving, but with the encouraging probability of a fine future. Thus, by the end of next December your friend will have become a citizen of Paris again and, except for vacation times which he willingly promises himself to spend always in Lyon, you will be assured of meeting him every time the leisure of your happy existence brings you back to the capital. Then, what lively and sweet delight in seeing one another and pressing the hand, at prolonging at leisure those conversations of friendship, so ill at ease in the narrow limits of an irregular correspondence, of feeling forever united by faith, charity, recollections, and hopes, and to be able to embrace more truly than could be done up to now by

Your old companion and most devoted confrere,
A.-F. OZANAM

The loss of your address forces me to send this little note to St. Cheron who has agreed to forward it to you. Adieu.

Original: Robillard de Beurepaire family.





1841-1842

278. To Dominique Meynis¹
Paris, January 10, 1841

Gratitude for draft received. Success of first course and the report on it in l'Univers.

My dear friend,

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the payment of 100 francs which you were good enough to send me. The council's courtesy to me touches me infinitely. I am all the more pained because I mistook at first its intentions in recommending me to M. Choiselat.² I have now received a total of 200 francs.³ The month of February is therefore paid up.

I am embarrassed at doing so little for the society at the present time. Attention to my debut is taking all my time. The first lesson was given yesterday with a success which, without being brilliant, was happy enough to fill me with gratitude to Providence and to friendship. I have just had a column in *l'Univers*⁴ which, however, rather hurts my case because of the way it quotes my poor words. I would not like them to judge me on this at Lyon, and I ask that if anyone should speak to you about it, you will say exactly what I have written you. The intention is excellent, but not the execution.

Farewell, I will speak to the Cochinese.⁵ While I wait to be more useful, please assure the council of my devotion.

Your friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original lost: It belonged to the archives of the Propagation of the Faith. Galopin copy, n. 169. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Dominique Meynis, (1800-1887) was secretary general of the Propagation of the Faith of Lyon from 1835 until his death. The society had two general councils, one in Paris for the North, and one in Lyon for the South.
2. Charles Choiselat or Choiselat-Gallien (1816-1858), chemist and "sculptor of bronzes for churches," was secretary-treasurer of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith of Paris (L. de Lagarde, *Diptyques du collège Stanislas*, Paris, 1881, p. 251).
3. The question of honoraria paid to Ozanam by the Propagation of the Faith for the year 1841 remains confused. In principle, these honoraria should be 600 fr. per year, dating from December 1, 1840. The great ledger of expenses of the Central Council of Lyon on the account of Ozanam under #198 lists the following entries:

March 9, 1841	50 f.
July 8, 1841	100 f.
August 10, 1841	100 f.
December 30, 1841	200 f.

The draft of 100 fr. mentioned here would correspond to the January-February payment. If the 50 fr. paid by Choiselat is added, we have the sum of 600 fr. for the year 1841. When Ozanam writes on January 10, 1841: "I have received 200 fr.," he is counting the 50 fr. which were paid him (probably before his departure from Lyon) for the month of December 1840.

In 1842 the payments were made in a simpler manner, by semesters completed. The great ledger carries under #214:

June 21, 1842 1st semester honoraria for M. Ozanam 300

December 10, 1842 2nd semester honoraria for M. Ozanam 300.

4. *L'Univers*, January 10, 1841.

5. Two agents of the Hué government (Cochin-Chinese dynasty in power since 1804, not only over Lower Cochin-China, but also Annam and Tonkin) who were propagandists in France.

The sovereign, Minh-Mang (1821-1842), who persecuted Christians, thus breaking with the tradition established by his father Gia-Long, had nevertheless sent a delegation to France in 1840. "Upon protestations of the Society of Foreign Missions and of the Pope, it was not officially received" (cf. Cultru, *Histoire de la Cochinchine française*, and cf. I, pp. 442-443).



279. To Madame Soulacroix¹

Paris, January 16, 1841

Tells of the success of his second course. Makes his apologies for the futile anxieties he has shared with his fiancée. Gratitude for prayers said for him.

Madame,

After the excellent and most motherly letter I had the good fortune to receive yesterday, and the fright I have given Mademoiselle Amélie over my next letter, it is my duty to write a few lines by today's post although the twenty minutes left between my class and the post leave me little time for a proper thank you and news.

The lecture which gave me the greatest anxiety and which made me so weak as to lose my courage yesterday and the past week as well has been successful despite everything. I have taken courage and brushed aside my thoughts with a presumption that somewhat astonishes me. Friends have not been wanting, the audience was full, and the applause was not wanting. There you have a middling modest frankness. But you should not take my minor achievements for triumphs, and if Lucia is unwilling to recognize her hair as truly golden and her cheeks roses, Renzo, too, has been careful lest his words be taken for pure honey, his knowledge profound and the kindness of friendship a monstrous popularity.²

Nevertheless, I am duty-bound to confide this success to you as to a mother's joy to which the great desire to share my solitudes and the way you join in my efforts entitles you. How can I tell you how much the account of that journey of the 9th to Lyon has moved me? Ah, I am no longer surprised that my weakness has been strengthened and that in place of my failing mental powers a secret force has come to relieve me in the twinkling of an eye. I am no longer surprised when prayer was there to sustain me, prayer so pure and kind, prayer if I dare say so more disinterested than ever and consequently more meritorious, freer and also more generous than even the prayers of my poor mother of long ago; for no one is obligated to

me any more. I accept with thanks this moral alms from a hand not yet belonging to me and already so dear.³ Tomorrow (my feast day) I hope to be at the sacred rendez-vous where she was Saturday. I will try, not to repay her upon my return—some debts can never be paid—but at least not to be ungrateful and to deserve what I know myself to be unworthy of. Tell her that, please.

Ashamed of my twenty-four-hour delay I hope nevertheless that my letter to Mademoiselle Amélie has arrived. I take pleasure in the prospect you permit me of a kind reply and am obliged to close now in order not to repeat the infidelity of my delay.

Be good enough to present to M. le Recteur⁴ and to accept yourself the homage of my filial respect.

Your most humble and devoted servant,
A.-F. OZANAM

I would like my brother the abbé, to whom I have not written today, to know about the successful outcome.

Address: Madame Soulacroix, at the Rector of the Academy, Quai de Retz, Lyon.

Postmark: Lyon, January 18, 1841.

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Zélie Magagnos (1798-1882), Ozanam's mother-in-law, had married Jean Baptiste Soulacroix, November 10, 1819, at Marseille.
2. Renzo, apparently himself.
3. Amélie Soulacroix, Ozanam's fiancée, soon to be his wife.
4. Jean Joseph, called Jean Baptiste, Soulacroix (1790-1848), Ozanam's father-in-law, former normal school student (1809-1812), had taught mathematics at the Lycée d'Avignon (1812-1815) and at the Collège de Marseilles (1815-1821) before becoming inspector of the academy of Montpellier (1821-1825) and rector of the academies of Nancy (1825-1832), Amiens (1832-1833), and Lyon (1833-1845). He was made chief of the third division by the minister of public instruction in 1845.



280. To Mademoiselle Soulacroix
Paris, January 24, 1841

He now enjoys writing. He sees himself as unworthy of her; he considers her ideal. His course does not cause him more than a "reasonable apprehension." He tells her her letters are charming; wants no rhetoric. Gives her advice on studying.

Mademoiselle,

I have been anxious to write for a long time, but I do not take up my pen with-

out some hesitation for fear that out of pleasure I will not be able to stop filling the pages when it is a question of replying to a friend. The written word is a laborious form which strains laziness of thought, a slow process which stirs up its own impatience. In this regard, however, as in several others, I no longer recognize myself. My correspondence day is now a happy day which I look forward to and which does not come soon enough to satisfy me. The hours I set aside for it are cherished hours, savored from the moment when the evening's work allows complete quiet assured by the order, however courteous, to close the door. I savor this time especially, all week, in fact, in the midst of my studies my thoughts kept straying to the longed-for Sunday. In short, I have needed the occasion to draw near to you again and to tell you how much I appreciate what you have done for me.

I had asked, not however without timidity, a remembrance and a prayer on the occasion of my debut. Since I know what a word from your lips could do for me, it seemed to me that it would also have some power with God. Your goodness was willing to do more; it inspired you to the supreme act of Christian affection. In the depths of this sanctuary of the soul visited by a mysterious Guest the thought of me was present and my name was pronounced. I am, therefore, no longer amazed at the un hoped for help which has come my way. I know, too, the sincere and touching piety which you will disavow but which the facts prove. It is neither the religion of propriety practiced by an indifferent world nor the proud pharisaism of an indiscreet zeal. It is a serene faith because it is enlightened, a purity whose visible reflection is grace, a charity which can see no evil, merciful to poverty, suffering, even (am I right?) to the pangs of exile. These are in a word the admirable traits of moral character I see taking form more each day, emerging little by little from the cloud of mystery and modesty with which a young girl's life constantly veils itself. The more the beloved figure comes near bathed in clearer light the happier I am with the choice Providence has made for me. At the same time, I feel less worthy, am envious of the virtues which are still great strangers to me, but I console myself with the thought that they will be an example and safeguard for me, a merit in which I shall share.

Your letters afford me a continually unfolding and charming revelation of yourself. I would not dare to hope that you should give me the pleasure of replying regularly. I thank you and beg permission to believe that you will not lose so kindly a habit, for I must confess that I deceived you once—I had said that I would have the courage and foresight to set aside a dignified leisure for our intended correspondence which would help me without fail over this period of isolation. I judged myself stronger than I am. After the harsh labor of my lessons demanding an enforced application of several days, when leisure time came, limited as it was, it seemed incredibly long and empty. Exhausted with fatigue, I could not rest because one does not rest upon himself. The child puts his head on his mother's knees; the sister washes the dirt from her young brother's face; the wife may seem to support her hand on her husband's arm, but that hand which he presses to him supports his heart. We have the external power but it is you who provide the secret energy from within. There is a slot which you alone can fill, and when you fail to fill it there

ensues weakness and injury; and I experience in a regular way the fitness of this aphorism grown trite in the conversational language of sentiment. I bear the scar of a pain which will not go away. Melancholy overcomes me, and when I measure the five months remaining against the slow passing of the last forty days, I fear I shall not be able to hold out to the end. Every distraction importunes me, no conversation pleases me, unless I can clothe it with the remembrance of you. The piano under strange fingers annoys me, and lately, thinking I heard somewhere the tune I love—you know the one I mean—it struck me as a profanation. Last Tuesday a professor friend of mine invited me to attend his daughter's wedding. I could not refuse without failing in the amenities to spend two hours there. The festivities had an effect of sadness on me: I would carry them out so handsomely in June! He who took my role made me lose my patience: he was a clumsy usurper. I could see in him no ray of that happiness his eyes should reflect. The bride (have no fear!) did not beguile me. How much better this charming role could suit you! With what flair you would wear white! What a sweet crown orange blossoms would make you! What joy your smile would bestow upon our two families assembled together! The solemnity would be wonderfully set among those great trees of Vernet, at the foot of those green hills, on a magnificent summer night. The vision was enchanting, but in the moment of fascination, it fled into the future. But the future is waiting, and waiting is privation, and I understand now that hope, whose charms are so much vaunted, has its sorrows, too.

But when the lines signed by you arrive in their soft envelope, then this delicious vision once more haunts my solitude. I see you again not with all the attraction of reality but under the idealized forms of sweetness, intelligence, and simplicity which ravish me. You are there, always a bit reserved as at Lyon, but nonetheless already more familiar because you see me suffering and are so good. You withdraw too soon, but it is so generous of you to have come. And because your words, falling upon the wound I spoke of earlier, left there as it were the perfume of the rose, your momentary presence gives me strength for several days. I work better, and you lose nothing thereby. Just as when you indulge in a useful occupation, sometimes the vague remembrance of a tune you heard sung, a favorite chorus, returns in a whisper that breathes from the mouth without distracting you from the task that must be done. Just as when the heart is joyful, song rises internally without disturbing the serious duties of the mind. I would never have believed two such different things could strive for attention without interfering with each other; could on the contrary be mutually helpful. Oh, be afraid no longer about the consoling offices you discharge: now you know that they make things easier. You have no need of practice; you have performed them so well already at the bedside of poor Théophile.¹ But to the contrary, you can have nothing to learn in this matter for, to borrow your language, if there is a course to take, if exhortations have their *eloquence*, and consolations their poetry, in your case certainly neither one nor the other is a stranger. From my side, I will make every effort to spare you a ministry so burdensome. I will try not to lose courage, except enough to allow you the pleasure of giving it to me. You shall never see the scenes of

anguish in which I have made you take part from afar. They had their fatal hour which never happens twice in a lifetime.

Even now I am far from having gained assurance; nothing justifies it. On the contrary, my feeling of my personal incapacity increases with a more comprehensive understanding of my field of study. But these reasonable apprehensions no longer bear any resemblance to the panic terrors of the beginning. I hope from now on to lay claim to the continuance of your benevolent solicitude without putting your feeling to too great a proof. In return, I shall continue these accounts which your exceptional good will finds interesting, and as often as I consider my lectures eventful you shall have news of them. I have told Madame your mother of the nearly satisfactory success of the second: I brought animation enough to it and received marks of approbation in which you must surely share. Once again I was amazed on arriving for the third session yesterday, when I expected the flow of the curious to begin shortening, to see the tiers of the amphitheater packed solid and on the floor the crowd of standees which is the crown of a class well attended. But this rejoicing of self-love deserved mortification. I was weary and tired out from working too long into the night. Besides, the subject this time was dry and it was with great effort that I was able to put a little order, light, and heat into the pursuit of learning. I was counting absolutely on three truly beautiful quotations to relieve the monotony of my lecture somewhat and to stimulate applause, not for the professor but for his chosen author. At the end of fifteen minutes when the inevitable difficulties of the introduction were dissipating, I suddenly realized that two of my quotations were at home, lost in the welter of my notes. Consequently, effect missed, need to fill the lacunae and to modify the plan without breaking it; at the same time a moment of terror, and for the time remaining, an uneasiness which no longer permitted enthusiasm. I withdrew crestfallen and convinced of defeat (perhaps like that which M. Noiro^t counseled you to invoke and which I could come to terms with perfectly so long as the dismissal was not perpetual).

Back at home this evening I could not make up my mind whether to write to you in such trying circumstances. At last some friends stopped by, the kind you believe. They reassured me about the public impression: my fatigue showed a little, but not my shock; the lecture seemed long and heavy but that was excused by calling it learned. In a word, there had been no failure. I have since gotten my wind back and although I certainly expect to see my audience depleted next Saturday by the flight of a few discouraged amateurs, I am confident that enough will remain to allow me to take my revenge by giving more dramatic form and lively movement to my remarks. I have taken at the same time, by advice of those who wish me well, the laudable course of working less from now on. I had contracted the mistaken habit of accumulating piles of books, of storming every library, of keeping an armed watch over a Teutonic camp until two in the morning. Two disadvantages resulted: one was the overloading of my memory with a multitude of facts which became difficult to manage, the other the shaking of my confidence causing me to come to the lecture devoid of half the resources of an ordered mind. Consequently they pre-

scribed for me an easy change: less time given to scientific investigation, more to literary presentation; give sleep its due, and interrupt the strictness of the cloister from time to time. With this regimen (if you are afraid to take the measure of Dame Dulcinée) it could happen that I will end up by looking like Sancho's⁴ horse. Nevertheless, friendship is right. Exaggerated efforts often proceed from a vanity that stifles judgment. Absolute truth, perfect knowledge, is not of this earth. We try in vain to attain it while raising up the Babel of our ambitious pedantry. In the midst of the effort, the head whirls and tongues grow confused. It would be better to be more modest in plan, to construct your little intellectual edifice humbly, elevated enough to see things from on high but with no pretension of reaching the heights. In place of always wanting to comprehend it would be better at times only to admire. A little abandon is in order, alert to inspiration without wishing to constrain it, not depending so much on yourself but confiding more in the two guardian angels that are always with me since you are so willing to lend me yours.

You will pardon this new chapter of general confession, but you received the first part so well that I could not fail to continue, not only in order to prevent illusions but also to have the happiness of making excuses. One falls to his knees willingly when a pretty hand raises him up, and the marvelous penances of the knights have no terror when a darling voice pronounces absolution over them. Further, perhaps my avowals will win me the right to gamble upon a word of advice. Madame your mother informs me that you are starting a series of conferences with the learned and good M. Reynaud.⁵ I am delighted at the prospect as I am at everything capable of adding to the merits with which you are endowed. Nevertheless, the frequent crossing of an icy bridge in that impetuous Rhône air along with the rigors of the Lyonnaise winters makes me uneasy for your constitution so recently threatened.

From another viewpoint, I would not for all the world want study to steal the bloom from your style. Be assured of the truthfulness of a witness who is not disinterested. You write very well indeed, nor could your letters be better. If you knew how, after wearisome reading in our philosophies and poets, journals and periodicals, the imagination lovingly comes to rest upon the flower of naiveté, sensibility, and grace! I know from experience the mischief rhetoric can make. Short essays have their usefulness, provided they are freely chosen and hatch naturally as it were under your pen, provided you do not pick at them too much and that you are told what to avoid before you are told what to do. Since they will be like Agar's jewel⁶ that I am happy to have stolen from you, you will let me see their first fruits, too. The best office M. Reynaud could render you would be to start you off with a series of simple narratives on the general history of literature, sometimes lingering over the masterpieces to read a few pages with you in order to acquaint you with their beauties. His task will be easy: you have been given an appreciation of art to a rare degree. He will find this to be true of all the various subjects he treats. Is not music the sister of poetry? We will put that to the test soon, I hope. Without wishing to embroil you in my prickly labors, I intend to read to you one day some romances

the troubadour squire sang in the hall of the German countess of the thirteenth century and which will not offend the ears of pretty French girls of the present. I shall say no more about it today, for all turns on a word which ends some verses known to me and which does not permit you to thank the author, you will say.

In the meantime, how are things going? You insist upon sincerity; you want to see to the bottom of what one thinks and feels. Therefore, one cannot deceive you about what he thinks of someone or feels about a matter. And since such things have a name, the mind's eye knows how to read it even though the mouth knows how to keep silent about it. Frankly it is quite natural for me—poor young man so isolated from the world, ever in rather bleak surroundings, stranger for the most part to the joys of life—to be deeply moved when the will of Providence introduces me to a pious young girl, loving and pure, joining high character to the culture of the mind, and advanced with that external splendor which never fails to attract attention; when her father and mother from whom she has all the advantages of a perfect bringing up, and God Himself whom I see behind them, and from whom her first endowments flow, when these allow me to believe that this vision will not elude me forever; when she herself gives her consent and, scorning the homage the world could render her, prefers to come and to embellish in adopting it, my solitary and toilsome destiny.

If it is not a dream, if the reality is assured, if she draws near, the presentiment must certainly be already fraught with life and efficacy. There will surely be no outbursts of disordered passion, of that violence by which the chalice of youth is overturned and emptied at one stroke. It will be as reverent as worship, noble as mutual devotion, sweet as happiness. But always it will have I know not what instinct infinitely tender, never lacking in affection, ending by vanquishing every obstacle, these because it was put there in the beginning when the first father on awakening foretold the attraction of the husband to the side of his wife. Accustomed to strict manners, to not expressing myself except in irreproachable language, I do not blush for what has stirred for a long time now in my soul. I am most happy about it and all but haughty. I do not grow worse: my wounded nature, it seems to me, is healed and exalted by the minute. Leave me no more. After what happened on January 9, after that solemn pledge made in the shadow of the altar, I am willing to banish my first anxiety, I no longer torture myself over the possible wrongs absence might inflict, and I hope that, of my emotions of this year, it will not be only the most painful that you will have shared. I need the release of thus unburdening myself and would like to prolong it even further. Unfortunately the order of which I spoke on the first page has been disobeyed, M. Ampère has arrived like a brother, without ceremony. I could talk with him about you, then we would forget ourselves. My poor letter undertaken belatedly is threatened with the departure of the mail. I must fold it in haste and there is no time left to reply to the excellent Theophilus. Be my interpreter for him as I wish him to be for you. I will have the pleasure of writing to him soon how much affection I have for him because of his good offices and how much I hope he will not have to report on his health. I have another place in my regards for Charles⁷ and ask him for a little of that affection you have known so well

how to gain over the rude fellow who bears his name. Kindly give your parents my filial devotion and keep for yourself, Mademoiselle, the assurance of my respect.

Your most humble and obedient servant,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 390.

Notes:

1. Théophile Soulacroix (1823-1847), brother of Amélie Ozanam, had been ill since his fourteenth year. He died at Paris on March 9, 1847.
2. Allusion to teasing by Abbé Noirot which she shared with him in her letter of January 17.
3. Character in Cervantes' *Don Quixote*.
4. Character in Cervantes' *Don Quixote*.
5. Dean of the Faculty of Letters (see letter 231).
6. A writing of the young girl (not found).
7. Charles Soulacroix (1825-1899), brother of Amélie Ozanam, studied art at Lyon and Paris.



281. To Mademoiselle Soulacroix
Paris, January 30, 1841

Notes on his course. He declares himself happy with a more familiar correspondence.

Mademoiselle,

Two mysterious lines written in an unsigned hand at the end of a letter from Madame Soulacroix came to alarm me yesterday. But since they received a reply the same day they were written, I must not cling to the desire to speak of them. And, if you wish to have the early fruits of my professional impressions and to accept the immediate homage of the applause received, it will be necessary to write about the result of the lecture, nor can it be but a page, it is three-fifteen and the mail is collected at four. One proceeds then to inform you about a lecture which was not very brilliant, but which had better success, the speaker did not forget his notes and his erudition was worthy of some bouquets. For all that, I am convinced that, embroiled as I am in serious historical and political questions, I should no longer put my whole trust in assiduity and interest. Clamorous sympathies and the motive which gives rise to them will come to haunt me just at the moment when the course of my studies leads to that order of poetic sentiments of which we have agreed (have we not?) to speak no longer.

The public is extremely kind: it is numerous and loyal. The dryness of my last lecture should have discouraged its benevolent attention. Indeed it was not without surprise that I saw my amphitheatre still packed from the height of the back wall to the foot of the chair below. There is still polite applause when I appear, much

more when I leave. [I want very much to know whether it will be the same with a certain hearer to whom I can have the honor of presenting myself this coming Easter?

Joking aside,] I dare to hope, Mademoiselle, that you have never blamed negligence for the silence imposed upon one poor pen so little mistress of itself for a long time now. It would be indeed a profanation for me to take it up, as I do today, without even the leisure to trim it, still filthy from the morning's and night's work, still drenched in German, Latin, and a detestable French, in order to trace a name which is dear and sacred to me. It costs me something to scribble a few fleeting phrases on a common sheet like the correspondence of a merchant because of the threat of time pressing and the departure of the post. [It seems to me that I should have some freedom and quiet in order to be longer and less hasty; I would love to collect my thoughts in my solitude as in a sanctuary where I could unburden myself completely before the adored idol. But since I cannot forsake it and you are so good as to suffer it for my sake, I will henceforward multiply and diversify these enjoyments, the only ones of my exile. I will make use of this neglect which you tolerate; I will profit from it without fussing about whether it is authorized, and each week I will at least have the pleasure of reminding myself "that one loses what one does not recall." I will come to you in the simplicity of the man who in the very instant of leaving off the seriousness of his duties and relaxing among his friends wipes the sweat from his face. I will reflect then that this time next year my return from the Sorbonne will be happier, that another's voice will greet my steps at the door, another's hand will squeeze mine by the fireside. And then, as formerly, especially when I had received one of your charming letters so welcome to me I would make time and place. I will not set myself to toiling over some business letter, but take the necessary ease for a complete unburdening; I will slip away from problems, distractions, outside worries, in order to be more natural, truer, in a word more *myself*, because I will be more yours.

Thank you for excusing this familiarity. You make me happy. I will be even more so if on your side you wish to exercise a little more the rights which are yours: to ask me questions, to scold me when needed, to form me in advance for the sweet duties I will take upon myself in the near future, to allow me a glimpse of the job's requirements—presumptuous requirements for my part, but you will make them easy—the job of procuring happiness. Well! you will not take offense at my occasional frankness in expressing my feelings, nor at the vividness of my words when I speak of my respectful but always deep tenderness.

Your most humble and obedient servant,]
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte. Excerpted ed.: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 394. Passages in brackets do not appear in the 1912 edition.



282. To Mademoiselle Soulacroix
Paris, February 6, 1841

Joy at frequent letters, compared to the dove of the Ark. He explains his work habits, discusses the account of his courses printed in the Journal de l'instruction publique. Still apprehension in face of his professional debut. Meanwhile he notices changes in himself. Proposals for living in their first household.

Mademoiselle,

I have good reason to call you good and kind. You know how unhappy I would be to have displeased you: you fear to let me think that, and along come two charming, consoling letters to reassure me on your part. They speak to me of things so sweet and encouraging that my emotion could not contain itself, and several times my lips were pressed against the white sheet which bore your messages. The second especially was a happy surprise, coming as it did to interrupt the five days of waiting to which I had already resigned myself upon receiving your news. I would hope that the like will happen many times again, and that in allowing me from my side to multiply these epistolary visits, you will also afford me the joy of receiving them more often. Far from me, however, is the thought of being importunate and of imposing upon you by indiscreet requests the trouble of replying to me! There is nothing worse for pretty fingers than ink stains. It suits them much better to be poised over ivory keys from which they draw harmonious chords. And again, are they not otherwise occupied in writing for the good M. Reynaud elegant compositions which someone is unwilling to send me?¹ All the same, when they hold the pen thus, if they allow themselves from time to time to take the road to Paris to carry there some friendly words to a poor exile of your acquaintance, that would be a wholly meritorious deed. When Noah was shut up in his ark in that frightening solitude the deluge had made around him, the dove came on occasion with the olive branch which promised him deliverance. As for me, in my Parisian desert, in my Sorbonne ark where I find myself in the midst of animals of every species (I do not refer to my colleagues), your letters are the green branch of hope. Only, why must they come alone and the beautiful dove herself not bring them! Ah! if some day she comes to sit upon my hand, as on the hand of the patriarch, I will do as he did, I will draw her inside quickly lest she fly away, and the window will be opened no more.

You have pardoned my silence then and even more since you see no reason for pardon. Not, please God, that there was negligence on my part, but another kind of imperfection which I must confess to you lest there be deception between us. My friends have given me the reputation for hard work, and indeed the example and lessons I early received from my excellent father have trained my character and constitution to a strict work regimen. There is a certain attachment to a task begun which makes me stubborn and does not permit me to abandon it so long as I feel able to do it better. But that is not the same as that much more precious, much more efficacious disposition which undertakes much and accomplishes all, and

which is known as activity. I am not at all active: at the end of a tiring occupation I cannot steel myself to begin another, however light it might be. It is painful for me to fill up the hours of the day with a variety of matters; my rather slow, and if you will permit, leisurely mind, loves its ease: it does not like to be pushed. It must envisage spare time for each of its plans; it willingly fluctuates between too much study and too much rest; it delights in nights almost entirely wakeful because of some difficult problem, but will be tempted to spend the next day in long and idle chats. The result, when it is forced to put aside these distractions, is a kind of confusion and continual delay: half the week spent in research which was not indispensable, the other half insufficient for the immediate preparation of the course: then days spent entirely in long, drawn-out visits or devoted to catching up on neglected correspondence; and so the free time which I had intended for seeking a bit of happiness in writing to you escapes me, cut up, devoured by imperious demands which my carelessness can neither prevent nor satisfy. There is a heavy avowal which one would not dare to have made three months ago. But to sweeten the effect, it must be added that one is infinitely humbled to be like this, that the resolutions to change are firm and sincere, that one is thinking principally of this fault when he promises you to improve; that already university duties, the discipline of public service, are helping to give more organization to my work; that among other duties, another discipline less strict but more powerful will do the rest, and that is the most beautiful matter of the training which you so much wish to undertake. It will be your joy and honor to have reestablished order in a life troubled successively by such great anxieties and problems. It will be easy, for we are used to telling other philosophers (ask M. Noirot) that order is love.

It was possible once for this kind of worry, when mingled with the sadness and anxieties of absence, to change character and productivity; and more than once this week the tyranny of boredom, desire, and regret came to distract my thought from obligatory functions. The rival of whom I speak to you, Mademoiselle, is *hardly to be feared*; there are days when she complains about you and I let her talk: she has charms beyond a doubt, but they are six hundred years old; and if, as you say, she often changes appearance, do not think it the means of seducing me. That would be to suppose me inconstant, a vice not mine: be certain that I shall be angry if a charming figure I know should change during my exile. No one is more easily captive than I. The little ring whose red cornelian comes loose in my hand, the medallion which I wear over my heart, the letters pressed between leaves of velour and satin in the center of the desk on which I write; the beloved name Amélie which rises so often on my lips while a vanishing image passes across my memory, these are so many cords which bind and at the same time support me. I am happy and proud to wear them. I love the vowed title of fiancé with which my friends laughingly greet me: your knight joyously dons your colors when he descends to the lists. If a prayer or two rise before the altar of the Blessed Virgin of Lyon on Saturday, here the cherished ringlet, the lock of hair, is gazed on, and then kissed: that brings luck. It is true that in the course of a lecture if certain words of feeling issue from me with some heat, I see some well-known faces in the audience assume a

malicious expression and neighbors give one another the elbow. But they are not the less pleased for it and the waggishness of the compliments they make me is not offensive. Yesterday's session was good: a most beautiful, dramatic, important subject had perhaps given me more assurance; even though notes still too extensive and weighty to remember did not allow freedom and inspiration enough to suit me. They seemed to be satisfied, and for my part I can attest that I have never seen a more courteous public: it was 8 degrees, ice-glazed snow, horrible weather; it nearly prevented me from going out, and I wished the course could do without me. I expected, therefore, that my hearers' zeal, a little chillier than my own, would decimate their ranks. The hall was as full as ever, the stairs crowded, and the two corridors spilled over into the courtyard. After the recess the same crowd squeezed into M. Lenormand's [sic]² class; he speaks after me. The last two years have cast a tide of wise and studious youth upon the pavement of Paris to refill our amphitheatres once deserted: a favorable change is noted in this new generation, and grave men truly hope for good from it.

Monsieur le Recteur's comments³ about my opening discourse have touched me deeply: the basic frankness, the delicacy of expression, cannot but be evident to me, and this letter will have one of the dearest claims on my gratitude. Why then hesitate to take advantage of it, and not avail myself in the future of a father's sincerity? Should not everything that reminds me of what I am soon to be to you delight me? Moreover, my inexperience is great, but not at all presumptuous enough for me to welcome nor solicit advice. His comments were perfectly justified; they repeat what reason tells me every day, what I often hear around me. The article in *Le Journal de l'instruction publique*⁴ must not, however, be thought to be comprehensive: it is abridged, condensed, and digested. It is a skeleton, a framework—ideas, names, a list which tries not to leave anything out. Expression is freer and more flowing, the attitude livelier and the clothing, so to speak, more ample and draped. Thus it can scarcely pass for a lecture where I do not treat in turn philosophical considerations, a historical scene, a citation from some naive and touching poet, some details of customs which stir curiosity, or cause general hilarity. The occasion has arisen five or six times already to recount those marvelous legends which belief rejects but imagination delights in: I love to see the audience's attention perk up to hang upon stories of paladins, chatelaines, fairies, demons, admirable poetic treatment, and great historical insights. For the rest, do not indict the author of the report; he is none other than myself. Lack of time has prevented me from editing the second part: it will be accomplished tomorrow, I think, and published soon. I will place it if I can in a revue which has asked for it and elsewhere, in a form less dry.⁵ But here I have thought it necessary to stick exclusively to what is essential; the *Journal* comes to the attention of scholars who ignore style and seek knowledge. They hold to a doctrine of professionalism which I must say two words to you about, even though they do little honor to our modesty. We distinguish two kinds of success and their union can only assure our future: the success of popularity and the success of esteem. The first is acquired by brilliance or warmth in delivery, by the competence with which the material is presented, even by the choice of appropriate subject. It is

achieved when the crowd is dense and the applause long; it maintains the professor in the world, but by itself it will not make his university career smooth: on the contrary, it is often a temptation and a trap; habitual sacrifice to public caprice compromises and dishonors teaching. The second demands patient research, matters rare and little known appreciated in depth, a learning next door perhaps to pedantry. It is the vote of colleagues, the approval of professionals who do not heap compliments on one another: it is a certain scent of classical powder which the Lady University, our mother, uses and which announces her good graces and favors. "The lessons of the Athenaeum and periodical literature are not approved at the Sorbonne": such is the external adage of M. Leclerc [sic]⁶ and M. Cousin. This latter continues to show me extreme benevolence. The Ecole normale officially sends students to my course. Finally, to conceal nothing and to make you familiar ahead of time with my little indulgences of self-love, I have read the article in the *Gazette d'Augsbourg* which is unduly flattering, and yesterday someone took notes for a critique to be published in a Spanish magazine.

This prosperity of the moment does not delude me concerning future dangers and, for example, it is not without apprehension that I see the time coming when I must speak twice a week. That will be in Lent, I think. It is doubtful whether there will be sufficient time for me to prepare; it is more uncertain still whether the audience's diligence will last or stand for a doubling of its captivity. Moreover the final days of the carnival is a disordered time for all schools. I must then report to you on the actual results in light of my future anxieties, knowing that what you have done for some you will do for others. For I fail to recognize where this unhopd-for success came from. From heaven doubtless; the intercession of a sainted mother there accounts for much of it, but she has appointed a powerful helper below in the person of her who earnestly desires to carry the remembrance of me and my name into the mysterious chapel of St. Nizier for eight whole days.

At the same time another thought will encourage this second period of hard work for me; I see the festival of Easter approach for which, without waiting for your gracious invitation, I am already entertaining enchanting plans. Thank you for approving them; we must count on circumstances allowing their accomplishment. For my part the attraction is so strong that I cannot contain it and fear only that I will never again be able to leave Lyon once I set foot there. Can you imagine a poor soul in purgatory given eight days in paradise then made to return? Do not tell me to be reasonable: I am beginning to see that certain emotions know no reason. One gives them time and place with oneself and a short time afterward they have taken over. Believe those who tell you they no longer recognize me. I am wholly astonished at myself.

It is not that the exterior has changed much: full dress is maintained on lecture days, always as you wish, but the disorder of work time needs your presence to amend. It is in the imagination, in the heart, that new things are happening. The imagination ruminates on all the phases of that life which will begin in the month of June; it fastens you to my arm in delightful walks on summer evenings. It takes you to the shore of Swiss lakes, to Venetian gondolas, around that lovely Florence

which is indeed like a jewel in a basket of flowers, to Rome amid the ruins, to Naples and the length of bright Mediterranean coasts. Then a little later, Paris and the joyous care of our own establishment, the modest happiness of a young household, the little circle of chosen friends, and the sweeter hours still of intimacy, and those long winter evenings too short for our conversations. Our seriousness will not be without distraction nor our simplicity without elegance, and my philosophical character will not be afraid of compromising itself by dreaming upon your mode of dress. Our life will have some dignity and ornament, as much as is necessary to escape the triviality of common habits and to keep intelligence at the height of its literary functions. Nor is this a deceitful vision, a reminiscence of German legend transported fantastically into the future: it is the reality of every hour, and before the year begun has attained half its course all these beautiful dreams will be fulfilled. I repeat that often

[Page 5 of copy missing.]

A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte. Partially edited. *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 395.

Notes:

1. New allusion to the lessons in literature which she is taking with the dean of the Faculty of Letters of Lyon.
2. Charles LeNormant (1802-1859). Nephew by marriage of Mme. Récamier. She assigned him (with J.J. Ampère) the first lecture on *Memoirs beyond the Tomb* in her salon, in 1834. Mme. Récamier died at the Lenormant home in 1849. Colleague of Champollion, Lenormant taught at the Sorbonne from 1835 to 1843, then afterward until he left in 1849. In the interval he was curator of the Collection of Medals. After writing in *Le Globe*, he managed the *Correspondant* from 1846 to 1855. Member of the institute from 1839. Professor at the Collège de France.
3. The text of these comments has never been found.
4. The first part of the first course was published in excerpts and under his direction in *Le Journal de l'instruction publique*: 27, I, 41. The conclusion of the first course appeared in the same magazine: 3, 3, 41.
5. The first lecture had been published in its entirety in *Le Nouveau correspondant*, 3 vol., pp. 167-197, under the title, "Course in German Literature taught at the Sorbonne by M. Ozanam, substituting for M. Fauriel."
6. Victor Le Clerc, dean of the Faculty of Letters of Paris. Note the misspelling of Le Clerc's and Lenormant's names in the correspondence of Ozanam who, pressed by the post time, sometimes neglected to reread his letters.
7. Allusion to the letter of January 30-31, 1841, in which she describes one of her days and her bad dream of the preceding night (Archives Laporte).



283. To Monsieur Soulacroix
Paris, February 9, 1841

Letter of recommendation for M. Auguste Véra, professor of philosophy, friend of M. Ballanche.

Monsieur,

The venerable M. Ballanche, who knows everything good about you by me, asks some lines of introduction for a young friend. M. Auguste Véra,¹ a worthy Italian, taken on ten years ago by the university, and professor of philosophy at the Collège de Toulon, is going to Lyon to pursue his studies in order to further his career. Fit to hold his own very honorably in the baccalaureate examinations, he has need only of a kindly welcome to encourage his shyness. He would suddenly find himself a stranger in our city unless the paternal solicitude of the head of the academy were not assured to men like him in advance. It appears to me, then, that without the indiscreet pretense of recommending someone, I could accompany M. Véra even to that door which is best known to me and which will be hospitable beyond any doubt.

I have the honor to be, Monsieur le Recteur, with filial respect,

Your most humble and devoted servant,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur the Rector of the Academy, Lyon.

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Note:

1. Auguste Véra. Ballanche had recommended him in three letters to Victor Cousin: October 31, 1839, September 9, 1840, the third date unknown but in between the other two (Cf. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, *op. cit.*, t. III, pp. 395-397). Véra pursued a career in the university, was in 1846 among the subscribers to the revue *La Liberté de pensée* (Cf. Paul Gerbod, *La Condition universitaire en France, au. xix s.*, p. 184). After his resignation in 1860 he lived in Turin, then in Milan, where embracing Hegelianism, he translated the works of Hegel (cf. Gerbod, *op. cit.*, pp. 413-414).



286. To Joseph Arthaud
Paris, February 15, 1841

Letter dealing entirely with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Lyon. Regrets being angry with La Perrière. Considers Lacordaire's sermon as applying to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Congratulates Arthaud for the work accomplished at Vaise on the occasion of floods.

Dear friend,

Just a word to thank you for your good and interesting letter, a word to ask you to remember [to do] the same from time to time, and finally a word to ask pardon for my recent fault. I was wrong to reply to La Perrière with impatience, and he rightly enough reprimanded me, although rather severely. Be kind enough to tell him that I would be unhappy to have offended him.

P. Lacordaire's sermon was given yesterday. *L'Univers* commented on it.¹ But it did not say that this admirable discourse was a great deal less concerned with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul than the installation of the Friars Preachers.² The collection, for lack of a number of motives, tallied only 6,000 francs. M. Bailly, indeed, wanted no announcement in the papers.³

We are impatiently waiting for the assembly of the first Sunday in Lent,⁴ and the narrative of the fine work at Vaise.⁵ I earnestly envy you the honor and merit of this aid so easily and Christianly organized. The good God will bless you, and through you, He will bless the conferences whose zeal you directed so well. It would be kind to send your report to poor Baudicour.

I notice that I am writing on a slant, which is rather like my life. My lectures frighten me even more than you could imagine, and demand preparation that brings on extreme fatigue. Happily the health holds up despite the vigils. It is a real credit to the excellent doctor who built it up so well at Lyon last year. Be assured that I often think of him and am happy in the thought that he is carrying on with my brother the close friendship he was kind enough to have for me.⁶

All the best to all of yours: I particularly single out Chaurand, Accarias, La Perrière, Jacquier, and Génin. Tell the last that he would do me a favor if he were to thank his friend de Laprade⁷ for me for sending his speech.

Adieu: a remembrance, a prayer for your friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original autograph: belonging to M. Louis Arthaud. Unedited.

Notes:

1. *L'Univers*, Tuesday the 16th and Wednesday the 17th of February.
2. The passage on the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (Cf. *L'Univers*, February 17) was in a paragraph at the end of a long description of contemporary French Catholicism. In the peroration, addressing himself to Msgr. Affre, Lacordaire said: "I congratulate myself at finding myself once more under the same patronage [the protection of Msgr. Affre] on the day when I come to install here the order and the habit of the French Friars Preachers. This day is the most beautiful of my life . . ."
3. The president of the Society and editor of *L'Univers* was a man of extreme discretion. (Cf. Albert Foucault, *La Société de Saint-Vincent-de-Paul*, Spes, 1933, pp. 45-47.)
4. After the definition of the rule in 1835, the Council of Direction of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (called the General Council after 1840) met four times a year: the first Sunday of Lent, Good Shepherd Sunday, July 19 (feast of St. Vincent de Paul), and December 8 (feast of the Immaculate Conception).
5. At the time of the Lyon floods, the end of November and beginning of December 1840, the prefect of the Rhône had confided the responsibility of disbursing the 600,000 francs of official aid

provided for the victims to the conferences of St. Vincent de Paul of Lyon, then headed by Dr. Arthaud.

6. Ozanam seems to be complimenting Arthaud, in the third person.
7. Victor Richard de Laprade (1812-1883) studied at the Collège de Lyon in the same class with Génin and Velay, a year after Ozanam, two years after Janmot. From 1847 he taught French literature on the Faculty of Letters of Lyon and was on the same election slate of 1848 as Ozanam, with the same lack of success. Elected to the French Academy for his poetry in 1858, he was deprived of his chair in 1861 when an antigovernment poem appeared in *le Correspondant*.



287. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, February 16, 1841

The lost letter has been found. Success of his first course and his feeling of insufficiency. Will do his best to carry out Meynis's instructions concerning the association of "Catholicism in Europe." No more news about the Cochinchinese.

Dear Friend,

I am too fond of you as a brother not to be very happy to receive two letters from you instead of one. But I also appreciate too well how valuable your time is to have you waste it on me. By luck just as unexplainable as before I put my hand today on the note I thought lost. I must hasten to let you know in order to atone for my fault and erase the bad opinion of me I must have given you yesterday.

Such confusion in the house of a poor man who, free of the first terrors of his debut, is none the less the prey of care and worry will not astonish you. Providence has permitted me to be received with the greatest and kindest encouragement by my colleagues and students. And since your affection has a lively interest in all that concerns me, I can and must tell you: my successes are not triumphs, but I am very happily encouraged. The hall is full, attention sustained, the applause sometimes deafening; I am allowed to treat with Christian frankness of questions once dreaded, such as the struggle between the priesthood and the empire, the political influences of the Reformation, etc. I am, beyond doubt, still very anxious and nervous. My lack of learning betrays itself constantly, what I have to say is most imprecise. But they are very understanding, and although they do not admire, I believe they at least like me. If that is the way of it, I will be able to end up by doing some good; help me by praying God that it will last. The carnival and fine days are dangerous temptations to the public.

It so happened that yesterday, by a sort of presentiment which is most natural when ideas and affection are held in common, I wrote you a partial answer.¹ Thank you, nonetheless, for the curious information you give me and which I will use in the way you want. As for discretion, it will be absolute, but do not rely upon my influence. I know only one member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul actively

engaged in the association of Catholicism in Europe, and he is too stubborn, although to be pitied and in good faith, for me to get anything out of him.² Besides, as you can see by P. Humphries' sermon, if I have not been misinformed, they are certain that they have pontifical approval.³

When I have had the honor of seeing M. de Montalembert, I will speak to him again about the Cochinchinese. But I have heard nothing more about these foreign visitors.⁴ I am entirely at your service, and very embarrassed still to have given you a false alarm. I am with Christian and lastingriendship,

Your brother in Our Lord,
A.-F. OZANAM

Envelope: Monsieur, Monsieur Dominique Meynis, Secretary of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith, rue du Perat, 6, Lyon.

Original lost: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Galopin copy. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Allusion to a paragraph of his letter of the day before about the association of "Catholicism in Europe" whose activities upset the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith of Lyon and Ozanam, who officially represented it in Paris.
2. Unidentified.
3. Point upon which all the anxieties of the Propagation of the Faith converged in regard to the association of "Catholicism in Europe."
4. Cf. previous letter to Meynis (January 10).



289. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, February 27, 1841

Agrees to make a report of the association, but asks a delay and precise instructions. Proposes to resume his work on Buddhism. "Catholicism in Europe" business. News of his health.

Dear friend,

I have just now received your excellent letter of the 25th and hasten to reply. I am glad to be assigned the report of the association, a task which always pleases me. But allow me to point out that you are a little late. To ask to have it in Lyon by the 10th is to ask that it be done next week. But my Saturday lecture takes nearly three days of my time and, not knowing that I was going to be so pressed, I have requested appointments for my university business which will take up more time yet. It will therefore be impossible for the work to be complete and ready unless I can be given also the first days of the following week, that is, to have until March 10. I will go at it energetically. But try to obtain the delay: it is not my fault and, if the notes were

sent me by the 20th, I could easily have it ready. Let us pull together. I have been a little distracted from the business of the association¹ lately and need to know whether any new missions have been opened in the meantime and other information of a somewhat important nature. Where do the principal hopes of the Catholic apostolate lie, etc., etc.

That done, I will resume the Buddhism work.² You will find attached the last two issues of the *Annales du catholicism en europe*.³ For its continued existence this society relies upon the refusal by the Council of Paris to cooperate with it on the European missions.⁴ I am absolutely ignorant of how *l'Univers* knew of what transpired between Msgr. de Lyon and the particular council.⁵

Farewell, dear friend, excuse an enforced brevity and join me in thanking the good God who is treating me in this country like a spoiled child. Persistent health despite exhausting work, success despite my inexperience, good friends all about me, and others far from me like you who never forget me.

Farewell! my regards to the members of the council and particularly to good M. de Jessé.⁶

Your devoted,
A.-F. OZANAM

If you cannot obtain an extension I will try to do the work as well as I can, but it will be much shorter.

Envelope: Monsieur, Monsieur Meynis, Secretary of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith, rue du Perat, 6, Lyon.

Original Lost: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.
Galopin Copy. Unedited.

Notes:

1. The Association of the Propagation of the Faith for whose report Ozanam, as extraordinary editor, assumed responsibility.
2. Cf. Letter of February 16 to Meynis.
3. *Annales du catholicisme en europe*, evidently the December 1840 (the 5th) and January 1841 (the 6th) issues. Number 7 did not appear until April 1841.
4. The Propagation of the Faith was of the opinion that the association of "Catholicism in Europe" divided the missionary efforts of Catholics. If the Propagation of the Faith took up European missions, the other association would have no further reason to exist. Such was the opinion at least of the Central Council of Lyon, but not of the Council of Paris where it was feared that patronage offered by the Association of Catholic Churches established in European Protestant countries might set the Propagation of the Faith in conflict with the governments of these countries. The two councils had appealed to Propaganda in Rome for a decision in the matter. For the steps taken and the difficulties of viewpoint, cf. letter of Verna and Meynis to the president of the Council of the North, January 11, 1841 (Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Paris, Carton A, 1a). The difference was evident when there arose the question of the position to be taken in regard to Msgr. Studach and the Swedish mission.
5. Ozanam probably wrote "particular council" for "Central Council" (of Lyon) by mistake. Indeed, a week earlier (February 19), the Central Council of Lyon had held, in the presence of Msgr. Challetan, vicar general of the archbishop of Lyon, Msgr. Bonald, a meeting intended to enlighten the archbishopric upon the association of *Catholicism in Europe*. It was in the wake of the information

furnished by the Central Council of Lyon that Msgr. de Bonald declared that association useless. *L'Univers* made allusion to this judgement, but the source of the information received by *l'Univers* could not be discovered.

6. Baron Antoine de Jessé (1792-1854) was about to succeed Baron de Verna as president of the Central Council of Lyon, starting in July 1841 (cf. letter of Meynis to Choiselat, July 3, 1841. Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Paris, Carton A, 2a). He held the post until his death.



290. To Mlle. Soulacroix
Paris, February 28, 1841

He shows his joy in the improvement of Théophile Soulacroix's health. Thanks her for the most intimate confidences and the assistance given for his Saturday course. Has assisted at a lavish soirée at Lamartine's; opinion on the opulence and pomp. Meeting of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul; some words about its works. He is happy with her letters but does not want her to weary herself nor deprive her family.

Mademoiselle,

I was right in calling the white dove: she heard me, and not overly fearful of this icy winter air, she came bearing the green bough of hope, in other words, good and marvelous news. The brother you love, whose name intervened in so touching a way at a sacred moment for me and whom you also allow me to love as a brother, there he is in full convalescence. Your accounts made me a part of all the progressions of these two years of trial, the sad sights of each day, the prospect of a future sadder still, the flickerings of hope, followed by long and inconsolable discouragements. I understand these things: a recent experience has shown me only too well how devastating it is to watch constant suffering, to deceive oneself as to the progress of illness while one by one the illusions vanish. I also know how heartrending is the sufferer's resignation to those around him. Especially how it revives their regrets and sorrows.¹ But it was not given me to experience what joy can follow these anguishes, how the dread progress has its end, how illusions become probabilities, then certainties, and with what transport one watches the resigned brow restored little by little.

I thank Providence for having reserved this good fortune to you who were worthier of it than I. I come to share it and add my felicitations to those your good parents have received from their numerous friends. I come rather late, but you will forgive this habitual sin: you will enlarge the family circle for me, you will (will you not?) make a little room for me beside you; Théophile is on the other side. I shake his hand and complement him with brotherly ardor; he will not keep the armchair and crutches much longer. His patience is rewarded: the pleasant good humor, which never abandoned him, has not betrayed him; while we gave way to discouragement, there was in his strong and pure youth an instinct which sustained him.

And by the month of June a happier wedding usher will never have been seen. He is laughing maliciously already at the idea. You will read this passage of my letter to him, and his usual mischievousness will find its mark. He will be very curious, for example, as to why the story of the dove comes up this way in our correspondence. It is most indiscreet of him, and as a professor I would refer him to the first verse of the fable of the *Two Pigeons*, whose explanation and application to the present case I would like in writing! . . . But, alas! for the moment, French literature is not in my domain, and I am in every way exiled to a foreign land. If attention were only paid to my lessons in German poetry! But you do not understand the troubadours, and despite what they say, you do not intend the key to be lost!

Now I will leave Théophile to enjoy his wonderful state of convalescence, and I come back to you, Mademoiselle, to thank you again for having thus long admitted me to your past sadnesses and present consolations. Your exquisite sensibility causes you to fear troubling me by confiding your own troubles: but perhaps I have spoken only too much of my own. It is good for all that, it seems to me, to act so and, when two are destined to share the troubles of the future, they should share the troubles of the past. And since this community of everything ought to be shaping between us, recollections, even the most sorrowful, have their value. Afflictions are like bittersweet herbs which perfume and revive. I love thus to see your soul awoken in the limpidity of your simple words. I admire that courage which knows restraint in the face of a stricken family, and that praiseworthy smile which shines like a parting ray in the midst of the most somber thoughts. But I love not less those solitary tears shed in the silent room at the foot of the crucifix; those sisterly prayers would not be such as God wanted if the eyes remained dry. No, no, moral energy has nothing to do with dryness and imperturbability: whatever is strong is not what stands stiffly, but what straightens up after bending. Such stoicism would be out of place among the sweet and Christian virtues with which women are adorned. How could they be our consolers, if they did not feel more intensely than we? I would say that they seem to have the nature of angels: not so much as to wings as to tears. We say jokingly that these are their weapons, but we are well aware that they are also part of their charm, and we would be punished indeed never to see those two fugitive pearls which compassion and tenderness hang on their eyelids. However, do not think I wish to give myself that pleasure often! Happily, one also weeps for joy: there are delightful sensations for which any other language would not suffice. How often I have seen my mother's eyes fill when she hugged her children to her breast. It should happen again, after what you told me about the little cousin who is in the habit of weeping a bit on that terrible day when one says yes. If that is so, and if on that day, under the white veil, in the shadow of lovely blond hair, I should perceive something of the same, let me believe that it will be undoubtedly from emotion, not from chagrin.

Besides, you are willing to confide in me that already, at the foot of another altar, that solemn moment has had its prelude. Thank you for that benevolent news and see how the Blessed Virgin has blessed you for it. For was it not from that time, of my first visit, that they date the beginning of the first signs of the unhoped-

for healing? And do you not see that heaven wished us to be together, and well aware that you would not want to abandon the bedside so long as a cherished head rested there, "He said to the paralytic: get up and walk." I was not worthy of this miracle: but it is you who have availed for us, you have indeed performed many others, less astonishing without doubt, but not less indifferent to me. Your pious Saturday remembrances continued to chase the demon of fear, and to loosen a tongue which trouble would strike dumb. Yesterday's lesson, one of the most boring, and singularly compromised by an importunate visit imposed in the morning, came off perfectly. The hall is always overcrowded, and the crowd insists on finding interest in that historical chaos where I am lost, in that labyrinth of barbarous names and strange ideas. The dissipating influence of carnival is not even felt: there must be some powerful unknown working on my behalf, and I am aware of no other talisman than the little gold locket hanging with a cross on my heart.

It seems to me that I am repeating myself and have already told you that, and yet I do not erase it: first because I do not wish to default in favor of disorder, which we are agreed upon; next because there are repetitions which please me, and words whose return charms my ear. It is like that air which your piano reserves for me and which I never grow tired of. When, smiling, I asked you the privilege of it, I was far from imagining you would be kind enough to take my request seriously. I was afraid of being rash; I was well aware that I had no rights yet and I would have been upset most of all at depriving you of that delicate pleasure of giving pleasure to the others. But I was infinitely touched that you took it differently. You were able to perceive a childishness in me; and is there not, really, something childlike, that is, naive and pure, in infant affections? Has not this springlike season of life its *primevères* and *bluets*?² Also? Perhaps, besides, the pleasure I took in it was not exempt from a light cloud of jealousy: that is a villainous fault, and all mine, I trust. Nevertheless, must there not be a little, a fine and imperceptible, hint of it in love? Indeed, why would your fiancé, man of good character if his friends are to be believed, and no enemy to his neighbor, smile at the thought of the *petted lion* resting ear aflop, while the pretty ballad drowns secretly on his eardrum so as not to waken until Easter?³ Thus I am very happy that you took me at my word. It is still one of those traits capable of brightening up the gloomiest of our brothers; but let me say to them: our dignity in no way suffers, and as I sometimes go ferreting into the lives of great men, visiting the unknown corners of their hearts, I find, among other things, these amiable puerilities. It is always the same when sensibility is new, and I also fear that preferences that are always reasonable are not yet formed by use, or perhaps used by exercise.

I am obedient to your recommendations and continue my music course. Although I go out very little, I went last evening on business to M. de Lamartine's and found a magnificent concert in progress in which were heard, among several people of the highest rank, the admirable voices of Mme. Damoreau-Cinthy⁴ and M. Dupre.⁵ A violinist such as I have never heard the like was vigorously applauded. As for the piano, it is not my fault if I did not listen to it willingly: it is for me like the Jewish harp which the exiled people no longer wished to hear under the willows of

Babylon.⁶ There was also an incredible luxury of fashion, and yet I assure you that this distinguished assembly, heads crowned with diamonds and shoulders bare, empty faces under a rain of flowers and in a cloud of lace, the complacency in their show of pomp and disdain for the person of their neighbors—all of this gives me a mediocre opinion of what the character of women can gain from habits of opulence and an education in show. Do not be upset, then, at this role of observer, which besides is not often repeated; it makes me better appreciate the differences. This evening another contrast was afforded me: why should I not tell you about it, even though I have already done so once before?

It was one of the four annual meetings of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.⁷ We numbered 600 young people, as many as would fill a large lecture hall, assembled to learn about the small good already accomplished and the great deal of good yet to be done. We had a report of our two thousand brothers here in Paris and the provinces: of every rank, every step of the social scale, but principally from the middle class It is reckoned that 1,500 families here in Paris alone have been helped, the daily bread brought under the needy roof, wood assured for many a dismal home. Besides twenty boys educated free in a paternal household,⁸ a truly large number supervised, protected, and encouraged, apprenticed in reliable shops, brought together each Sunday for divine service, corrupt fathers have been brought back to an ordered and frugal life, and future tears of so many good mothers of families dried. But nothing was reported about another and perhaps greater advantage to Christian love, the bringing together of young men whom the necessity of circumstances scatters far from their native village and relations among the dangers of the capital. Nothing was said about a community of faith and works erasing little by little the old divisions of political parties and preparing for a not-too-distant future a new generation which would carry into science, the arts, and industry, into administration, the judiciary, the bar, the unanimous resolve to make it a moral country and to become better themselves in order to make others happier. These are ambitious dreams, but since they are of those which most console my present solitude and contribute most to the sweetness and dignity of our approaching union; since these sentiments seem to me my least reprehensible, I give free rein to them here, for you alone, and for the maternal eyes which follow yours over the friendly page. They, too, will understand the blessing of seeing the gratitude of the poor and the fruit, small as it is, of kindness.

You warn me not to expect long letters always and accompany this information with such amiable expressions that it is impossible to be offended. However great be my privation, I would myself beg you not to sacrifice to the prolonging of my Lenten enjoyment the interests of your health, the cultivation of your talents, and the convenience of your family. When you can do as you have done with so much kindness, at intervals put some lines on the page which a week will fill up; I will receive them with gratitude, and in the consequent variety I will enjoy discovering the different facets of the thoughts which cross your soul. You will understand what a choice pleasure, what a rare and precious thing that is; that diversity of aspects has its own merit when the object is unchanged, and from whatever side

your character is revealed, nothing is lost. What, must I be the first to give bad example? To matters of imperious necessity and the preparation of two most difficult lessons is added an important and remunerated work, due the 10th of this month.⁹ Obligated to make efforts that my excellent health permits, I must ask your indulgence to be a little shorter today, and a little late next time. There is little chance of my writing Wednesday evening. It will be a painful sacrifice, but one of those which duty demands from time to time and for which I should find strength in the very ardor of my tenderness.

That graceful name of Amélie seems to be this latest time more charming than ever: you have surrounded it for me with a very lovely setting, that title of fiancée which suits it better than a tiara does a duchess. It is different with my name, which has special need of a companion to pardon its awkwardness and gravity. I sign myself, nonetheless, and with a most contented pen

Your fiancé who loves you very much,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Ozanam probably refers to his mother's last lingering illness.
2. Spring field flowers, the first indigenous to France.
3. In a letter to Ozanam, dated February 20, 1841 (Archives Laporte), Amélie told him how, during a party, she refused a young man who had asked her to play on the piano a certain ballad which she had promised to reserve exclusively for her fiancé.
4. Mme. Damoreau-Cinthy or Damoreau (born Laure-Cinthie Montalent, she was also known under the name of Cinti). In 1841 she was principal female singer at the Opera Comique. After her retirement in 1843 she taught a voice class at the conservatory.
5. Gilbert-Louis Dupre (1806-1896), a French tenor and composer. In 1841 he was singing at the opera, renowned for his upper range. In 1842 he took a professorship at the conservatory while continuing his professional career.
6. Cf. Psalm 137.
7. In conformity with the practice adopted in 1835: meeting of the First Sunday of Lent (see Ozanam to Arthaud, February 15, 1841).
8. Allusion to the orphanage for young boy apprentices established in the rue Copeau (formerly rue Locepede) on the initiative of the Conferences of Saint Vincent de Paul of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont and Saint-Sulpice, with the encouragement of Bailly, who furnished them employment in his printing house. Viscount de Melun asked (July 16, 1840) the council of the Society to transfer the patronage of this orphan-apprentice work. Perhaps the transfer had not been accomplished by February 1841 since the orphan apostolate is listed among the activities of the association. (Cf. *Albert Foucalt, La Société de Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, histoire de centans*, p. 58, and J.-B. Duroselle, *Les Debuts du catholicisme social en France*, p. 183ff.)
9. The annual report for the *Annales de la propagation de la foi*.



295. To Mademoiselle Soulacroix
Paris, March 17, 1841

Joy which her last letter brought him. Recollection of family memories.

Mademoiselle,

Since there are emotions which I cannot fight, it would be wholly impossible for me to wait until Sunday to tell you of the profound impression your last letter left with me. I did not dare expect it, and I feared greatly lest my weekly Tuesday happiness find itself supplanted by the good visit of the preceding Saturday. And yet, you write to me, you write to me about things in such a way that never have you more completely stirred whatever of feelings there is in my heart; and now I am still reading you over, and there stays with me a tenderness which I can call religious. Oh! take, please, my poor mother's parasol, if such a thought does not sadden you too much. For I believe that already her shadow truly encompasses and protects you and that her spirit is upon you. Already her ring entwines my finger with yours and the two of them become one before my eyes. God who seems to have loved my family very much ever permitted it to have saints, and each one of my forefathers (for we have preserved long and traditional records) therefore had at his side a chaste and pious vision to guide him to heaven. When one of these angels had finished her mission and folded her wings to ascend on high, another one always came to fill, in the next generation, the post left empty. If you also will come in your turn, you will come like the wife of Isaac into the widowed tent of Sara his mother; and it is written that only on that day was Isaac comforted. Bless you for having understood, bless you for wishing it! The day when I learned of your family grief! I too suffered cruelly, not that I felt my own wound open afresh, it has never closed, but at too vivid a vision of too recent a sorrow. However, at sight of such tears and desolation, a consoling thought long overdue came to me also; and I deem myself happy to be under a roof where sorrows so lively attest to such holy affections. Yet you form this heroic resolution to come to inform me. You take pity on my solitude, and by one of those dedications of which women, Christian women, alone are capable, you earnestly wish to accompany on earth this exiled soul. You have consented to a great many separations, trials, sacrifices, in order to do some good to him who suffers. You have accomplished an act of courage whose reward is elsewhere. But here forthwith a first reward is bestowed on you in the infinite tenderness, the imperishable love, the reciprocal devotion of your fiancé.

Say no longer that we do not know each other, or that duty separated us before allowing us to know to whom we had plighted our troth. Perhaps, alas, it is so on one side. Perhaps despite protestations not made out of simple modesty have you wished to preserve in my regard illusions of which more than one begins to fade in light of those weaknesses of character which recent circumstances have disclosed. But, on the other hand, these epistolary conversations have revealed you to me beyond all my hopes. I had set out, delighted above all with your charms, and the extreme reserve of our first rappings scarcely allowed for anything more than hon-

est trust inspired by an excellent family and a perfect education. Your first letters, still stamped with a naive embarrassment and an admirable simplicity, already permitted me to understand better the attraction your person had exercised on me. Then judicious observations, genuine comments, exact ideas, and a number of qualities which made me appreciate the precision and clarity of attention with which your intelligence was endowed, came to mix themselves with this amiable cheerfulness. But your last pages have taught me more than all and I know now with what touching delicacy you interest yourself in all the bruises that can try the heart, with what affectionate care you hasten to heal them, with what ineffable condescension you know how to pardon all, with what generosity, finally, you give yourself completely . . . I know what was done in heaven and on earth for my happiness the day your hand was put in mine!

As for me, forgive me if, in concluding my last letter, I let fall by way of amusing myself a question I should not have asked. No, I ask no more whether you do not love me a little. You will never be able to say that again, but have you not said much more, and with that supreme tact with which women are endowed, have you not said it much better? I would be an ingrate to ask any longer. You heap upon me, you ravish me with, your favors. Oh, rejoice in your work, rest with pleasure on this thought—that the words fallen from your pen have gone to bear joy, peace, and serenity to someone very far away from you. And may this sweet witness which gently lulls your conscience fly to console your days and gild your night dreams.

Farewell. I needed this outpouring but now I can no longer find a way to conclude, a means of expression that corresponds to what I feel, and the words with which I ordinarily close seem to me more helpless to say what I am . . .

Your fiancé who loves you tenderly,
A.-F. OZANAM

I intend to reserve tomorrow a seat on the mail for Palm Sunday. I would then have a dozen days to spend at Lyon: indeed, it is just in time, for I can stay here no longer. My indisposition, completely cured, leaves no further trace of fatigue, and I am able to carry out the schedule of my ordinary duties without difficulty: do not worry, then.

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Note:

1. Meaning is given to this entire paragraph by a letter of Mlle. Soulacroix to her fiancé, dated March 14, 1841. She alludes in it to the death of her paternal grandmother and adds that it was the way in which Ozanam, then a stranger to the family, shared in its grief that made her decide to marry him. (The circumstances in which this death occurred having some analogy to conditions under which Ozanam had recently lost his parents justified his emotion.)



297. To Monsieur Soulacroix
Paris, March 17, 1841

Asks advice about his career. Begs pardon for his excessive concern. He accepts courses at Collège Stanislas, which will assure a steady income without overwork. Discreet request to set the marriage date.

Monsieur,

If I have allowed much time to elapse without profiting from the filial freedom you have given me to unburden myself to you about the problems of my position and to ask your expert advice, I dare hope that you have not attributed my reserve to a defect of confidence and trust. Little used yet to the bruises which one cannot avoid when it is a question of boring the crowd, endowed unfortunately with too sensitive a nature, I experienced extreme pain at the declaration of M. Fauriel which seems to compromise my future. My imagination called up somber pictures, I became profoundly uneasy over a destiny in conflict with other destinies more cherished, and I felt that if I wrote to you in such a state I would do cruel violence to your affection either by causing you to share my fears or by drawing your attention to the instability of my character. That is why it seemed prudent to address such a communication to you through my brother who, accustomed to my exaggerations, could more easily present them in their true light. Meanwhile, I was completely silent about the matters in question in my letters to Mademoiselle Amélie, thinking to spare the exquisite refinement of her feelings. It was very far from my wish to leave her ignorant, no more than you, Monsieur, of worries that I am only too happy to share. And with lively gratitude have I received the excellent advice which in turn Mademoiselle Amélie, Madame Soulacroix, and yourself have been so willing to give me amid the uncertainty in which I find myself. Today I have the pleasure of informing you that it is coming to an end.

The principal reason for my chagrin was not the reduction of six hundred francs¹ in income anticipated for this year. It was the intention expressed by the incumbent to resume his classes from time to time; a proposal which could become serious, M. Fauriel wonderfully contenting himself with thirty or forty grave, erudite, honorable students who regularly crowd around his chair. It is necessary under such a threat to assure one's independence which in opposing circumstances would ever serve to afford greater calm and stability. I think I can accept at this point, in line with your advice, the proposal of Collège Stanislas. The affair is concluded: Mm. Cousin, Ampère, Pelet² and several others urged me to take it. Some of my colleagues are in a similar position: nothing is lost of their dignity. The work will be considerable but not excessive: three evening classes each week in French and Latin poetry. Another professor is responsible for the rest. The initial salary of two thousand francs will probably be increased soon, and if by chance the Sorbonne duties come to be a major interruption, things will be eased by conferences, private lessons, etc. . . . to fill in part the temporary void. For the rest, my class occupies nearly all the intellectual forces I can dispense and while I am looking after all

of my lectures, it will be impossible for me to seek financial supplement through writings, for instance, which demand concentrated thought and fresh imagination. Besides, I would risk branding myself like so many young people fallen headlong into the dangerous literature of newspapers. In this connection, better a regular job which suffices, like my three classes, with a certain knowledge, conscience, and exactitude. There are always the long Faculty of Letters' vacations and other means for writing memoirs and books which I may be inspired to do.

One only difficulty remains, and I must tell you how painful it is to me. The Collège Stanislas where I will begin teaching on May 1 will need me especially during the time of the competitive examinations. They formally stipulate my presence for the month of July and during the first half of August.³ This will not prevent the Italian trip to which literary motives also expressly hold me. But it will be necessary to come back here for six weeks which, in my first plans, would have been passed in the bosom of our families. I have twelve days, which I will stretch to fifteen, at the end of June. At that time, we will celebrate that marriage whose appointed time, still so far off, greatly provokes my impatience. Who knows whether we will be allowed to return alone or whether we will find ways to entice a father or mother to share our first trip to Paris? It will not be necessary at that time, as I will write to Mademoiselle your daughter, to set up housekeeping immediately: the problems of settling in permanently can wait for our return from Italy.

If these plans do not seem agreeable to you, I will make only one change in them. The prolonging of an exile of which I am now experiencing the full force must not be imposed on me. There is then only one alternative left, to advance my happiness two months by fixing the moment I desire for this coming Easter. In any case, Easter must not pass without my having the honor of seeing you. And I would the more insist that everything be accomplished then, did I not fear on the one hand to be indiscreet and on the other to compromise the beautiful pilgrimage to Italy, smiling event in our near future, which Mademoiselle Amélie does not seem to want to give up.

In the hope that these arrangements do not displease you, I now rest easy and return to my studies with entire liberty of spirit. I am embarrassed in so far as I have let you see so much weakness in the first difficulties to assail me. But in a way it is perhaps useful for your benevolent illusions about me to be dissipated a bit in advance and that you have seen close up how much need I have of finding a father again, my own having been taken from me too soon, and in the last years I enjoyed too little his advice from which I could have gathered the energetic and firm impulse to step without hesitation over the threshold of a career. Your example and encouragement will complete in me the work left off. In another way those difficulties were not typical. They were part of those I anticipated for my debut, and the anxieties of the debut were precisely those whose prospect made me accept the isolation of the first months of this year so as not to share with a soul tenderly loved worries whose entire bitterness I knew in advance. Mademoiselle Amélie, with that admirable generosity she is endowed with, wanted very much to share all my troubles. And I cannot say with what a noble and judicious manner she treated in

her letters those matters I did not dare bring up in mine. I bless a trial which has revealed so many merits to me where I had already known so many charms.

Yesterday I had the honor of seeing M. and Madame Pécelet, and I gave them the first progress reports on Théophile's recovery. They shared my joy warmly. M. Pécelet told me of his intention to write to you in the near future. He does not know yet whether his inspection journey⁴ will allow him to visit Lyon. I continue to see M. Miguet and to be perfectly welcome there. Tomorrow I am going to the minister's soirée. In the morning I hope at last to visit M. l'abbé Soulacroix,⁵ who has stopped by here twice, and whose house I have visited twice, without our getting together.

Forgive me, Monsieur, if I have prolonged so greatly a conversation precious to me, and if I have contended too much with public duties for an attention ever so industriously and usefully occupied. I was carried away, which has happened often since I have had the good fortune to be a son and to be able to unburden my heart to a heart ever open to me. Accept in advance the expression of my profound gratitude and the respectful affection with which I am

Your most humble and devoted servant,
A.-F. OZANAM

My respects to Madame Soulacroix. To Théophile, Charles, and Albert my fraternal friendship.

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Notes:

1. New allusion to Fauriel's change of mind.
2. Jean Claude Pécelet (1793-1857), born at Besançon, entered the Ecole Normale Supérieure in 1813, professor of physics at the Collège Royal de Marseilles, then at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, from 1840 inspector general of Public Instruction. His wife, nee Correalis, came from a family of magistrates.
3. Exigency already mentioned a letter to Mlle. Soulacroix.
4. He was one of twelve inspectors of studies. Dividing themselves into six commissions, they parcelled up twenty-seven academies which they examined each year between May and August (Cf. Gerbod, *op. cit.*, p. 42).
5. Marc Antoine Soulacroix (1797-1873), younger brother of Rector Soulacroix, had been ordained a priest in 1820. Former chaplain of the Maison Royale d'Education de Saint-Denis (1826-1832), he lived in Belgium after 1832 and more precisely at Brussels after 1842.



299. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, March 17, 1841

Thanks for money sent. Difficulty he encountered in writing the promised article on Buddhism. Matter of Catholicism in Europe which is finding some credit at Paris. Step considered in regard to Msgr. Affre.

My dear friend,

I acknowledge receipt of your last letter, of the important document, and the draft of 110.25 francs¹ which was enclosed. I must thank you also for the confidence with which you continue to honor me and the earnest exactitude so willingly devoted to regulating my little matters of interest. Accept anew the expression of my regrets for having been obliged to send you a piece of work as unbusinesslike as the account rendered, drawn up in a crisis of the most violent fever I have felt in my life. An energetic doctor and his accurate treatment have arrested the illness. I am delivered but not without an extreme weakness remaining with me especially of eyesight which obliges me to suspend some of my duties for a while. It will not then be possible to have the "Buddhism" ready in the desired time. But I will see you at Easter and then, with the approval of the editorial staff, I will do a short provisional article which can allow for the insertion of letters later. I prefer not to curtail my great work, and before going to Rome myself in September I should be able to make the proper reevaluation² of it at the same time as the other commissions with which the work of the Propagation of the Faith may charge me.

I had a useful visit with M. Desgenettes³ in connection with the matter known as *Catholicism in Europe*. Sunday I will call on Father Boulanger,⁴ superior of the Jesuits. I am going to have a long conversation with M. Bailly. M. Bailly thinks that it will be necessary to speak first to Monseigneur the archbishop of Paris who out of ignorance of the facts⁵ has approved the new association and ratified the bureau's nominations.⁶ Without the archbishop, impossible to work on the clergy: even the internuncio⁷ cuts a rather slight figure. M. Bailly, who is on close terms with Monseigneur, has taken it upon himself to speak to him if you will authorize me to give him for this purpose a copy of the cardinal's letter.⁸ He will use it with discretion and will not publish it in any manner. I await your prompt reply in this matter.

But I have more evidence than ever that resistance will be long and dangerous, the *Catholicism* affair being monopolized by a legitimist faction which by every imaginable means seeks to insinuate itself everywhere. Every precaution in the world has been taken to safeguard *l'Univers* and the St. Vincent de Paul Society from their incursions. When we shall get together, which is to say very soon, I shall discuss with you the long and curious details.

Farewell, my dear friend, count upon my zeal for our admirable association as upon my affection for you.

Your devoted,
A.-F. OZANAM

My respects to the members of the council.

Original lost: It belonged to the archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Galopin copy, n. 183. Unedited.

Notes:

1. This sum is not mentioned in the great ledger of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith of Lyon (cf. letter of January 10, 1841, to Meynis).
2. Ozanam had already let it be understood that this study presented difficulties that he had not at all foreseen.
3. Charles Dufriche-Desgenettes (1778-1860), pastor of the parish of Missions étrangères from 1819 to 1830, had left France at the time of the revolution of 1830. Some months after his return in 1832 he was named pastor of Notre-Dame-des-Victoires but was especially famous as founder of the Archconfraternity of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary (1838), which has several million members throughout the world. The basilica of Our Lady of Victories founded later by Father Baker in Lackawanna, New York, is its American offshoot.
4. R. P. Clement Boulanger (1790-1868) was superior successively of two houses of the Society of Jesus in Paris (18 rue des Postes and 15 rue de Regard), before becoming provincial in place of Father Achilles Guidée, February 4, 1842. We do not know whether the proposed interview took place with any effect (despite research pursued in the archives of the Society of Jesus at Chantilly and Lille). Three weeks later, April 6, 1841, Father Guidée sent the following circular letter to the superiors of the Paris province:

“I warn you in behalf of our Father General (Jan Roothan) that the work called *Catholicism in Europe* not having the approbation of the Sovereign Pontiff who believes it by its nature to impede the great work of the Propagation of the Faith, it is proper for our confreres to remain entirely aloof from it; and if anyone has allowed himself to involve himself in it with permission, he should withdraw.” (Archives of the Society of Jesus, Chantilly.)

5. Monseigneur Affre, Ozanam believed, was unaware that the work of *Catholicism in Europe* did not have the approbation of Rome.
6. Bertier de Sauvigny, count of Brissac, Vatimesnil, and Hamelin; Monseigneur Affre had given him as honorary president Abbé Augé, one of his vicars general.
7. In 1831 the nuncio to Paris, Monseigneur Lambruschini, was recalled to Rome following the funeral obsequies of Abbé Grégoire. Monseigneur Garibaldi, until then auditor of the nunciature, henceforth filled the office of nuncio until 1843, with the title of internuncio. He had the sympathy and confidence of Louis-Philippe. (Cf. P. Droulers, *La nonciature de Paris et les troubles sociaux-politiques sous la Monarchie de Juillet*, and Monseigneur Jacques Martin, *La nonciature de Paris*, Beauchesne 1947.)
8. The letter, the copy of which Ozanam asks permission to communicate to Bailly so that he could make use of it in conversing with Monseigneur Affre, could be one which Cardinal Fransoni, prefect of propoganda, addressed to the Central Council of Lyon in order to disavow the work of *Catholicism in Europe*, March 4, 1841.

Translation of the letter written to the president of the Central Council of Lyon (Verna; June 7) by his eminence the cardinal prefect of propoganda:

“Most illustrious sir, In replying to your letter of February 20 last, I hasten to tell you that with as much surprise as regret I have seen repeated in *l’Univers* the announcement of the work of the Propogation of Catholicism, and that I have written to Monseigneur the Internuncio of Paris that effort be made to hinder an enterprise which, far from having the blessing and approval of the Holy Father, on the contrary displeases His Holiness very much because it harms the progress of the other work of the Propogation of the Faith. His Holiness has wished that his disapproval be made known and that at the same time there

be expressed to the well-merited association of the Faith that it is his intention that from now on the care and assistance of this association be extended to the Missions of Europe also.

I have communicated this pontifical resolution to the Council of Paris; your lordship may now judge how afflicted I am at all they have tried to do in contempt of this decision.

It would not be averse for your lordship to agree to join with Monseigneur the Inter-nuncio along with the excellent Cardinal de Bonald concerning a convenient remedy to be employed promptly so as to give the lie to the pretended approval of the Sovereign Pontiff and stifle the thing at birth, *urging* at the same *the stable future* of the foundations needed for the *Missions of Europe*.

With that, I pray God to preserve and prosper your Lordship.

Rome, from the Propoganda, March 4, 1841. Your Lordship's most affectionate

(signed) G.F. CARD. FRANSONI, PREFECT

The Vice-President of the Central Council attests to the accuracy of this copy.

(signed) TERRET, VICE-PRESIDENT

(Archives de la Propogation de la Foi, Paris. Carton A. Ia)

9. Cf. especially the article in *l'Univers* of December 2, 1841, on this work. We have found no trace of these efforts at penetration within the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.



307. To Mademoiselle Soulacroix
Paris, April 26, 1841

He depicts with a wholly romantic melancholy the life he leads far from his fiancée since his return from Lyon. The six weeks stretching before him are going to be very hard. Reflections on the Collège Stanislas, account of visits he has made, especially to the Abbé Marduel. Imagines the family happiness of his fiancée.

Mademoiselle,

Can you believe that only a week has passed since the day of parting, since the moment when on your threshold I still held your hand, since I threw myself into that fatal carriage, looking back time and again at the walls of Lyon from which I have exiled myself for two months? Can you believe that seven more dragging weeks must pass before the blessed hour which will unite me to you? I dare hope that you have some pain in thinking of it; as for me, I do not know how to reconcile myself. *Mon Dieu!* What must purgatory be, what suffering, after having seen the Eternal Beauty face to face, to be separated from it for ages, if absence brings so much bitterness to the affections here below! To have gazed upon you so for some days, to have been able to sit beside you, to look into your eyes, to read your smile, to hear that sweet tongue whose accents are like rose-dew to the dryness of my soul, to exchange all my thoughts with yours in silence . . . And then, after so much joy, to have left it at one stroke, to have allowed myself to be carried far away from you, and to find myself once more in my loneliness, in this desert of aridity and

boredom assigned to me, and to wait thus through the whole springtime when nature does not wait to bedeck herself with flowers, when the heart no longer waits for anything in order to love. See, Mademoiselle, what casts me down and makes me suffer greatly. True, there no longer remains that violent upset, those burning regrets which assailed me during the journey; it would have been impossible for them to last. Mine is a calm enough malaise but constant, the cord of feeling stretched too tight, a kind of nervous irritability and moral impatience, a languor which blights the ordinary enjoyments of life, which withers the freshness of my thoughts, which makes duty onerous, distractions importunate, and even friendship indifferent to me. You know how my imagination has the habit of picturing to itself everything the mind conceives and of coloring the most abstract thoughts. But I seem to imagine within me as it were a darkness before dawn most dark still, and the dawn of June 15 appears remote, far off, and of slow approach. I hear from former days something like a sigh, or better a sad and monstrous tune singing inside me, and I cannot hold from quoting that line of Racine whose words come mechanically to the lips: "How times have changed!" Even my work maintains this sadness by recalling to me those elegiac situations which resemble mine, and by transporting me back to all the medieval manors, beneath all their balconies, to the altars of all the madonnas, and in their echoes I recognize my own complaints. Thus, while preparing my lecture just now, I came upon the story of a poor banished knight: he sends his beloved a symbolic present of honeysuckle blossoms wrapped in a branch of hazel; these verses, too charming not to repeat to you, and which I have modernized a bit, are inscribed there. They are by a woman of the twelfth century, Marie de France.

Further, what will be my fourth literature lecture proves that the custom of sending flowers is not at all new to the world. But what does it matter that a pleasure be hackneyed to the world if it be new to us? The good and the beautiful do not grow old. Sentiments' youth is sheltered from the shocks of time which soil and vulgarize everything else. To cite the thought of that ancient whom one grows tired of hearing forever called the *Just*: "It is true that one never tires of hearing that one is loved, tenderly loved! . . ." Let us continue, then, this exchange of simple and naive confidences, nor fear being a little childish; for childhood is good and dear to God. And since, for example, it is a cruelty to make these poor flowers travel between folds of paper whose deadly embrace takes away color, perfume, and life, tell me which ones you prefer so that I can have them sometimes on my mantelpiece in the little glass vase which I have just furnished for the purpose. Do you like Provence roses? I have some there: they remind me of charms happily more lasting than their own . . . I have arranged in the same bouquet a like number of pansies, and need not tell you what they express. I notice, however, that their corollas already begin to droop and that their neighbors' buds threaten not to open, from which I conclude that symbols end up at fault and that all possible allegories are not worth a little reality.

It is otherwise with those most profound and mysterious sympathies which transcend distance and in certain grave and difficult instances prove of real assis-

tance to the forlorn. Thus I am sure, Mademoiselle, that you did not fail in your promise to me and that you prayed for me last Saturday. The need has never perhaps been more urgent. My dejection of spirit and the many material chores connected with arrival interfered with my preparatory studies, and faced with the resumption of the cause which was not without its terrors, I found myself so behind that I did not even have time to spend, according to custom, five minutes in church before class. Others then—and I counted on it indeed—had to implore for me from on high that help which all the knowledge in the world cannot attain, inspiration. The subject to be treated was vast and difficult, the attendance still considerable, and my physical strength, I do not know why, very tottery. . . . Nevertheless, things went fairly satisfactorily, and if I hesitated more than usual at the beginning, if less moving quotations failed to arouse loud applause, on the other hand I have heard that several members of the university present expressed publicly their learned approval. Monday's lecture was more worthwhile, but there were more empty seats: the fact that they are not accustomed to the day yet, that it is a time of examinations and excursions, and that our heat has been excessive since the day before yesterday, somewhat console my self-love over these inevitable absences; for the rest they are not numerous enough to disturb me, and indeed I expect others after the next interruption, May 1.

One of the most laborious periods of my career will begin at that time and last until June 15. I will not be able, as I will next year, to substitute a simple conference for one of my lectures to the faculty, and I will have my three classes at Stanislas.¹ Last Tuesday, M. the minister, at whose soirée I had the honor to be present, told me that the matter was settled.² I will try not to let it interfere with my eventual advancement. But it is evident that the Sorbonne chair means regular advancement, official position, and the avenue to fame. Every other position, even the Ecole Normale, is only secondary, and an attempt must be made to render it easy and lucrative while at the same time filling it conscientiously; and seen in this light, I hope that Stanislas will be a post well chosen. Persons least prejudiced in his favor praise the director,³ and lately M. Rausselle, inspector taking over the duties of rector here, spoke of him in my presence in the most honorable terms. Finally, they want me, and I prefer being asked in to knocking for a long time at unproductive doors. Meanwhile you can assure Monsieur your father that I am not forgetting his advice and that, by way of example, the prospect of the Collège de France does not cease to please me.⁴

I left you the other day for M. your uncle, in leaving him I meet you again today (Tuesday morning). I have just seen him off on the Brussels stage, well rested, satisfied with his apostolic labors this Lent, thinking some about returning to Paris next year, but especially happy to have had through me good news of all his family; of you in particular to whom he is very deeply attached, and of Théophile, whose ambulatory exploits he told me about at great length. Some days ago I also had the pleasure of seeing Madame Pécelet; her husband had just left on an inspection tour, and, a widow of several hours, she was better than ever disposed to listen to my troubles. Finally, Madame Vincent⁵ to whom I delivered your letter at the *Hôtel*

Crillon had not arrived yet: she is expected at the end of this week. I shall be eager to make her acquaintance, too happy to meet one more person with whom I can chat about you!

Last evening's visits and the morning's courses have put me behind, and I would be afraid of upsetting you were I not to take advantage of today's mail. Otherwise I would tell you in greater detail about the habitual occupations of my mind since this tiresome return: how, to cheat the slowness of time, I am already dreaming of the preparations, collecting information, looking at houses for rent, having a copy of my birth certificate sent to me, trying to persuade myself that the great event is not so far off as they pretend. Meanwhile, the good old priest of whom I have spoken to you at times, M. Marduel, is trying to calm my impatient mood by sharing it a little: "he wishes," says he in my interest, "that today took the place of tomorrow." He asks me to send you his compliments, and assures me with a patriarchal smile and the experience of seventy-nine years, that if absence brings pain, it can no longer have risk for me, and that he guarantees me my place in that memory, that heart, from which I vehemently desire never to be banished. Do not believe, meanwhile, that I have unworthy fears: you have been so good and so encouraging that from now on I shall no longer be capable of fearing anything. Be blessed for that, for if I had left with a single doubt, with the slightest cloud, with the shadow of an anxiety, waiting would become torture, and even the future a menace. As for you, happiest one, with spirit doubtless more sensible and at the same time less tumultuous than the one which has left you, with shyness full of charm which, without causing you to thrust aside future things, does not permit you to hasten the end of present things too much, in the midst of that most sweet existence as young girl and adored daughter, the last hours of which already take their coloring from the first rays of a new era, surrounded with a family, in whose bosom you will not behold me without perhaps some pleasure (I dare believe it), but which you cannot leave without regret; you are, *Mademoiselle*, a complete stranger to the pain I feel, but your goodness alone, in caring about it, can make you comprehend it. Ah! in these moments which are the most solemn, the most moving of your life, amid the domestic happiness of your present situation, when health revisits your brother's pillow and restores joy to the threshold of your house, when you are surrounded with affections more expressive than ever, and your mother, seeing her work in you accomplished, thrills with legitimate pride, when on the eve of putting your hand in the hand it has chosen, your excellent father cannot refrain from pressing it more tenderly, then if you still have a thought for me, you are generous, and I ask nothing more. Rejoice in a happiness Providence has given you and which I do not deserve: I will be only most satisfied and proud to be able to add to it in promising you other days which will not allow you to regret these, in repeating yet once more the assurance of what you already know, but which you will soon know better, that is, of my respectful, lively, and particularly constant tenderness.

Your fiancé,
A.-F. OZANAM

Your kind letter was just delivered to me this morning; it is too flattering, so that I am not eager to reply to it. Otherwise, the slowness of this weekly correspondence seems to me too long. To write you and to read you are two consolations I need more often. I will write then probably between now and Sunday; do not grow anxious if it should be otherwise, however, and do not thank me, for it is a way for me to unburden in some little way an overflowing heart and to obtain as well, when possible, some reciprocity on your part. In the meanwhile, pardon the brevity and disorder of these page. Time presses. I can only express to you my thanks for the welcome you gave my brothers; and ask you to present my respects to your parents, and to Théophile, Charles, and Albert my friendship.

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Three afternoons in rhetoric.
2. By virtue of statute proper to Stanislas nominations of university personnel to any post at this college had to be made with the approval of the grand master of the university.
3. Père Gratry (1805-1872). It was his first year directing Collège Stanislas, where he succeeded Abbé Bucquet. Inspector General Rausselle, who in his 1840 report expressed severe criticism in regard to studies and discipline at the Collège notes the improvement alluded to here in his 1841 report (Archives Nationales: F. 17-6813).
4. It was in view of a chair in the literature of the Midi at the Collège de France that Rector Soula-croix had advised him to apply himself to the study of Spanish.
5. The former Eugénie Véron (1812-1893), wife of Adrien Vincent (1793-1853). M. Vincent had taught in several institutions between 1812 and 1831 before becoming inspector of the academy of Bourges (1831) and then of Lyon (1834-1838) where the Vincents became acquainted with the Soulacroixs. M. Vincent was inspector of the academy of Douai from 1839 until his retirement in 1848.



308. To François Lallier
Paris, April 30, 1841

He has just returned to Paris. Has immediately taken steps with de Cornudet which could prove useful to Lallier, and tells him the result. News of some friends in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. How he assesses his teaching at Stanislas. The postscript is devoted to the recent general assembly of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

My dear friend,

Your letter came to visit someone who was absent,¹ or rather it came to wait as an agreeable surprise and consolation on his return. It has been so long since I have had news of you, and I was driven, under pain of no longer having any, to seek some at Lyon from our friend La Perrière.

Having arrived a bit late in Paris, I was not able to be of service to you, and things had proceeded as you conjectured. I have seen M. de Cornudet at the Ministry of Justice; he told me that advance in office had ceased until other seats fell vacant. M. de Person² could not be included in the promotion, and the next one will probably not affect him either, for, according to the ordinary rules of advancement, it should include magistrates outside the circle of the Royal Court of Paris. By reason of his Christian zeal, his membership in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and his friendship with Montalembert, M. de Cornudet has a lively interest in your affair; and when I explained your fears about the immobility of the judges of Sens, he earnestly besought me to dissuade you from too stubborn a candidacy for that tribunal. He is of the opinion that you should hold yourself ready for opportunities which could open up in other cities and, that after all, Providence will perhaps accomplish more by having you pass up this vacancy. Such is the message I am entrusted to deliver to you, with regret at not being able to report a more satisfactory result, but ready to offer my modest services again with joy and gratitude as soon as you think they are still useful.

The decision rendered applies to two of our confreres, one M. Moignon³ whom I do not know; the other Lejouteux, now president of the Conference of St. Etienne-du-Mont and who is about to go to judge the citizens of Châteaudun. It is another loss for me, another from the little circle of intimate friendships formed in my student days and which is no more. I scarcely ever see Lamache anymore: for the last two, four, five months I have called at his house in vain without his having, on his side, come near mine. Dulac is no longer of help to me. Buried in the news-room of *l'Univers*, he is no more visible among his colleagues than a desk; familiar conversation is rendered impossible, and chess is no more than a memory. I have left only poor Henri Pessonieux, banished a league and a half from me, enslaved by his tedious duties, and moreover thrown into a world of shadows where I can neither check him nor follow him.

Further, how insupportable is the solitude here, and my trip to Lyon, while giving me some days with my family and that other family destined to become mine too, has only served to make me feel all the more the hardness of my very real exile. I dare think that isolation for two will cease to be sad; and this hope makes me hasten with every wish the moment that will change my life. In the same moment that an inexpressible impatience seizes upon me and longs for the realization, I do not see the great solemnity advancing without apprehension. Beneath all the festal veils of preparation is perceptible that formidable character common to all definitive things which gives them I know not what strange resemblance to death. The duties and perils of a state so new to me appear like restless shadows, and the time remaining to me until the middle of June would be given over to the gravest thoughts were I not distracted by the sweet image of her whom God chooses for me as helpmate and whose character, better and better known through four months of correspondence and a dozen days of new conversations, seems to give me every earthly guarantee of happiness.

For the rest, my university affairs continue to prosper. Despite the excessive

heat, the ranks of my audience, while somewhat thinned, are not yet deserted, and the resumption of the course has received a sympathetic welcome. Whatever be the fate of later lectures, the success of this year is for all practical purposes achieved and establishes a favorable base for my ultimate advancement. On another front, Collège Stanislas⁴ is going to ask me to take on three classes in rhetoric a week with acceptable financial arrangements. This lucrative extra and a little worrying will take care of my situation until further orders. Aside from the religious character of the establishment and the impeccable kindness of those who have enlisted me, be assured that I was touched to find that you are remembered there also. I understand nevertheless all the delicacy and gravity of this mission, a thousand times more difficult than my faculty obligations, because it must be fulfilled among our people handed over to our care by their fathers' trust and to whom we owe moral influence as well as scientific instruction.

You see that I, too, have my scruples and must spurn them in order to accomplish the will of Providence as Providence allows me to see it. But I confide them to your paternal affection so as to obtain the consoling help of your advice and prayers. The privilege of age, which a year or more seems to give me, has been revived by your entering a year sooner upon the second period of life; you owe me now the tax of your new experience. I would be very happy if you can carry out the proposal made recently of a trip here in the month of May. If this pleasure must be renounced, be kind enough at least to make amends by a prompt reply and by more frequent letters. After traveling so long a time together, do not forsake me when I am about to rejoin you on paths where you have taken the lead. As for me, I feel that new attachments do not loosen old bonds and that the power of loving, like all others, increases by greater exercise.

Farewell, my dear friend, trust ever in my sincere devotion.

A.-F. OZANAM

Last Sunday the Society of St. Vincent de Paul held its general assembly. Full hall, a well-written report, the venerable Greek patriarch of Antioch presiding,⁵ fervent address by M. de Ravignan. Thirty conferences in the provinces, twenty-five in Paris; in the future, a weekly conference of the twenty-five presidents, a general council which functions, and Père Bailly active. Never have things gone better. Please God it will last.

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur François Lallier, Substitute Judge of the Tribunal of the First Instance, Sens.

Postmarks: Paris, May 2, 1840 [sic]; Sens, May 3.

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Lallier's letter of April 12 had arrived at Paris before Ozanam returned from Lyon.
2. M. de Person, examining magistrate at Sens, had sought the same post at Auxerre but had not

- obtained it, which prevented Lallier, substitute judge, from being named at Sens in his place.
3. Alix Moignon (1812-1876), born at Reims. He pursued his career as magistrate at Epernay, Troyes, and Paris, councilor of the Supreme Court for 1868 (Cf. Arch. nat. BB II 253, BB³ 416).
 4. Collège Stanislas, directed from 1841 to 1846 by Père Gratry (Cf. *Stanislas, le premier centenaire*, 1905). The stipends of which Ozanam speaks were 2,000 francs a year for three afternoons a week.
 5. Msgr. Maximos Mazlum.



309. To Dominique Meynis
April 30, 1841

Affair of "The Work of Catholicism in Europe." Protestant Mission Review. Letters on Buddhism gone astray.

My dear friend,

I hasten to send you the early information gathered in conformity with the works of the Council of Lyon. And first, you have, enclosed, the last issue of the work of Catholicism in Europe. It will tell you more than I can about the resources and intentions of those directing it.¹ I have gathered from the principal Protestant library references you want. There is extant only one French journal reporting on missions of the sect and on French missions only.² The subscription is six francs per year, and the revue is monthly. Your correspondents in England could undoubtedly get information and procure them for you; otherwise, the bookseller I have spoken to about it could perhaps undertake it.

As far as communiques extracted from the *Annales*, *l'Univers* would do it free of charge; the *Gazette*³ and the *Press* would probably do the same; the others for a fee. One is of the opinion, however, that in newspapers not expressly religious, the items might be shortened in way of tempting and capturing their readers. I hope soon to have more precise information on these matters.

Finally, the letters on Buddhism are not here: moreover, it would not have been possible to lose them. It is evident then that I sent them, as I thought. If you still have doubts, be good enough to come to the house and there in my room insist upon the key to my bureau, inspect the drawers and the boxes, and make certain whether I am in error. Items concerning the Propagation of the Faith have never been put anyplace else.⁴ In the absence of these materials, I did not feel called upon to work on the notice which should accompany their insertion, although the books and notes needed for the history of Buddhism are still in my hands. I count upon your kindness toward me to learn the plans of the council in this regard. And, not to compromise matters by too prolonged delay, I stop here, embracing you with all my heart.

Your devoted friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

I forgot to tell you that Msgr. Arduini's⁵ comments on the French bigamists in Moldavia have been confided to someone trustworthy and zealous who has undertaken to acquaint M. the Minister of Foreign Affairs⁶ and M. the Director of General Consulates⁷ with the matter. But it is doubtful whether in the middle of active unrest attention will be paid to moral interests. Msgr. the Patriarch of Antioch⁸ immediately sought information from Mm. of the council and especially M. de Verna.⁹

Be assured of my sad sympathy in regard to the persecution of the work in Spain.

Original lost. Property of the Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Galopin copy #186. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Number 7 of this revue, out in April.
2. *Journal des missions évangéliques*, 1841, XVI year. Published by the Society of Evangelical Missions of Paris.
3. *La Gazette de France*.
4. Documents which had been loaned him for an article he was preparing for the *Annales de la propagation de la foi* (undoubtedly letters of P. Gobet, Vincentian Father).
5. Msgr. Arduini, vicar apostolic in Moldavia.
6. Guizot.
7. The consulates were subject to the "commercial division" of foreign affairs. This service had succeeded the "division of consulates" of the consulate period. In 1841 the director of the "commercial division" was Drouyn de Lhuys.
8. Msgr. Mazlum.
9. President of the Central Council of Lyon, who was gravely ill, and who would die in June.



310. To Mademoiselle Soulacroix
Paris, May 1, 1841

Pleasure in letter received. He is happy with the progress of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. He asks his fiancée to point out his imperfections. He explains what religion means to him. Beginning of class at Stanislas.

Mademoiselle,

Can it be that our two ways of thinking, destined soon to intermingle, were already so alike that yours is now eager to bend toward mine, to understand it without a word being said, and to answer it without fear? For while I was indicating last Tuesday that this weekly correspondence would be from now on at too long an interval, when I was begging you to shorten it, you were forestalling my wait after a fashion by preparing a very sweet surprise for me for Wednesday. At first the unexpected letter raised that feeling of uneasiness you know as characteristic of me. But

when I had torn open the envelope and found no bad news and had read those charming pages all perfumed with sweet and affectionate things, I sighed with pleasure and the grateful kiss was pressed more tenderly than ever on the consoling paper. If then the consciousness of a good act is not without charm for you, if my desires are not indiscreet, repeat what you have done. Do not entrust the migratory swallow with your friendly messages, who knows whether the capricious bird might not take them to other roofs? Come yourself, at least by word, to dissipate the boredom of my solitude; come, I need you. During the first days of my new exile, impatient to find again some trace of you, I have reread the collection of your first letters from one end to the other, from the one where your still hesitant pen made the first attempt to the gentle lines whose duty was to distract the monotony of my trip. I seemed to see the dear image, uncertain and shy at first, draw near little by little, delineating itself in ever clearer strokes, half-lifting its veil to allow a smiling and reassuring glimpse, becoming more familiar and accessible until it brought me, all trembling with joy and love, face to face with the reality. Why must this moment have passed so soon, why must truth be so evanescent, leaving me for my only consolation shadows of remembrance? Ah! when I pressed your hand in mine, it seemed that nothing could again rob me of it; yet behold now my lips only too happy to brush the page your fingers folded But another day will come when I shall be allowed to see you again, and on that day it will be your heart that I shall press to mine and then we shall see whether there is any power in the world strong enough to tear you away!

You are good and compassionate; my sadness afflicts you and you urge me to allow myself some diversion. I have never thought really that you deserved my sullen offering of mood and peevishness, nor that you would blame the brief amusements of friendship. Nor have I refused to accept an invitation received shortly after my return; and shall dine on Monday evening with a friend come from Nîmes¹ to congratulate me on my approaching happiness. The day before yesterday, to cheer myself up, I tried to reread that dramatic proverb of which I have spoken to you: *the most beautiful day of my life*; but it turned out ill. And it is pretty much the same with everything I have tried to distract me from my troubles; after the intoxicating cup given me to drain not so long ago, there is left no draught for me without bitterness. Isolation bores me and conversation with another is a burden; there is no longer any reading able to catch my attention, no task which comes easy.

I must, however, except the day of Sunday last; it was the second of four feasts of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.² In the morning a pious throng crowded around the altar where this glorious Apostle of Charity reposes in his silver *chasse*. There were deputations from the twenty-five Paris conferences, young people with whom some illustrious old men mingled in fraternal equality. It was wonderful to see their serried ranks in the choir where some priests were also at prayer, veterans or recruits of those far-off missions in China and America, established by their holy founder and still watered with the blood of his disciples. The nave and the tribunes were filled with good religious who, come together under the same patronage, watch at the bedside of the sick, visit the homes of the poor, receive indigent child-

hood into asylums and schools, and whom the people of Paris voluntarily greet with the title of *Sisters*. In the evening a large crowd filled our meeting hall. An interesting report was made of the work of the last quarter. A visitor from Lyon had something to say about the good accomplished amid the recent misfortunes of that city.³ Finally an eloquent orator⁴ was heard, and the meeting closed with the blessing of the patriarch of Antioch⁵: white-haired pontiff in ancient dress here to beg the intervention of France in behalf of the oppressed churches of Syria, and delighted to find in the youth of this most maligned country reassuring signs of a Christian future. Long after the assembly the place was covered with groups of friends exchanging encouraging words.

At the same hour, thirty other conferences established in the farthest removed sections of the country celebrated the same solemnity. How can there not be given some hope to such a strength of association, exerted mainly in the large cities, in every law school, in every enlightened home, upon a generation called to fill a variety of offices and influential posts? And if formerly immorality befell the upper classes, the academies, the judiciary, the military chiefs, the politicians, among the middle class and the people, can we not believe without too much madness that divine Providence calls us to the moral rehabilitation of our country when eight years are enough to raise our number from eight to two thousand, when several of us without the help of intrigue and favor already move in the highest levels of society; when on all sides we invade the bar, medicine, the courts, the professorships; when a single one of our conferences is composed of nearly a third of the *Ecole Normale* and the brightest students of the *Ecole Polytechnique*? . . . (Only one thing could hinder and destroy us: the adulteration of our primitive spirit, the pharisaism that sounds the trumpet before it, the exclusive self-esteem which belittles any power other than that of the elite, excessive customs and structure resulting in languor and relaxation or rather a verbose philanthropy more eager to talk than to act, or again bureaucracies which impede our march by multiplying our machinery. And especially to forget the humble simplicity which has presided over our coming together from the beginning, which makes us love obscurity without cultivating secrecy, and will perhaps win us our ultimate expansion. For God is especially pleased to bless what is little and imperceptible: the tree in its seedling, man in his cradle, good works in the shyness of their beginnings.)

This has turned into a very long homily, and, more, has probably made the mistake of being the repetition of a several-times written and preached sermon on the same subject. But lay the first blame on the touching story of your poor Spanish refugee,⁶ which has moved and impelled me to pay you back. Then, you have very obligingly invited me to allow you to share in every part of my thoughts and affections; and one day you will know what I owe this society which was the support and charm of the most perilous years of my youth. Finally, why has it never been said what I am well aware of: that taciturnity is not one of my faults, and that in my plethora of words I repeat myself rather than leave off? There is one of the failings for which had I asked your advice, you would have spared me the embarrassment of a confession, and perhaps, while pointing out the defects you noticed, would have

allowed me the sweet belief that they were the only ones. But no! you should not want to skim the surface only. Tell me freely, openly, the *little things*, the *puerilities*: tick them off while laughing at them, I will listen to them in the same way and know how to turn it to profit. But since you pretend to notice nothing, and permit me the trouble and merit of revealing my moral deficiencies to you, I will start now, not without a little indulgence. The noble lady before whom the penitent kneels is so powerful and he himself so fearful!

To begin with religion, you undoubtedly think me penetrated with its inspiration, consistent in applying its principles, a rigid observer of its laws, even perhaps rather severe and retaining like the university of former days I know not what musty scent of Jansenism. But, placed by circumstance in rather exceptional situations, in frequent communication with men who by office or inclination are occupied with ecclesiastical affairs, I have acquired the habit of speaking about religion more often than should be; reserve in such matters is, for other laymen, the safer way and in better taste. It is one of those aberrations which even the most excellent things fails to escape; and even our conferences of charity by bringing moral questions to our attention constantly, permit some of us to acquire habits of compromising ostentation and indiscreet zeal. On the other hand the sedentary life which, up until now, the duties of my profession and family misfortunes have forced on me, has given my character a rude timidity and maladroit clumsiness: I do not know enough of the world to understand the deference due it in order to make it honor my name of Catholic while avoiding its agreeable ways and seductive forms. Again, how little the interior is in accord with the exterior! It is certainly easier to hold an edifying conversation, to conform to certain positive precepts, to turn away from certain delights, than to be deeply filled with the spirit of the Gospel, to preserve it in the font of the spirit so as to ennoble, purify, and improve it; to reproduce it at length in one's own actions, letting it be the seal of gentleness and beneficence. It is possible for the mouth to mumble many prayers and yet not have that soaring fervor that raises up to heaven, nor the piety that abandons itself to the maternal guidance of Providence without complaint of the present or apprehension of the future. A tender love of God, an active good will toward men, a right and unbending conscience in regard to oneself, these are the elements of a truly Christian life, and you shall not be slow to learn all that is wanting to me in this three-fold regard.

Side by side with a usually lively sensibility, you will find a despairing coldness toward holy things, with mild inclinations toward impatience, general aptitudes for good imparted by education, and yet comprised of inertia and idleness, resolutions reduced to no more than wishes, and each morning's proposals dissipating each evening. And then the vanity, weak point of people like me, the constant preoccupation with self, apparently justified by the demands of advancement and fortune, but in whose shadow hides the universal root of evil, egoism. Assuredly faith, supported in my spirit by the teachings of an admirable philosophy, has made me conscious of all its help amid the dangers of my age, its comfort for its troubles, its fruitful inspirations for its tasks; and yet I see around me so many fine intelligences

ravished by doubt, so many young lives blighted in their flower by corruption. But that is not all: there is much more. Amid my literary studies not always agreeable, the imagination, too often moved by magic scenes, needs to flee romance and drama to the real happiness of the family. That pious perception of the divine presence which seemed to depart from me with my poor mother, its image here below, will revive when another guardian angel takes her place at my side. May your modesty not make you decline this mission! Is it not the mission of every wife? Has not heaven given them the most religious instincts, the most touching qualities? More sheltered from the coldness and contagion of the outside world, they more easily preserve the happy dispositions with which they were endowed, just as the lidded jar better preserves the perfumes within. And to assure their sway, an invincible attraction is part of their example and all their virtues' charm.

As for you, Mademoiselle, permit me to say: without a doubt you were aware of my respectful glances, the day when I saw you, a pale, laughing, young girl in the midst of your friends; when I listened to you, captivating at the instrument which obeys you. But the presentiments which came to me then had their effect later. That was at those two evening parties in November when I came, a questionable guest, to sit by your fireside, when you impressed me so deeply by the simplicity of your dress, even by your silence, accompanied as it was by unintentionally and unconstrainedly charming manners; your parents with you and you gazing upon them with that expression of tenderness which revealed the sweetest filial compassion, bending from time to time to your suffering brother whose grateful eyes told all he owed your solicitude; when describing to my good aunt the sad scenes of the flood you had visited shortly before, your voice, charged with emotion again, took on the accents of a sorrowing pity; and finally when I learned by chance of the preparations you had made that last time to entertain me (it was Saturday the 21st, feast of the Blessed Virgin); it was then, Mademoiselle, that all was over for me. Then the mystery of my vocation, so long in question, became clear; in one who until now had been only a young and charming stranger, I saw the guide and companion of my future years, and I came to understand those words spoken to the young Tobias in sacred scripture: "Hold back no longer: for she has been destined for you for all Eternity; she will walk in the same paths with you, and the merciful Lord will save you by means of each other And," continued the text, "from that moment Tobias loved her, and his soul felt itself drawn to her with an infinite power."

The end of this story is also the end of mine. With a bit of development, I could have drawn up a little lesson in Hebraic literature. But you have now given me permission to avoid such detours. You try to assure me very earnestly that my repetitions are not tiring to you, and that such discourses could be listened to without end. And I reply that I, less good and patient, permit myself, if not to speak, at least to write. A point is reached when the pen is powerless, when the mouth itself can no longer say everything; when there is impatience with everything except to see, to hear, to be together. To be together, in other words to let what agitates the heart overflow naturally and empty itself into the heart of another, as it were to mingle the streams of two lives and feel them run more limpid and sweet between broader

banks. In short, to arrive at that union of souls which is the marvelous work of love, to draw ever nearer each day by mutual imitation of whatever is good, to bind closer together by reciprocal devotion two wills that are now but one, to lose and find oneself in each other, and to do it so well that only God could distinguish and recognize them, but without ever separating them! Alas, we have not reached that point yet! I must leave you to return to my work. Pity me, Mademoiselle, or rather excuse the gravity and extreme seriousness of this letter which I have just reread and almost hesitate to send. It is my lot, as in my visits, to be left with regret for time badly put to profit. However, I do not want everything to be lost, and you will remain convinced one more time that you are sincerely, tenderly cherished.

Farewell! Your fiancé who loves you dearly,
A.-F. OZANAM

I will join very willingly in your prayers for Theóphile. I dreamt the other night that I saw him walking without crutches. My dreams are not all lies, for often, mademoiselle, I have dreamt of you as good, affectionate, and pretty.

My regards to your parents. M. Vincent de Gourgas,⁷ who just left and who knew that I was writing to your home, requests that his best wishes be presented to M. the Rector and that he be given the message (without further explanation) that the matter in which he is interested is going well. As soon as he gets to Reims he will have the honor of addressing a letter to Monsieur your father. I will take up my duties at the Collège Stanislas on Tuesday. I intend to write to you on Thursday if time allows. I have not forgotten my promises nor the blank pages of the little remembrance you want so much.

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited except for passage in parentheses published in the *Livre du Centenaire*, pp. 133-134.

Notes:

1. Unidentified, but probably Curnier.
2. Good Shepherd Sunday. Ozanam had already given a brief description of this feast in his April 30 letter to Lallier.
3. A reference to the official assistance given by the prefect of the Rhône on the occasion of the floods of November 1840, whose organization and distribution was confided to the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. (cf. letter 260, February 15, to Arthaud).
4. Père de Ravignan.
5. Msgr. Mazlum.
6. Allusion to a former letter from the young girl that told how she and her mother had helped this poor woman.
7. V. de Gourgas, headmaster of the Collège Royal de Reims. He held the post of acting rector of the secondary school of medicine established in this city.



311. To Mademoiselle Soulacroix
Paris, May 2, 1841

He admits to finding the locket empty of its lock of hair; he treats this matter poetically, jesting in the beginning; he remains very trusting.

Mademoiselle,

Do not be frightened at these unexpected lines. To begin with, the May feast¹ vacation has been extended, giving us an unlooked-for holiday, which I am happy to share with you. Next, there is question of asking of you a kind and urgent favor, pardon for a fault, and its prompt and easy atonement. Confession takes a little courage, but silence will be culpable, and I picture you as so indulgent and generous that I no longer hesitate.

Last evening I was getting ready for bed and, following a custom dear to me, kissed a little silver Christ, and the locket you are familiar with, hung about my neck. Then, giving in to a temptation which occurs frequently enough, I decided to open the little jewel to gaze again upon the lovely treasure it enclosed. It was unfastened; it was empty. I got up and spent nearly an hour searching everywhere for the dear ringlet; useless effort! The daylight which I counted on has been no more favorable, and I have come to realize with a lively and profound sorrow that my most precious treasure has been lost beyond repair. I do not know how to express my shame and grief: I have wanted to say nothing and to wait for fear of hurting you. But I have given way to my natural mode of acting which never allows me to dissimulate, which, when I was little, made me run to tell my foolishness to my poor mother, so as to return to grace immediately; nor can I even now bear the sight of those from whom I might have hidden a fault. But above all, I cannot resign myself to remain any longer without this cherished talisman. Four days of having to wait for a reply is already much too long; alas, will it be severe?

If chagrin should still allow some room for imagination, I would imagine myself in the attitude of my last confession: kneeling before you, head hanging, my hands in yours, your repentant knight, gracious suzeraine, would humbly confess his misdeed. And you, with pitiless memory of past sins, would assess blame for the ring lost momentarily on the day of departure, the studs lost and found, and even the adventures of the too-famous cloak; and you would ask what confidence the negligent guardian merits to whose hands nothing can be entrusted. Perhaps also would you pretend to fear some fatal presage, and threaten to withdraw your faith from someone who cannot keep its symbol. But the poor knight would reply that he once spoke to you of that Oberon, that spirit, happy to thwart innocent loves, who for so long a time harassed the young Huen de Bordeaux and his wife in the winds and on the waves and wept in order to make them pay some little price for their happiness. Your penitent would have his reasons for believing that old Lutin has not left off disturbing the joy of another. It could be possible that, attracted to persecuting me, he was the true author of so many treacheries, that he in an evil night, had suggested parsimonious thoughts in some learned professor, that, disguised as

a valet, he had put my clothing on the back of the aristocratic ravisher, that he then engaged in the fun of pilfering successively the trifling jewels whose history you know in order; in short, to desolate me today by a new trick. In consequence, and having seen the attenuating circumstances of the case, just judge, you would allow yourself a certain mildness; you would give three lashes to the shoulders of the patient sufferer with the gold chain hanging on your bosom, but to assuage his pain, another lock loosened from your forehead would tumble into the gold locket, to leave it never again.

But, I am really too upset to keep jesting any longer with good grace. I dare not ask you to cut off another ringlet of your hair in my favor. Madame your mother has shown me those she has preserved from various ages; would it not be possible to send me one of them in an envelope by the next post without waiting to write me about it? This act itself will be my pardon. Never have I given lectures at the Sorbonne without pressing your dear amulet upon my breast. What would I do on Saturday if it were missing? Strongly shaken feeling makes superstition easy. I no more want to mark a bad omen here than you yourself to see grave blame there. I do not have the foolish custom of losing things, and my little misfortunes of this year can perhaps be explained by a new distraction for which you cannot reproach me. In the present situation my fault has been to open the case too often: does not the motive excuse me? Beyond doubt some importance, a certain sentimental value, can be attached to these symbolic acts inherited from our fathers and of such sweet usage. I for one see no harm.

Who knows whether, to counteract the prerogatives vexations here below assume over our life, Providence does not send us these small but painful reverses at the moment when it wishes to prepare for us boundless consolations. No, no, you are not afraid (are you?) that my heart is as faithless as the locket that rests on it; neither do I dread losing you like those fickle ringlets! True, you are free until the hour when the solemn consent falls from your lips, and I am proud that each thought you give me is a voluntary offering and impatient of the fact as well, because to strange eyes we do not appear to belong to each other yet. But whatever be my haste to seal this blessed union, my wish is entirely without anxiety: for is it not true that I no longer have anything to be anxious about? Will not the hesitations, apprehensions, and discouragements which they tell me often come to try the soul of young girls on the eve of the fateful day befall you? Yet we are each other's in God's sight and our families'; and with how little regret you will see the moment come when we shall be so before men!

Adieu, Mademoiselle, I close this letter in haste because time presses and I am with an ever constant tenderness,

Your fiancé who loves you dearly,
A.-F. OZANAM

Note:

1. The feast day of the king (Saint Philip, May 1) was a holiday. May 1 fell on Saturday in 1841. Ozanam erred in dating his letter May 2. It was really Monday May 3, as the following letter indicates.



312. To Mademoiselle Soulacroix
May 8, 1841

He confides his worries about his health to her. Is grateful for the lock of hair sent him. He speaks of his family, of the role women have played in it, of its motto and arms.

Mademoiselle,

I seize a fleeting hour between the lecture just finished and the one whose preparation must now begin and come at the same time to excuse myself, to thank you, and to tell you how much more good you have done than you perhaps realize.

When I recounted my unhappiness to you on Monday,¹ I had no thought of an evil omen and was far from expecting anything which would justify nagging apprehensions. In the course of the same evening and as if to inflict upon myself the chastisement from which your mercy exempts you, a raging sore throat assailed me. The general weakness which accompanied it and the remedies necessary to fight it absorbed the greatest part of these past days which I had counted on sharing with you. My imagination, seizing upon the sadness of these circumstances, immediately found in them the most cogent reasons for anxiety. There was my interrupted lecture course, the incalculable delays in my affairs and consequently in the affairs of her who is dearest to me of all, in a word all the painful thoughts capable of running through an aching head in solitude and exile. Happily, the doctor, who has decided to be my companion and friend, came to visit me, consoling and helpful. She guaranteed that I would lecture today,² and against my expectation I was able to speak for an hour without too much fatigue. She now promises me that it will be gone by the end of the week, and the comfort I feel begins to shake my incredulity.

Without disparaging the efficacy of material means, sensitive as I am to the moral side of things, I indeed have the right to ascribe some of the success to those white visitors which arrived yesterday and today bearing your friendly words. They informed me that the evil genie, ravisher of the lost lock, had confined his perfidies to that, that all was not broken off between us, that in short, you would forgive and, magnanimous to the end, you would wipe out the fault in repairing it. Or rather, and to be more serious, in those melancholy moments when the least vexations are as menacing as catastrophes, when isolation seems like abandonment and absence like a final farewell, how most sweet those letters which dissipated fatal illusion and allowed the voice of hope to be heard once again, particularly when another keepsake joined these others; when at the same time one seemed to hear, he

believes, that he also saw once more. I have told you of my poor memory, powerless to retain the most cherished features. Well! these ringlets which you have been so willing to give me again, restore you to me: your image had vanished entirely with them. It is a secret as mysterious as that of the bonds of which our thoughts are intertwined! A shadow can suffice to recall a picture. So, this ringlet snipped from your head was not only *yours*, but *yourself*. From now on, while it is here, while it reposes on my breast, it is a little as if you were with me, as if I pressed your hand into my arm and my heart; I find myself no longer alone; I can believe myself, feel myself, strong. Therefore, without being superstitious, I have the right to attribute some efficacy to my favorite talisman, I have the right to be happy in having found it again before my lecture, and I can express to you without exaggeration my lively and deep gratitude.

You know that I hold at great price and take infinite pleasure in the trifles that symbolize great thoughts. I am indifferent to the cold and proud spirits accustomed to scorn symbols and to disdain the adorable childishness of sentiment. And you, on the other hand, you know so well the art of reviving the present again by words preceding and following it! I had expected some dissatisfaction, a few reproaches, sweetened in their presentation undoubtedly, but betraying at bottom a justified impatience. But you *play acted* at anger so well, with so much grace and gaiety that from the first lines I ceased to believe in your resentment, and held myself certain to obtain my request the next day. You made a fair semblance of wishing to be implored. I knew you too well, knew you to be too soft-hearted and easy to have supposed that you could long keep up an assumed role and prolong my already overlong suffering. And you ask me whether I am happy, whether I still love you? And how could I not love so affectionate a playfulness, so sweet a sensibility? How not be moved to meet thus, on the humblest occasions, and so to speak at each step of life, these charming qualities strewn like so many flowers to perfume the way? Above all, how not thrill with joy and pride while musing that so many merits and charms have been brought together by nature, and cultivated by education, only to belong so soon to me?

In return for the ringlet-precursor which precedes your own person here I send you (poor exchange) my coat of arms which you have requested. It will soon be yours and with it I will give you something worthier I have to offer you, the name it serves. Oh! be assured that it is a fine name and was my mother's and grandmother's. It is the name those good and respectable ladies bore who prayed from the beautiful Book of Hours given into your hands today. It is a name which the angels of heaven have often repeated with praise, which here below numberless children have repeated with love. The poor hold it in benediction still. If it is not richly emblazoned, if it is not crowned with the diadem of *comtesse* or *marquise*, it is united to a holy crown, hereditary in the family. It is vacant now, waiting only you: it shall be worthily worn; I seem to see it on a twenty-year-old brow more brilliant and lovely than ever. In my pride and happiness at presenting to all who belong to me, to my relatives and friends, the helpmate bestowed upon me, I will echo the

motto of those ancient knights our fathers after theirs wrote on their arms, but with more reason and delight, *God permits it*.

Farewell, Mademoiselle, in a few days, Wednesday probably, I will have the honor to write you more at length: today the hard law of work summons me nor any longer allows me the liberty of an unburdening of which I have need. I hesitated to tell you about my little discomforts: that is bad policy for me; perhaps it is a worry to you. But I reminded myself of the complete honesty you demand; besides I found in this circumstance an excuse for my delay in writing, an opportunity furthermore to merit your last letters. Nevertheless, the illness was not grave or even discomfiting; it has run its course. The doctor assures me of preventing its recurrence and sees no reason to worry about the future. I dare hope that you will not be upset and that, in the prayers you now say for your excellent brother and in which I join with all my heart, you will yet keep a place for him whom on a certain day, at the foot of the same altar, you called your betrothed, while waiting to bestow upon him a sweeter title; the title can change, but not the love.

A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Notes:

1. See the letter of May 2 where he relates the history of the lost lock of hair.
2. His Saturday course at the Sorbonne. It seems, contrariwise, that his debut at Stanislas had been delayed.



313. To Mademoiselle Soulacroix
Paris, May 13, 1841

Poetic passage on "Mademoiselle" and the name Amélie; he jests about a piece of verse he intends to compose. He has been appointed to examine a Spanish work for the minister of instruction and wonders why. He requests a list of his exterior faults. Also requests a little note so as to make purchases through Mme. Pécelet in way of wedding presents. He remarks upon his complete ineptitude at dancing.

Mademoiselle,

I experience a singular pleasure in writing that one word *Mademoiselle*. Nothing there but itself, light and graceful, hanging in the middle of the white page, it seems to smile at me and I smile back at it. Can you tell me why? Could it be especially because it conjures up an image with the general habit of pleasing? Because a young girl's presence is like an angel's: beautiful in flight, love on the move, scattering its fragrance? Because, condemned as I am to a solitary life, I am so happy and astonished to be in communion with one of these mysterious creatures made to

charm earth and to honor heaven? Is it not indeed that for me the archetype has assumed visible forms, that for me these lovely qualities are arrayed with the features of someone beloved, that in charming recollections they represent her as I saw her lately, and that the someone is you? It is a grammatical question involving a compound word, a question of recognizing which beguiles me the more: the noun or the possessive which precedes it? I hold for the latter.

Maid that you are, you could, seeing that I delight in writing *Mademoiselle*, insist upon my prolonging this delight for some time. But I hasten to declare that the first syllable holds all my predilection and that it would lose nothing in being followed immediately by two shorter ones. God knows the wise lesson I would be honored to give you on the title of *Madame*, its etymology and synonyms, its origin and worth, did I not fear to push pedantry too far. There is another name also most dear to me, as you know, whose sound is sweet repetition on my lips and which respect even now forbids me to address you with as do your father and brothers, it is the name *Amélie!* . . . See how proud and happy my pen is to have found reason to write it! And how, besides, it so truly flatters the eye, falls harmoniously on the ear, has so charming a cadence. I am most pleased, furthermore, that it is blessed in not being one of those Romanesque names with which the fad of the moment has baptized so many women. It belongs to a genuine saint. Rather aristocratic, too, and suggestive of the middle ages and strange letters, and indeed fittingly, for it belonged to a queen of Hungary. Admit, nevertheless, that rather than allowing it to be profaned by the sacrilegious barking of your Diane, you prefer to see it set down respectfully in these lines. It shines forth here, it is inscribed with honor, as on the locket I wear. But nowhere is it more deeply etched, more surrounded with the homage of worship as affectionate as it is faithful, than at the bottom of my heart.

This preface was necessary to clarify a controversy of major proportions touching which I need to sue in the court of love before you. The aforesaid court has condemned me for certain misdeeds and crimes to make honorable amend, penance, and satisfaction, of which I should acquit myself to you, since I am suspect of more or less legitimate relations with the demon of poetry, point where my judges (I beg their pardon) are strangely mistaken! But it is a well-known law of the *Gai-savoir* which forbids troubadours, *trouvères*, minstrels or any other belonging to the field of song, to insert in their sonnets, *sirventes*, ballads, lays, virelays, triolets, rondos, chansons and *tencons*, the name of the chatelaine lady or demoiselle who haunts their thoughts. And on the other hand the devil, who meddles a bit in our affairs, having wished the execution of my aforesaid penance, does it not make it impossible for me not to appeal several times over to the charming ringlet which in its turn points to the poem requested contrary to the laws, usages, and prescriptions above? All that being taken into consideration, you are sued to declare and pronounce sentence without appeal upon the prejudicial difficulty, while the culprit protests his sincere intention of submitting to his sentence. He will go much further, for the fervor of his penitence is so excessive that he is ready to become your prisoner if it please you to be his jailor, and hopes soon to wear for his whole life the chains you will impose on him!

How ashamed I am to bring up once again that piece so long promised! The fact is that I write verse rarely, slowly, and with difficulty: some time ago I had made a beginning when I was taken with the deplorable illness which had lasted two weeks and whose inopportuneness had plunged me into an anxiety and sadness difficult to describe. I would have taken less notice of it at another time; it was trifling, incapable of interrupting my regular work; the doctor made fun of my apprehension for the future. But remember that the sore throat prevented all conversation, the aching made my mind stupid and work unproductive; add to this my anxiety, and I became incapable of anything worthwhile. Now that has all passed, for I am much better since last evening and today conducted my first class in rhetoric at Stanislas almost without fatigue.¹ I certainly do not want to deny either the slightness of the illness or the efficacy of the medicine, but yesterday morning I felt sicker than the night before, and this worried me; I remembered it was the last day of your pilgrimage, that at the very hour you were undoubtedly praying for Théophile. I prayed with you. I, too, counted on a place in those vows you made at the sanctuary of Fourvières; I had asked you for it. Before the end of the day there was a considerable change which continues and grows better, and perhaps by tomorrow evening all trace will be gone. See how all-powerful prayer is and how I have reason to believe that yours hang over me like a protective shadow. May this improvement be the presage of better health and our poor invalid soon continue to improve rapidly on the way to a cure begun when all his hopes were low! Be so kind as to tell me about him and tell him that I would have written to him if I were not overwhelmed at present both by work very far behind for my having put it off too long and by new duties awaiting me.

I count among these latter an unforeseen task sent me by the minister of public instruction without my knowing the reason. The other day there arrived through the offices of a dragoon a packet resealed with the official stamp and containing a course in the *Spanish Language* which M. the minister *begged* me to examine to know whether the work merited the approbation of the university. My standing in the Faculty of Letters does not justify a mission of this kind and my colleagues are little accustomed to assume gratuitously this kind of unpaid work. Besides, a committee exists for this kind of thing whose members are remunerated and among whose membership there was question of admitting me. Could it be that this question has come up again? Is it a test, a trap, an exploitation, a civility? Whatever it is, one must extricate himself honorably, read the book in its entirety and draw up a report.² The task was begun as soon as received, but it cannot fail nevertheless to rob me of several hours. Not enough remains from this touching tale to buy myself a needed article of clothing, but in return the *Religieuse allemande*³ has largely sufficed to pay for the coat which has the further bad luck of not pleasing you. Excuse the pettiness of these details. But they should remind you of a promise made and still unfulfilled, to send me the list of my external faults; if you delay any longer I will end up by frightening myself with the probable length of a list most difficult to finish.

Now that speech is restored to me, and commerce with humans at the same

time, I am going to assume steps abandoned for some days. I have already gotten the necessary legal information concerning the publishing of the banns. No proxy or document is needed here. All papers must be filed with the legal authorities of the place where the marriage is celebrated, that is, at Lyon: a receipt will be given which M. your father should send me right away and which will serve for the publishing here at the same time as there. I must then from this end send my birth certificate to M. your father and will do so as soon as the sworn-translator⁴ appointed to make the copy has sent it to me, which will be, I hope, early next week. In return, Mme. your mother must be kind enough to send me a little note, as arranged between us, to guide me and the good Mme. Pécelet in a choice I am happy to make since it has to do with you, but in which I would succeed very badly unless assisted by some instructions. I ask that they be many, not to do violence to your discretion and delicacy but in order to give me personally an easier option and knowledgeable choice. Rest easy, our good grandmother university affords her children too modest a situation for the temptations Parisian luxury exercises over some. I can never do everything I would like and what I would like does not merit backing, for it is pure egotism, and I admit to you that under our apparent seriousness, we are not insensible to the prestige of finery and elegance. If you cannot look without pleasure on the chiseled frame, the gilded cornice, the blooming roses which frame your precious portrait, I too know a beautiful brow that I would like to deck with diamonds less limpid than itself, hair that I would like to see escaping its fillets beneath the floating shadow of lace, hands that I would hold charming prisoners set with gold and gems, and finally, a whole figure whose simple and modest attitudes would lend nobility to the richest draperies and grace to the most gleaming tissues. Happily you have no need of them, no need of anything to be pleasing, much less to be loved, but love itself does need to attempt the realization of what it dreams about.

You are so good as to summon me to a family council about a serious question, the matter of the fetes and celebrations to be given in honor of the great and memorable event. I have been so graciously accustomed to freedom and ease at the family fireside that I shall not hesitate to give my opinion. To the number of exterior imperfections you could add the complete ineptitude of the individual concerned for dance steps, nor are they themselves subject to improvement. Time is lacking as much as the ability, and despite my wish to show my gratitude for the agreeable surprise that your Italian lessons have been looked after, I cannot oblige you by returning a passable dancer. But, as you know, since eyes are invariably drawn to the heroes of the occasion, if dancing must inaugurate things, I am equally ridiculous whether I dance badly or not at all. My humility is not equal to resigning itself to ridicule on such a solemn occasion nor would you yourself wish it. Besides, however proper the protocol, however modest the celebration, my older brother would be rather out of place, my younger brother could take no part (he is no cleverer than I) and among my family of the Haraneder, Jaillard, and Coste lines I can think of no one who could indulge in this pleasure. There, I admit a calamity, but it cannot be helped; it could in no way be considered. Even the kind of party must be aban-

done where, without dancing being planned, improvisation is necessary in order to entertain and satisfy certain guests such as I witnessed at the wedding of one of my friends who had, with bad enough grace, to open an impromptu ball with his wife. This being said, I abandon myself entirely to the wisdom and delicacy of the first speakers and while, excluding out of its absolute impossibility for me the idea of a dance-soirée or what could become such, I leave the rest to votes more competent than mine. Anything that would heighten and consecrate a day destined to hold so great a place in our life merits my sincere and profound gratitude.

Midnight strikes and the hour past my bedtime set in obedience to you has come swiftly in the middle of the engaging distraction of this letter. It marks a new date, one of those we are committed to observe. It is May 14. One month more and I shall go to accomplish the great things awaiting me. Well! (Shall I say it?) Amid the impatience which swells within me, it strikes me that time, whose slowness I accuse incessantly, is going to prove too short for my preparations. I am not referring to the official preparations, easy to push if one wishes. Rather to a more important preparation, one carried out in the soul's interior, one I owe you. Surrounded as you are, you have only to look to know, and if needed, the advice of your admirable mother there by your side introduces you to the obligations, problems, and consolations of your new destiny. But I, long now alone in the world, condemned in advance by my studies to this fatal neglect, deprived of domestic models and traditions, I have not as so many others do a father's admonitions to instruct me in my duties; I have no paternal mouth from which to learn the conditions of my happiness: nor was it my lot to live with sisters nor with relations whose conversation would have apprised me of the discretion, consideration, and exigencies which a more balanced organization and livelier sensibility demand. I know nothing about the imposing functions of the head of a family, nothing of what it must cost honor to protect a young wife. I shall offer you a loyal arm but one which is neither supple nor very strong; a heart accessible to the sweetest sentiments but also to the most exaggerated disquietudes; an imagination whose heat must be maintained since it gives life to my speech and my pen, and yet whose digression I must constantly war against; solid principles, but a will often weak; work habits nonetheless bare of order and activity: in short, a fortune obscure and shaky at present and uncertain of the future.

Six months ago I would not have dissimulated, but I would not have dared say so much. Today, I trust, illusions are useless; they would be dangerous. Your intelligence and perception assure me that, however you have known me and however you will know me, you have wanted me. You have not despaired of my becoming better; you have believed in me because of the honorable friendships with which I am surrounded, because of my parents' memory, because of the Providence which has preserved me in their teaching and traditions. Oh well! your faith will support mine, and I will begin to realize that I must be good if I am dear to someone other than myself. And when doubts about my career, my conscience, my role as a man and a Christian, recur, I shall reassure myself by considering that if God could allow me to blind myself and perish alone, He could not permit a young girl all full of

innocence and purity, righteousness and tenderness, to be deluded and to come to her own perdition by falling into my hands. When in the first days of the world He allowed the partition of things here below, he abandoned to Cain the culture of this accursed earth covered with brambles and thorns. But the cherished flocks, the sweet sheep and the little lambs, He confided them to the care of the young Abel whom He loved. No, I can believe no longer, once He gives you to me, I can believe no longer that He does not love me!

Farewell, Mademoiselle; still some letters to write in this style that another style will supplant . . . or rather there will be little room for replacement, for there will be little correspondence, the sad necessity of writing will disappear forever. If I believe an interior voice which speaks no falsehood, once united, we will no longer be able to leave each other easily. And since the Italian sojourn is necessary for my studies, we must join forces to bring it to pass immediately. Later I would never make the decision to go alone. Do you not see that even now I cannot make up my mind to finish? Nevertheless I must and I yield with regret. Farewell once again, and if I have not replied at greater length to the charming insinuations of your next-to-last letter, be assured that I have nonetheless been moved. . . . Your poor fiancé is too happy, and you are the reason; but also will he repay you with a tenderer affection, and without fear of repeating himself he wishes to declare himself again:

Your fiancé who loves you dearly,
A.-F. OZANAM

I am greatly touched at some lines¹ Mme. your mother addresses to me and I will have the honor to respond to them next time. But I absolutely insist upon the little note of which we have spoken. If it is not meant for me, it could be written to Mme. Pécelet. Capable of offering but very little, I would at least like to have the satisfaction of a choice well made. The color of the drapes, the place for the laces, and the kind of trinkets—in a word, general indications—and I, in my turn, will write to Mme. your mother what I have done.

I have just received your charming little letter with the instructions enclosed, which, in what concerns the tobacco, have already been accepted, and in regard to the rest will have their scrupulous execution. Do not ask: I am almost cured; be kind enough to tell my older brother, who thinks me still sick. I always made the mistake of raising an uproar over nothing, and I hope to spare you, thanks be to God, for other duties than those of a Sister of Charity.

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Notes:

1. The start of his teaching at Stanislas, expected on Tuesday, May 4, had been delayed until this date.
2. She replied: "My father sees a good augury in your being asked for the Spanish." This gratuitous service requested by Villemain could have been related to an eventual nomination of Ozanam

to the Chair of the Literature of the Midi at the Collège de France. This nomination was possible until Quinet got the appointment.

3. He was about to publish in the *Nouveau Correspondant*, tome IV, 1841, pp. 121-171, "A monastic drama in tenth century Germany, 'Gallicanus,' comedy derived from the Theatre of Hrosvita, German religious of the Benedictine Abbey of Gandersheim."
4. The sworn-translation was necessary, since the birth certificate of Ozanam, who was born in Milan, was in Italian.



314. To Charles Ozanam
Paris, May 19, 1841

He makes excuses for not being able to write more often. Concerns himself with his scholastic progress and consequent satisfaction. Advises him not to forego the friendly excursions proposed to him. Shows him how to act at his induction into the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Expresses his admiration for their older brother, Abbé Ozanam. Gives news of his health and work (Stanislas). In the postscript asks for a favor.

My dear friend,

It is said that you accuse my silence and envy the long pages I address to others. But others write to me, and without wishing to wound etiquette, it seems to me nevertheless that the older should not take the first step. True, your duties are numerous; mine overwhelm me, and the time I take from my nights, while undermining my health, hardly fulfills the most demanding needs of my duty. Aside from this excuse, it is a long time since you have heard from me directly: until now you have had to share those received at the academy¹ or the Carthusians.²

First, my congratulations on your good marks, and still more on the work of which they are the result. You see that your extreme apprehensions were not realized—they were due to your characteristic modesty—M. Demogeot's³ goodness will avail to make easy these last months of rhetoric, so formidable when seen from a distance. No longer is it necessary to stir up your zeal; I think intelligence and taste are developing also: you are at one of those times of life when the faculties grow by leaps and bounds; they can feel themselves growing and swelling. God, who performs this work in us, must be tenderly thanked and asked for the grace to use His benefits in a holy manner.

You must be conscious of the eagerness with which so many people crowd around you. It would seem that you cannot satisfy their invitations. These social relationships are not useless. They help form your manners and strip away the wildness and rudeness often characteristic of young people your age. But meanwhile you will form solid Christian and comforting friendships. You will feel the heart struggling to swell itself, the old affections melting at contact with the new, and no longer can it be said as formerly: *the three of us, always the three of us, none but the three of us.*

Beyond a doubt the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is preparing for you those

delights of holy brotherhood I have always found numerous and sweet. It seems to me, I do not know why, that I am completely happy and eager to see you join it. It is another bond between us; it brings us together by putting you, so to speak, more within my reach; it is a subject on which we will always be able to understand each other. However, your extreme youth needs certain cautions: I am strongly of the opinion, for example, that you should not be sent to visit poor families alone. Greater demands than that of the military service⁴ should not be made on you or on your needed rest. These reservations being made, you should bring a joyful dedication to the works placed under the patronage of so good a saint and which have received such unbelievable blessings from Providence. It is eight years since the first conference was formed at Paris: we were *eight* men. Today our ranks count more than two thousand youths. We penetrate every school, every class of society, every village of any importance. Three new divisions are forming at Besançon, Amiens, and Douai: it will soon be impossible to set foot anywhere in France without meeting a kindred welcome. Be good enough to remember me to those gentlemen you see, especially Matheron,⁵ your worthy president.

You could not imagine how I have wished to change places with you for a while these past days and to visit for some hours with Alphonse, whom I see in my mind's eye motionless and captive with that stubborn disease of the knee. But in return heaven has given him a serenity of soul in comparison to which all external misfortunes are but as light shadows. In choosing God's service he has chosen the best part. Further, despite his troubles, is he not still the guide and consoler of others? He is especially mine at this time which is not without trouble and vexation for me.

My sore throat, after having quickly abated last week, has recurred to a worse degree the last three or four days. My affairs of every kind are suffering because of it, and I am far from having the patience necessary to bear misfortunes come at such an inappropriate time. In the meantime I have had to begin my tenure at Stanislas⁶ and have proved that rhetoric is not an easy subject: between professor and students, the one most burdened is not always the one you think.

Farewell, my dear brother; since you are going to my Aunt's, take her my respects and be sure to ask Uncle, if he has not done so, to answer the letter I wrote him yesterday as soon as possible. A thousand compliments to Marie.⁷ We will meet again within the month.

While waiting, pray for your brother,

A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Notes:

1. At Rector Soulacroix's.
2. At their brother's, the Abbé Alphonse Ozanam.
3. Demogeot, professor of rhetoric at the Collège Royal de Lyon and substitute in the Faculty of Letters. He later collaborated in *l'Histoire Universelle* compiled by Victor Duruy (cf. I, p. 436, n. 1).
4. An auxiliary work of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul which had its origin with the conferences of Lyon.
5. Misprint for Mathenon.

6. May 13.
7. Their former housekeeper.



315. To Mademoiselle Soulacroix
Paris, May 19, 1841

He reproaches himself with egotism for following the path of his duties without troubling himself enough about those of others. Reply to teasing from their friends (Bailly, l'abbé Noirot, Mme. Pécelet). To meet Mme. Vincent at last.

Mademoiselle,

I wrote the date on this letter last evening: an urgent duty made the pen fall from my hand and here I am on Thursday morning, very happy with your good letter, which I have just received, and very much hindered from answering it as I would like. Today the post leaves early, just as on Sunday, and yet I wish to thank, too, Madame your mother for having been so obliging as to send the note requested. Our dear interview must then be shortened, save to renew it as soon as possible.

First, you must have the avowal of a twofold remorse. One is for having upset the charming order you have established: that of writing on a fixed day, the same day, and of lending the attractiveness of a rendezvous to the correspondence. The wish to give and receive more frequent news has made me fail to adhere to the agreed arrangement, and I have perhaps seemed not to appreciate the delicate pleasure of reuniting ourselves at least in thought, of consecrating ourselves to each other at the chosen moment, and of being truly together despite difficulties and distance. The second reproach is that too often I abandon myself to the flow of my thoughts and come to the end of my time and paper without leisure to respond to so many good, charming, and interesting things you have told me. This habit of preoccupying oneself exclusively with one's own caprices, of following one's inspiration without troubling oneself with that of others, does it not conceal some egotism? From that arise my fears of a failure I have not needed to confess to you: he talks enough about himself; I wish to accuse him of talking too much. But on this point amendment will be easy. Of the numerous joys I have known since a certain time, one which most moves me is to listen to the accents of a sweet voice. You would scarcely believe how much those harmonies ravish my ear, in which I feel throbbing all that soul to which I will soon belong, all that life that will be mine. You have no idea what I would pay for the happiness of hearing a word from you, even were I too far away to distinguish the sense. Beyond a doubt the instrument which obeys you so well moves beneath your fingers with the liveliest admiration. Yet many times I have prayed for it to be silent for a little while so as to hear you in turn. If then you make me wish to silence your pretty piano, how much more reason to relieve you of the intemperance of my speech?

Thanks, noble and gracious sovereign, for the laws and ordinances you have deigned to make your friend, vassal, and subject. He has received them with all the respect due royal words and is permitted to jest at them only insofar as absolute obedience to you allows. He has noted with satisfaction in the preface that the literature lessons of M. Reynaud were not lost, and he has conceived from that the same hope for his own. Yet you will allow him to revolt against the Machiavellian maxim of M. Noiroi, inappropriately invoked by your Highness, by the way, as if she did not know that he belongs to the profession of people who do not engage in making fun of others. Now or ever, revolt is the most sacred of duties. I rise up then to protest that the empire which has fallen to you will have no end except at your good pleasure; I pride myself in not creating ephemeral institutions, and the day when I shall install you as Queen of my hearth will long last. More to the point, you are already aware of how your commands are anticipated. Your intervention is nonetheless still necessary to render the execution possible. For example, M. Bailly being well paid to watch me eat, but not to carve his own boiled beef. I am deprived of serving my apprenticeship as carving squire at his table, and this experiment is put off until the solemn day when, hanging the hook from the domestic mantelpiece I enter into the possession of my functions as family head. Again, a silk cravat, several times resumed since your judicious observations about collars, has never succeeded in being worn with any elegance. It must await the succor of the beautiful hand which some time ago tied such a pretty rosette of blue ribbon on my favorite carrying-case. For the rest, some courses with Madame Pécelet will acquaint me with the art of walking two by two; and as for *pointed* dancing slippers, they have not given me too many bad turns so as not to dispose me to sacrifice them with good grace upon the altar of marriage.

Théophile's progress must be a great consolation to all of you: I share it with all my heart, and if the blessings from on high only continue to fall upon him I do not despair of his being able to play his full role in the great solemnity which approaches. I myself would be very upset if we could not have at our side in church this excellent brother whose courageous and serene virtue has sweetened your bitterest days, and whose hoped-for presence would add even greater wonder to this day of happiness. From my side, I think you will be pleased to learn that I have had the honor of seeing Madame Vincent. *Honor* is the word. For after having written her to inquire the hour when it was most convenient for her to receive me, I was awaiting her reply when she took the trouble to stop here! And as I stumbled all over myself in excuses and admitted the fear of your chiding me, she replied that the multiplicity of her errands did not give her a moment at home and my going there would have been in vain. Nevertheless I intend to call constantly. I am overjoyed at the opportunity to chat about you with someone who is so tenderly attached to you.

Mon Dieu, how time flies! Already I must leave you. But is it leaving you to turn to Madame your mother?

Your fiancé who loves you dearly,
A.-F. OZANAM

Why have you not scolded me a little about my opposition to the proposal of dancing? It is still the same, and the reasons seem to me ever more decisive. But since there must be something on the other side, it would be better to say so. Such frankness would assure me that mine had been pardoned.

It seems to me that I have given you too brief a goodby . . . even though I have been interrupted here. It will be too late for the letter to Madame your mother to be finished in time. I am going to send this one; the other will follow close on it. A twofold hurry must excuse the double postage.

Many thanks for your little flower. Health to the good bearer. We are not so intelligent as to know enough to continue stripping the petals from the daisy, and the reply of this vegetable oracle has delivered us a most sad, modest, but sweet word which we delight in seizing upon as the true word of the puzzle. Why is it that this day of all days I haven't the tiniest bouquet at my convenience?

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.



316. To Madame Soulacroix
Paris, May 20, 1841

Mme. Pécelet is occupied with the wedding presents which regrettably can only be modest. Request for prayers required for the banns of marriage. News of a flu relapse which is not serious. Steps taken by Soulacroix with Mignet on the subject of the Collège de France.

Madame,

It is a very long time since I determined to write you. It is only proper to court your maternal power and make it the accomplice of my assault on a heart whose keys are still yours. It is in response to the sweet name of son with which you already address me and to bear witness to my gratitude by the sincerity of my confidences. Several circumstances have joined to refuse me until now the leisure to dash off these hasty lines destined for your eyes. But today the thanks I owe you for the note which came this morning could wait no longer.

You will forgive me, Madame, for having offended your delicacy by my importunities. But the good Mme. Pécelet, who is very eager to assist in the great business of the wedding presents, has agreed to cancel the first instruction. Now her more enlightened zeal can be exercised without any trouble, and we have already held a preliminary conference and put our heads together. Mme. Pécelet somewhat suspects my cashmere merchant of smuggling, and since the tariff on this article greatly increases its price, she is of the opinion that perhaps it would be better to select a

French cashmere of the best quality and the fullest measure. In any case I insist that that first be verified, so we will pay our Jew a visit. In what concerns the rest, I can from now on surrender myself entirely to the taste and judgment of your respectable friend. Except, that I would greatly enjoy accompanying her. And, singular as it may seem to see a pretended philosopher play with a tailor's dummy, it would be very charming indeed for me to busy myself with something which could bring a satisfied smile to lips so dear. It will no longer be without regret for me to find myself limited by the paucity of my resources, far removed from the horizons my eagerness would reach out for. This good desire, I have said already, is fruitless. I already experienced the husband's ambition of seeing young charms destined to shed so much joy upon my life set off with all the external splendor that art can still furnish them. Love would like to adorn without limit this vision of which it is the *reflection* according to its exalted destiny. It is understood that certain lacunae will remain which Mademoiselle Amélie's taste will have to fill: a sum has been put aside for this purpose.

Apropos of these lines, I must ask you, Madame, to be my mediatrix and advocate in regard to other lines long promised and still unwritten, which, except for extenuating circumstances, would constitute a crime of negligence of the first order. The truth is that I have had a severe attack of the flu, an illness hardly dangerous usually, but which is epidemic in Paris at present. The sore throat and its consequences lasted three weeks. The bad weather and some absolutely necessary lectures brought on a slight relapse since the day before yesterday, but it seems to be over. All my affairs have suffered somewhat because of it. The course, without being interrupted, has languished for some lessons, which has resulted in a relaxation among the auditors; the benches have been emptied to a great degree, decimated also by the weather; and there are scarcely 150 to 200 people left. Consequently, I had to redouble the work and fervor to rekindle the interest of the sessions, and I have not done it without fatigue. Obligated to save my voice for the most urgent occasions, I have had to forbid myself even useful conversations. That is why I have not been able to see either M. Mignet or M. Dupont, or even for a while M. the Minister: conversation tires me even more than lecturing. That explains also why I have dragged my heels so miserably. I have finally procured my birth certificate, and as soon as it has been stamped by the minister of foreign affairs,¹ that is, I think, the day after tomorrow, I will send it on to M. the Rector. He must be good enough to take the assembled papers to the city hall and have them give him a receipt which should then be sent to me as soon as possible so that the first banns can be announced here starting a week from Sunday (since the civil state requires two and I must then get the certificate back so as to be able to proceed with the marriage at Lyon). Finally, concerning the publication in the church, I need names and Christian names of M. the Rector, of yourself, Madame, and of Mademoiselle Amélie to be posted in the sacristy of my parish along with mine and my parents'.

Like all spoiled children, I am too happy to complain, especially to an excellent mother; nor in any case would I want to upset you. This passing illness, annoying because of its inopportuneness, gives no further reason for alarm. It is the tempera-

ture, the climate to which at the moment the greater number of Parisians are exposed. No strong medicine, no troublesome attentions, no impossibility of working. Only a little weariness all over, enough to excuse my delays and unreliability to Mademoiselle Amélie. Nothing more nor less to explain the bizarre kind of letter enclosed. Begun last evening, taken up today to go with this one, interrupted by a visit which obliged me to lay it aside, finally finished at post time, it should have gone by itself. Rereading it I found it so strange and so little presentable that I would have done it over if leisure were not lacking. At least have I wished in the circumstances to present it under your patronage and accompanied with the apologies and justification it needs. In hands so benevolent my cause can run no danger.

Why does this jealous slavery to my affairs constrain me in such a way as not to allow me to write to Théophile in order to tell him of the share I take in his slow progress, but my certainty of his recovering? And to M. the Rector likewise, to thank him for his letter to M. Mignet in the matter of the Collège de France?² Be so kind, Madame, as to serve as go-between and tell him how much I long to greet him with the name of father. I know through my younger brother also how these sweet family relationships already precede by means of amiable preludes their approaching reality. Your kindnesses to that young man are a further claim on my deepest gratitude.

I have the honor to be with filial respect, Madame,
your most humble and devoted servant,

A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Necessary formality because of his birth in Milan.
2. Approach of the Rector Soulacroix to M. Mignet. The rector sought to solicit for Ozanam the Chair of Literature of the Midi, in case Fauriel's substitute should retire (the approach was anterior to the official nomination of Quinet).



317. To Joseph Arthaud
Paris, May 20, 1841

Gives news of his health and consults Arthaud about treating his sore throat. Gives Arthaud advice for someone who asked him in behalf of a friend about to take a trip to Belgium and the Rhine region.

My dear friend,

I am very ashamed at replying with just a few lines written in haste to the good letter I received from you the day before yesterday. My excessive duties must be my excuse. In demanding excessive effort on my part, they have wearied and overheated me to the point where they have actually made me ill. A deceptive feeling of strength carried me away this winter into works beyond the call of duty. For a long time no result was noticeable, and I began to think of myself as immune until the onset of this raging sore throat which has lasted three weeks. After having quickly abated some days ago, it has suddenly and all at once recurred in strength; so your encouragement and advice could not have come at a better time. I have taken Seidlitz water today, and next week, if the sickness continues, I am thinking of applying a blister. You understand how frustrated I must be surrounded with vexations like these at a time meant for other cares. Nay more, never will I be able to make up my mind to go to Lyon to celebrate the great act which must not take place unless I feel myself nearly recovered. Despite my earlier plans, I should leave on June 15. It is then not without reason that I am suffering at present and anxious about the future; and to assure myself of some energy I greatly need good inspirations from heaven and the encouragement of friendship.

At least my gratitude ought to be expressed by giving you in some decent way the information that M. Terret¹ wishes. But a simple listing is entirely insufficient, and details would never end. M. Terret should buy a *Guides du voyageur dans les Pays-Bas, en Allemagne et sur les Bords du Rhine*.² Booklets like these are well done and cost little, especially those by Richard. As for me, I am limited to indicating places I have been and remember. Brussels; Louvain: Catholic University; Liège: a town manufactory; Aix-la-Chapelle: church and tomb of Charlemagne; Cologne: a dozen churches noteworthy at least for their architecture, the famous cathedral, priceless paintings; Bonn: university; Coblenz and the banks of the Rhine, which must be seen by steamboat; Mainz: cathedral, fortifications, museum, etc. . . . Frankfurt-am-Main: chief town of the Diet, the church where the emperors were crowned, the hall where they were proclaimed, etc. . . . Carlsruh; Strasbourg.³

But I travelled through these countries as the bird flies and in fifteen days. How speak about them with any depth?

La Perrière is here, and I have already seen a great deal of him. This morning he had a three-hour conversation with M. Bailly.⁴ The business of the Society has been conducted vigorously and successfully here for the past two months. And much of what you wish has already been foreseen. Three new conferences have been established at Amiens, Douai, and Besançon. I am most sincerely grateful to you for admitting my young brother. He is very good, but his age requires directions which will make him a moderately useful member.

If some means of making me better comes to you, be kind enough to write to me. The larynx is less affected than the pharynx, but the latter has a particularly sore spot which goes quite deep on the left side. Headaches and perhaps some fever accompany the pain which, moreover, is more intense when I swallow. Speech greatly fatigues me.

Farewell! Why am I condemned to interest my friends only in my miseries? Pray for me.

Your devoted friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

My regards to all at your house, please.

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Arthaud, Doctor of Medicine, rue des Capucines 3, Lyon.

Postmark: May 2, 1841.

Notes:

1. André Terret (1794-1859), notable of Lyon, silk manufacturer, then director of Loire and Ardèche forges, was one of the founders of the *Gazette de Lyon* and especially of the Propagation of the Faith, of which he was vice-president of the Council of Lyon from 1822 and president from 1854 until his death.
2. The complete reference is Boyce and Richard, *Guides du voyageur* (the two volumes concerned with Belgium and the banks of the Rhine are called booklets). The series was revised to form the Joanne guidebooks. *Le Manuel du voyageur en Belgique* is found in the Archives Laporte. N.B. Richard being a pseudonym, these guidebooks are classified at the Bibliothèque Nationale under the real name of the author: Audin, Jean Marie.
3. Itinerary of his trip of October 1840.



318. To Joseph Arthaud
Paris, May 27, 1841

Uneasy at the proposal for reform of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul which La Perrière is about to submit to the General Council (Paris) in the name of the Council of Lyon, he asks Arthaud whether La Perrière expresses the point of view of the Council of Lyon with exactitude. He gives news of his health.

Dear friend,

Allow me a delicate communication, indiscreet perhaps, certainly hasty, but which the interests of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul render extremely urgent.

De La Perrière came to let me see the memorandum he is planning to present to the General Council as expressing the wishes of the Council of Lyon.¹ I have just finished reading it. I find several proposals perfectly wise. I recognize others I have often heard developed in our friendly meetings. But there are new ones and so rash that they astound me. And, since according to La Perrière himself, the memorandum does not appear to be entirely your work, I would like to know what part you had in the editing, and what ideas on the contrary are the editor's.

1. Does the Council of Lyon truly lean toward becoming a consultant general council and centralizing all the correspondence of the conferences of the south

when several other cities, Toulouse, for example, have Societies equally as flourishing and a great deal more numerous? Do you not understand besides, the dangers and delays of an administration partitioned between two authorities and two headquarters?²

2. Do you really propose that the election of the president general take place at Lyon, when Paris all by itself possesses half of the total number of conferences, all of whose presidents or delegates would have to travel, to the advantage of a single provincial Society?

3. Do you also wish to have, and be the only one so to have, a representative in the ordinary General Council?

4. What do you intend by a *chargé d'affaires* of the Society assigned to the Holy See and one from the Holy See assigned to the Society?³

On all of these points I do not permit myself to express an opinion, but La Perrière wants the General Council to do so, and he wants it done soon. I will try to have it wait until Wednesday.

Try to reply to me by courier to courier from both ends, as to whether these are indeed your wishes, and whether the memorandum is a faithful expression of them, both basically and in format. Without such a guarantee we could find ourselves in the greatest embarrassment. It could besides harm our friend who, left to himself to formulate your wishes, could easily have allowed himself to insert his own proposals.

There are otherwise excellent things in the work, expressed well and dictated by the primitive spirit of the Society. I will support them with all the energy of personal conviction if, however, my health permits me to speak on the day of discussion.

Alphonse⁴ will have told you of my relapse, suffering, and anxiety. I am really suffering a great deal, and the fever has not abated for eight days. At present, however, I feel better, and treatment scrupulously followed will end by curing me. In the meantime my course and work are suspended, and isolation and silence are recommended. I trust that, having tried me, Providence will grant me better days. Who knows whether the coming joys reserved for me must be bought at this price?

Give me news of yourself and yours. Will you be good enough to send to the house, so that it can be taken promptly to my brother, the enclosed note, a postscript to a letter which left this morning. Pardon so many liberties, but your goodness authorizes them. I take, then, that of embracing you fraternally.

Your friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: belongs to M. Louis Arthaud, Lyon. Unedited.

Notes:

1. This is a follow-up to the May 20th letter to Arthaud. La Perrière was in Paris in connection with changes in the organization of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (cf. Albert Faucault, *op. cit.* pp. 61-64).

2. La Perrière's proposal consisted in patterning the organization of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul on the two-headed organization (Lyon-Paris) of the work of the Propagation of the Faith.
3. The ultramontane tendency of the Lyon works as opposed to the more Gallican tendency of the Paris works.
4. Abbé Ozanam.



326. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, June 9, 1841

News of his health. The Gibraltar affair. Probable disappearance of the work of "Catholicism in Europe." Matter of a public appeal in l'Univers. Subscription to the paper by Protestant missions. Difficulty of getting releases of the Propagation of the Faith into the press.

My dear friend,

I acknowledge reception of the remembrance and both your letters. The stubborn sore throat which will not go away does not permit me to earn your thanks and praise. The editors of *l'Univers* have spontaneously caught fire over the Gibraltar affair and continue to make it their fervent business.¹ They are sure to be reprinted by several English papers.

Your comments about the need of preserving the unity of the work seem perfectly right to me, and agree with my most cherished wishes. You will not learn without some satisfaction that the work of "Catholicism in Europe" shows signs of dissolving. As for the appeal in behalf of Msgr.,² I had not noticed it, and unfortunately a new article on the subject has just appeared in today's issue.³ You can count on my objections. In the meanwhile, do not exaggerate the importance of this bothersome business. In the first place, it is concerned only with a particular work, that of the prisoners, and not the assistance of the whole mission. In the second place, the appeal can only be momentary, for even if it should be indicated otherwise, there could not be much of an extension, and *l'Univers* is not usually happy with that kind of uncertainty. I would insist that what is done not be repeated. In the meanwhile, consider it insignificant and negligible. Some lines from Msgr. Dupuch to M. Bailly, whose close friend he is, would in any case resolve any difficulties.⁴

I will take a subscription to the Protestant missions magazine for you.⁵ Be sure that I am much humiliated by the inaction this stubborn illness forces on me. Even so, in regard to the kinds of outside publicity which the work would use, it would be difficult for me to assist it without certain preliminary arrangements of a sufficiently delicate nature and which should perhaps be discussed *viva voce*. It seems that it would not be easy to get political magazines to contract to carry all and any news. Each article would be the object of a little negotiation of its own, not without trou-

ble and money. Therefore it would be necessary (1) to have someone edit the notes or articles in the form demanded by the magazine whose columns are wanted; (2) to find someone reliable, friendly with the editors-in-chief of the principal publications and who will assume the task of obtaining the desired space from them, able to advance money to that end, of which they will afterward render an account and be reimbursed regularly. The Protestants do not fail to do things this way, which is why they fill the whole Parisian press with the words and deeds of their so-called missionary, M. Gutschlaf.⁶

Farewell, dear friend; I am leaving next Tuesday, and in the midst of the serious and sweet thoughts which accompany this return, be assured that there is room for the joyful intimacy of seeing you again. Adieu, farewell! Pray for your brother in O[ur] L[ord],

A.-F. OZANAM

My regards to the members of the council.

Original lost. Part of the archives of the Propagation of the Faith. Galopin copy. Unedited.

Notes:

1. *l'Univers*, June 4, 1841.
2. Msgr. Dupuch, bishop of Algiers.
3. *l'Univers* of June 5 had published on the first page an appeal to Catholics in behalf of Msgr. Dupuch, who wished to raise funds to ransom Christians imprisoned by the Moslems. On the same day *l'Univers* had started a subscription (first subscribers: *l'Univers*, 100 francs; Bailly, 25 francs; du Lac, 25 francs; Saint-Chéron, 25 francs). *L'Ami de la religion* having protested against this subscription, *l'Univers* made a rebuttal on June 9. (Ozanam's allusion is to this rebuttal.) Those directing the Propagation of the Faith feared a scattering of missionary resources, similar to what they feared in regard to the work of "Catholicism in Europe."
4. *l'Univers* pressed its campaign in favor of Msgr. Dupuch's work. One reads in *l'Univers* of June 23: "The Propagation of the Faith has already worked wonders; it will continue to do so; but still more is needed: this is a very special case, special cooperation is needed" (due probably to Ozanam's influence).
5. *Journal des missions évangéliques* (cf. letter 309 of April 30 to Meynis).
6. Protestant missionary of German origin who exercised his apostolate in China.



331. To François Lallier
Chateau du Vernay, near Lyon
June 28, 1841

In this letter, written five days after his marriage, he shares his happiness with his friend.

My dear friend,

The great things your affection involved itself with are accomplished. Last Wednesday, June 23, at ten o'clock in the morning, in the church of St.-Nizier, your friend knelt; at the altar was his older brother, raising his priestly hands, and at his feet, his young brother, making the responses to the liturgical prayers. Beside him you would have seen a young girl, in white and wearing a veil, pious as an angel, and already—she lets me say it—attendant and affectionate as a friend. Happier even than I, her family surrounding her, and yet at the same time she welcomed all the family heaven has left me here below; and my old comrades, my brothers of St. Vincent de Paul, numerous acquaintances, filling the choir and peopling the nave. It was beautiful, and strangers who chanced upon it were seen to be profoundly moved. I could scarcely restrain great but delightful tears, while I felt the divine blessing descend upon me with the sacred words.

Ah, dear Lallier, companion of hard times, comforter of bad days, if only you could have been there! I would have asked you as I did the good Personneaux to sign the commemorative document of this great feast; I would have presented you, too, to the charming wife who has been given me; she would have greeted you, too, with the gracious smile which claims everybody. And now for the five days we are together, what calm and serenity in this soul who has been known to be so upset and so ingenious in finding how to suffer!

I let myself be happy. I no longer count moments nor hours. There is no more passage of time for me. . . . Of what interest is the future? The good fortune of the present is eternity. . . . I understand heaven.

Help me to be good and understanding. Each day, revealing numerous merits in her who is mine, increases my debt to Providence. . . . Useless to tell you that I am much better. My throat is gradually becoming normal and no longer requires discretion and precautions. What a change from the days when you beheld me so cast down in Paris!

I was pardoned in a fashion for having shown you a certain letter; I will be entirely cleared when someone has the pleasure of knowing you. You are invited for the housewarming, in the month of November.

Farewell, my regards to Madame Lallier, to you a fraternal embrace.

Your friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte.

Previous publication: *Revue d'économie chrétienne*, t. VI, 1864, pp. 722-723; *Lettres* (1912), t. I, pp. 402-404.



332. To Emmanuel Bailly
Le Vernay, June 28, 1841

Expresses his thanks to Bailly and his family. Shares his happiness.

Monsieur,

Good fortune does not allow ingratitude. Since the beautiful day which gave me a good and charming companion, I have not forgotten those whose friendship, care, and good offices assuaged the pains of waiting and exile. Among numerous friends, all our confreres of St. Vincent de Paul followed me to the foot of the altar. But their multitude did not prevent me from noticing the gaps left by those absent; and among these latter who could be more regretted than you? I know, however, that your prayers and those of Madame Bailly have not failed me. Heaven answers them: already my health, for which you had so much concern and worry, is rapidly improving. Speech has been restored to me in order to make good and frequent use of it. My heart especially overflows with joy: its most cherished dreams have been crowned by even more beautiful realities. I owe you a share in these first fruits of my happiness; you always took so great a one in my afflictions. Adieu for now. I hope in some weeks to show you what a happy man is like.

Your grateful friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

My respects to Madame Bailly and to M. Vivier. Madame Ozanam and her family also send you their thanks on my behalf and the assurance of their sincere attachment.

Original: Property of the motherhouse of the Assumptionists, Rome. Photocopy provided by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, unedited.



335. To Montalembert
Lyon, July 25, 1841

He thanks Montalembert for the help given to the patriarch of Antioch. Asks him to speak to the minister of foreign affairs in behalf of the leaders of the Propagation of the Faith in Spain, in order to set the government there to come to terms. He shares his marriage with him. Allusion to Montalembert's Saint Elisabeth.

Count,

Often, in the affectionate talk with which your friendship honors me, you

have been fervent in expressing your admiration and zeal for the work of the Propagation of the Faith. Your interest in the recent incident concerning the Greek patriarch of Antioch affords me an especially grateful example. I have been entrusted today again by the council of the association to ask your charity to interpose in a less difficult but possibly serious circumstance.

The most beautiful characteristic of the work of the Propagation of the Faith is the catholicity which divorces it from national concerns, washes from it the odious hues of politics, and seals it with the faithful seal of the Church, whose active instrument it is. Furthermore, it draws tightly together all Catholic peoples so as not to give France alone the honor of taking the initiative. Spain's adherence has been the latest.¹ Amid the moral and financial ruin which bespatters the desolate face of that country, there are two sincere men; and like the noble and pious citizens among us who did not despair of our religious nature in 1830, M. O'Lombell and M. Ximena have held to the old faith of Spain. By their dedication the association was established and has grown with unlooked-for success. The sum of 30,000 francs is the result of their efforts in the first year.

You are not ignorant, Monseieur le Comte, of the schismatic decrees of the regency. Protestant propaganda, along with Jansenism, is surely hastening the proscription of an association whose first result was the strengthening of the people's ties with the Holy See. Hostile politics are part of it, and the government document interdicting the Propagation of the Faith blamed it especially "for spending by French hands the pennies of Spanish charity."

At the same time, M. O'Lombell and M. Ximena were placed under arrest, one in Cadiz, the other in Madrid. But M. O'Lombell is a French subject, and the energetic action of the consul immediately obtained his release. It was of short duration. The enclosed account and letters reveal the ceaseless persecution and new captivity of which he is the victim. The upshot is that from now on only the embassy can bring him effective help and by taking active steps put an end to his imprisonment. In this situation the council of the association of Lyon has come to the conclusion that a recommendation of the minister of foreign affairs to the ambassador will be the most effective and easiest means. National honor is sufficiently at stake to appeal to the minister's attention, and it is hoped that religious interest is pressing enough to motivate the intervention of your high influence. Certain paths of duty of yours will perhaps contribute to unlocking the prison of a compatriot who is also a companion in arms in the defense of the divine cause.

Having acquitted my duties as an intermediary, allow me a few more words of my own. I have accomplished a purpose which you were in sympathy with. The engagement entered into this past winter was solemnized a few days ago. God, who took my poor mother from me, has not wished to leave me without a guardian angel any longer. My happiness is great, and while I rejoice in its first sweetness, I remember that you foretold it in advance. I recall that, taking leave of you at our last meeting, you took me kindly by the hand and told me that infinite joy here below crowns Christian marriages.

At present I am laying claim before God to the place you promised me as a

Christian husband. St. Elisabeth has revealed the chaste secrets of conjugal piety to us; the friendship of her biographer can help us realize it.

I am, with respectful attachment to you and gratitude for your kindnesses,
M. le Comte,

Your devoted and obedient servant,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Property of the Montalembert family. At the top of the original *autograph* in Montalembert's hand: "Wrote to Guizot, August 6, 1841; see his favorable reply of the 12th."

Previous publications: *Lettres* (1912), t.I, pp. 406-408.

Notes:

1. The Propagation of the Faith had been introduced to Spain in 1839 by O'Lombell (a Frenchman living at Cadiz). Desirous of obtaining an official authorization from the Spanish government for the association, he was deterred from making the request by a letter of the Central Council of Paris (December 30, 1839), which alleged that no similar action had been taken in any other country. O'Lombell had made recruits in Spain (Ximena, of Madrid, was one) and had the approbation of the archbishop of Seville and the bishop of Cadiz (cf. archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Paris, Spanish branch, correspondence 1839-1859, especially a long *note*—without date, but able to be placed between May 1841 and May 1842—in the middle of which is inserted a copy of the letter of December 30, 1839, cited above).
2. The dynastic crisis precipitated in Spain in 1833 (death of Ferdinand VII) was resolved (1839) by the defeat of the Carlists. The triumphant regent's party (the *Cristinos*) was dominated by its left wing (Espartero). This latter favored English influence by making the purchase of goods confiscated from religious communities easy for adherents of England (cf. P. Renouvin, *Historie de relations internationales*, t. V, XIX s., Part I [1845-1871], pp. 112-113).
3. By the decree of April 18, 1841.
4. The accounts of the Propagation of the Faith (already mentioned).



342. To Antoine de Jessé
Allevard, August 11, 1841

Sends him a report of l'Univers's efforts in behalf of O'Lombell.

Monsieur le President,

During the period of inactivity to which the strict orders of the doctor have condemned me for some time now, I am happy to be able at least to render some infrequent and undemanding services to the association of the Propagation of the Faith. I hasten, therefore, to send you the enclosed reply of M. de Saint-Chéron to two letters I owed him on the M. O'Lombell affair.¹ You will be reassured of an active intervention which, supported by the steps taken by M. de Montalembert, should not fail to be effective. The note contains, however, some sentiments toward me that are too affectionate for me not to want it returned. I must add that the confidential information it contains demands absolute secrecy. Finally, the good

will which exists between M. Guizot and M. de Saint-Chéron has nothing to do with the cause taken by *l'Univers* which is more interested in forcing the government's hand than in sustaining his impetus.²

My somewhat improved health allows me today to resume some of my interrupted work. I will take advantage of it to send you next week the note so long overdue which is to serve as preface to the letters concerning the conversion of a young lama. May I trust that my delays and silence have not caused you to doubt my devotion? Please accept once more its sincere expression and give the members of the council my fondest regards.

Your most humble and obedient servant,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: The President of the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, rue du Pérat, n. 6, Lyon.

Original lost: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Galopin copy. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Saint-Chéron's reply to Ozanam's two letters is dated August 6 (cf. Galopin papers). We do not have Ozanam's two letters relative to the O'Lombell affair (evidently contemporaneous with the letter to Montalembert of July 25).
2. The following passage of Saint-Chéron letter (August 6) clarifies the allusions in the first paragraph of Ozanam's letter and shows how Saint-Chéron had proceeded by *l'Univers*' method (cf. *l'Univers*, July 31).

Paris, August 6, 1841

You must have seen in *l'Univers* that I received the documents you sent me concerning the business of M. O'Lombell. I thought it would be in the best interests of our countrymen to air publicly the scandal of these persecutions of a Catholic and a Frenchman. So long as things lie hidden, the ministers will not press nor pay any attention to the most important of facts, but publicity challenges their honor and responsibility. That is why, dear sir and friend, that it would have more effect to begin by publishing these letters before speaking to M. Guizot. I have seen him, and he is struck by the details published in *l'Univers*. I told him what I thought the government should do in this matter for the Propagation of the Faith and for a citizen undeservedly persecuted. He promised faithfully to write to our chargé d'affaires in Madrid and to intervene with the Spanish government. I will make a point of following this up and will inform you of everything that has been done.

A. de Saint-Chéron



347. To Antoine de Jessé
Allevard, August 25, 1841

Report on new steps taken in behalf of O'Lombell, the association's imprisoned representative in Spain. He has not yet completed the note-preface for the Letters on the Conversion of a Young Lama which he owes the Annales de la propagation de la foi.

Monsieur le President,

I persevere in sending you the replies I received in the O'Lombell matter. This one is from M. Cornudet, former chief officer of the minister of worship.¹ Although less encouraging than could be wished, I think you should be familiar with it. M. de Saint-Chéron's approach will perhaps attain its purpose better than all the others.² Nevertheless it is not without importance that a French minister of worship's complaint against an attack of Spanish religious tyranny should be important evidence of the solidarity of Catholic interests in the two countries. On this occasion, as on previous ones, I commend the enclosed paper to the prudence and personal care of the president.

A note has asked me to furnish an introduction for *Some letters on the Conversion of a Young Lama*.³ It is still not entirely finished, and I regret that I must put off sending it until tomorrow's post. The members of the council entrusted with the editing must still have the charity to accept my excuses. I beg M. le President to be willing to offer them at the same time that he accepts the assurance of my respectful devotion.

A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur the President of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith, rue du Pérat, n. 6, Lyon.

Original lost: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Galopin copy. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Martin du Nord.
2. It has been seen how Saint-Chéron proceeded with Guizot by publication in *l'Univers* of articles recounting the ill-usage undergone by O'Lombell (cf. letter 342 of August 11 to Jessé).
3. Article for the *Annales de la propagation de la foi*, which had already seen several delays.



352. To Antoine de Jessé
Allevard, September 1, 1841

Success of the steps taken in O'Lombell's behalf: sending of instructions to the French embassy at Madrid. The preface to the Account of the Conversion of a Young Lama is finally ready, but he is not satisfied with it.

Monsieur le President,

A letter of the Count de Montalembert's herewith enclosed will inform the council that the steps taken in the O'Lombell matter have not been useless, and the minister of foreign affairs, with unhoped-for dispatch, has sent instructions in the matter to the French embassy in Spain. Without a doubt the council will judge it

fitting to write some lines of gratitude to those who have extended themselves in the association's interest and especially to M. de Montalembert in way of reply, as well to his gracious offer to procure a copy of the instructions. Let us hope that Providence will do the rest and that the voice of France will not be raised in vain for Catholic interests threatened in the person of your brave correspondent.

The article long requested to serve as preface to the *Account of the Conversion of a Young Lama* will have reached you very belatedly and is most unsatisfactory. It was written amid the influence of a hydrothermal treatment, in the upset of a sudden journey on which all sources of research were lacking. The censure of the editorial committee will make up for it by doing what it wants with it, and perhaps its kindness will forgive the collaborator, who has already spent several months waiting for the return of a health imprudently compromised. Amid the embarrassment of this false position and despite the feeling of my uselessness, I experience real consolation in thinking of the indissoluble ties binding me to the association and which will ever hold at least my heart.

Please, M. le President, convey to the gentlemen my respectful devotion. I will soon have the honor of telling them of it in person. Accept also the assurance of my deep affection for you and my gratitude for your kindness.

Your most humble and obedient servant,

A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur the President of the Council of the Propagation of the Faith.

Original lost: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith. Galopin copy. Unedited.



365. To Henri Pessonneaux
Rome, November 12, 1841

Travel descriptions. Historical comments. Papal audience.

Dear Henri,

In the midst of the pleasures of the traveling life and the numerous enjoyments encountered along the way there is, nonetheless, something wistful, that is, not happening on the faces of friends as usual, those faces which smile at you passing by and bidding with a cordial gesture hello or goodbye. Yet I had a very pleasant surprise when, this past week, the eve of my departure from Naples, I found you awaiting me at the post office and bringing me news of Paris. Thank you for that brotherly remembrance and for answering mine immediately: more than once in the leisures of the road, chatting with your new cousin¹ about our approaching ex-

ile and those who would alleviate its solitude, your name rose to the lips as one of the dearest.

I have, then, visited Naples and its so vaunted sites: Pompeii, Boja, Amalfi, and Pestum. I have admired its always fresh verdure and those marvellous antiquities that have not aged. It is no longer astonishing to find so many living monuments there where the leaves of the trees do not fall. It seems as if under the happy sky the destructive power of time has disappeared. The perishable side of human things, however, is evidenced by terrible examples. The menacing crater of Vesuvius and the baths of Herculaneum are dread lessons for the voluptuous capital sleeping in their neighborhood. I would like to talk more about it and tell you about the magnificent views of Chiaga and Castellamare, the historical traces of French and Spanish domination, the strange customs of the people, the joyous tumult of the streets, the improvisers on the mole and the last of the *lazzaroni*² race, scantily clad in the required pantaloons, seeking on the quays a corner in the sun to converse in or a pocket to pick.

But the place where more imposing sights awaited me, where I first saw the southern character in all its majesty, where Greece was wholly revealed in its historic past and admirable genius, was Sicily—the lighthouse of Messina, the theatre at Taormina facing the black ashes of Etna, the solemn desolation of Syracuse, and the ruins of Selinontea and Segesta are sights never to be forgotten. And yet even they are effaced by the great scene of Agrigento. On these shores of the African sea on which reigns a tropical vegetation, where the palm thrusts itself up crowned with fruit while the woods of orange and citrus trees perfume the air and the acanthus, aloe, and cactus intermingle among the ruins, there nestled among a long range of hills rises the old and powerful city. The outline of its walls carved in rock is still there, and everywhere on the ramparts as a place of honor, the tombs of heroes and temples of gods. Of these, eight remain variously preserved, but all imposing, whether in their integrity or partial destruction; all brought together to give an idea of that noble doric architecture, itself bound up with a civilization and poetry too little known. A sun ever serene gilds those great facades and long colonnades; and in the face of such pure contours, such knowledgeable proportions, in the face of such simple means which produce such great effects, that axiom and general formula of Greek art can be understood: beauty is order.

The successive dominations which have passed over Sicily have left their imprint. Palermo, the Phoenician city, one of the havens of the Carthaginians, also possesses great souvenirs of that other African race, heir of Carthage, that is, the Saracens. It has moorish palaces in which you find the style of the Alhambra³ and the Generalifa.⁴ It has old Byzantine churches sparkling with mosaics and Norman chateaux, and magnificent dwellings erected by the Spanish viceroys and whose walls are still covered with inscriptions in Castilian verse. And the *fleur de lis*, which glitter on the curtains, recall that a French dynasty still reigns here today. But the marvels of this place are the Montréal basilica and the Palatine chapel. I left them wholly full of those impressions which are never lost: just as in leaving a sa-

cred ceremony you remember for a long time the perfumes wafted there and, as it were, the last echo of the chants heard.

Now, delayed by unforeseen difficulties, we have been eight days at Rome and are about to leave in three. We could not dream of making an intelligent exploration of it and have decided to content ourselves with a simple pilgrimage. Certainly we have inspected with admiration the Coliseum, the Pantheon, and the Vatican museums. But we have especially tried to visit as sincere Christians the tombs of the holy apostles. From this point of view we have gazed on the evident ruins of Roman corruption and divine chastisements and that new glory which surrounds the Papacy. We have venerated the sanctuaries where so many illustrious men repose, pontiffs, doctors, and martyrs. Today (November 13), after receiving Communion at St. Peter's tomb and praying for all belonging to us (you can well imagine that I did not forget you), we have made the solemn visits of the churches.⁵ Yesterday we had the honor of being received by the Pope. His Holiness deigned to admit us to an audience devoid of all protocol; it was not the rather awesome majesty of the tiara, but the simplicity and sweetness of a father. During the fifteen-minute conversation he spoke to me of France with singularly moving kindness, and of my studies with all the learning and presence of mind of a scholar speaking in his special field. I received his blessing for myself, my family, and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul which he knows and loves. If it is fine to see the Sovereign Pontiff amidst all the pomps of priesthood bless the city and the world on Easter Day, it is not perhaps less moving to see this apostolic old man, alone and without ceremony extend his hands over two young and obscure pilgrims.

Belviala is here, and I had the pleasure of seeing him with Cazalès. He asked for you and listened with a great interest to what I told him about you. I am grateful to you for bringing me up to date on our Paris friends. Be sure to tell them all that I think of them: I am coming back better prepared, ready to attempt the renewal of my course without being sure of my reestablishment. My affairs are in the hands of Providence. It has for some time granted me so many favors that I would be ungrateful not to hope.

Adieu, dear Henri. I embrace you in my heart while waiting to do so as soon as I can.

Your devoted cousin,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Henri Pessonneaux, Man of Letters, rue de Courselles, n. 16, Paris.

Postmark: November 16, 1841. Place illegible.

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Ozanam's wife, Amélie.
2. Neapolitans of the lowest class.

3. Renowned palace of Moorish kings at Granada.
4. Another nearby Moorish royal palace.
5. An indulgenced pilgrimage of the four major basilicas of St. Peter's, St. Paul's Outside-the-Walls, St. John Lateran, and St. Mary Major.



366. To M. and Mme. Soulacroix
Rome, November 15, 1841

Regrets for the unavailability of sending letters during the travel in Sicily. The stay in Rome and the audiences. The Pope, the Cardinals Pacca and Mezzofante. Usefulness of this trip for his work. Some other comments.

Dear parents,

Amélie's letter could not leave without my joining the sentiments she expresses toward you. Regrets, first, for the anxieties you have had due to our involuntary silence. Relegated for three weeks to one of the extremities of Europe, far from all regular communication with the civilized world, we have also had our anxieties and problems. One of the liveliest was not being able to write, and we have experienced what a terrible thing it is to live on an island, and since the king and queen of Naples had to be rescued from the gulf we swear with the good Sancho to visit only the isles of *terra firma* from now on.¹ You will forgive us if our correspondence, even from Naples, has not been as active as we would have liked. But it was not a question of our being economical with our dearest consolations, even though the price of postage was enormous. On the other hand, during our entire stay, our time was spent in trips to the surrounding countryside, and when returning from Boja or Vesuvius we arrived back late and dead with hunger and fatigue, I could not allow nor could you that eyesight be ruined by staying up until one o'clock in the morning. On my part, I hardly managed to reread certain authors' passages and dispatch short notes absolutely necessary so as not to lose the fruit of my trip. I had intended to send the rector a letter from Sicily for the *Journal de l'instruction publique*. But the four or five hours it would have taken were wholly lacking.

The ten days we have spent in Rome have been like a dream. What we have seen and done in so little time is unbelievable; and nevertheless we are leaving with the conviction that ten days more would be necessary to take advantage of being here and profiting from the occasion in the interest of my future. Only since the day before yesterday has it been possible for me to see some of those with whom it is important for me to establish relations, and we are already loaded down with kindness and favors. If the obligation of being at our post prevents us from responding to so many invitations as pleasant as they are respectable, at least we carry away with us recollections which comfort us and are in themselves sufficient to honor and enhance life. We shall never forget the solemn moment when the Sovereign

Pontiff extended his venerable hands over the two of us and blessed us and our absent family at the same time. We shall also remember the patriarchal welcome of Cardinal Pacca,² whose octogenarian face has suffered every political and religious tempest of the past without once flinching. We have visited and conversed with Cardinal Mezzofante,³ whom the ancients would have made a god and whom God will undoubtedly make a saint.

But it was certainly no penance to kneel at the tomb of the holy apostles and pray together before the simple stone which covers the remains of St. Peter; nor was it useless to go down into the catacombs, burrowing so to speak into the entrails of Catholic Rome. What the trip to Sicily was for the understanding of antiquity, the stay in Rome was even more for the understanding of Christianity.

I sense a new life stirring in my thought, and my rather sterile ideas awakening and stretching in an early thaw.

[I trust it will be the same little by little with my physical strength and, wholly incomplete though the recovery be, it seems to me sufficient to allow a trial. It was the lack of a positive result in this regard which has kept me from speaking. Meanwhile, amid the usual fluctuations the good seems to be prevailing more and more. Thank you for the solicitude you show me in the matter. Be assured, also, of my deep gratitude for the benevolences of every kind with which you continually surround my poor Charles and of which he has so great a need. You have done for M. Fauriel much more than we could have done, and I do not doubt that it has made a favorable impression. There is another of your favors whom I cherish more each day. You know whom. This trip, by testing Amélie's ways, patience, sweetness, and devotions so greatly, is demonstrating to me how much she is capable of. But, even more, you could not believe what she does for me by her presence in other circumstances, what more gracious hospitality I especially encounter when she is with me, how she interests and captivates from the very first. Cardinal Pacca, the old and venerable eminence we visited yesterday, told his secretary last evening how impressed he was by that young lady; you have been told already about the Benedictines at Catania and the Capuchins at Syracuse. But new conquests have been made since. There was the procurator general of the Observatines⁴ whom we met in the Naples coach and twice or three times more at Rome, smiling his most gracious smile in his grey beard. There was another Capuchin father at St. Peter's in Montorio, of whom we asked directions, and who offered Madame a bouquet of roses. There was the Abbé Barola,⁵ still one of her best friends; in a word it would be something to worry about did not virtue outshine courtesy here.

Adieu, dear parents. In a little while we will not be reduced to enclosing our farewell embrace in a letter, and if separations occur again, the distances at least will have lessened. A thousand regards to Théophile and Charles.]

Your affectionately devoted son,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte.

Former publications: *Lettres* (1912), t. I, p. 421. This publication is most unreliable, some excerpts of the letter of November 8 to Abbé Ozanam and the *l'Univers* article of December 25 having been inserted within the original text. On the other hand, the passages in brackets are not in the 1912 edition.

Notes:

1. A reference to Sancho Panza in Cervantes' *Don Quixote*.
2. Bartolomeo Cardinal Pacca (1756-1843). Abducted from Rome with Pius VII. Nuncio to Vienna, governor of Rome, bishop of Ostia and Velletri.
3. Giuseppi Cardinal Mezzofante (1774-1849). Vatican librarian (1833), cardinal (1838). He was a member of the congregations of Propaganda, the Index, and Rites. He was said to know fifty-eight languages.
4. Order of Friars Minor (O.F.M.), founded by St. Francis of Assisi.
5. Former secretary to Cardinal Pacca, Abbé Barola was attached to the two congregations of the Index and Propaganda. It was through the latter, undoubtedly, that Ozanam became acquainted with him.



373. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, January 1, 1842

Excuses for having forgotten to deliver when he was in Lyon a letter for Meynis entrusted to him at Rome. O'Lombell matter. Some anxiety over the Committee of the Holy Land.

Dear friend,

It is on a day such as this given over to reconciliations and the pardon of wrongs that I am going to confess a great fault and seek an easy pardon. When I left Rome several letters were sent to me at the last moment and thrown hastily into my portfolio, most of them from Paris. When I got to Lyon a stopover of eight days scarcely gave me time to check my packages. And once here, having to attend to the priorities of finding a place to live and preparing a course made me forget until yesterday the envelope I had for you. Imagine my embarrassment, shame, and chagrin when I discovered it. Shamefaced and humbled, I confronted myself with a mistake which seems to point to great indifference toward the interests of the association and of friendship. But then I remembered your kindness and that you would never believe me indifferent. And I had confidence, in repairing my fault today, of obtaining your forgiveness. There remains a single reassuring thought: the letter did not come to me from Propaganda and so probably is not concerned with anything very urgent or important.

I have been less unreliable regarding the latest commission I have been given. The medals¹ arrived safely. I have sent one to M. de Montalembert. I went to M. Sauzet's house but he was not home, and I have seen M. de Saint-Chéron. Maybe it

would be fitting to add another one to the list for M. de Cornudet, who has also been most active in the O'Lombell affair. I noted that M. Salvandy², on his departure for Spain, carried the strongest instructions from the French cabinet for the purpose of obtaining freedom pure and simple for this excellent man who is still only released under surveillance. As for the circular letter of the Committee of the Holy Land,³ it is doubtful whether there is one; an announcement only has appeared in the papers and perhaps I could get that for you; but it would seem that the association has a political tone and is headed by compromised men.

There is nothing more but to request you to thank the council of the association for the worthy trust it continues to place in me and to which I will try to respond better. I am very touched by the gift of your beautiful medal. Since it commemorates a great and memorable epoch of the association's works, let us hope that the new year will have its share of glories and benefactions. That is my prayer to God this morning as I make the usual requests for the future of my family, friends, country and church. For will not this institution, which brings comfort to the church and honor to the country, also unite us as one family, and has it not given me in you and certain other members of the Council of Lyon friends whose memory I will always cherish?

Farewell. Your devoted,
A.-F. OZANAM

Please send through M. Sandier⁴ my special regards to M. Dufieux.

Original lost: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Galopin copy. Unedited.

Notes:

1. The Propagation of the Faith had a commemorative medal struck for the twentieth anniversary of its founding.
2. Achille Salvandy (1795-1856). Born at Condom, writer, journalist, deputy from 1830-1831 and from 1833 to 1848. A Constitutional Party member, minister of public instruction in Molé's cabinet from 1837-1839 (he would have the same post in Guizot's from 1845 to 1848). He had just been appointed ambassador to Madrid (October 1841).
3. Allusion to an association like Catholicism in Europe and distrusted like it by the Propagation of the Faith because of the risk of dividing missionary efforts. It is possible that it was connected with the Association of Mont-Liban, whose head was Ferdinand de Bertier de Sauvigny.
4. Frédéric Sandier (1796-1849), notable of Lyon, former mayor of the Croix-Rousse (1826 and late 1847-1848) where he enjoyed the role of reconciler during the troubles of 1834 and 1849, member (1839), then treasurer (1841) of the Central Council of Lyon of the Propagation of the Faith. "Member of several charitable societies and useful institutions, M. Sandier had only one constant aim: to love God and do good" (*Gazette de Lyon*, August 30, 1849). The address of letter 493 "Monsieur, Monsieur Dufieux-Sandier" may indicate a relationship between the two men.



380. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, January 26, 1842

Sends the thanks of Saint-Chéron, de Montalembert and Sauzet for the medals given them. Inquiry about the Committee of the Holy Land. Gratitude for the council's regard.

Dear friend,

I hasten to answer your kind letter of the day before yesterday: I must be short so as not to miss the post and in consequence Wednesday's meeting. You know that otherwise I would enjoy chatting longer with you.

According to the council's wishes I called upon M. de Saint-Chéron but could not catch him at home until today. He asked me to tell you how moved he was at the token of esteem he received from the council and at the confidence they still placed in him.¹ The desired meeting with the minister of foreign affairs will take place this week, before the weekend. Besides, the minister appears in general to understand perfectly the association's intentions and does not identify it in any way with political parties.

Count de Montalembert told me again recently that his conversations with M. Guizot on the O'Lombell affair have left him completely satisfied. He also thanks the association for his beautiful medal and renews his offer of future service.

I am happy to carry the same message from the president of the Chamber of Deputies. He received with sincere gratitude, both as a citizen of Lyon and a Catholic, this memento from his pious fellow-citizens. I myself was deeply moved at his sincere feeling and the truly religious conversation that occupied this visit.

After a vain search, I think I am on the track of the Committee of the Holy Land.² I have the address of its chief representative and the hope of getting all its publications. If I succeed, there will be no delay in their reaching you. I am only afraid of being found out.

In closing I must emphasize one thing, that is my lively gratitude for the council's kindness and my heartfelt resolve to render myself more worthy of it. Please let me know if they want anything of me. The time will soon be here when my affairs will clear up enough to let me take at least a small part in the editing. Would you be kind enough to assist my memory; I cannot recall when I last received my stipends. I think, but am not certain, that December is paid up?³

Farewell, my regards.

Your devoted friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Meynis, Secretary of the Propagation of the Faith, rue du Pérat, n. 6, Paris (letter returned because of wrong address: Paris instead of Lyon).

Original lost: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Galopin copy. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Allusion to the medal which had been given him by the Propagation of the Faith (cf. letter 373 of January 1) in gratitude for his intervention in behalf of O'Lombell. A new approach to Guizot had just been asked of him in the name of the association.
2. The question of eventual support by the Central Council of Paris to the Committee of the Holy Land made the Central Council of Lyon anxious. The register of letters received by the Central Council of Lyon has the following for January 22, 1841: "Choiselot to Meynis—Lyon having asked abstention from assisting the Committee of the Holy Land and having asked Paris what its position was, Choiselot replied that Paris had not committed itself." Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.
3. Ozanam had in reality received the 600 francs agreed upon for the year 1841. The last installment was paid him on December 30, 1841 (cf. letter 278 of January 10, 1841, to Meynis, taken from the ledger of the Central Council of Lyon).



384. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, February 9, 1842

Ozanam sends Meynis the answer of the minister of foreign affairs to Saint-Chéron's approach relative to the work of the Holy Land Commission.

My dear friend,

In consequence of the communications for M. de Saint-Chéron with which the council entrusted me, he has seen the minister of foreign affairs, and came within the last few days to report his answer. It is contained in the note which I have the honor to send you enclosed, and whose preciseness should clarify the council's deliberations.¹ It is very consoling to see our country's Christian role perpetuate itself in this way despite men and circumstances.

Farewell, dear friend. Having no other news to give you, I wait impatiently for yours and ask your good will in giving the gentlemen the assurance of my respectful devotion.

Pray for me,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur D. Meynis, Secretary of the Propagation of the Faith, rue du Pérat, n. 6, Lyon.

Original lost: It belonged to the Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.

Galopin copy no. 221. Unedited.

Note:

1. Subsequent to the approach made to Guizot by Saint-Chéron at Ozanam's request in behalf of the work of the Propagation of the Faith (cf. letter 380, January 26, 1842, to Meynis). We have not recovered the text of the "note" alluded to by Ozanam, but the gist of it can be reconstructed:

Guizot's confusion of the "Holy Land commissions," whose political views had disturbed him, with the Propagation of the Faith had been avoided.

- a. The list of correspondence received by the Central Council of Lyon records for February 12, 1842: "Ozanam sends copy of a letter of M. de Saint-Chéron relative to the work of the Holy Land."
- b. The transcript of the same council's letters indicate on February 14 Meynis's thanks to Ozanam for the "note relative to M. Guizot's answer."
- c. On February 7 Saint-Chéron had written Ozanam the following letter preserved in the Archives of the Propagation of the Faith at Lyon:

Paris, February 7, 1842

Dear sir and friend,

On the first of this month I communicated to Monsieur the minister of foreign affairs what you had entrusted to me in the name of the Central Council of the work of the Propagation of the Faith. I explained to H. E. that the Central Council was completely divorced from any political action and especially from the establishment and actions of the *Holy Land Commission*. I added that the Central Committee had not sent any direct aid to the people of Syria, but had entrusted this aid to the Latin bishops responsible for distributing it among Christians of different rites. I ended by saying that the Central Council had no other budget than that published each year in the *Annales de la propagation de la foi*.

M. Guizot seemed quite satisfied with this information and asked me to express his gratitude to the Central Council. The answer given by H. E. having perhaps some importance for the Central Council, I reproduce it faithfully for you:

"Thank the Central Council for this information. I have always had the conviction that it was always entirely aloof from all political maneuvers. This Holy Land Commission is *the cause of serious embarrassment to me* in my negotiations for the betterment of the situation of Catholics in Syria."



387. To Charles Ozanam
(Paris), March 28, 1842

He recounts the Easter ceremonies at Notre Dame. Judgments on the vitality of Catholicism in France and especially in Paris. During morning mass he prayed for his two brothers. Encouragement and congratulations in regard to Charles's studies.

Dear brother,

Today is too beautiful not to spend with my family. Even this morning at Notre Dame I was not alone. Each evening since last Monday six thousand men made the retreat preached by M. de Ravignan. I was absorbed by the admirable conferences: to hear anything more elevated and solid would be impossible. It would be especially impossible to see anything more beautiful than the congregation: on leaving, the crowd streamed out of the three doors and covered the plaza. The great basilica with its black facade and majestic towers revealing the illuminated nave through its portal represented so to speak the sacred edifice of the faith whose mysteries are also

imposing and grave outwardly but conceal an interior of infinite clarity. Today a general communion of the men crowned the pious exercises, our serried ranks filled the central nave, twice as long as that of Saint-Jean; there were nobles and rich men covered with decorations, and beside them poor men in ragged shirts, soldiers, students from the Ecole normale and the Ecole polytechnique, and children, but especially students in great number. After Communion, which, given by two priests, took an hour, a magnificent Te Deum filled the vaults, and we broke up deeply moved.

Solemnities such as these are a most eloquent answer to one of the difficulties which often trouble minds of your age. In leaving the religious haven of their first years and finding themselves suddenly in the midst of the world, they are at first dismayed to see so little faith. This universal abandonment is alarming, and there never fail people who exaggerate it even more, some through melancholy, others through weakness, and certain ones in the hope of being won over by example. But only children fear solitude. A firm soul, nourished on the great recollections of history, is not ignorant of the fact that truth and virtue often find themselves alone in the midst of a multitude of enemies, and that their honor does not bend the knee to the general sway. Meanwhile, when one has lived a little longer, one comes to remark two other things more reassuring. First, in preceding ages usually regarded as ages of belief and peace, there can be found temptations and perils like those of our day. God never spares His servants from trial because He does not wish to spare them the merit and glory; and the result of past struggles tells us how things will turn out in the present age. In the second place, if one takes a closer look one will discover around him a great deal more Christianity than he first thought. One is greatly astonished to behold in this French society tormented for the past one hundred and fifty years by so many perverse doctrines, shaken by so many scandals, so despised by strangers, works of charity in great number, practices faithfully observed, the Gospel embraced with such universal homage, the Church assured of such great dedication, and still so many Christian attitudes and salutary memories, favorable dispositions among those who do not belong to us. I am not speaking of the countryside and many provinces where one finds the true backbone of the nation and where the Catholic soul has not ceased to exist. But even here, in Paris, in this foyer of human enlightenment and ambition, among those blasé intellects for whom pleasure, art, and study no longer have attraction, among all things considered there is only one that preserves dignity, respect, and true popularity, and that is religion.

There is a long effusion of my emotions of the morning. I cannot finish without telling you, just the same, that with these thoughts of general interest the affections of the heart are most sweetly mingled. This feast is one of those when the hours pass more swiftly, where meditation is easier, where one does not leave off praying. In praying for all, I could not forget my good brothers. I asked for you that wisdom which reinforces judgment, that strength which sustains the will amid the thunderstorms of adolescence. I have asked that you may preserve that piety with which you are endowed, so that you may know your vocation and will not fail in the cour-

age to follow it, nor the consolations to embellish it. I have begged for our dear Alphonse the graces his ministry has need of, the definite reestablishment of that health so long uncertain, and joy of soul, recompense of a life vowed to good. I begged that fraternal union, symbol of and prelude to the celestial company of the saints, flourish among us and that, fulfilling the last word of the Savior to His Father, we be one as they are one. At this moment I have no doubt that we shall be united in the same meeting place: our mother will be there, too, since it is with God.

It was not without a lively pleasure that we learned of your placing second. [17, 10, 4, 2, there you have a sustained progress which has more worth than the most brilliant start.] If you continue in this way, nothing prevents your having a share of the prizes at the end of the year. But it is especially proof of intellectual development, a good augury for the future. You should be very grateful to the excellent M. Noirot, whose solicitude has made the introduction to philosophy easier for you. Please thank him most earnestly for me. His teaching is a great boon; I have daily proof of his influence over my early years. When better circumstances will have brought us together you will be amazed at how many ideas we have in common. I look forward to it eagerly: your being here will enliven our exile; and Amélie, who loves you very much, will be delighted to see one of her four brothers again.

You ought to write to her the first time you have an opportunity. A little letter would please her; you have answered hers only indirectly. I will write to Alphonse in a few days; give him a fond hug for me and tell him what a painful privation it has been for me not to be able to visit him at Easter, like last year. My love to Marie and my fondest regards to my uncle and aunt.

Your brother who loves you dearly,
A.-F. OZANAM

[P.S.—I would like to congratulate you better for placing second, but if you do not despise a 20-sous piece from a poor professor, Alphonse will give it to you. Please give the enclosed letter to Ballofet.]

Original: Archives Laporte.

Previous publication: *Lettres* (1912), t. II, p. 14.

Notes:

1. Père de Ravignan gave the Lenten sermons at Notre Dame for the first time in 1837. The idea of concluding them with an Easter retreat for men only, preached during Holy Week, had come about in 1841, but there was on that occasion no closing Mass with the large numbers of Communions indicated here.



391. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, April, 6, 1842

News of the article on Buddhism. Details about the outline and offer to change the text upon the advice of the committee. He regrets being so far away from the association's center and offers to do more for it in Paris. News of friends; Chauvand's visit. Dugas's letter.

Dear friend,

So much time has passed without writing to you, nor have I even been occupied with the association. For more than three weeks, and during the Easter holidays, I have worked constantly at the interminable article on Buddhism.¹ I had to consult innumerable sources to refresh my rusty memory and the writing several times over in order to set a scholarly style that was at the same time clear and especially edifying. The principal difficulty was to make certain points in a way which would not arouse a dangerous curiosity in lay readers and at the same time let the scholars know there was no ignorance of fundamentals. I have followed the advice of a prudent and pious man who approved my work, and I am almost completely finished. Yet it cannot be sent off today because I must still check something in the *Mémoires de l'Académie de St. Pétersbourg*,² at the library of the Institute which is opened tomorrow only. I must be unassailable on facts and citations. Once it is finished, it is finished. It will run about twenty pages, as the council wishes. The manuscript is closely written so as to spare postage. Even so the package will still be costly, and I ask you to let the office know in advance so it will not be refused.

I have transcribed proper names as best as I could and entrust their accuracy to you both as to the printed article and the copy to be sent to Rome,³ if you are agreeable. For the rest, there are still many erasures, and I beg the service of your friendship to read it over first especially to insure its intelligibility to the editorial committee; otherwise I run the risk of being misunderstood in more places than one. If the committee thinks a great many changes should be made, I would be too busy to change the article according to its wishes. If, on the other hand, it confines itself to some deletions, I agree in advance. When it goes to press I would like galleys sent to me. You will see in the conclusions at the end that this work has, aside from anything else, roused my interest in an important question. I have relegated to footnotes many things which interrupt the flow of the text but which I consider indispensable to the mental impression that should be left. It is good to preserve them despite the slight expense they cause.

It might seem odd that I should talk with you about an article still unfinished. But that will not delay its reaching you. You should certainly have it tomorrow by eight at the latest, providing that the little left to do can be taken care of before my next class. Then, I could not bring myself to let you go so long a time without a reply, even though I have no news. The last I had from you told me of your suffering and left me anxious. On the other hand, being put to work for the association dur-

ing the holy days gave me such consolation that I had to tell you. Yes I do miss sincerely the time when a regular service bound me to this fine institution, when every week I went to strengthen my weak faith by the tales of heroism and the sight of your great enterprises entered into for the world's religious fate. Here in this haunted center of luminaries I find nothing to compare to it. I wish at least to fill up the distance with zeal and some active cooperation. This year should make up for last year's inactivity. I would be delighted to be busier, to be asked this coming autumn for a longer article than the one I have done.

Your errands have been taken care of. M. Guizot has received your circular with gratitude and has promised to write to the council of the association.⁴ Other than that you have given me no other chores to do. Without misjudging the power of the Propagation of the Faith, I am convinced that its ambassador to Paris is of little use to it. The Easter holy days have been moving here, all the more because some people from Lyon came to celebrate them with us. Chaurand⁵ is here, and we have gotten together to study, like six years ago, with the difference, however, of a conjugal setting. We often talk about our mutual friends. Some time ago Dugas (Prosper) wrote me an affectionate letter. Deluged with business, I have not yet answered it. Please tell him at once that I will answer it next week. Tell me something about Lyon, and about yourself, especially the daily visits you make to Our Lady of Fourvière. Assure the council of my respectful devotion and let me clasp your hand like a brother.

A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Meynis, Secretary of the Propagation of the Faith, rue du Pérat, n. 6, Lyon.

Original lost: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Galopin copy. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Ozanam had published several articles on the religions of India and China. He intended these works to be part of the vast apologetic synthesis he had in mind to undertake from the time of his student days, in which he meant to demonstrate through history the common origin of all religions:
 - a. *Exposition du système tibétain-mongol*, freely translated from Benjamin Bergmann. In *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*, t. IV, May 31, 1832 (no. 23), pp. 373-384, and t. V, July 31, 1832 (no. 25), pp. 28-39, and November 30, 1832 (no. 29), pp. 321-331.
 - b. *Sur les croyances religieuses de la Chine*. In *Revue européenne*, t. VII, September 1833, pp. 5-41.
 - c. *Des doctrines religieuses de l'Inde à l'époque des Lois de Manou*. In *Revue européenne*, t. VII, December 1833 and January 1834, pp. 384-411 and 515-549.
2. *Memoires de l'académie impériale des sciences de Saint-Petersbourg*, 6th series, political science, history, philosophy, t. I, no. 1, 1830.
 - a. *Ueber einige Grundlehren des Buddhismus*, erste Abhandlung par M. Schmidt, pp. 93-120.
 - b. *Zweite Abhandlung*, p. 221 (B.N. R. 4900, t. I, 1830).
3. Either the Congregation of the Index or the Congregation of Propaganda. Ozanam was in touch with Abbé Barola, who was a member of both.
4. The text of this circular is lost.
5. Chaurand, then a lawyer at Lyons, spent several weeks in Paris.

392. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, April 14, 1841¹ [1842]

Sending his article on Buddhism. Scholarly approach of this article. Conversion of Ratisbonne.

Dear friend,

Here at last is the interminable article. The research which delayed me demanded some changes. I hope that it is now unassailable in the field of scholarship. I leave it to better judges in so far as religion is concerned. Only let me say that the Jesuits had no fear of expounding in the *Lettres édifiantes*,² written for the faithful, those teachings of Confucius which suggest accommodations and at first raise very dangerous doubts.

I have been careful, for the rest, not to frighten off the reader; all purely scholarly comments have been relegated to footnotes. I want them kept, as well as the transcriptions of names in parentheses in the text. These are my proofs, and it is important that the scholars into whose hands it might fall know that we warm ourselves at the same fire they do. For too long Catholics have been regarded as strangers to those studies which a malevolent pedantry seems to want to keep to itself. If you should consult Rome, please make the copy exact. A certain word is used precisely for the purpose of satisfying men I think I understand there.

Will you be kind enough to let me know as soon as it arrives, for I have no second copy and will be anxious for fear it is lost. When the editorial council studies it, I would be grateful if M. de Jessé were there. For the rest, I await comments and will answer them promptly.

Your packages arrived this very morning. Be assured that I will take care of everything at once. Your pious thought seems excellent to me, and I will share it with the General Council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.³ The conversion of M. de Ratisbonne has raised a stir on all sides here.⁴ Seeing such signs and others like them makes you wonder what God really has in store. Be sure, however, that what He has in store is sovereignly merciful.

Farewell, dear friend, I embrace you and recommend myself to your prayers.

A.-F. OZANAM

Original lost: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith. Galopin copy. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Year's date obviously wrong, although it is in Ozanam's hand.
2. *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses écrites des missions étrangères par quelques missionnaires de la Campagne de Jésus, 1703-1776*, I, XXXIV (B.N. 15961-94). Succeeded from 1822 to 1833 by *Annales de l'association de la propagation de la foi*, supplemented from time to time by a collection: *Nouvelles lettres édifiantes des missions de Chine et Indes orientales*, Paris and Lyon (B.N. 8° H 100). Succeeded at the end of 1834 by *Annales de l'oeuvre de la propagation de la foi*.
3. Allusion unclear.

4. Marie Alphonse de Ratisbonne was converted at Rome, January 20, 1842, and baptized in the Church of the Gesu, January 31, 1842. Back in Paris, he placed himself under the direction of P. de Ravignan and on May 20, 1842, entered the Jesuit novitiate at Saint-Acheul. This miraculous conversion of a distinguished French Jew and outspoken enemy of the church was effected on the instant by a vision of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal in the Roman church of S. Andrea delle fratte, and did much to effect the official ecclesiastical (papal) approval of the medal, given in a vision to St. Catherine Labouré at Paris in 1830, and its continued widespread adoption and diffusion. (For a detailed account of the extraordinary events leading up to this conversion, cf. Joseph I. Dirvin, C.M., *St. Catherine Labouré of the Miraculous Medal*, Chapter XIV.)



393. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, May 3, 1842

Mass at St. Sulpice. He accepts the council's decision not to publish his article on Buddhism. He expresses his regrets that he could not serve better and discusses the objections which prevented the publication. The better apologetic, he says, is to state the truth frankly. Congratulations on the May issue of the Revue. The Bulgarian consulate affair. Distribution of the booklets on Ratisbonne.

Dear friend,

Today's solemnity is too beautiful for me not to show my need to be a part of it. I have already assisted this morning at the Mass offered at St. Sulpice by the archbishop of Paris,¹ and at Père de Ravignan's sermon. I then read the association report in the May issue,² and this evening here I am to chat about things so dear to us both.

The publication council has decided not to publish the article on Buddhism. There was no need, in telling me, to make excuses.³ It is a matter of conscience, and it would scarcely be Christian to take offense at a decision dictated by prudence and charity. Since I have the dangerous honor to speak and write, I cannot but fear the responsibility of speech. And when its circle is enlarged, when a million men are its audience, when it treats of faith and the piety of peoples, then its consequences become too weighty for a single mind and should not be assumed without the approval of a higher authority.

But bear with fraternal frankness. I cannot help feeling deep regret in being so useless to the Association of the Propagation of the Faith. To collaborate with it gave me comfort, it was like a consecration of my pen, that weak instrument so often employed in a less rewarding way. I especially enjoyed writing the annual report, being the first to rejoice and bringing joy to others at our progress and our plans. In leaving Lyon, I preserved in this way sacred bonds. Now I am afraid that absence can be harmful and that I will end up not being on good terms. In this case, for example, I gave the matter mature thought and assembled material carefully

researched. I consulted wiser and better men. All the while I was conscious that there would be difficulties and that corrections and changes would be necessary, and even that the advice of theologians might have to be sought as to the opportuneness of publication.

But, permit me to say, the reasons for absolute rejection do not seem conclusive to me. On the one hand the objections are too strong and the replies hardly stand up. But all these analogies of lamaic worship and the hierarchy of the Church have been expounded, and the same explanations have been given in Msgr. Wiseman's conferences which I have almost completely translated.⁴ And these conferences of an eminent scholar, professor at the Sapienza,⁵ now a bishop, were preached to Protestants, at Rome, under the eye of a saintly zealous authority; they were received with applause by the whole Papal court; they have been published in three languages, myriad copies of them. They have been distributed all over Italy by the *Annals of Religious Knowledge*,⁶ without fear of scandalizing the docility of the faithful with a weak apologia.

And again there is anxiety over the vestiges of the Holy Trinity in pagan religions⁷ because there is no sign of it among the Jews. But why is there not the same anxiety about the immortality of the soul? It is well known that unbelievers have made a great to-do about the fact that this doctrine is not as precisely formulated in the writings of Moses as in those of Plato. Yet, without understanding why the Bible is obscure in this matter, no one gets excited about it. The same holds true for the doctrine of the M(ost) H(oly) T(rinity). It is proven to be part of the explicit teaching of the synagogue which follows the priestly tradition; but that did not protect it from the interpretations of a more obtuse people; and the frenzied sacrileges of paganism show the danger well enough. Besides, the presence of truth among the Gentiles, in the prophecies of the Sibyls, and in the books of certain philosophers has always been one of the pious beliefs of the Roman church. Contrary ideas are part of our Gallican puritanism. So it is that in the verses of the Roman breviary:

Dies irae, dies illa
 Teste David cum Sibylla
 Solvet seclum in favilla

we have changed the second line,⁸ afraid to place the Greek prophetess side by side with the prophet-king. It was too easy to anticipate every scruple by crossing out or adding lines.

Again, I point to the example of the *Lettres edifiantes*⁹ and the profit the impious chose to draw from the teaching of Confucius. The Jesuits never retreated; they never hesitated to bring the whole truth out into the open. Such candor does honor to the faith. It does not fear questioning, it is too sure of itself to be afraid of anything the world has to offer. Furthermore, risk cannot be avoided. Take the literature of China, Tartary, Ara¹⁰ and of all the idolatrous East which is full of allusions that cannot be blotted out entirely without destroying interest nor published without commentaries. Partial clarification does harm by leaving the perpetual ob-

scurity, provoking questions without answers and *raising suspicion*. Should one point be dissembled, there the restless attention fixes itself and it is easy to suspect in the writer's reticence the impossibility of an answer.

It is therefore the importance and suitability of the subject that I defend, and not my work. Evidence of incompleteness or defectiveness is what disturbs the conscience of its judges. That is not the truth's fault, but his who is its instrument. It is therefore my wish that the editorial council, in a matter as serious as this, had taken theological counsel. Without consulting Rome, which had been considered in the beginning, without bothering the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda with numerous worthless pages, my article, the letters on the subject, and the doubts of the council could have been submitted right there in Lyon to the curé of Saint Paul¹¹ or Abbé Pavy. I am bold enough to express the wish that it still be done and would return the article for that purpose, if it is agreeable. Further, I am ready to make any change requested. I would not even insist any longer upon the insert. I made it only because I was convinced of its opportuneness, as well as the fact that every other point depends upon this central one, and the question is whether the *Annales* will rise to the eminence of the old *Lettres édifiantes*, or if they will become strangers to the world of scholarship, useless to the progress of human knowledge and, by the same token, to the propagation of the association among the higher classes of society.

However, I congratulate you sincerely on the May issue. Msgr. Hillereau's¹² is admirably written and most courageous. There is not enough awareness of all the perils which menace us out of St. Petersburg and the intrigues which radiate from it to create schismatic churches as far away as Spain and Portugal. The official census of the Russian Empire for 1839 lists in that year alone 2,500 apostasies among Latin Catholics, not counting Greek-Uniates; and 4,000 conversions of Muhammadans and idolaters.¹³ Could not the Association of the Propagation of the Faith make an attempt in Upper Asia?

M. de Saint-Chéron has called on M. Guizot twice to pursue the matter of a French consulate in Bulgaria¹⁴ and twice failed to see him. But there is little hope. Fear of displeasing the czar militates against establishing a national representative in a country which lies in the direct path from Moscow to Constantinople. You would not believe, dear friend, the depth of humiliation and impotence we have descended to in the Levant. England's dominance, shaken by the events at Caboul¹⁵ and kept in check by a ruinous war in China,¹⁶ could well be on the decline. The only star rising in the hour that has fallen on the world is the north star. The great barbarian and arian invasions of the fifth century came from the North and the East. Who knows what is in store for the end of the nineteenth century if the sword of France rests in its scabbard?

Now, dear friend, some personal words of thanks for your thoughtfulness in involving me in the excellent work of the brochures about M. Ratisbonne. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul would be glad to distribute them if it knows where they can be obtained in lots of a hundred as it needs them. There should be an outlet in Paris, and I have no doubt but that the circulation of this wonderful story

will do great good. Personally, I am deeply moved by it but not surprised. If the signs, daily more menacing, make me dread the future storms, I also expect to see signs of the divine protection multiplied so that the world will not despair. I am aware that you have renewed your efforts to restore the sacred observance of Sunday at Lyon. In this matter it is for the episcopate to take the lead; then the rank and file will fall in and hopefully a commercial city like yours will set an example. Be assured that, despite the outcry from the godless press and the imprudence of religious papers, good will grow among us. But it must be remembered that only in union is there strength. Let us pray for one another in constant remembrance before God.

Your devoted friend,

A.-F. OZANAM

My regards to the members of the council; all the best to our mutual friends.

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Meynis, Secretary of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith, rue du Pétrat, n. 6, Lyon.

Original lost: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Galopin copy. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Mass celebrated each year for the deceased members of the Propagation of the Faith.
2. Ozanam, who usually did it, had not written the annual report published in the *Annales de la propagation de la foi*.
3. It has been noted that the article rejected by the *Annales de la propagation de la foi* appeared in *l'Université catholique*, t. XIII, June 1842, pp. 453-462.
4. Henry Wiseman (1802-1865), following his education at the English College in Rome, became its rector in 1828. His field was Syriac and Hebraic studies. In 1835 he was named by Gregory XVI to give conferences for the English colony in Rome at the Church of Jesus and Mary on the Cross. These are the conferences alluded to here.
5. Roman university founded in the thirteenth century. Wiseman taught there before his return to England (1840).
6. Italian review: *Annali della scienza religiosa*.
7. In the article Ozanam, following the thought of the traditionalist school, sought to find in pagan religions traces of a primitive revelation concerning the Trinity, of which the polytheist mythologies would be a corruption. Catholic theology has not retained this opinion (cf. A. Baudrillart, in *Le Livre du centenaire, l'apologiste*, pp. 395-396, and J. Lebreton, in *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, Beauchesne, 1930, t. I, p. 17).
8. Ozanam was unhappy with the substitution of breviaries proper to various dioceses for the Roman breviary; this substitution, dating from the eighteenth century, being in many cases evidence of the growth of Jansenism. Ozanam's remark is a clear echo of the criticism made by Dom Gueranger in his *Institutions liturgiques* of which volumes 1 and 2 had just come out in 1840-1841. The indicated change was in the second line, which became *Crucis expandens vexilla*, *op. cit.*, t. II, p. 375, Paris, Debecourt, 1841.
9. Ozanam, by this fresh allusion to the *Lettres edificantes*, expresses his admiration of the missionary methods practiced in the East by the Jesuits of the sixteenth century.
10. Ara, sometimes called Upper Asia.
11. The curé of the parish of St. Paul was at that time Abbé Jean-François Cattet (1786-1865). It can be questioned whether Ozanam did not confuse him with his brother, Abbé Simon Cattet (d. 1858), vicar general of Lyon, who seemed better qualified for such consultation.

12. Msgr. Hillereau, patriarchal vicar apostolic of Constantinople. The French ambassador to Constantinople had rebuked him for accepting support from Austria (cf. *Aff. Étr.*; *Cor. pol. Turkey*, 282). In his letter published in the May issue of the *Annales*, he discusses the Greek and Armenian churches whose autonomy he feels must be assured lest they risk dependence upon Moscow or St. Petersburg in the event of a confrontation with the Turkish empire.
13. These statistics appeared in the *l'Univers* article quoting a German paper published in November 1841 in the *Catholique de spire*.
14. The Bishop of Bulgaria, Msgr. Mulajoni, who had Wallachia (the two countries then forming part of the Ottoman empire) under his jurisdiction, supported the establishment of a French consulate in Bulgaria. He had made overtures for this purpose to the Propagation of the Faith at Lyon. Under April 8, 1842, the minutes of the meetings of the council of Lyon read, "Msgr. Mulajoni . . . wishes steps to be taken for the appointment of a consul who would protect the Catholics of Wallachia An excerpt from Msgr. Mulajoni's letter has been sent to M. Ozanam, so that, through M. de Saint-Chéron, it might come to the attention of the minister of foreign affairs."
15. The annihilation of the British troops of occupation in Afghanistan had occurred the year before (1841).
16. The Opium War. The English, having encountered diplomatic difficulties in China, were no longer in control of Shanghai (cf. P. Renouvin, *La Question d'Extrême-Orient 1840-1940*, Hachette, 1953, p. 27).



397. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, May 18, 1842

Settlement of the business relative to the article on Buddhism which will be published elsewhere. Remains bound to the association. The bishop of Bulgaria matter. Opinion of the candidates proposed for the assistant secretaryship of the Propagation of the Faith.

Dear friend,

Your letter, received a few days ago, has touched me deeply. To be kinder and more brotherly is impossible. You did very well in entrusting the writing of this year's report to another pen for variety, and the work was otherwise excellent. As for my article on Buddhism, I will say no more. Only that, to ensure that my time was not completely lost to the association, I will publish it in another periodical¹ which will pay me and I will turn this little sum over to the treasury of the Propagation of the Faith. Be assured that only one thing concerning us is of interest to me, to live as one with you. We belong to an age and a city which is wholly divided, even the good people,² which needs to hold on to something in order to grow strong. It is not in the academic world, not among the literary men and the press that I find that moral fellowship which supports and encourages. But God allows me to discover it first in the family, then in the midst of numerous friendships which absence fails to weaken, and finally among those Christian associations where faith is strengthened and charity specified.

I thank you then for your trust and ask you to be so kind as to convey the expression of my gratitude to the council. I am sorry that I cannot tell you the results of the steps taken in behalf of the bishop of Bulgaria. M. de Saint-Chéron left for the country without giving me an answer, but he will not be away long. I am honored to be consulted on the choice of an assistant secretary. I find it difficult to give definite opinions. M. Onofrio is a man of great distinction and solid piety. But le Barreau, it seems to me, shows promise of too great a future for him to renounce. However, there is no reason not to approach him. I know M. Génin better and am happy to be able to call him one of my oldest and most devoted friends. He has a great deal of talent and even more virtue. He possesses a high character, a generosity, and an extreme delicacy which are often lacking in the affairs of life. He belongs to the number of those who in these recent days have suffered from the business reverses which have befallen the most reputable houses of your city. However, I think he is still well off; and I am not well enough informed of his plans and opportunities to assure you that he would accept it, especially if the condition is a contract of very long duration. If I were in Lyons, I would volunteer to sound out the dispositions of these two gentlemen, so as to make your steps clearer.

Farewell, dear friend, in the midst of the many sorrows which cause universal dismay here there are none to regret among our acquaintances.³ Chaurand and his wife were at Versailles, but they had the happy inspiration to return by the right bank. My regards to the gentlemen.

Your devoted,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Meynis, Secretary of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith, rue du Pérat, n. 6, Lyon.

Original lost: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Galopin copy. Unedited.

Notes:

1. *L'Université catholique*, t. XIII, n. 78, June 1842, pp. 453-462.
2. Polemic on the monopoly of teaching.
3. Paris-Versailles railroad accident of May 8, 1842.



398. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, May 21, 1842

Thanks the council of the association for appointing him to represent it at an audience of the king. He fears that he lacks the dignity suitable to so weighty an embassy.

Dear friend,

On leaving for class I am taking advantage of the short time remaining before the post leaves to tell you that I received the commission of the Council of the Propagation of the Faith yesterday. The medals arrived safely. Not so the letter. It reached me very crumpled because the envelope was too flimsy, and it does not seem to me to be presentable in that state. If, then, you would not find it inconvenient, you should send me another copy enclosed in heavier paper, which will stand up better. Next, see whether it is permissible for me to seek advice from someone who has been at the palace occasionally, such as M. de Montalembert or M. de Carné, to learn the steps to take for the audience and the best way to discharge it.¹ I would enjoin secrecy, and they are men too dedicated to the Propagation of the Faith for anyone to have the least anxiety. But on the other hand, I do not know whether the matter can escape the risk of publicity, the court being perhaps accustomed to publish its audiences. Nor am I without embarrassment; for, little used to seeing the powers of this world at close range, I am very much afraid that you have made an unfortunate choice of ambassador. I run a strong risk of getting nervous and of representing most unworthily an association which must, here especially, maintain all its dignity. I am nevertheless deeply touched at the honor the council does me and ask you to convey to it my sincere gratitude. You will pray to God for me so that I may get through so important and unusual an event in a competent manner. After all, when I shall be in the prince's presence, I shall remind myself that some months ago I was in the presence of another more august sovereign, his master and mine.²

Farewell, dear friend, excuse my brevity which the hour of the mail imposes.

Your devoted friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

Envelope: Monsieur, Monsieur Meynis, Secretary of the Propagation of the Faith, rue du Pétrat, n. 6, Lyon.

Original lost: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Galopin copy. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Audience whose purpose was to present a gift to the king and attract at least his gracious protection in behalf of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith, which enjoyed no legal existence.
2. Reminder of the audience granted him by Gregory XVI.



400. To Théophile Foisset
Paris, May 23, 1842

He thanks him for news and apprises him of Mme. Ozanam's accident. Promises a review of Foisset's book. Comments on the proposal of issuing Correspondant. Var-

ious echoes of Carné's speech, and the rivalry between the Cercle and the Institut catholique.

Monsieur and friend,

We have gotten so used to seeing you for a few minutes each evening that your letter arrived truly to fill a gap for us. Since your departure my thoughts have followed you more than once, even into that beloved family you were so impatient to be with again and the occupations of all sorts awaiting you. I will often visit you in memory there again and, to begin, if feeble my prayers may be, they will mingle with yours the day you ask for them. May the feast of the Comforter¹ have brought a beneficent ray to brighten your trials.

Here, we were not expecting to have need of it so soon. You saw the serene and tranquil happiness of my interior. Ever since my young and pious wife entered there the angels have inhabited it with her. But it had to be that we would have our troubles, too, and an accident which cannot be blamed on any imprudence and whose outcome cannot yet be measured has occurred to plunge us in affliction. After cruel suffering, my wife is still bedridden without yet knowing how serious the situation really is: I am assured that there is no positive danger, but certainly hopes are compromised.² You see that it is my turn to ask you to pray for us.

You will also forgive the brevity of a reply written on watch by a bedside in one of those too infrequent moments for preparing lessons which otherwise I could not interrupt. It is very sad when one's heart is preoccupied to have to be involved in affairs of the mind. I am not thinking along such lines. I regard as a matter of friendship and a duty of proselytism whatever concerns the propagation of your excellent book.³ Besides, the review has been done since the week after you left Paris. With more trouble taken it would have appeared in the last issue. It will surely be in June's. My only fear is that, after being afraid it would be finished too late, you have the occasion to find it done too quickly. Your indulgence will pardon a work which is not familiar to me.

The publication of *Correspondant*,⁴ new review, made possible by your zeal, will not languish through our fault. In finding the funds that we were lacking, you have deprived us of the possibility of blaming the indifference of Catholics⁵: we do not want to incur the same reproach. Frequent messages have been exchanged in the matter between M. Wilson and us; the financial organization of the thing will still hold us back some time. Concerning personnel, I had thought of M. Didron⁶ and I have already insisted on the usefulness of his cooperation. M. Lenormant had been perfect at the last meeting, but how annoyed he is that M. Bautain⁷ could not come. We must not pretend; we will be like an army without generals; *non multi nobiles, non multi sapientes*.⁸ That is why the enterprise has special need of being commended to Him who chooses the weak and contemptible so as to confound the strong. For the rest, the opportunity could never be greater. Situations worsen and debate⁹ is not joined. We are not represented in the press, and it could be said, in turning a celebrated witicism: one treats us, in our own territory and without us.

I would like very much to know how you feel about M. Carné's¹⁰ speech here—complete division, nearly general approbation from old Christians, revolution from others.¹¹ And always rivalry between the *Cercle* and the *Institut catholique*.¹² We are so few, and we do not know enough to unite. Happily the archbishop, whose firm attitude and exalted character have an ever increasing influence, is kind enough to occupy himself with an alliance of the two organizations, and if God pleases, I hope we will soon have for letters and the sciences what we have for charity in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. You left Paris with gloomy predictions; I share them, and yet I deliberately allow myself to be misled by the glimmers of hope which seem to arise. May they perhaps visit your toilsome solitude, and without being with us, you will be able to direct yourself at our expense by accomplishing easily the little good we think about.

Adieu, Monsieur and friend, be kind enough to present my wife's compliments to Madame Foisset, and to preserve for me a place in your remembrances, especially those you have before God.

Your most humble and devoted servant,

A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives of the Foisset family. The text has been taken from a typewritten copy. Archives Laporte.

Former publication: art. cit. in *La Vie spirituelle*, t. XXXV, May 1, 1933, p. 189.

Notes:

1. Pentecost.
2. Mme. Ozanam had apparently suffered a miscarriage.
3. *Le président de broches, histoires des lettres et des parlements au XVIII^e siècle*, publication of *l'Académie de sciences, arts et belles-lettres de Dijon*, Paris, Olivier Fulgence, 1842.
4. The publication of *Correspondant* had been discontinued in 1831. The new review which bore that name appeared in 1843, along the lines of the *Revue européenne* rather than that of the first *Correspondant* (open, timidly it is true, to social questions. Cf. J.-B. Duroselle, *op. cit.*, p. 158.)
5. An allusion which tends to reinforce the hypothesis of an identification of Foisset with "the one among our friends who commits himself to rallying all the others."
6. Adolphe Napoléon Didron (1806-1867), architect and archaeologist, born at Hautvillers (Marne), an admirer of the thirteenth century. He had opened a printing house specializing in the publication of archaeological works.
7. After the condemnation of his fideist positions by Pope Gregory XVI (fideism places the cognizance of first principles in faith), Abbé Bautin had retired to Juilly.
8. Not many noble, not many wise. An allusion, carried out in the following sentence, to 1 Cor. 1:26-28.
9. The French word is *polemique*, which has for its primary meaning *written discussion*.
10. Carné's speech, given on May 18 in the Chamber of Deputies, published in *l'Univers* on the 19th and commented on by the journal on the 20th. Carné had said principally, in regard to the quarrel concerning the monopoly of teaching, "This debate has furnished the occasion in clerical journals for differences that I regret, especially when I have seen some venerable prelates unfortunately associate themselves with them by certain acts." It was following this speech that *l'Univers* had written: "M. Carné has betrayed us."

11. Probable allusion to Louis Veillot, whose conversion Ozanam had referred to earlier. (Cf. letter 242 to Olivier, July 11, 1840.)
12. The *Cercle catholique*, founded in 1841 by Ambroise Rendu and his son-in-law, Doubet, and the *Institut catholique*, founded in 1839 by Cauchy, were two centers of philosophical, literary, and scientific conferences. The two organizations had different orientations. The *Cercle catholique* attempted to make up for the lack of Catholic higher education by means of conferences; the *Cercle* tended to be liberal, the *Institut catholique* conservative.



412. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, June 8, 1842

Informs him of the illness of his wife. Tells of Montalembert's advice, the process of obtaining an audience with the king in behalf of the Propagation of the Faith.

Dear friend,

Excuse the fact that your last letter is a long time without a reply. During this period God has tried me severely. Madame Ozanam has been gravely ill, and for two weeks we were in the most painful uncertainty. At length, we were so prayed for on earth that they had pity on us in heaven. My wife is well on the way to recovery, and I am taking up the interrupted course of my affairs.

These unhappy circumstances have not for all that held up the honorable mission which the council has been good enough to confide to me.¹ It could not be carried out while the king was traveling. Now that His Majesty has left the Chateau of Randon and the audiences have been resumed at the Tuilleries, I can proceed usefully. Yesterday I saw the Count de Montalembert, whose filial piety toward the association's interests has not cooled, and I am going to make my request today along the lines he suggested. He has forewarned me that there will be perhaps a short delay in the reply.

We had the pleasure of seeing Abbé Desgeorges, and you would be right to think that, among the thousand matters of interest a friend from Lyon could bring exiles, the plans of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith and of those engaged in it would hold first rank. You will see him again soon; I trust that he will be good enough to take you a good impression of me and will tell you how everlastingly fond of you he is.

Your friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

My regards to the members of the council.

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Meynis, Secretary of the Propagation of the Faith, rue du Pérat, n. 6, Lyon.

Original lost: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Galopin copy. Unedited.

Note:

1. In the letter of May 21 to Meynis, there was already question of seeking an audience with the king.



414. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, June 22, 1842

Ozanam continues to work toward obtaining a royal audience. He is making sure of the sovereign's good will toward the Propagation of the Faith. He must act discreetly, considering France. The elections over, the intervention of Guizot could be expected.

Dear friend,

I come once again to inform you about the business with which I have been entrusted and which suffers many delays. Following the Count de Montalembert's advice, I took the first step two weeks ago without results.¹ Would there not in other circumstances be reason to take offence? But habitués of the court assure me that in the wake of the actions of the archbishops of Toulouse,² Paris³, and Lyon,⁴ the king takes a dim view of church affairs. At M. Sauzet's recently they cited the case of two eminent churchmen proposed by the minister of worship⁵ for bishoprics and rejected by His Majesty solely because of their talent and vigor.⁶ In such a critical time it is possible that the measure adopted by the council of the association might not at all produce the desired effect. The association having no legal character, it could be judged irregular for the gift⁷ to be presented by its hands instead of following the usual path of the apostolic nunciature. Nevertheless, there is an incontestable advantage to interesting the king personally in the French association and thus preventing possible difficulties later on. There is perhaps reason, therefore, not to give up, but to wait. Such is M. de Montalembert's advice, at least, whom I saw again yesterday; he thinks that we should wait for the elections⁸, then a little later approach the minister of foreign affairs who, having granted the wishes of the council more than once, would probably go out of his way to request the audience for me and to prepare His Majesty favorably. M. Guizot would probably be flattered by such confidence and thus become all the more committed as far as the future is concerned. Kindly submit this plan to the council and let me know whether it is acceptable.⁹ Whatever the decision, kindly give it the reassurance of my strict devotion.

If you see Abbé Desgeorges, be good enough to give him my regrets for not having gone to say goodbye. During his last three days in Paris I was forced to stay

home because of a relapse of my dear wife, who has suffered much, but whom I now see regaining her health, thank God.

Farewell, dear friend. In two months at the latest I will be with you and will embrace you with that fraternal affection that restores so many words. We are distributing your accounts of Alphonse Ratisbonne.

Your devoted,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Meynis, Secretary of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith, rue du Pérat, n. 6, Lyon.

Original Lost: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Galopin copy. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Cf. letter 398 of Ozanam to Meynis of May 21.
2. Msgr. d'Astros. His Lenten pastoral of 1842 took accurate aim at Professor Gatien-Arnoult of the Faculty of Letters of Toulouse (cf. controversy between *l'Univers* and *le Journal des débats*, from March 6 on). Paul Thérèse David Cardinal d'Astros (1772-1851), born at Tourves, was the nephew of Comte Portalis, one of the redactors of the civil code and minister of cults under the Empire. D'Astros was his uncle's cabinet chief for the negotiation of the concordat, and drew up the list of future bishops. In 1806, he edited the imperial catechism. Imprisoned from 1810 to 1814 for opposing imperial orders, he became bishop of Bayonne in 1820, archbishop of Toulouse in 1830, and cardinal in 1850.
3. Msgr. Affre. On April 30, during an official reception at the Tuilleries, he had displeased the king by raising the questions of the weekly day of rest and the monopoly of teaching.
4. Msgr. de Bonald. We could not find the precise event alluded to here.
5. Martin de Nord.
6. Canon Doney (Besançon) and Abbé de Salinis (then at Jully) had just been denied the episcopate by the king himself because of their former sympathy for Lammenais. Cf. letter of the Intercuncio Garibaldi to Msgr. Mathieu, July 12, 1842, quoted by P. Paupard in *Correspondance inédite entre Msgr. Antonio Garibaldi internonce à Paris et Msgr. Cesaire Mathieu archevêque de Besançon*, Paris, de Boccard, 1961, p. 358. Antoine de Salinis (1798-1861) was later bishop of Amiens (1849-1856) and archbishop of Auch from 1856 until his death.
7. One of the commemorative medals of the twentieth anniversary of the association.
8. The Chamber of Deputies having been dissolved in June, elections were anticipated on July 9.
9. Ozanam's letter was brought before the Council of Lyon in the course of the meeting of July 1. It was decided to leave Ozanam free to act according to his own judgment, asking only of him previous knowledge of the steps to be taken (cf. Minutes of the Central Council of Lyon, archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon).



421. To his wife
Paris, July 23, 1842

He received Communion that morning. Visits to Père Marduel, Dr. Durnerin, Bailly, and Beaudicour. He suffers from the separation but joins in the familial good fortune of

his wife. He hopes that he can fix the date of his departure after he has seen Mignet. He has worn his new clothes, after alterations. Allusion to the preparations for the funeral of the duc d'Orleans.

Saturday evening.

How good you are, my well-beloved, and how your tender solicitude touches and charms me! You are tired from 33 hours of travel. It is the middle of the night, a time when everyone sleeps and consequently forgets: a stop in a miserable way-station with hardly a light, where a bad-humored attendant rubs his eyes; the grumbling conductor is urging the travelers to their seats; the stamping of the relay horses hitched for departure is heard. It is an effort just to find paper, pen and ink; and yet the little white paper is filled, so as to go off bearing good news and a sweet kiss. Your pretty fingers fold it in haste, and you are anxious that it be put in the post promptly, so as to surprise me gracefully, as when you come up quietly behind me as I work, to bend down to my cheek which never turns away with impunity. I am no longer amazed at the comforting dreams that came to me the same night: we are truly together and the vision did not lie. And today, knowing that you were continuing the journey overland, I no longer expected anything, but when I heard the bell ring at 7:15, I had not a moment's doubt and ran to get the letter: I have read and reread it, pressed it against my lips and my heart. It has not left me for an instant; it has kept me company all day. See how happy you make me. I am well aware that for you it is nothing, that you are capable of much more, and that you may find my imagination too ready and my thanks too much. But I am also aware that attentions are still more charming than services, and that there is sometimes more love in a delicate thought than in a courageous act; and, however love be shared, in whatever way it be shown, it can never be welcomed with too much joy and gratitude.

Sunday evening.

This morning, my good Amélie, I went to find the Comforter of every trouble, the friend of the afflicted. Good Père Marduel, whom I saw yesterday, gave me permission. It was in the Chapel of Saint Vincent de Paul where I had missed the feast of the 19th,¹ but the octave is celebrated today. The remains of the blessed patron were exposed in their crystal *chasse*. This simple and humble priest was surrounded with all the homage of the Church and of that double family of missionaries and sisters² who carry his benefactions to the utmost limits of the world and the last degree of misery. I had the good fortune to receive Communion. And there in the bosom of Him whose arms are wide enough to encompass all distances, I found you again. I felt your soul like a white dove beside mine, and I offered your purity, your sweetness, your simplicity, and all those things God loves in return for my pride, impatience, and perverse imaginations. I renewed the resolution to become better, is not that a means, and the surest one, of bringing me near you? My emotion was

profound, and for a long time I have not left church with more salutary thoughts.

Then, how is it that the day no longer seemed endless? Could it be that days when I am not wicked are also those when I love you more? But how painful were the hours of absence for me until they no longer dragged by so slowly. No gloom, no shadow, none of those humors not to your liking; but a languor which follows me in everything I do makes me feel that half of my life has ceased. The time has been well taken up. I have made a call on M. Fauriel, whose compliments I send you. I have gone to M. Durnerin; he had sent me his bill for the past year; and as all Paris knows everything, he is not ignorant of your illness³ and our recourse to another Aesculapius.⁴ M. Bailly, at whose house I called to thank him for his hospitality, was not in. Madame received me, and I understand after the conversation that they do not want anything.⁵ I had also to write Marie a letter and chat with M. de Beaudicour about the affairs of the society of St. Vincent de Paul. But all these cares which distract the mind do not occupy the heart and I am forever amazed at the powerlessness of even study to overcome such torments. This evening, as yesterday and the day before, we had a magnificent sky: at sunset a flood of light comparable to all the magical effects of the horizon of Rome or Naples. At the Luxembourg the golden light played among the leaves in a manner entirely ravishing. But I no longer have the courage to admire and rejoice: your being far away changes every aspect for me and hides for me every ray. And then always to go back into this house where a charming voice no longer greets me. To sit by myself at that table, to pass by the silent piano in order to lie down in that bed whence the smiles and caresses have flown!

Yet everything in the way of consolations an exile could have, joined together today. I received your good letter this morning. Read and reread, it has stayed with me; it did not leave me at the moment I approached the altar. Thank you, my well-beloved, I am happy to share thus in your traveling, in the joys of your arrival. You shared in the feast day, and I feel that I was not wrong when thought transported me to you. How I envy my brothers the good fortune of embracing you on Tuesday! Do you know that if I were jealous I could not forgive them? May you be blessed with all the tender recollections which, amid all those effaced, recall you to the arms of your husband! If that astonishes you, I myself am never in doubt of it. Oh! do not reproach them. Think of him who loves you, but think of him happily. If his melancholy face comes back to you at times, persuade yourself that it is good to put this lord and master to the proof, to remind him of his chivalrous customs as fiancé, to make him sigh a bit again. The role of severity does not sit badly on women, especially when sentiment poorly repressed betrays you, and then your merciful looks return to reassure your inconsolable slaves. So that I may hold to tradition, I have made a vow of love: not to buy little cakes so long as I have not the pleasure of sharing them with you. Today I have resisted all temptation although my courses made me pass by the richest display of that appetizing industry. At dinner Marie, who takes care of me, put a cherry tart in front of me. The case was serious, and the problem most thorny. After a long and mature examination in which all the economic, gastronomic, and moral considerations were weighed, I wisely resolved the

problem by one of those distinctions with which I distinguish myself. Seeing that the fruit tart was undoubtedly unavailable to you, surrounded with the delights of Quillons,⁶ I, not in my own name, but as your power of attorney so charged with receiving and consuming all revenues, received and consumed your portion, that is, half of the object in litigation; the rest was left intact, and I have renewed the promise not to set foot inside any bakery on earth until the day when other pretty little feet will cross the doorsill with me, while a beautifully gloved hand disengages itself from my own to select from the elegant display a petit four.

While plotting thus I see that is late. The music I requested and which fell on my ear seems to have ceased: the instrument is closed. Farewells are exchanged; each takes up his torch, and I leave, alas! like the others. A year ago at this time we were not apart.

Monday, three o'clock in the afternoon

Another half a day spent in the dust of libraries. I grab a moment to embrace you and close. Do not envy my poor books, dear child, they are doing nothing wrong. While the hand unfolds the Latin folios or embellishes with notes a darkening paper, the imagination runs after you in the gardens at Quillons; it catches up with you at the turn of the path and taps you on the white shoulder it knows; it plucks a flower to offer you and, at the moment of taking its reward, everything around it disappears and it finds itself alone in these learned but somber halls where sleep as in a tomb the illustrious dead of all the ages.

And so I must leave you. I am about to take my book to M. Mignet for his opinion. From now until the end of the week I would like to refine my research and make it possible to set a time for its conclusion. Adieu, little friend, I press you to my heart. Adieu, my angel, kiss me on the forehead. Adieu, will there not be a time when we will not leave each other?

Your dear husband,
A.-F. OZANAM

A thousand affectionate regards to our good father and mother, and to all the brothers, and I ask Charles, if the terrors of his examination harass him, to visit his little sister, who will know how to encourage him. My compliments to the two Mariés. I am waiting impatiently for news of my aunt and her family. Do not forget me in regard to M. Noiroto, to whom we owe special obligations. The tailor has delivered my dress coat, vest, and trousers after some alterations judged to be necessary. I appeared yesterday all newly turned out; I was thinking that you, too, would have taken your bit of satisfaction, after having had so often to take the arm of my old threadworn coat, and I wished that your pretty rose or blue sleeve intertwined in the crook of my arm had introduced these new clothes. At least the thought was there.

I have not told you enough how much pleasure your good letter gave me. I am about to read it again. Oh yes, my Amélie, you love me very much: all those charm-

ing words fill my memory like a perfume of love. Write me often like this. Write me at length. It is my only consolation. Is it not one of yours, too?

Everything is being readied here for the funeral ceremonies.⁷ The Place de Notre Dame is but a great studio. The band of the national guard assembles in front of the city hall to go over and over the marches it must play. The deputies are arriving. M. de Lamartine⁸ is here; I will go to leave a card at his house. I forgot to tell you that I went to the archdiocesan chancery to take care of the restitution with which I had been entrusted and which greatly intrigued the personnel.

Original: Archives Laporte.

Previous Publication: The end of the second paragraph and the beginning of the third: "I had the good fortune to receive Communion . . . that half of my life has ceased" in *l'anneau d'or* n. 54, art. cit., pp. 493-494.

Notes:

1. The former feast of St. Vincent de Paul, July 19.
2. The priests of the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentian Fathers) and Daughters of Charity.
3. Dr. Durnerin was a friend of Ozanam's father. Ozanam had not called him, but Dr. Recamier and Dr. Gouraud, at the time of his wife's miscarriage.
4. Aesculapius, son of Apollo, god of medicine or healing.
5. When Madame Ozanam was ill, the Baillys had provided Ozanam with a lodging near the Luxembourg.
6. A suburb of Lyon where the Soulacroixs lived.
7. Ferdinand Philippe, duc d'Orléans (1810-1842), oldest son of Louis Philippe, had been killed in an accident on July 13.
8. Lamartine was reelected deputy from Mâcon on July 9.



424. To Mme. Bailly
Paris, July 28, 1842

Through Ozanam, Mme. Bailly had recommended to Mme. Ozanam a poor traveler passing through Lyon. Ozanam informs Mme. Bailly that the necessary steps have been taken.

I offer my respects to Madame Bailly, and conforming to her kind intentions, I have just addressed her letter to my wife. Regrettably she is in the country—at Quilons near Lyon—at a summer residence. She could be contacted best through her father's house in town, *M. le Recteur de l'Académie*, quai de Retz 38. But that would take a long time and be too late. But if Madame Bailly is agreeable, these good people could be directed to M. Arthaud, president of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (rue des Capucins 3). The Society at Lyon has indeed a special service for poor travelers. I will write to point out the need. My wife for her part will do what she can,

and if it is very little, at least she will be very grateful to Madame Bailly for being so kind as to wish to share her good works with her. That is one of the sweetest proofs of Christian friendship: the soul's welfare, and after that the body's.

I pray Madame Bailly to present my compliments to M. Bailly and to consider me always her most obliged, most obedient and most humble servant.

A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives of the motherhouse of the Sisters of the Assumption, Rome. Photostat provided by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Unedited.

Note:

1. The original has no date. An allusion in the following letter adopting Thursday, July 28.



425. To his wife

s.l.n.d. [Paris], July 29 [1842]

Has met at the Cercle Abbé Desgenettes, back from Rome. Description of the funeral of the duc d'Orleans. Regret at having missed his visit to M. Marduel. Counts on her to smooth out some family problems. Advises her to take piano lessons and to pursue the study of Italian. Passes on to her Mme. Bailly's request.

Wednesday, 10 o'clock in the evening

I must make excuses once more, beloved. I came from the *Cercle*¹ where, despite my protests of retirement, they insisted upon my going to see the venerable Abbé Desgenettes, who is back from Rome bringing with him the blessing of the Sovereign Pontiff. That is why I am late; I have not had my habitual leisure for writing to you, that sweet moment I save for the end of the laborious day. Nevertheless, no day must go by without your having a few lines from me. I am bound by happy scruple to this religion of love. Except that, before going to bed I have still several pages to read and am pressed, so that there is hardly time to kiss your lovely forehead. And, so that you can share in what happens to me, I add to it a story. The Pope was with Cardinal Lambruschini,² who is said to be a bit Austrian. M. Desgenettes reported the status of good works in Paris, the archconfraternity, the *Cercle*, etc. The Pope expressed his delight. Then turning to the cardinal, with that simplicity which also has a bite: "In France, Your Eminence, in France, do you hear?" And Austria said not a word. Now there's a story! I have another too. But you shall not have it until tomorrow. You want me to get my sleep, and your maid has just reminded me again of your wish.

Saturday, two o'clock in the afternoon

I have just been at the funeral procession of the duc d'Orleans.³ I hesitated quite a bit about losing nearly four hours in that manner when time is so precious to me. And then I no longer like to see anything alone. It was to my way of thinking a kind of infraction of the penance I am observing. However, I thought you might want to know something about the funeral rites other than the newspaper accounts and I went in order to please you. From the beginning of the Champs-Elysées where I stood, you could see the Place de la Concorde overflowing with the moving multitude and a rank of people four-deep behind the soldiers, down both sides of the avenue. Public attitude was proper. Outbursts of sorrow could not be expected; but the usual curiosity was joined to a kind of sadness and sympathy for so much youth and hope so quickly withered, for so much family affection so cruelly desolated. Women spoke of the queen with respect, and men doffed their hats when the cross passed by. The impression on minds should have been beneficial. Populaces have need of being touched sometimes. Great spectacles are necessary for them. If processions are denied them, they wind up wanting scaffolds. The cortege was perhaps too exclusively military. With the exception of a group of clergy, nearly all the deputations were in coaches, and the richness of the equipages did not have the same effect that the great body of the state marching on foot behind the coffin would have made. For the rest, the hearse drawn by eight horses caparisoned old style; behind it, the warrior's horse; at the four corners, the four marshals of France.⁴ All this warlike panoply was of an extreme magnificence and left in passing this painful thought: that all the power of royalty, all the opulence of a great nation, all the genius of the arts, all that converged in this superb pomp could not restore a breath of life in a young man of thirty and dry the tears in the eyes of his widow! In this inflexible equality of nature there is a hard lesson for our frettings and cupidities. And Providence teaches us that it is necessary to evaluate human grandeur when the most elevated of all are subject to such reverses. I would have wished that, in this immense crowd, there had been one thing especially, something more than decency and pity—prayer. What greater help for a soul in those invisible regions it inhabits than the remembrances of three hundred thousand Christians going up to heaven. I have not on my part refused this supreme alms which the poor prince trapped beneath that lugubrious luxury seemed in passing by to ask for, and I quietly recited the *De profundis*,⁵ feeble tribute for one so immensely stricken: and I can still see the blank stares and smiles of those who passed me.

Sunday, one o'clock.

I am finishing a correspondence of five letters and I have reserved the last lines for you, dear friend, as I did the last kiss on the day of departure. There is hardly time to reply to your gracious letter of yesterday to which I would like to give special attention because of its being still longer and lovelier than the others. I am very grateful for your pious rendezvous planned for this morning. When I was getting

ready last evening to go to M. Marduel's,⁶ a visit was made me which lasted beyond limits and prevented me from leaving. I find it hard to reconcile myself to the fact. And this Sunday, lovelier than the last, is particularly melancholy.

One thing only comforts me, which is the thought of having served half my sentence if, however, my obligations permit me to leave on August 11. Do not neglect the information I asked for on Thursday. Certainly you cannot involve yourself in disputes. You are not involved, and God does not wish your poor heart to be chilled by the disagreements of men. But you can foresee that certain differences may arise in attitudes of mind, in each one's opinions and intentions. It would be a miracle if it were not so, and those which are advanced should be no reason for preferring one's own less. It was very thoughtful of you to visit my good aunt,⁷ and the good news you give me of her and my family consoles me very much. Only, if I have veneration for the family root, I should have the same for the *branches*,⁸ and I remain scandalized at the two states of health, one of which needs to hunt every week and the other to be away for six months. Probably, when you go back to Lyon you will visit Pauline and Madame Jaillard.⁹ But if you want to perform a charitable, a gracious act immediately, you could call at the house on rue St. Jean.¹⁰ The old nurse and poor Charles¹¹ would appreciate that charming thoughtfulness very much. Since I am making recommendations, I implore you not to neglect M. Bilet's piano lessons as we agreed: it is a worthwhile expense and among those I would not hesitate over. Allow me also to remind you of the Italian,¹² and if you are willing to make me happy, promise me to stop biting your fingernails. Is he not a most irritating husband? I have not finished, however. Madame Bailly asks you to give a poor Italian she is sending to you a sum of 25 francs, the proceeds of certain concerted appeals for them; she will reimburse me. It would be the proper thing for you to write to her. Such acts of courtesy would discharge some of our obligations.¹³

Adieu, my well-beloved. Pitiless time is pushing me: I can no longer take you in my arms, hug you to my heart and bid you farewell, alas, as I did twelve days ago today. Only twelve days! *Mon dieu*, and such a long time!

Your friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

My affectionate regards to our parents. I have shared deeply in the sorrow M. Larrey's¹⁴ death must have caused you all especially. Much love to Théophile, Charles, and Albert, to say nothing of the little cousins. Adieu, my beautiful lady. If your knight is dear to you, send him by the first dove to carry your message a flower which lay on your bosom. That very day I will put it in front of your portrait.

Original: Archives Laporte.

Former publications: The second paragraph (everything about the funeral of the duc d'Orleans) was published in *L'Anneau d'or*, n. 54, art. cit., pp. 494-495.

Notes:

1. The *Cercle catholique*.
2. Luigi Cardinal Lambruschini (1776-1854) had, toward the end of his nunciature in Paris, shown a great deal of sympathy for his Austrian colleague, Count Apponyi. Ordained in 1799, Lambruschini, a Barnabite father, archbishop of Genoa (1819-1830), and nuncio to Paris (1826-1830), was created cardinal in 1831, and named secretary of state by Pope Gregory XVI. Known for his authoritarian bent and Austrian sympathies, he left office on the advent of Pius IX, and became prefect of the Congregation of Rites.
3. See letter 421, footnote 7.
4. There were at the time seven marshals of France: the duc de Dalmatie (Soult), the duc de Reggio (Oudinot), Comte Molitor, Comte Gérard, Marquis de Grouchy, Comte Vallée, and Comte Sebastiani.
5. Ps. 129, appropriated by the Church as a prayer for the dead.
6. Abbé Marduel was his confessor.
7. Madame Haraneder.
8. A play on the name of his cousin Pauline Haraneder, by marriage Madame Branche.
9. Another aunt of Ozanam.
10. The Ozanam family residence.
11. Ozanam's younger brother.
12. Madame Ozanam had taken up the study of Italian during their engagement period.
13. See letter 424, Ozanam to Bailly, July 28, 1842.
14. Baron Dominique Larrey (1766-1842), surgeon general of the *Grand Armée*, b. at Beaudéan (Hautes-Pyrenees). He had died at Lyon on July 25, returning from a tour of inspection in Algeria, and before he could reach Paris.



428. To Henri Pessonneaux
Paris, August 3, 1842

He gives him facts concerning the curriculum for the licentiate and shares interest in his personal research with him. Reflections upon the death of the duc d'Orleans and upon the demeanor of the crowd at the funeral obsequies. Allusion to the meeting of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul under the chairmanship of the new archbishop of Avignon.

Pardon me, dear friend, for making you wait so long for a reply and a favor. You were never late when I needed you. However, Amélie's departure, which was imminent when your letter arrived, necessitated frequent errands and assiduous attentions which hardly left me any freedom for eight days. Then I fell into a state so depressed and troubled that I could think of nothing, and when I thought of anything it was to plunge into the research which keeps me here. In the midst of these daily visits to libraries I again forgot your commission, which at times returned to haunt me in the evening. Finally I spent today at Hachette's. There is no *collection* of authors for the licentiate. There are several works indicated for the curriculum¹; certain ones, Sophocle's *Oedipe à Colone*, and Aristotle's *Rhetoric* are extra; others like the speech of Percicles in Thucydides are in the anthologies, still others such as

an idyll of Theocritus might be studied in the author. The same holds for the Romans. Consequently it is necessary to buy only what is extra, which is very little, and leave the rest to be studied in the Parisian libraries. Send me your instructions letter by letter and I will carry them out with all the more scrupulousness since I must expiate my first negligence. Whatever my mistakes, dear friend, do not suppose that I would ever forget what I owe to your long and affectionate friendship.

I prize it more than ever because it is a necessary comfort in my loneliness. My life for more than two weeks has been like a bad dream, the kind that make the night so long and trouble sleep so distressingly. I am not used to the empty house, the silence, the dreary, empty life I have been living. A year's happiness has made me forget entirely, and it seems never to have been otherwise for me. It is because the mystery of the marriage bond so welds souls together that every separation lacerates and leaves both partners bleeding. I used to believe that temptation should be resisted and the interests of work never sacrificed. The further I would penetrate a subject, I would recognize truly great and beautiful things, worthy of man's attention. I had to research on a grand scale; now I see how ignorant I was, how much there is to learn, and how I will still be ignorant after all. But I see also, up close and with filial awe, all the wonders the church has done for this Germanic race, this European civilization which has shown her so much ingratitude. Everything that has been said for years about the benefits of the episcopate and monasticism, all the encomiums which are in danger of becoming trite, are nothing in the face of the marvelous reality. Men have carried wrapped in the folds of their garments not war or peace, but learning, charity, the destinies of the world.

The good news you give me of yourself was one of the pleasures of the last days Amélie spent here. She was very pleased to learn that you find yourself improved in your feudal way of life at the manor of Beaurepaire.² She was amused at the picture you drew of your picturesque costume and hunting expeditions. Bracing air, exercise, fruit, milk, game, all these things restore a man, and especially the sight and enjoyment of lovely nature which God has made us part of, and which we do not leave without regret. The country has charm along with a kind of innocence and purity; the preoccupations of artificial life scarcely penetrate it, nor political passions, nor the demands of pride, nor humiliating necessities. Undoubtedly there are great sins everywhere, but immorality has more resources in the cities.

However retired your life, the sad event which even today casts Paris into grief must have troubled your country repose. It seems that God wishes to shatter every human plan and keep to Himself the secret of the future. The papers have carried a description of the funeral obsequies. It is correct to say that the reaction . . . is fitting. The heart still retains what is best in us; it is a part of the national character still uncorrupted, the part where the faith still has a hold. A committee for the observance of Sunday is in the process of formation.³ The St. Vincent de Paul ceremony, July 19, was reverent and moving. H(is) G(race) the archbishop-elect of Avignon⁴ spoke; but what was better yet, the sovereign pontiff has established it at Rome by bestowing upon it every blessing.

Farewell, dear friend. Please give my regards to M. de Beaurepaire. I trust we

shall soon find ourselves neighbors and will embrace each other better than I can here. Pray to God for me.

Your cousin who loves you,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur H. Personneaux, Château de la Marche, on the Daubs near Verdun, Saône-et-Loire.

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Notes:

1. The Greek texts included in the licentiate curriculum were the following: Thucydides, *Speech of Pericles*; Plato, the *Gorgias* and the first *Hippias*; Aristotle, *Rhetoric*; Demosthenes, *Speech against Leptine*; Aeschylus, *Prometheus*; Sophocles, the choruses of *Oedipus à Colone*; Aristophanes, *Pluto*; Theocritus, *Combat of Hercules and Amycus*.
2. Personneaux spent part of the summer with the Beurepaire family at the Château de la Marche, as a tutor. Joseph Claude François de Beurepaire (1769-1854), former emigré (Bourbon army), deputy in 1815, peer of France in 1827, mayor of Beurepaire (Saône-et-Loire).
3. The question of a weekly day of rest had been taken up with the king by Msgr. Affre during the audience of April 30, 1842. The movement in favor of a weekly day of rest had begun at Lyon a few weeks earlier. Cf. *L'Ami de la religion*, 1842, n. 113, p. 770.
4. Msgr. Naudo, who had just left the episcopal see of Nevers for the archiepiscopal see of Avignon.



432. To Antoine de Jessé
Paris, August 9, 1842

He reports to the president of the Propagation of the Faith on steps taken to obtain an audience with the king. Advice from M. Carné and a cleric attached to the queen's household leads to the conclusion that prudence must be exercised.

Monsieur le President,

On Sunday morning I received a fresh copy of the letter addressed to the king,¹ and several days later the council's instructions urging me to make a new approach at once arrived. In reporting my attempts to you, I hope the council will appreciate the reasons which delayed them and will be kind enough to believe that I am dedicated to earnest action.

Many reasons, easy to list and too long to expatiate on, make private audiences with H[is] M[ajesty] very infrequent. The requests must pass through the hands of the aides-de-camp,² and the reply is nearly always delayed and sometimes unfavorable. Besides, such requests always take on a certain public character. The papers take notice of them, and the association wishes to avoid every kind of publicity.

It is then impossible to act without taking the advice of grave and highly placed

men, with a familiar knowledge of the court. The council gave me permission to consult the Count de Montalembert, peer of France, and M. de Carné, deputy. The former, who already kindly advised me two months ago, not being in Paris, I went to the latter. I have seen him on the matter three times; he has taken time for reflection, has accepted the council's trust gratefully, and wishes to respond to it warmly. His political position allows him to do so intelligently. Also, I have sought further enlightenment from a cleric of consummate wisdom who is attached to the household of the queen and acquainted with the present climate of feeling.³ The result of both their opinions is that it is decidedly inopportune to request an audience at this time.

1. "The king cannot receive at the present time other respects than those of public sorrow. Any effort to attract the attention of H[is] M[ajesty] to anything besides the most urgent business of the state would be considered an indiscretion; everything else must respect a father's grief and the family's consolation. Even the queen, although accessible for favors, must receive no requests. This situation will last for another month at least. In face of this delay one can only hope.
2. "The gesture which the council of the association wishes to make is beyond doubt an honorable obeisance freely given; a voluntary proof of respect and gratitude. But it can also be misunderstood as an appeal for royal protection in regard to possible future difficulties. The king could not accept it without obligating himself in some way. On the other hand, it is a delicate piece of business, because the association has no legal existence and the government does not recognize it as a legal person and because the bad will of some could contest the welcome you will receive as an irregular obligation; and a simple courtesy could be impeached as a favor.⁴ Amidst the serious circumstances in which the crown finds itself, it must avoid a scandal in the press or of a public nature, which would also affect the Association of the Propagation of the Faith.
3. "A means must then be found outside of ordinary conditions and all publicity to communicate in entire privacy and secrecy. An indirect and sure approach must be taken, which will bring about the desired result. Such an interview is possible, but only when the court has returned to normal. The means will have to be submitted to the council's judgment, and it would be better to talk about it face to face rather than in correspondence, where everything cannot be said."

Such, M.le President, is the advice they have given me; it appears to me serious enough to delay for the time. I am leaving soon for Lyon and will be present at the August 19th meeting. If the council is kind enough to hear me, I will be honored to develop the summary which I am forced to make here. My duties call me back to Paris by September 15, or October 1. This absence, which I would not permit myself if it were possible to act in the association's interests now, will not delay the progress of the matter, but will on the contrary give me the welcome opportunity to become better acquainted with your intentions and to absorb your wishes.

I am, with respect, M.le President,

Your most humble and devoted servant,
A.-F. OZANAM

Be kind enough to give the Members of the Council my most respectful regards.

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur the President of the Propagation of the Faith, rue du Pérat, n. 6, Lyon.

Original Lost: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Galopin copy. Unedited.

Notes:

1. An original copy of this letter to be transmitted to the king had reached Ozanam in a damaged condition.
2. Aides-de-camp. Twelve in number, with three more honorary aides-de-camp (Cf. *Almanach royal*, 1842, p. 49). None is mentioned by name in Ozanam's correspondence.
3. Chaplain of the queen's household: Abbé Guillon, professor of the Faculty of Theology of Paris.
4. Ozanam's prudence and that of his advisers is explained by the juridical situation of the Propagation of the Faith. The law of February 1834, which confirmed Article 291 of the Penal Code, forbade associations. In reality religious associations existed by tacit agreement (for example, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, which would not be disturbed before the circular of Persigny in 1861). The Propagation of the Faith had steadfastly refused to request legal authorization under the title of exception. The mission entrusted to Ozanam envisioned obtaining for the association the guarantee of the king's protection without any official recognition.



433. To François Lallier
Quillons, near Lyon, August 17, 1842

He has finally just rejoined his wife in the country. He converses with his friend about their recent trials, and his lack of serenity. The book he is working on is progressing: it deals with demonstrating that Germany owes the largest part of its civilization to Christianity. News of some Lyon friends.

Dear friend,

I have been on vacation only four days, in the country, at my father-in-law's, where I have rejoined my wife, who left with her mother three weeks before me to breathe the good air and build up her strength. I for my part stayed behind, held back by the research for my future book and in that isolation whose habit I had lost, and hurried to finish and get here at least for the family feast of August 15. Those long hours of work, compromised by conjugal affection, will be perhaps some excuse for my silence. But I promised myself to reserve one of my first moments of leisure for you, and you see that I am keeping my word.

Let us chat first of all about you and yours. The last time you came to Paris I scarcely had time to thank you for the wonderful letter by which you undertook to comfort me in my misfortune. No more friendly and Christian sentiments could have been uttered. Amélie was very touched by it, and as for me I asked God for

that faith and courage of whose secret you are in such full possession. Alas! my poor friend, you yourself also have need of it. You had informed us of the accident which interrupted your second hopes, but we have been told since that Madame Lallier was still suffering greatly. We have thought of it often and have shared your anxieties, whose complete bitterness I can today understand. And the desire of being reassured about it was one of the reasons which urged my writing to you. Meanwhile, La Perrière tells me that you are thinking of leaving to visit your brother. That trip would presuppose that health lives under your roof, and I am congratulating myself with you. I imagine, at least, that your child continues to grow happily before your eyes, getting bigger in body and mind, and giving you those pious joys of fatherhood of which I fear to have looked forward to only to lose them forever. For I am still crushed under the blows with which Providence struck me. I will be so for a long time yet. Look at Le Taillandier, Chaurand, Arthaud, and yourself, as well as others still; look at the little Catholic families that are developing and promising to preserve the traditions of faith and virtue. Undoubtedly I was not yet worthy, was not yet capable of this ministry.

Despite all the graces which the Good God has lavished upon me for some time, my character, far from growing stronger and more meritorious, is more than ever full of troubles and weaknesses. The literary occupations with which I occupy myself, by keeping the imagination in perpetual activity, inflict a disordered empire on it. The inevitable slowness of a university career often discourages and frightens me. There is in the extreme competition which blocks all the avenues something of the impatient and tumultuous that I do not know how to deal with. And without the sweet serenity reigning in my interior, I could be lost amid agitation from without. Why do I not have in practice that confidence in the divine goodness whose purpose I so well understand? Why this restless ardor, nothing of abandonment and little of prayer? Why does the destructive activity of my thoughts not leave me the refuge and repose others find before their crucifix? In the meantime I have so many encouragements and examples around me! I have had such happy experience of the celestial solicitude that watches over us.

At the moment I am rather tired from my studies and the year's efforts. It was only when my course was finished that I could give proper and serious attention to the subject.¹ I am showing that Germany owes its genius and civilization almost entirely to the Christian education which was given it; that its grandeur was in proportion to its union with Christianity; that it has power, light, and poetry only by fraternal communication with the other European nations; that for her as for all, there is not, there cannot be, true destinies except by oneness with Rome, depository of all the temporal traditions of humanity as well as the eternal designs of Providence. But on the other hand, national pride is complacent in the dream of native-born civilization, which without Latin contact would have developed with an unexampled splendor, and finally of a future which shall be magnificent if its strength is renewed in an unmixt Teutonism. The Germanic prototype is not Charlemagne,² but Arminius!³

These doctrines surface under different forms, amid the different philosophi-

cal, historical, and literary schools from Hegel to Goethe and from Goethe to Strauss.⁴ There seems to me some utility in attacking them at home, on their own ground; of making them see that by themselves they were only barbarians; how, through bishops and monks, by the Roman faith, by the Roman language, by Roman law, they entered into the procession of the religious, scientific, and political heritage of modern peoples, and how in repudiating it they will return little by little to barbarism. An introduction which precedes and the conclusions which will follow the history of the literature of chivalry, principal topic of my book, will bear witness to this idea. Do you think such a work could be really valuable?

I am working on the Introduction at present. My former lessons have been of little help in this section whose importance I perceived only latterly: that caused me to make extensive research. The Germans under the Romans, the military structures, the municipal organization, and the schools. The original preaching of Christianity before the invasion of the barbarians. The activity of the church in the face of, and following, the invasion. The development of the state: on one side the empire, on the other the towns. Finally the preservation and propagation of letters, the interrupted teaching of the languages and arts of antiquity, the admirable works which made of the monasteries of Fulda and Saint-Gall the schools of Germany.

In the absence of general treatments I had to research particular histories, the lives of the saints, and the chronicles of the towns. I seem to have discovered unknown and decisive facts which will establish the perpetuity of the scholarly tradition in an era accustomed to being branded with the name of barbarian from Charles Martel⁵ to the Crusades.⁶ I am going to try editing all this, about two hundred and fifty pages, and publishing some of it in the review,⁷ in order to stimulate good advice. A book in a short time is not a small matter, especially for me who compose slowly and risk taking a great deal of trouble for little result. I do not hesitate, therefore, to recommend what I have begun to your good and fraternal prayers. You probably expect me, since I am here, to give you news of our Lyon friends. While my stay has not been long enough to allow me to see much of them, La Perrière has, however, profited by our nearness and came to visit me yesterday.

He is recovering from his illness; his courses and excessive exhaustion had brought on, I believe, an inflammation of the intestines which was serious enough. Stronger now, he is going into le Bugey⁸ to rejoin Janmot, whose health also seems to be improving little by little. As for Doctor Arthaud, he wears on his prosperous face the best evidence of his profession. They are doing a great deal of good here, and the little Society of St. Vincent de Paul is on the best terms with the archbishop.

Adieu, dear friend, the postman is waiting for this letter, and I only have time to embrace you most affectionately, your friend,

A.-F. OZANAM

My wife presents her compliments to Madame Lallier.

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Lallier, Substitute Judge, Sens, Yonne

Postmark: Lyon, August 21, 1842, Auxerre, August 22, 1842.

Original: Archives Laporte.

Former publication: *Lettres* (1912), t. II, pp. 23-28. This publication is very unfaithful; numerous paragraphs have been suppressed and replaced by patchwork phrases.

Notes:

1. This paragraph and the following ones indicate what this subject was and why it had kept him in Paris, researching especially at the Sainte-Geneviève Library.
2. Charlemagne (742-814), king of France from 768, was crowned Emperor of the West by Pope Leo III on Christmas Day, 800.
3. Arminius (or in Germany, Hermann) was the chief of the Cherusci, an ancient Frankish tribe dwelling in present-day Germany. He is celebrated for his total destruction of the legions of the Roman general Varus.
4. David Strauss (1808-1874), German theologian, born at Ludwigsbourg, author of a *Life of Jesus*, where he expounded the gospel story as a myth.
5. Charles Martel (689-741), Mayor of the Palace (France), son of Pepin of Heristal. By defeating the Saracens at Poitiers in 732, he saved Christian civilization and the West from Muhammadan conquest.
6. From the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries.
7. *Le Correspondant*, which Ozanam and his friends were preparing to launch at the beginning of 1843.
8. A region of France whose chief city was Belley.



447. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, October 10, 1842

Approach to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to obtain a postal exemption for the Annales in the Levant seaports.

Dear friend,

I was forced with deep regret to leave Lyon without saying goodbye to you and without receiving from you the council's instructions. I am grateful for your kind thought of furnishing me with useful and enlightening instructions for my efforts.

In line with your advice I have had the honor of visiting M. Etienne,¹ procurator general of the Lazarist missions, to discuss the *Annales'* exemption in the seaports of Levant. He advised me to see M. Saintra,² chief of the political division of foreign affairs, and explain to this official, whose good will and zeal for the Church's interests have long been evident, the council's wishes. M. Saintra received me with every kindness due a young man with a commission from a respectable association. He did not, however, disguise the fact that there were difficulties because of the postal laws jealously guarded by the Ministry of Finance.³ On the

other hand, he earnestly promised me his entire support. He thinks the only approach to take is a petition indicating the number, weight, and destination of the packages and signed by the president of the association's council. He will assume the responsibility of transmitting and personally recommending the request to the minister from whom he has already obtained a great deal for Oriental Christians. He hopes to succeed again.⁴

Such is the reply which I hasten to transmit to the council. If it judges it fitting to make the request, which seems to be the only path to success, I will be happy to deliver the letter, press for a decision, and cooperate to the best of my ability in this enterprise which, by propagating the association in infidel countries, will impress upon it ever more deeply the glorious seal of universality.

I am waiting for the bronze medals before ordering the case for H[er] M[ajesty] the queen. When I go presently to post these lines I will pay the subscription for the protestant missions' magazine.⁵ I will not forget your comments when I write the footnote on the origin of tithing in the Propagation of the Faith.

Be kind enough to convey my deep and respectful regards to the members of the council. My respects to M. Sandier. To you, dear friend, the ever lively affection of your weak assistant.

A.-F. OZANAM

Depend upon my zeal in concluding this delicate but long-drawn-out commission.

Original Lost: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Galopin copy. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Jean-Baptiste Etienne (1801-1874). He was about to become superior of the Congregation of Lazarists (Vincentian Fathers) in 1843. There would seem to be no written trace of Ozanam's approach to him in the archives of the Congregation of Lazarists.
2. Cintrat (not Saintra), deputy director for political matters in foreign affairs (*Almanach royal*, 1842).
3. Minister of finance, Lacave-Laplagne, successor to Humann, who died in April 1842.
4. Guizot, whose favorable dispositions toward the Association of the Propagation of the Faith have already been noted.
5. Mentioned previously: *Journal des missions évangéliques*.



454. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, October 12, 1842

Treats of the opportunity of approaching Guizot in order to obtain free delivery for the Annales de la propagation de la foi to the seaports of the Levant. Means proposed for the success of this matter. Asks clarification about the gift to be presented to the queen.

Dear friend,

In reply to our last letter, the council, bearing in mind that the association has no official character and could not make a petition, thinks that consequently the course of action begun at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to obtain free transportation for the *Annales* should not be pursued. Without presuming to give advice in a serious problem I will perhaps be excused if I offer some comments with the intentions of helping. I offer them with respect, and if they are not acceptable, I withdraw them willingly.

The objection of the irregular situation of the association ought to give the council pause only if it hesitates to make itself heard by the government, or suspects that the text of the petition could be construed as constituting in some way the existence of an illegal association, and obliging it to regularize itself by seeking formal authorization.¹ But, from all the communications addressed to the minister and received by him, it would seem that his good will toward the association is without mental reservation, and that his tactfulness would not abuse a request for which he strongly desires just treatment. It would be transmitted, besides, through the hands of friends like M. Saintra, and the indiscreet publicity common to offices would thus be avoided.

On the other hand, if the council insists on keeping out of it entirely, could the approach not be made by the editor-in-chief of the *Annales* in his own name? He could sign the letter, and there would be no need of any official sanction. This first step would be supported by M. Etienne, and the administration seems to be so well disposed that success would be practically assured. In this way the responsibility of the association would not be compromised, and monetary advantage would be obtained without danger to independence.²

I am ready, then, to carry out the orders of the members of the council if they find it agreeable to abandon their first intentions. I need instructions in the other and more important matter with which I am entrusted.³ When having the little casket made for H[er] M[ajesty] the queen, should I have traced in gold lettering on the casket intended for the king the inscription: *Sagra Congregazione de Propaganda fide*? Please enlighten me on this point. The bronze medals have arrived as well as the document from the seminary of foreign missions, which will be of use for the history of the foundation of the association. If it were possible to gather some data on the way in which the laity, peoples, and governments have joined in support of the missions over the past three centuries, my work would be easier and perhaps more interesting.

Farewell, dear friend. Please convey the assurance of my respectful regard and accept the assurance of my deep and lasting affection.

Your friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Meynis, Secretary of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith, rue du Pérat, n. 6, Lyon.

Original Lost: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. *Galopin copy.* Unedited.

Notes:

1. The problem of the difficulties engendered for the Propagation of the Faith by its tolerated existence has already been raised in the correspondence between Ozanam and the Central Council of Lyon; but the problem has not been otherwise clarified.
2. Ozanam's advice was followed and proved effective. Cf. letter addressed by Guizot to the secretary of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith (Meynis) December 9, 1842.

"No one, Monsieur, appreciates more than I the merit and usefulness of the association whose request you sent me.

"I know the good it does, the services it renders to religion, humanity, and civilization; the devotion, disinterestedness, and purity of the sentiments which animate it in carrying out this task so eminently French and honoring France so highly. Such claims are more than sufficient to recommend it to the benevolence as well as the esteem of the king's government, and it gives me personal satisfaction to give evidence of that by approving the request you submitted to me. . . ." Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.
3. An approach to the queen. This had been decided on after the proposed audience with the king had met with numerous difficulties (cf. letter 432).



459. To Marquise de Dolomieu
s.l. n.d.¹

He asks her to present to Queen Marie-Amélie his request for an audience.

Madame la Marquise,²

You have been kind enough to allow me to hope for your assistance in obtaining an audience with H[er] M[ajesty] the queen and presenting her with a letter and medals in behalf of the council of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith.

Today, after waiting for the period of official observances, I have the honor to send you my audience request, happy to entrust to your ever kind auspices an effort which can contribute to the good of religion.

In expressing to you the gratitude of the association's council, which recognizes your effective interest in this matter, allow me, Madame la Marquise, to thank you for having directed me in the accomplishment of a mission of the greatest importance to me.

A.-F. OZANAM

Copy: Archives Laporte. Unedited. It is not the original letter, but a duplicate which Ozanam saved.

Notes:

1. Necessarily before November 30 (cf. the letter to Meynis following).
2. Lady-in-waiting to Queen Marie-Amélie.



460. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, November 30, 1842

Success of the matter of the free postage. State of efforts to obtain the audience with the queen. Beginning of the article requested for the next report in the Annales de la propagation de la foi. Account of Boré and his work in behalf of the association.

Dear friend,

Pardon my long silence. I break it to acknowledge receipt of your recent letters. The one addressed to the minister of foreign affairs has been delivered to him. I am delighted at the happy outcome of that effort. Perhaps I should thank M. Saintra particularly on your behalf because without doubt his active kindness served the interests of the association greatly.

The more important business with which I have been honored has not been neglected. First of all I have had the second inscription for the two medals made up. The work, which seems to me most satisfactory, cost fifteen francs. Next, as I waited in vain for certain means of introduction promised me, I addressed the Marquise de Dolomieu, lady-in-waiting and friend of H[er] M[ajesty], directly for the purpose of obtaining by her intervention the most favorable audience possible.¹ I am waiting for her reply!

I will soon begin the article so kindly confided to me for the next report.² It is a task I will acquit with love. There is much pleasure in telling of the humble origin of great things. It is so wonderful thus to reveal the secret work of God. And besides, we are at the moment caught up in apostolic marvels. The last issue of the *Annales* continues for us the acts of the martyrs of Tonkin. We have also had for some weeks now our admirable friend Eugène Boré and have been able to avail ourselves of his tales, which are always too short because he must of necessity speak of himself. You will learn not without consolation that at the brilliant gatherings he takes part in, the Asian pilgrim recruits many dozens of subscribers for the Association of the Propagation of the Faith.

It remains to tell you how touched I am at your kind assurances. You know that I am bound to Lyon by all the roots the heart shoots forth. I am counting on you to

remember the get-together of December 3. Please give the council the homage of my respectful devotion.

Your friend bound by every tenderness,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur D. Meynis, Secretary of the Propagation of the Faith, rue du Pérat, n. 6, Lyon.

Original lost: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Galopin copy. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Cf. letter 459 to Marquise de Dolomieu.
2. In 1842 it was not, by way of exception, Ozanam who wrote the annual report of the association's activities for the *Annales de la propagation de la foi*, pp. 169 ff. The article traces the history of Catholic missions since the sixteenth century.



462. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, December 11, 1842

Status of the efforts to obtain an audience with the queen. The Marquise de Dolomieu's advice on the steps to be taken.

I have just left the Marquise de Dolomieu, lady-in-waiting to the queen. I explained the matter to her. She advised me to request first an audience with the queen, which she promises to obtain, in order to present to H[er] M[ajesty] the medals intended for her, and then to tell her of the hesitation about offering the medals to the king and simply to ask her advice. It could happen that she would be kind enough to take charge of the casket herself, or she might point out the procedure to follow in order to be received by the king, and in either case our doubts will be dispelled.

It is suggested that the council send along a letter to the queen with the offering it makes her. It would be sufficient to express in it respect for her person, which is only right, and incurs no obligation. I would also like another copy of the letter for H[is] M[ajesty] sent to me. The date on mine is too old. I hope that this great and too long drawn-out business will be finished soon.

Now, dear friend, since the end of the year is a time of many expenses, you would infinitely oblige me by having sent to me the total of my second quarter's fees, that is, 300 francs, at the next opportunity. I have worked very little for the association this year. But the father of the family did not disdain to pay the workers of the eleventh hour.

Please present to the council the assurance of my respectful devotion.

Your friend forever,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Meynis, rue du Pérat, n. 6, Lyon.

Original lost: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. *Galopin copy.* Unedited.





1843-1844

468. To Dominique Meynis¹
S.l. [Paris], January 31, 1843

He reports on the audience Queen Marie-Amélie has just granted him, during which he paid the respects of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith. On M. de Carné's advice it was judged preferable not to address the king directly. The court is well disposed toward the association. He is preparing the annual report asked of him.

Monsieur le President,

I have just had the honor of being received by the queen and of presenting to her the letter and the medals the council had entrusted to me.² Her Majesty accepted this homage with much affability and demonstrated her attachment to the Association of the Propagation of the Faith. She knows its good works, reads the *Annales*, and is deeply moved, so she told me, by the account of the sufferings and labors and dangers by which the poor missionaries seek out their eternal salvation, while we imagine we can attain ours as easily as possible. When I explained to her the council's regret that it could not put a gold medal in her casket, "It is better so," she replied, "for it will leave a little more gold for the missions." She questioned me with lively interest about the operation and organization of the association, and asked me what hope the opening of the ports in China could afford religion.³ Finally, after insisting upon knowing the reason for our approach to the king, she offered to herself present to His Majesty the casket and the council's letter. I thought it proper to accept this offer with gratitude, and when I therefore took it upon myself to do so in line with M. de Carné's advice, the queen was kind enough to accept immediately, assuring me besides that the gift would be appreciated and that the benevolent solicitude of the king could be counted on for the association as for anything to do with Catholic missions.

Thus have I tried to acquit myself of the honorable commission you have been kind enough to confide to me. I am sorry for the delays, which were inevitable. It would perhaps have been more flattering to get to the king without detour or intermediary. But for the success of the matter nothing could be happier than the intervention of the queen, ever eager, as is known, to advance the interest of religion with the prince and ever assured of a favorable reception. The approach could not be less successful nor make less noise, and we will avoid the embarrassment of indiscreet publicity. Besides, the first step taken, if the council has further wishes later on, it will always be easy for me to make them known to H[er] M[ajesty] the queen through the good offices of M. de Carné and Mme. de Dolomieu. I would be infinitely happy when new occasions arise to make myself useful in the pious plans of the directors of the Propagation of the Faith.

It remains to reply to a note from the secretary who asked to have by February 15 a work destined for the May issue. Figuring that the work should be delivered to the printer no sooner than March 1, I have not taken it up again actively. Now I can promise that the editing will be finished by the 22nd, and it will therefore arrive in good time for the corrections, which I leave entirely to the wisdom of the council.

I have the honor to be, with respect and the deepest devotion to the association whose destinies divine Providence has placed in your hands,
M. le President,

Your most humble and obedient servant,
A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Unedited.

Notes:

1. The French edition wrongfully addresses this letter to Dominique Meynis. It is obvious from the text that it is addressed to the president of the council, Antoine de Jessé. In fact Meynis, who was secretary, is referred to in the third person.
2. Cf. letter 398, Ozanam to Meynis, May 21, 1842; cf. also letter 392 written between November 15 and 20, 1842, to Marquise de Dolomieu.
3. By the Treaty of Nankin, which ended the Opium War (August 29, 1842), the English had effectively attained the opening of five Chinese ports to their commerce (Shanghai, Amoy, Canton, Fau-Tcheau, Ningpo). France was taking steps to obtain like conditions from China (Cf. P. Renouvin, *Histoire des relations internationales*, le XIX^e siècle, 1^{re} partie, p. 226).



469. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, February 14, 1843

He has still not been able to get in writing confirmation of the court's good disposition toward the Propagation of the Faith. He expresses admiration for the projects, still secret, of the bishop of Nancy and asks whether the rumors about the emperor of China's good dispositions toward the missions have any foundation. He is working happily on the promised article.

Dear friend,

I am late in acknowledging reception of your recent letters. I am deeply sensible of the satisfaction the council feels in the matter of the medals. But I regret not being able to increase it by sending you the information I had hoped to. M. de Carné deems it impossible to obtain a letter from the king's secretary of commands, only perhaps one from the queen expressing a sense of gracious acceptance. In the meantime, it seems to me you could, in approaching Propaganda, count on the amiable assurances of H[er] M[ajesty].

The letter for M. Boré has been sent to his address (rue du Valier, dans le cité, Angers); he is not expected here for a month. Thank you for being so kind as to let me in on the secret of the wonderful project as well as the requests of the bishop of Nancy.¹ It is very consoling to me, at the distance I find myself, to be able to fol-

low the association's course of business and to be treated always as a member of the family.

This reason and the need for enlightenment in the work given to me make me consult you today. The Catholic papers are filled with a new rumor that has stirred every heart. It absorbs me as well as everyone around me, and I am not sure whether God, who can even now work the greatest miracles, should be thanked or men be distrusted, for they often compromise the divine interests by their indiscreet desires and credulity. If the marvel is true, if the request for forty missionaries by the emperor of China is a fact, we should not be silent. We should have proof of it. I would almost say we should be silent about everything else and that this event, without equal in the church's history, should itself alone introduce the twenty-second year of the association. For three days I have thought of nothing else: I have made inquiries and know that the internunciature has received affirmations from Rome.² You should not be left out. Please write as soon as possible about this matter, then, and instruct me as to what I should say at a time when no word seems to do it justice.

For the rest, the account of the beginnings of the association will take up the largest portion of my article. Your comments about a more generous effort in the future to support the good begun will find their proper place. It will help me to know, however, the total amount of receipts, at least approximately. While I hold myself to the deadline of the 23rd of the current month, as we agreed, if it were strictly possible to keep my article a week longer for further reworking I would rest all the easier for not being able to correct the proofs.

The time I have spent on this article is like a visit with you. I am delighted to find myself for a while in that modest parlor where you show the Christian hospitality of two worlds. I feel myself, unworthy as I am, a part of the grand designs Providence seems to advance by your hands. Do we not share unformed questions in face of this movement which lays hold of both boundaries of the Orient, Syria and the Chinese empire, in order to turn this portion of the globe again to the light of the radiant cross which is the symbol of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith?

Farewell, dear friend, my regards to the members of the council, to you my devoted affection, pray for me.

A.-F. OZANAM

I am going immediately to *l'Univers* to take care of the errands you entrusted to me.

Address: Monsieur Meynis, Secretary of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith, rue du Pérat, n. 6, Lyon.

Postmark: February 14, 1843.

Original: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Msgr. de Forbin Janson (1785-1844), who was in the process of founding the Association of the Holy Childhood. The Council of Paris of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith had given a favorable reception to Msgr. de Forbin Janson's exploration of a kind of merger of the two associations. The Council of Lyon favored the maintenance of their autonomy. (Cf. minutes of the meetings of the Council of Paris, February 3 and 17, 1843, archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Paris.) Charles, Comte de Forbin Janson, born at Paris, was auditor of the Council of State (1805) but withdrew from the imperial service over the quarrel between Napoleon I and Pius VII. Ordained a priest in 1811, he founded with Rauzan the Society of Missions of France, which organized the missions during the Restoration. As bishop of Nancy (1823-1830), he continued to make the missions priority. From 1839 to 1841 he evangelized Canada and the United States. On his return he founded the Work of the Holy Childhood.
2. *L'Univers*, Sunday, February 12, 1843, p. 1. When the English signed the Treaty of Nankin with China (1842), France was forced to seek similar advantages by negotiations which were to result in the Treaty of Whampoa, October 24, 1844. Among the clauses of the treaty, France obtained the recognition of freedom of apostolate for Catholic missions and impunity for Chinese converts. Several diplomatic missions were sent to China between 1842 and 1844: the Dubois de Jancigny mission in January 1842, the Lagnené mission in April 1843. The negotiation alluded to here was previous to Lagnené's arrival. It undoubtedly concerned a proposal to be discussed by Jancigny and the Imperial Commissar Ki-Ying, which was to result in a provisory agreement of July 15, 1843, never carried out, Ki-Ying boasting that he had tricked the French. The rumor that Ozanam cites here agrees with the general tenor of the negotiations which were seized upon and interpreted by the French with excessive optimism.



470. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, February 28, 1843

He sends the secretary of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith the report of the association's activities of the past year and offers his excuses for being late. He is trying to obtain from l'Univers necessary rectification following an item which could be prejudicial to the Propagation of the Faith. New allusions to the good dispositions of the king. He recommends himself to his friend's prayers at the beginning of Lent.

Dear friend,

Here I am, rather embarrassed, renewing my excuses and sending you my finished article.¹ Yesterday I set aside a half-hour to make a neat copy of it, and the half-hour was stolen by a visit which occurred despite a strict guard of my door. I allotted three weeks for the work and had no doubt of meeting the deadline when a host of unforeseen circumstances thus brought me right down to the wire. Please be assured that I will take better precautions the next time and that you will not experience the inconvenience that I perhaps cause you. I trust that the members of the editing committee will also excuse me, and I have only one anxiety: to know whether my article has come close to satisfying your wishes.

I am sorry that I could not receive more complete information from you before I left Lyon. For lack of more detailed instructions, I thought first, as to length, I should confine myself to moderate limits, about twelve pages of the *Annales*. Then it seemed to me that the account of the foundation of the association should be as simple as possible, and that is why I have restricted myself to facts and dates, trying to present them in the clearest order, leaving comments to the end. And I have hidden any identity of persons by the use of initials, and have left out small details which have only local or individual interest. The short introduction where I have tried to summarize what preceded the article was fashioned out of the data you supplied me with. The last year, whose purpose is to point out the needs of the new year, might seem too short to you: I was afraid that if I expanded it I might use up more space than I should in the issue. For the rest, you will note that your opinion has been followed as regards the China missions. Finally, it is completely understood that you will make use of the article according to the council's wisdom and wishes, adding, deleting, and correcting as you will. I make no pretense to be treated better than the venerable missionaries whose letters we have so many times subjected to deletions and retouching. Once in your hands, what I have written is no longer mine. I consider myself already sufficiently honored and happy to serve the publication of so admirable a society. If my pen can again render itself useful on occasion in the same way, I will always be grateful for a use which sanctifies it and must bring it luck.

Now I must consult you about the note which has been sent me for *l'Univers*. It happens that the editors of this paper have close ties with the priest who is in charge of collecting for an English mission.² Consequently they are unwilling to publish your letter in its present text, which could hurt the work in question. The cleric alluded to has come to see me and made some explanations which excuse somewhat the carelessness of his first effort. He then offered me a rewrite which preserves the substance of your note but adds: "However, it can happen that, despite real needs, whether because of a defect of proper solicitation or for other reasons, of which the councils of the association must be the judges, a country or a district does not participate in this support. Such is the case of the mission which we have undertaken to help and for which we continue to solicit alms, etc." I thought that, by modifying certain phrases, I could accept the compromise, so as to delay no longer in rectifying an error dangerous to the honor of the association. Meanwhile, I wait for your reply.

L'Ami de la religion, not having carried the announcement in question, has felt that it must give the answer that there is hardly a reason for publishing the rectification.

I will see M. de Carné again to find out whether some acknowledgement can be obtained of the king's gracious acceptance of the medals from the sacred congregation of propaganda.

Farewell, dear friend, pardon a wretch who uses wretched paper and a bad pen and who, I don't know why, finds the greatest difficulty in expressing today everything he wants to say to you. The holy time of Lent is just beginning. Pray much for

me who, overburdened with duties, has scarcely leisure to pray. Give the council of the association the homage of my respectful devotion, and take for yourself the assurance of my unchangeable friendship.

A.-F. OZANAM

If you see Abbé Desgeorges,³ would you tell him that I received with much thanks his letter and package and have long since done what he asked?

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur D. Meynis, Secretary of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith, rue du Pérat, n. 6, Lyon.

Postmark: February 28, 1843.

Original: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Cf. *Annales de la propagation de la foi*, t. XV, March 1843, pp. 169-179.
2. The appeal in behalf of the English mission, carried in *l'Univers* of February 11, 1843, was signed by Abbé Hault, chaplain of the Institution Laville, former professor of philosophy at the Collège de Juilly. In the same issue it was said that offerings would be accepted at the archbishop's palace by Abbé Carron, honorary canon, vice-official of the diocese. But it was the custom that every missionary work would submit its requests for help through the Propagation of the Faith. Similar incidents had already resulted in slightly strained relations between *l'Univers* and the Propagation of the Faith.
3. Amedée Desgeorges (1804-1887), born at Lyon, ordained in 1832, belonged to the Society of Priests of Saint-Irenée or "Chartreux" of Lyon, of which Abbé Alphonse Ozanam was a member from 1835 to 1841. A renowned preacher, Desgeorges was a member of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith of Lyon from 1838. He was superior of the Chartreux from 1856 to 1882.



471. To Francois Lallier
Paris, March 9, 1843

He has been very busy in preparing two articles for the Correspondant¹ and the Annales de la propagation de la foi. The common project (translation of the works of St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure) had the approval of Victor Cousin. Announces du Lac's entry into the Benedictines. Reflections on Christian renewal.

Dear Friend,

You must think me blameworthy. After so many work projects carried out together and so much shared discussion, my two-months' silence can seem inexcusable to you. It would be indeed had not two long articles, one for the *Correspondant¹* and the other for the *Annales de la propagation de la foi²* taken up all

my time; and you know that my duties do not leave me much. I have just finished six of the most laborious weeks of my life, which discouraged every distraction and commandeered my evenings. You know with what difficulty I write, and now more than ever I cannot let my pen grow rusty: it is like an old rapier that can no longer be drawn from its scabbard. You will be receiving my published article, along with a short introduction, which shows it for what it is, the opening lesson and general outline of my course for the present year. I would like you to give me your opinion.

Do not think, however, dear friend, that I neglected the plans we made to collaborate for my personal studies.³ More than a month ago I saw M. Cousin and talked with him about our undertaking at great length. He strongly approves. He finds the choice of the *Itinerarium* especially excellent.⁴ As for St. Thomas, he was torn between translating a tract chosen from three or four he mentioned or a treatise drawn from the *Summa* which would have the advantage of better demonstrating his manner and method, translated, however, exactly, forthrightly, and without mutilation. He urged me not occupy myself with Roger Bacon too much, although he offered to give me, if I wished, an unedited treatise of that doctor. He thinks the style of this version should find its source in the theological writings of Bossuet,⁵ in the preface of Arnauld's⁶ *Perpetuité de la foi*, and in Malebranche, all excellent models of classical language at the same time faithful to the school. In short, M. Cousin believes in the possibility and probability of a success. (And I have reason to believe that he would assist in asking for the French Academy's recognition of a work of this kind.)

In another direction we have been less successful. Every attempt to find separate tracts of St. Bonaventure has been in vain. [Four days ago I visited Toulouse, which again has nothing. Méquignon the younger held out some hope of finding them, but this hope has had no results. This same bookseller has only one complete St. Bonaventure, which he will sell for 180 francs. It is the only copy that has turned up to date. Would you agree to such considerable expense? If you are determined on the work in question, I would urge you not to draw back in face of such an expenditure; in other words, burn the ships and refuse to abandon the enterprise. We can, if you wish, wait a while longer, visit other booksellers, and only conclude this expensive bargain for lack of anything else if we have no further information by Easter. Tell me what you want to do.] But is it not shameful and deplorable that in a metropolitan city, an archdiocese with canons and seminaries, no portion of the works of the Seraphic Doctor can be found? There is the result of expelling the monks. If there were Franciscans, you can be sure they would not be missing in their library. I have been asked to tell you a great piece of news that will undoubtedly bring consolation to your friendship as it has to mine. Du Lac enters the Benedictine Fathers of Paris next Wednesday.⁷ You perhaps know that he has been entertaining this pious design for a long time. The merger of *l'Univers* with *l'Union*⁸ gave him his freedom, and he took advantage of it for the sole purpose of going to immolate himself to God in the cloister. He will find there the peace he needed so much. I am happy to see him leave the harsh and vulgar life of journalism, which he was not made for. This excellent soul will unfold under the influence of prayer and

some day will produce fruits we shall all profit from. The vows of so many friends engaged in a holier vocation, as I see it, are of great help to us left behind in the world. Many have been blessed in our generation. If we consider it rightly, we should look upon it as an elite band which we must follow after under pain of desertion. Do you not contemplate the myriad of confreres of St. Vincent de Paul around us who win us to their ranks, thus committing us to the end of achieving our salvation?

Tell me your news. Madame Ozanam sends her regards to Madame Lallier. We heartily join in your hope of becoming a father for the second time. Tell us, too, whether your first-born's health remains flourishing; and be kind enough to plant a kiss on his forehead for us. Tell me when there is question of your promotion and whether I can do anything for you. Finally, will you see us again at Easter as you have given us to believe? Forgive me if this letter is short after so long a delay. Tomorrow's lesson makes me hurry. But be assured that in silence, as in absence, you are ever remembered by your friend.

A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Lallier, Acting Judge, Sens, Yonne.

Original: Archives Laporte.

Previous publication: *Lettres* (1912), t. II, pp. 28-31.

Notes:

1. Cf. *Le Correspondant*, February 15, 1843, "De la tradition littéraire en Italie."
2. Cf. *Annales de la propagation de la foi*, XV, March 1843, report (unsigned) of the association's activities in 1842.
3. Follow-up of a letter of October 4, 1842, where a joint work "of great relevance" is spoken of. A like proposal is alluded to in Ozanam's article "De la propagation des études théologiques et de quelques éditions récentes des pères et des docteurs," in *l'Université catholique*. t. XIV, n. 83, November 1842, pp. 400-404.
4. The complete title is *Itinerarium mentis ad Deum*.
5. Jacques Benigne Bossuet (1627-1704), bishop of Condom, then of Meaux, born at Dijon, sacred orator, called the Eagle of Meaux. A disciple of St. Vincent de Paul and member of that saint's famous Tuesday Conferences, a weekly gathering of priests intent on their perfection, he wrote in a magnificent and inspired style, his *Sermons* being the most sublime monuments of pulpit eloquence.
6. Antoine Arnauld, disciple of Saint-Cyran and Jansenist apologist (*De Communion frequente*) refuted by St. Vincent de Paul. *La Perpétuité de la foi*, published in collaboration with Nicole, was written against the Protestants in his usual fine literary style.
7. Dom Guéranger had hired a building at 13 bis de la rue Monsieur where the Priory of Saint-Germain-de-Paris (dependent upon Solesmes) was established on May 14, 1842. Dom Pitra became prior on March 9, 1843. On March 19 of the same year Melchoir du Lac de Montvert received the habit there from Dom Guéranger's hands. (He was not obliged to live in a Benedictine House.) The Parisian prior disappeared in August 1845, following a financial debacle. The monks withdrew to Solesmes (Cf. Dom Cabrol, *Histoire de Cardinal Pitra*, Paris, V. Retaux, 1893).
8. Merger of *l'Union* and *l'Univers*. The allusion is to *l'Union catholique*, a legitimist and Catholic publication, founded in 1841 and absorbed by *l'Univers*, January 31, 1843. It had assumed a moderate position in the monopoly dispute.

475. Monsieur Soulacróix
S.L. [Paris] April 5, 1843

Interesting, lengthy letter on an article requested by Villemain, minister of public instruction, to refute calumnies on his works. He explains his reasons for obliging and for not signing the article, which he submits to his father-in-law for corrections. He explains how he intends to serve both the church and the university.

Dear Father,

For a long time now I have needed to write to you, first to satisfy a heart which wants to unburden itself, and then about business wherein my inexperience has often enough sought the help of your advice. But this year's multiplied activities have given me no rest. The new duties which the Collège Stanislas impose on me take the little leisure remaining between my two Sorbonne lessons, and the inevitable interruptions, the cares and conventions of social life vie for the very little time I can give my beloved Amélie. I thus hardly write to anyone and am reduced to preserving in the heart's silence so many relationships of family and friends that I would like to reanimate by an active correspondence.

Meanwhile, I must at least apprise you of the safe arrival of the treasure you have been so kind as to send us; I renew my thanks to you and regret that you may have pressed yourself for the 500 francs of which we have no actual need, for our little bark is afloat, thanks be to God; and, despite the enormous expense of our new installation, I am able to bank a thousand francs. I hold it as a good maxim, when the greatest part of one's possessions come not from interest or capital but in payment of services, to put away as much as possible, a fourth of it annually, so as to create finally the corresponding capital. Such economy is especially wise if one is a bit uncertain of the future and runs the risk of experiencing a promotion which could be momentarily ruinous. That should be explained, and we shall in this long history of my affairs which I must tell you about.

Three weeks ago, on a Thursday evening, at the minister of public instruction's¹ reception, I was approached by M. Vacherot,² assistant director of the Ecole normale; he drew me aside, and in confidence which I entrust to you, told me something that he assured me came from his own chief—you may, however, think otherwise. In these circumstances he attested to M. Dubois³ wish to name me to the office of master of conferences at the Ecole normale. He assured me that I was first on the next list of candidates. But, he added, the minister, rather timid by nature and frightened further by the violence of present debate,⁴ would like to have proof of my devotion, and if I had the occasion to serve him in any way I should do my utmost not to lose the opportunity. For the rest, M. Vacherot declared that, without sharing my beliefs in any way, it was greatly desired to connect me with the école, to which it is hoped to draw all ardent spirits to express their opinions. I received this overture with a sincere gratitude, and asked the assistant director to testify if necessary to the proofs of attachment I thought I had given, and went the following Sunday to see M. Dubois, who did not bring up business but chatted with me a great deal about literature.

After some inquiries in knowledgeable places, it appears that he is on the lookout for a replacement for M. Nisard,⁵ now a deputy, who had a lot to do, that probably the first year only the title of substitute and a salary of 1,500 francs could be obtained, and that nevertheless it would be infinitely important to accept this position which would give me a foot into the university and would, for example, assure me of an infallible succession to the Faculty of Letters. Matters were at this point until Sunday, March 26, when I received an invitation from the minister's office to call there the next day, Monday. I appeared at the time indicated and found M. Villemain more gracious than ever. He got to the business at once, and showing me a book that you had sent him from Lyon, *Le monopole universitaire destructeur de la religion et des lois*, he indicated several violent accusations against him.⁶ He showed me, on the other hand, his work from which the indicted passages were drawn, with omissions and falsifications which changed the sense of the thought.⁷ I expressed my frank indignation to him, and he immediately asked whether I would take on a response which you might publish in one of the city's journals.⁸ It was impossible for me to refuse a request which demanded nothing of me but conformity to truth and justice; I asked only for a little time, and the audience wound up with a long literary conversation wherein the grand master of the university⁹ was prodigious in the best evidences of taste and the wisest comments on the classical authors of the seventeenth century.

I must, however, admit that I do not take up without a certain repugnance a task totally foreign to my habits and which may cause me much embarrassment. Besides I am a bit anxious about entering into a dispute where, as I see it, there are many thorns and pitfalls. Study is my thing rather than discussion. Next, M. Villemain did not even give me the book which he wants me to answer; he needed it, he said, for other purposes; consequently, he gave me only a note¹⁰ containing the parallel passages from this work and from his own *Mélanges littéraires* which were attacked in it. This already seems to be less than honorable. But principally I found him so preoccupied with what concerned his own person, and he maltreated so harshly in front of me several distinguished men, that I had difficulty in containing my annoyance. Finally, he finished up by a sovereignly dangerous insinuation, seeking whether he might ask me some day to write a complete critique of his *Mélanges littéraires* in order to defend its purposes and make it serve the interests of religion. But, some days earlier, M. Ampère and M. Fauriel, speaking with me about my collaboration in *Correspondant*, urged me not to withdraw it, because the only means to recommend it is outside support, and that, besides, the minister would demand of me more and more and grant me less and less when he had obtained the more. It is what experience proves every day: favors are for threatening more than helping.

I thought, therefore, in accepting the mission M. Villemain entrusts to me, that I owed it to my dignity and my conscience to inform him under what conditions I would undertake the article. I would not wish by an all-embracing apologia to take up at Lyon the implicit defense of M. Bouillier's¹¹ doctrines, for example; I would insist on the gravity and difficulty of the teaching question and the uselessness of compromising it by a harmful debate; finally, I would reprehend with force

calumnies which every person of good will should denounce. The minister seemed to accept these conditions, expressing only the wish that I should not give the impression of approving attacks made on other members of the teaching profession. For the rest he refused the offer to submit my article to him when it is finished, and said nothing about my signing it. I avoided bringing the point up, so as to preserve my total freedom. He dismissed me, as I have said, with perfect courtesy.

Now, good father, you will find the promised article enclosed. After mature thought and before God, I have decided absolutely not to sign it. Here are my reasons: the Lyon journals have asked me for articles several times and I have always refused so as to avoid recriminations and jealousies. I do not wish to expose myself to them now. Besides, granted that Providence tolerates the toilsome but peaceful preoccupation of knowledge, it is not right for me to jump into disputes where I would lose, along with my time, the little I have of energy and ardor. I would wind up playing a role pleasing to nobody: I belong to a side too unhappy with the ignorance and bad faith of those who make themselves defenders of the clergy not to disapprove of them severely; on the other hand, I would not be able to dissemble about the abuses and detestable teachings I see around me in the central administration and the chairs. Finally, I have respect to preserve at Lyon: you know how much good will has been shown me there, what honorable and warm friendships have supported me. There are those perhaps, who first of all called your kind attention to me, an attention later destined to become so fatherly and sweet an affection. I am bound to give prior loyalty to those who drew me out of affliction when I was yet without position or future. They hold me in faithful remembrance and, not to hide anything from you, even what may be a presumptuous illusion, it is already rumored of me that one day, after age has matured my speech, it could well be considered to confer on me the honor of representing my fellow citizens and in such a way that monetary considerations would not be an insurmountable obstacle.¹² In any case I know what resources I can call on in days of reverses, what sympathies in moments of success. It is among fervent Catholics that my books can hope for some popularity; it is in their ranks that I find here the small number of men of position whose influence can protect me; it is in their ranks that I find the youth who understand and back me. I also find there solid virtues, truly beneficent works, and models who edify me with the faith which enlightens me. I would not at any price sadden them by a step which they could take ill and could judge as an unfortunate intervention in deplorable debates.

These reasons which forbid my signature should at the same time bring me to write my article in such fashion as to have no reason to disavow it if the author were discovered. Besides, in honor and conscience, I could not do otherwise. That is why I have from the first put aside the whole question of the organization of teaching: the king's government having not yet expressed its opinion,¹³ I have thought it more respectful to imitate its silence and to hide my feeling which inclines more to authority than to liberty in this matter. In the second place, I have thought it my duty to show an impartial spirit by condemning with the same mark of disapproval all the violence of the press against the episcopate and the university. It even seems

to me that in acting with equity I would more positively serve the intentions of the minister, and that, if a refutation were to have some effect in a Christian city, it should be the kind that would be written in the interest of Christianity itself. However, since it is possible that I have not weighed carefully enough the effect of certain passages, I ask you, good father, to be kind enough to read this article carefully and amend or cross out, in your wisdom, whatever seems imprudent to you. This is one of those occasions when I am happy not to feel alone in the world and to have a protective cover over me.

I need to ask you also, to acquit my conscience, to be kind enough to verify the extracts from the anonymous book, which I have not seen, so as not to expose myself to that rashness of judgment I reproach in it. All the texts I have cited, whether from this work or *Mélanges littéraires*, are copied in their entirety on the handwritten note given to me. Finally, will you be so good as to urge publication in the journal, M. Villemain seeming especially impatient to see destroyed as far as possible the calumny which attains his honor?

Pardon the worry I give you, admirable father. I would have infinite comfort if you should approve my conduct in this situation. I am not unaware that I am letting myself in for a harder life and perhaps one with slower advancement by avoiding the paths the greater majority take. But your example has taught me to avoid them. You have always shown me that strict integrity which foresees opposition and is not afraid because it is sure of itself. I am not unaware of the firmness that has made you intervene between the pretences of local interests and the exigencies of power in order to defend the honor of the system and repress the aberrations of individuals. I see here and admire, in the venerable M. Rendu, some of these qualities and align myself with them. I belong both to the church and the university and have dedicated to them without hesitation a life which will be fulfilled if it honors God and serves the state. I want to reconcile these duties, wherein the difficulty seems to lie. I believe that I have partly succeeded when, in a public lecture to an audience of every belief and party, I profess Christian teaching with simplicity. I believe this is the best reply to those who make accusations against our chairs. And I also do not believe it useless for me to wield a university pen in Catholic publications where I attempt, so far as my modest talents allow, to restore the practice here of calm and serious study. Even more, I am not content with strong representations to the editor of the revue; I have written to the author of an article to complain vigorously. I know that I sometimes make my friends unhappy by my disapproval, but in that circumstance I believe that to make them unhappy is to restrain and to be of service to them. I know that some take fright when they see me speaking in a hall where immediately preceding me an ancient history professor attacked Revelation; I am touched at such friendly solicitude, but it does not trouble me. It could not be wished with any more justice that I write in a journal where some enemy of the university preceded me: if there is an established maxim today among men of letters it is that each one bears the responsibility for his works.

Be assured, however, that if the *Correspondant* assumes a hostile attitude, I

would consider in the hierarchy of proprieties separating myself from it completely; I had already signified such before I received your letter and the wise counsel it gave me. Increase it, admirable father, in order to give guidance to a life wherein your daughter's happiness is concerned. Often from her, also, I have good advice which moderates the first heat of my emotions and ideas. She herself is being strengthened by getting used to an active and occupied life. The company of the excellent friend she found this year helps her a little and comforts her a great deal. It should compensate for the enjoyments which her delicate condition now deprive her of. But it will not suffice to make her listen to reason in regard to the indefinite delay of your trip. I think it is necessary to tell you frankly that your beloved daughter's health being so bound up with her peace of mind, she is suffering more than she will admit from the anxiety of not seeing you. It is infinitely important for you to afford her this consolation, which will be greatly shared by me. We are awaiting you with a desire which no pretext should be able to cheat us of. Come, good father, and let this embrace be one of the last our letters carry you. Please give my good mother my tender regards. A thousand affectionate best wishes to my brothers, and accept yourself the assurance of the filial piety with which I will ever be honored to count myself one of your children.

A.-F. OZANAM

I join your Amélie in thanking you for the charming compliment you paid her. As I would like to have a copy of my article and have not the time to make one, would you be kind enough, if there is someone in your office who does not know my writing, to have a copy made, or better, give the task to the journal's office before it is printed? If you wish to test any doubt about changes to be made you could talk to M. Noirot, in whom, after you, I have the utmost confidence. Except for him I wish to preserve anonymity from everyone at Lyon. Meanwhile, there are three points I absolutely insist upon: 1) that there be no signature; 2) that I reserve my opinion in regard to the organization of teaching; 3) that I highly disapprove of the attacks against the clergy. If one of these three seem to you to create too serious a problem, please delay and write to me. Finally, pardon all the trouble I have given you in the midst of more important business. It is the lot of fathers to see their family cares multiplied.

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Notes:

1. M. Villemain.
2. Etienne Vacherot (1809-1892), agrégé in philosophy, director of studies at the Ecole normale (1837), substitute for Victor Cousin at the Sorbonne (1839), distinguished himself by the independence of his opinions under the empire. Cf. his work *La Démocratie* (1859).
3. Director of the Ecole normale supérieure and member for literature of the Royal Council.
4. The most recent incident concerning the monopoly of the university had been the delivery in

March 1843 of petitions hostile to the university, which, however, certain Catholic deputies disavowed. It was another episode in a controversy launched in its violent phase on March 10, 1841, by the introduction to the chamber of the Villemain proposal. By entirely restricting university monopoly, the proposal withdrew from the bishops a portion of their authority over minor seminaries (*petits séminaires*); in face of the bishops' protests the proposal had been withdrawn, but the debate had continued, the attacks from the university side focusing especially on the Jesuits: Michelet's and Quinet's courses at the Collège de France, May 1842; Villemain's discourse to the French Academy, June 30, 1842; Mignet's discourse to the Academy of Moral Sciences, December 8, 1842.

5. Désiré Nisard (1806-1888), professor at the Ecole normale supérieure and department head at the Ministry of Public Instruction (Department of Scientific and Literary Institutions), had been elected deputy from the Côte-d'Or in July 1842.
6. Anonymous work (attributed to P. Deschamps, S.J., of Lyon), published by Canon Des Garets, Lyon, Pomet publishing house, 1843. Villemain and Ozanam had consulted a first edition (not found); the one we refer to here is later than May 26, 1843 (allusion to the meeting of the chamber on that date, p. 578). The text of the work had already had partial publication in the form of articles in the *Reparateur* of Lyon during the elections of 1842.
7. Villemain was cited more than twenty times for his *Nouveaux mélanges littéraires* (Paris, Ladvocat, 1828). Most of the accusatory citations are printed in tome 2 of the work, which is in 3 tomes.
8. Cf. the journal *Le Rhône*, April 13, 1843, under the heading "Variétés" and under the title: *Des attaques contre l'université*. The article was published in *La Gazette spéciale de l'instruction publique* of April 27, 1843.
9. Villemain.
10. The text of this note—which is known only through Ozanam's refutation—is not extant.
11. François Bouillier (1803-1899), taught philosophy at the Faculté de Lyon from 1839 to 1856. He was often the subject of attack from the Catholic side. Director of the Ecole normale supérieure in 1867. During the academic year 1842-1843 the subject of his course was the theory of impersonal reason (cf. J. Simon, "Etat de la philosophie en France" (State of philosophy in France), in *Revue des deux mondes*, February 1843, p. 373. Catholics reproached him for the pantheistic orientation of his teaching. In the university monopoly sides were taken equally and several times, by the following: J.-J. Ampère, Bouillier, Michael Chevalier, Ph. Chasles, Victor Cousin, Fauriel, Ferrari, Guizot, Jouffroy, Lacroix, Lermontov, Letronne, Libri, Michelet, and Nisard.
12. Allusion to the registration fee (500 francs) required of candidates for the Chamber of Deputies under the July Monarchy.
13. The introduction to the chamber of monopoly suppression was being prepared.



488. To François Lallier
Paris, May 16, 1843

He congratulates him on the birth of his second child. Vacation projects modified because of Mme. Ozanam's health. Regrettable results of the quarrel unloosed in regard to the university monopoly. The work undertaken in collaboration with Lallier consoles him. News of the Correspondant, of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and of du Lac.

Dear friend,

I come to congratulate you upon your second paternity and to thank you for your kind letters. You have shared in our troubles like a brother. You have acted like a Christian in praying to God for us, and have added the kindest and most affectionate suggestions. Be assured that we will accept them one day, and it is one of our dreamed-of pleasures, my wife's and mine, to go to spend some time amid such pleasant hospitality. Amélie, who is part of our longtime bond, is impatient to know Madame Lallier also; they would not need much time to become the best friends in the world. Regretfully, future uncertainty scarcely allows planning; a sad experience has taught us not to rely upon our plans, and the necessities of weak health can employ leisure hours in a way foreign to our wishes. The convalescence, easy and swift at first, has been slowed by little set-backs. Recovery is still not complete; sea baths are mentioned and perhaps at the end of next month the road to Havre will have to be taken. Then comes the short vacation which we will have to devote entirely to our family at Lyon, and the best we can hope for, going or returning, is a short stay with you. Certainly we could not travel through the good city of Sens twice without embracing you on the way. But if it is necessary that you come here in person we renew our invitation. Your business demands a visit to Paris and friendship will profit from it.

The news of the discovery of the *Itinerarium*¹ has given me great pleasure. I had determined to make a last, desperate effort by inquiring at the Ste. Geneviève library. Now you see that I have not abandoned our joint plan. I deem it useful to solid Christian studies and consequently to God's glory and the good of souls. More than ever it is necessary to refresh the knowledge of this important and holy philosophy of the Middle Ages when overzealous adherence to modern thought carries Catholic writers into the most lamentable excesses.² I do not know what you think of the quarrel, but I rather doubt that you will not share the opinion of the archbishop of Paris,³ of some of the clergy, and of all thoughtful men who deplore and disavow vehemently these outbursts and violence. Out of a question where right was incontestable, they have raised a quarrel in which insults and calumnies vie with one another, and they have succeeded in provoking an irreligious reaction whose formulations can halt the good undertaken with such great pain and conducted with so much care. At the moment the young students are aroused in an alarming way and the tumult which attends the courses of Mm. Michelet and Quinet⁴ threatens too by way of reprisal the lectures of M. Coeur, M. Lenormand,⁵ and perhaps my own. We are in crises of unrest.

These imprudent explosions which compromise the Christian affairs of the country make me prefer more than ever calm and serious study, and I plunge with a certain comfort into historical research where, seeing the religious dangers which other ages have known, I reassure and console myself about those which Providence has reserved for us. I will gladly return to St. Thomas Aquinas, whom I revisit from time to time since I first became acquainted with him, and upon whom I must give several lectures next year. I am therefore going to make a definite choice of

the passages to translate, and I will speak to M. Cousin again about the subject. But I beg you not to let your enthusiasm cool, and to count on my faithful cooperation. In the meantime I do not think you should interrupt the work you have undertaken for the *Correspondant*. M. Wilson, who has rather emptied his bin in order to publish a worthwhile issue, is today short of material. You must bend every effort to help sustain a publication which is now the only serious organ wherein Catholic opinion can make itself heard by the French public. Subscriptions seem to be coming in and give us hope that this year's success will give a foundation to the future.

I have seen du Lac again since he took the habit, and a man could not be found whose face more expresses contentment and happiness. We talked about you, indeed with whom would we not speak about you? You have so many good friends here that you must make them happy some day by coming to spend at least a winter with them. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul continues to prosper. Lively discussion has arisen within it concerning the means of support, which shows its enthusiasm for the interests of the poor; it all ended satisfactorily, and we have celebrated with great consolation our feast of the Good Shepherd.

Farewell, dear friend, I am glad to know that your children are well. How God blesses those two little angels He has placed under your roof: it is already the first blessing and a rare one today to have a father like you. Amélie sends her congratulations to Madame Lallier. Please add the homage of my own regard.

Your devoted friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur F. Lallier, Substitute Judge, Sens, Yonne.

Postmark: May 16, 1843.

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Cf. letter 471 of March 9, 1843, to Lallier.
2. Since the abandonment of the Villemain proposal (October 1841), the monopoly and the freedom of teaching had become the subjects of interventions in the Chamber (where provisory regulation by ordinance was being considered) and of episcopal measures and quarrels in the press. The eve of the day when Ozanam wrote this letter (May 15) an important debate had taken place in the Chamber about petitions favorable to the freedom of teaching and *L'Amie de la religion* of May 16 carried an account of it. Ozanam is evidently thinking of Canon Des Garets' writings.
3. Already publicized, Msgr. Affre's opinion would be even better known after the publication of his *Observations sur la controverse élevée à l'occasion de la liberté d'enseignement* (August 1843).
4. Courses by Quinet and de Michelet at the Collège de France, May 1843, on the Jesuits.
5. Two professors' courses in July 1843 in the same volume: *Des Jésuites*, Paris, Hachette.



489. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, May 17, 1843

He expresses his pleasure at the publication of his article in the Annales de la propagation de la foi. Praise of M. de Carné and the article he is about to publish in the Revue des deux mondes.

Dear friend,

It was a stroke of good luck to see myself in the pages of the *Annales* again, and I am very grateful for the publication of my article.¹ The changes made by the council seem opportune; you left out certain details that I had hesitated to include and only in cases to adhere as closely as possible to the notes given me. The council will honor me when it wishes to confide some other work to me. It is now quite a while since I have been given something to do. Kindly renew to the gentlemen, dear friend, my pledges of devotion. M. de Carné is of the opinion that it is absolutely impossible to obtain an acknowledgement of the gift of the medals from the king. This deputy's zeal for the Association of the Propagation of the Faith, however, has prompted a beautiful article by him in *La Revue des deux mondes* on what is happening in Oceania.² Every Catholic will thank him for it, while the Protestant press heaps insults on him. The article would have been even longer and more positive if M. de Carné had not suffered a serious illness which prevented him from giving the religious section the same attention he gave the political.

When I assisted at the solemn Mass celebrated for the association on May 3 at Saint-Sulpice I united myself in spirit to your pious gathering at Saint-Jean. The ever-increasing amount of our receipts is a sign that we are still blessed; let us pray, nevertheless, that the association will not suffer from the irreligious storm which seems to be brewing.

Farewell, dear friend. Kindly remember me to those we love and allow me a brotherly embrace.

A.-F. OZANAM
rue Garancière, 7.

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Meynis, rue du Pérat, n. 6, Lyon.

Postmark: (probably) May 18, 1843.

Original: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Unedited.

Notes:

1. *Annales de la propagation de la foi*, t. XV, March 1843, pp. 169-179.
2. "Les intérêts français en Océanie," cf. *Revue des deux mondes*, April 15, 1843, pp. 288-301 (the article included fine praise for the Propagation of the Faith).



491. To Dominique Meynis

Paris, June 5, 1843

He sends the council of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon a report on what Montalembert has just done for the good of the association. Praise of Montalembert. He then tells of an incident which got him into difficulty with l'Univers and asks Meynis to keep his friends at Lyon informed of the matter. He tries to defend the Catholic religion in his courses at the Sorbonne.

Dear friend,

Enclosed is a message Count de Montalembert entrusted to me for the council of the Propagation of the Faith. Forced to spend a year on Madeira for the recovery of Madame de Montalembert's severely ravaged health, he has just spent two weeks in Europe, but at Europe's extremity, Gibraltar, without finding it possible to go further or to stay longer. These circumstances, it seems to me, should put his letter in a more favorable light, for no complaint can be made about the brevity of his remarks when the brevity of his stay is taken into consideration. Besides, he is so caught up in great affairs, and his connections are so important and of such integrity that the council of the association can be reassured. I know M. de Montalembert and know him to be too prudent to compromise himself by rash suggestions. I trust therefore that his request will be given consideration. Whatever is done I ask you to see to it and to send me a copy of the letter and to tell me whether the council, acceding to the distinguished peer's wish, will allow the insertion in *l'Univers* or *l'Ami de la religion* of some lines on the good done at Gibraltar by the vicar apostolic.¹

There remains to speak to you, dear friend, of an event of which you have heard something. I have too many friends at Lyon for there not to have been some interest there in an article published by *l'Univers* on Ascension Day in which I was singled out as having publicly attacked the polemic of Christian newspapers and as a deserter of the good cause who for personal interests had abandoned the fight and gone over to the enemy. Those who love me and recognized me as the object of the attack undoubtedly wish me to explain myself, and there being no way of doing this through the paper, since I was not identified by name nor, besides, do I wish to court scandal, I am sending you documents which have bearing on the affair and some clarifications in order to bring you up to date.

A large number of serious and religious people who want the church to have freedom to teach have long regretted the violence with which imprudent writers compromise this sacred interest while thinking to defend it. Abbé Desgarets' pamphlet and *l'Univers'* invective have put the question back, instead of ahead, and have alienated a great many government officials who were thought in the beginning to be favorably disposed. The vehemence of these quarrels has already provoked an explosion of impious rage and scandalous lessons which excite the youth of the Collège de France. The clergy and the Jesuits have deplored the provocations which have brought these outrages about their heads.

In these circumstances I was asked to take this information to a general meeting

of *Cercle catholique*. This group was founded to draw those Christians who wished to serve the interests of religion closer together by means of a common meeting place and frequent get-togethers. It includes some of the most distinguished clergy in Paris, peers of France, deputies, councilors of state, members of the institute, several writers, professors, and artists, and a great number of young people who are training themselves through earnest study to carry out in a Christian manner one day their duties. I had been appointed to preside over a literary conference and was asked to treat seriously the literary duties of Christians. I met with the directors and asked them whether they thought it opportune for me to recommend moderation in the controversy. They told me that I would do them a great favor, and several other important people said the same. But as H[is] G[race] the archbishop of Paris was to preside at the meeting, I judged it necessary above all to be sure of his agreement and not force his approval by speaking on delicate questions in his presence. We therefore went to Monseigneur's residence, where he received me most graciously, and without letting me open my mouth, "You are going to speak next Monday," he said to me, "and to recommend moderation?" And when I had explained what I thought I should say, he strongly approved; indeed he insisted. I proposed another subject entirely different, but he urged me to stick with the first. He even added fresh and the strongest reasons to those I had outlined. I noted them down so as to cover them. And everyone at the archbishop's house thought the same, in particular one of the vicars general² complained loudly of the rashness of laymen who did not fear to compromise the Church. Monseigneur would not let me leave without reminding me again and charging me anew to carry the message in the sense agreed; I promised him. The meeting was held; it was well attended. Everything I said was concurred in unanimously by the audience, which included Mm. de Tascher, de Carné, de Galbery, Abbé Coeur, Abbé de La Boiullerie,³ and others no less distinguished. When I finished, Monseigneur, who was happy for the occasion to let his opinion be known, declared that he approved what I had said *without restriction and wholeheartedly*. He added a few more words and went on to urge peaceful spirits. His words and mine being in agreement, they were published in the *Cercle's* bulletin as a kind of reply to *l'Univers's* attacks. Certainly this article wounded me. I thought I was known well enough not to incur even a suspicion of self-interest; and, far from deserting the Christian cause, if amid all my weaknesses and faults, which are numerous, I keep a semblance of hope, it is that from my youth I have never ceased to consecrate the little I have of scholarship and energy to the defense of Christian truth. But Monseigneur's approbation is so great an honor that it suffices to make up for all the unpleasantness, and, besides, the author of the article, seeing the blame he incurred from our mutual friends, has published in the paper frank and honest apologies to me, so that the affair is done with.⁴ However, I thought you should be informed so that you could share the information with our friends who might be concerned for me. Tell them that I always need their friendship and their prayers for support in the difficult career divine Providence has wished to assign me. I feel I must acknowledge this, while trying everything in my power, which is slight, to fulfill the duties of my state. I call on them also for Madame Ozanam's health, who, following a second miscarriage, has just suffered a

serious relapse; it will be a long time before she has recovered completely. The good God has sent us a cruel trial. May you fare better.

Your devoted friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

At the same time that I thought I was calling for a total Christian agreement on useful truths at the *Cercle*, I was forced at the Sorbonne to defend the monks and the popes attacked at the Collège de France. *Le Correspondant* has a resumé of these lectures. I am sending you a copy of the *Bulletin du Cercle* which carries my talk, and I have sent copies also to Mm. Sandier, Desgeorges, Jessé, Terret, Dugas, and Dufieux, but ask that you communicate the details of this letter to them when you get the chance, so that they will not believe me guilty of an act unworthy of a loyal Christian, of a friend of yours, or of a man honored by the trust of the council of the Propagation of the Faith.

Original: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Msgr. Hughes, who had been forced to leave Gibraltar for several years following a disagreement which had arisen between him and a portion of the Catholic community. *L'Univers* of March 9, 1843, hailed his return to Gibraltar and the benefit of his presence.
2. The vicars general: Garnier, superior of Saint-Sulpice; Ansoire, curé of Saint-Philippe-du-Roule; Carbon and Carrière, directors of the seminary of Saint-Sulpice; Eglée, Msgr. Affré's secretary; Gaume, diocesan official; Buquet, diocesan promoter; and Ravinet, director of the secretariat.
3. Abbé de La Bouillerie (the incorrect spelling of proper names is frequent with Ozanam); soon to be vicar general of Paris and a part of every important social Catholicism activity. Cf. J.-B. Duroselle, *op. cit.*, who has nine references to him.
4. Louis Veillot. Cf. his letter of apology of May 29, 1843. Archives Laporte.



493. To Alexandre Dufieux
Paris, June 5, 1843

Gives news of his wife's health. Says he is sending his article from the Bulletin du cercle catholique which is his defense against an attack in l'Univers. He is fighting the teaching of Michelet and Quinet by an apologia for Christian civilization.

Dear friend,

When I received your good letter two months ago, I rejoiced in the sense of renewal of relations very dear to me. I did not, however, reply immediately; M. Didier Petit arrived to speak of the business which occupies you, and some days later informed me that negotiations being interrupted, he no longer had reason to look for an editor.¹ Since then a cruel trial has taken up my every moment and thought.

Madame Ozanam had the misfortune of a second miscarriage, whose aftereffects, prolonged by an unexpected relapse, are still causing me great anxiety. This unfortunate mishap has had only one consolation: the pregnancy was only a few weeks old, so that there was no loss of a soul to lament.² It was April 7, and since that day, the crisis of the illness, the drawn-out convalescence, the setbacks, have so sadly preoccupied me that aside from the strict duties of my position, all my time had to be given to the poor sick one, and I had to give up all my obligations of friendship. Yet I have had more than ever the need of being sustained by the remembrance of prayers of my friends. Often in praying to God and telling Him my needs, I have thought of yours and hope that you did the same; there is one rendezvous where Christian souls are sure of meeting and conversing together.

Meanwhile I have seized a tiny moment of leisure and am sending with a few lines the *Bulletin du cercle catholique** in which you will find one of your friend's speeches on the literary duties of Christians and the archbishop's address in reply. I am also sending it to Dugas, Chaurand, Arthaud, and M. Sandier, Terret, Desgeorges, de Jessé, Meynis, etc. in order to defend myself against violent attack in *l'Univers*.³ I refer to an article published on Ascension Day entitled *De la modération et du zèle* (On Moderation and Zeal) in which I was signaled out as a deserter of the Catholic cause. It was this paper's reply to a speech of mine which did not refer to it in any way. Apologies well made; but I have been very much afraid that my friends in Lyon would be upset for my sake, and this is why I am sending you the facts of the matter and ask you to circulate them among your acquaintances. I have written to Meynis at length to give you every detail that could be useful: he can share them with you. You will note that the *Cercle catholique*, an institution which you have perhaps heard of, and which brings together a large group of respectable people, had asked me to say a word at an important meeting presided over by Msgr. In accepting this honor I consulted the *Cercle's* directions about the subject of my speech. Even more, we had consulted His Grace in advance, and he insisted vehemently that I should treat these questions, which appeared very easy to explain in public. The opinion of most of the Parisian clergy was against the outbursts and violence with which pamphlets and newspapers were compromising the Church. And the fact that the entire audience agreed with what I had to say and with what Msgr. was gracious enough to add, consoled and lifted spirits. A speech by M. de Carné⁴ in the same vein several days later induced the Chamber of Deputies to send petitions back to the ministry. Weighty thought and serious discussion succeeded, thanks be to God, by prevailing over the arguments of injury and anger at which the impious are better than we.

Do not, however, imagine your friend only in those particular circumstances where severity is reserved for imprudent defenders of the truth. I have lent my efforts, weak as they no doubt are, to sustain, with the help of M. Lenormand, M. Coeur and others, a vigorous struggle against the teaching of professors at the Collège de France. While M. Michelet and M. Quinet were attacking Catholicism as

*M. Génin has accepted this errand.

Jesuitism, I have tried in three consecutive lectures to defend papacy, monks, and monastic obedience. I have done so before a very large audience composed of the same crowd which the day before had directed its feet elsewhere. But I have had no outcry and, in tracing the literary history of Italy, that is, of one of the most Christian countries under the sun, I have encountered the subject at every step and have never missed an occasion to affirm the teaching, benefits, and marvels of the church. I ask only the assistance of your prayers; obtain for me that spirit of strength and wisdom that the Christian, profoundly prostrate at the solemnities of Pentecost, asks at that moment. I hope with God's grace and your help never to fail the fraternal mandate which my Catholic friends gave me when they enlisted me to take over this chair offered to me for the defense of interests forever inseparable from religion and right thinking.

Be kind enough to convey my compliments to M. Sandier and M. Dugas. Accept the homage of my respect for Madame Dufieux and remember our necessities and trials before the good God. I have learned with extreme satisfaction of the happy circumstances in which you find yourself. I wish you good health, which is so dear to so many people that you must preserve it. Farewell again.

Your friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Dufieux-Sandier, rue des Augustine, n. 7, Lyon.

Postmark: June 9, 1843.

Original: Archives Laporte.

Previous Publication: *Lettres* (1912), t. II, p. 31 (with some cuts).

Notes:

1. Cf. letter of Dufieux to Ozanam, March 21, 1843 (Archives Laporte): proposal of founding a Catholic and moderately legitimist journal to replace *Le Réparateur* of Lyon.
2. Ozanam was expressing a prevalent opinion of the time, following St. Alphonsus, that the fetus was not animate until 40 or 80 days after conception. This opinion was to fall within the following twenty years (Cf. John Connery, S.J., *Abortion: The Development of the Roman Catholic Perspective*; Loyola, 1977, pp. 210-211).
3. Most of the events and allusions treated in this letter are clarified by letter 491, Ozanam to Meynis, June 5, 1843.
4. Cf. *Le Moniteur*, May 28, 1843.



496. To Charles Ozanam
Nogent-sur-Marne, June 25, 1843

Request that certain information be sent him through his brother concerning the conferences of St. Vincent de Paul of Lyon in view of a general report of the society. The society

grows and may be the starting point of a Christian renewal. Reflections upon his literary and historical works which draw him ever closer to the Church. Worth in which he holds family life.

It is a long time since I have written to you, good brother. As long as you and Alphonse are together, the authority of the Church and the laws of the time vie for the honor of being addressed. Today, however, I have business for you only, to ask you to give the enclosed letter, which has to do with matters concerning the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, to your neighbor, M. Génin, whose street or number I do not know exactly. I am asking him for information on the conferences of Lyon, so as to be able to speak about them in the general report we will publish on July 19. This publication has become necessary to maintain the unity of our association which God blesses and which today counts approximately 24 conferences in France, two in Rome, several in Belgium, and more than four thousand members.

Let us thank divine Providence, dear friend, for having brought us both to enter this young and growing family which may be destined to regenerate France by preparing for all the liberal professions, science, art, politics, a recruitment of Christians. Whatever is said about it, souls are returning to the faith; it grows slowly like things that last, and will continue on to the end so long as we do not compromise it by our weakness or imprudence. The more seriously you enter into your studies the better you must perceive the higher light religion sheds upon them which nothing can replace.

As for me, I am about to finish the first year of my course in the literary history of Italy; it covers the Christian era up to the time of Charlemagne. The work has been for me, as for my hearers, a most profound and lively study of the papacy by which the difficult passage from antiquity to modern times is accomplished. I have proven all that can be gained by seeing Christianity up close; its benefits, of which I was not ignorant, I have discovered to be far greater than I had ever believed; I am more aware than ever of how much the Church should be loved because of all she has done to preserve us, to educate us, and to make available all there is to know of knowledge, liberty, and civilization.

I will send to your address, and you can share it with Alphonse, a copy of the latest issue of *Correspondant*. It carries a review of one of my lectures on the monks: which was a reply to the attacks of the professors of the Collège de France.¹

Your last letter crossed mine. Thank you for the kind message. If I have not answered some of your questions, blame my cares, which are infinite. On the other hand, to give an opinion in certain matters you raise it would be necessary to be more up-to-date about them, which I am not; for example, the private lessons in preparation for the baccalaureate in the sciences. I can only agree with Alphonse's judgment, and only the two of you are well enough acquainted with the good Marie's health and inclination to know whether she will be able to come next year. I am writing from the country today and have not brought your former letters so that I cannot refresh myself in the matter of your other requests. It is a sad thing to

have to converse this way over the distance of a hundred leagues; all the correspondence in the world does not match a half-hour's conversation. I cry out with all my heart's desire for the moment which will put an end to these eternal separations. We love family life too much for God not to give it to us sooner or later.

Madame Soulacroix has told you that we are spending some days with Mme. Pécelet at Nogent-sur-Marne to hasten Amélie's convalescence. The surroundings are most beautiful, the air fine, and the garden huge. But the misfortune is that you are not here. The poor invalid is finally much better. After two and a half months of anxiety, worry, and hope deceived and reassured in turn, I am beginning to believe that the convalescence is complete. Farewell, dear brother, I tenderly embrace you, and Alphonse, too.

A.-F. OZANAM

A thousand wishes on Amélie's part and mine to good Marie. If Alphonse is good enough to find a servant for us, tell him to keep it quiet, for if the one we have should hear of it indirectly through her friends in Lyon, she would be very put out and might wish to leave us immediately: we must be careful.

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Charles Ozanam, rue Saint-Jean, n. 19, Lyon.

Postmarks: Paris, June 28, 1843, Lyon, June 30, 1843.

Original: Archives Laporte.

Previous publication: Lettres (1912), t. II, p. 35 (excerpted and corrected).

Note:

1. June 1843 issue.



497. To Auguste Génin
Paris, June 25, 1843

The steps taken to get Génin into the judiciary are succeeding. Ozanam asks his friend to give him the necessary information on the state of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul so he can draw up his annual report. Recommends himself to his friends in Lyon.

Dear friend,

You have not left Paris so completely that you have not left something behind: I want to tell you that happy memories of you are not absent. I have gone to see in the last few days M. Cornudet, master of regents of the Council of State and our confrere in St. Vincent de Paul, and have learned from him that the applications

for the post you aspire to have arrived in Lyon, and that you are in a good position. Besides you have the best possible recommendations here, and if there is no certainty of success there is at least justifiable hope. If you have some further step to be taken in the same matter, make liberal use of me: should I be happy enough to contribute in some way to your entry into the judiciary I would consider that I have rendered my country a service.

Now I call upon your charity to obtain certain information on the state of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at Lyon. It concerns the general report on the Parisian conferences, the provinces, and abroad which must be made each year on July 19 for later distribution. Last year's report seems to have made a good impression, and we think we have found the means of achieving unity among the dispersed groups of our large family. A new undertaking is therefore in progress to certify the progress of the society over the past year. Lyon could not be left out: it is one of the finest jewels in our crown. Please, dear friend, trust us to speak worthily of it and supply us with whatever notes you can assemble in a letter, and whatever reports or written accounts there are of your general meetings.

If you have any objections to the manner of last year's publication, or if you can give any advice on the method or form of the report in progress, your fraternal suggestions would be gratefully received. You well know that I have never believed in the certain reservations that are said to exist between your conferences and ours. But when the possibility exists that there once was such and some shadow of it remains, it must be dissipated. Tell me how I can be of service. Never have we had more need of unity than in a time when religious strife may be on the point of starting up again. Dear friend, the age threatens to be very bad unless the small number of Christians tries to multiply itself by redoubling its energy and wisdom.

You have given me hope of seeing you in the month of July. If you do not come here, I will be going the following month to catch up on your news. It will be a great comfort for me to renew so many old friendships which Lyon holds for me. In the meantime, be kind enough to give a thousand affectionate regards of mine to all our friends: I could name them all but I cannot forbear singling out Dugas, Arthaud, Chaurand, and La Perrière. I am not sure whether my brother Charles is now a member of your conference, but I recommend him always to your fond care. Remember before God sometimes in your prayers him who will ever be

Your devoted friend,
A.-F. OZANAM
Rue Garancière, 7.

Please tell La Perrière that his protégée Mme. Larivoire is now, thanks to the kindness of Mlle. Jaillard and several members of the Society of S[t.] V[incent] de P[aul], lodged, furnished and completely settled with her mother, daughters, and sisters, that they have employment, and that, if God gives them their health, they would seem to be out of difficulty.

You would blame me if I said nothing about Madame Ozanam, who was suffer-

ing when I last saw you. She is much better and progressing in the convalescence, which has a bright future, but it is still necessary to take every precaution. It is certain, dear friend, that on earth good fortune is never unmixed.

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Génin, Lawyer at the Royal Court, Lyon.²

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Pierrette Cornélie Chormy (1794-1875), a first cousin of Ozanam's mother, the wife of Pierre Jailard (1788-1851), well-known Lyon businessman.
2. The letter was delivered to Génin by Charles Ozanam. Cf. letter 496 addressed to Charles on the same date.



502. To Dominique Meynis
s.1. [Paris], July 15 [1843]

He is anxious about the protection accorded by l'Univers to the Association of Lebanon, connected with the Holy Land Commission, and mentions certain differences between l'Univers and the Propagation of the Faith which he has been forced to smooth out. Progress of the society which will soon extend itself to the whole Catholic world. Thanks for a check. Family news.

Dear friend,

Today *l'Univers* brings you a new cause for unhappiness. You will find there the announcement of the Association of Lebanon,¹ a new form of the Holy Land Commission² created under the inspiration of M. Onfroy, calling himself commandant of the Maronites, and who has indeed made war against the Turks for several months wearing the white cockade. The names of M. Hyde de Neuville, de Bertier, de Baudicour, etc., give sufficient indication of the political character of the association, and I am persuaded that several others figure in it only out of kindness.³ Perhaps the former relationship of the commission with the editors of *l'Union catholique* has forced the item in the paper which succeeded it.⁴

Meanwhile, I have not failed to fulfill the council's wish that I go to the bureau to make strong and powerful protests. I saw the editor-in-chief and complained of the request drawn up by the Denmark mission.⁵ I spoke of the danger of these individual associations being multiplied against the well-known wish of the Sovereign Pontiff and becoming by their very multiplicity a possible means of deceiving the charity of the faithful. My remarks were listened to and understood; justice was assured me and consideration promised. Their only complaint was that the Propagation of the Faith had never done anything for *l'Univers*; and I do seem to recall a wish expressed in the past for a sort of alliance of the two enterprises. I replied that

the Propagation of the Faith, shying away from every appearance of political preference, could not even in the new order lend itself to the interests of any paper, and that for that matter several of its most zealous supporters had rendered *l'Univers* great service by publicizing it in Lyon, and that, after all, the silence that was requested was not an act of obsequiousness toward the council but of deference for the multitude of Christianity's needs. They renewed the assurance of being more prudent in the future.

Now, if the council has some information it wants, some new step to be taken, it has but to order me. I agree wholeheartedly with its opinions on the untimeliness of these upheavals. I want unity and the universality of the association because that is to want its perpetuity and greatness. I hope that soon, resurrected in Spain by the change of circumstances,⁶ welcome in Hungary and Austria by the tolerance which has reopened Lombardy⁷ to it, spread abroad in America, there will be no longer a Catholic area where it does not strike its roots and consequently no longer an infidel land where it does not spread the beneficent shade of its branches.

Thank you, dear friend, for the check you are holding for me. In the future it will be easier for me, if it makes no difficulty for you, to obtain from M. Guérin a bill of exchange on one of his correspondents here: that would avoid the need of a draft. Farewell. Madame Ozanam's health, in which you have been kind enough to take so friendly an interest, has become much better. I trust that it will permit us to see Lyon again for the holidays.

Please give the members of the council the assurance of my respectful devotion, and accept yourself that of a friendship that nothing will ever change.

Entirely yours,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur de Meynis, Secretary of the Propagation of the Faith, rue du Pérat, n. 6, Lyon.

Postmark: July 15, 1843.

Original: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Unedited.

Notes:

1. The Association of Lebanon. Cf. *l'Univers*, July 15, 1843.
2. Cf. letter 380 of January 26 and especially letter 384 of February 9, 1842, to Meynis.
3. The persons alluded to by Ozanam were notorious extremists: the Committee of the Association of Lebanon included besides Baron Cauchy, Abbé Desgenettes, also legitimists, and Eugène Rendu. Onfroy, a Frenchman stationed at Beirut to learn Arabic, assumed in 1840 the leadership of a Maronite revolt against the Egyptians. He designated himself by his own authority "commander-in-chief." He affected the style of the old Vendée leaders, wearing a costume similar to theirs. Since the month of June 1840 his political and military activities had been disavowed by the French government. (From Pierre Dib, *L'Eglise maronite*, Beirut, 1962, p. 276 ff.)
4. The merger of *l'Univers* and *l'Union catholique*, whose legitimist orientation was notorious, dated from January 31, 1843. Already in 1841 (see letter 287 to Meynis, February 16, 1841), they were worried at the Propagation of the Faith over a like protection accorded by *l'Univers* to the association of Catholicism in Europe sponsored by Bertier de Sauvigny.

5. It was the association of *Catholicism in Europe* (cf. letters written in February 1841) that raised the question of Denmark. The two councils of the Propagation of the Faith, especially that of Lyon, reproached *l'Univers* for protecting this work of ultra-royalist inspiration which risked further division of missionary efforts.
6. The defeat and exile of Espartero.
7. Then an Austrian province.



505. To Henri Personneaux
Paris, July 27, 1843

He has done the errands Personneaux confided to him. The feast of St. Vincent de Paul was marked by an excellent sermon of Abbé Gabriel. He regrets the need to prolong his sojourn in Paris.

Dear friend,

This too short and too hastily scribbled letter from a man who is always late will only serve to let you know of the reception of your two, safely arrived with the commission enclosed.

I am quite touched to see with what active and persevering charity you occupy yourself in this difficult matter; your edifying example perhaps will render me unworthy of your confidence. It is already eight days since I left the 15 francs at the Hotel Favard. I had boxed it suitably so that no one could guess the contents. Today I just received a letter from Mme. Gayet¹ with a certificate to pay in the amount of 150 francs which I sent immediately to be cashed. I will write to M. Morier² and arrange to meet him tomorrow. After speaking with him about where he wants to live I will see to the room and restaurant. If I am hampered in doing so by a trip to Havre next week I will put the matter into M. Leprévost's hands, which is the same as saying that it would be better entrusted than in your own.

Nothing new here since your departure except the gap your absence leaves among those who love you. My brother has also gone off but to . . . Bordeaux, where his superior³ sent him on some business. We have had a beautiful feast day of St. Vincent de Paul with a great wealth of members and a good sermon by Abbé Gabriel.⁴ I was forgetting that we have settled Spain's affairs without you: I have held forth at such great length during lunch and dinner with Amélie that Narvaez has ended up by bringing Zurbano to reason, and you see you did right to leave everything to me.⁵

For the rest, I envy you with all my heart that forgetfulness of the city and the miserable problems of Parisian life. At the present time it would be better to talk to the trees than to people, and I curse each day the absurdity of men who condemn themselves to the exile of the streets when one could live in the fatherland of flowers. I try to console myself with work but I have always had a most ungrateful

genius. One cannot have everything at the same time. I gaze again on what I hold most dear, Amélie's health, which seems to be recovered. She is very grateful for your interest in inquiring after her, and recognizes that affection of which you have given such great proof. Be assured that she shares on her side all my fraternal friendship for you.

The hour makes me stop; and although I had a thousand things to tell you, what you know best and what I can least prevent myself from repeating, is the tender attachment of your devoted cousin,

A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Pessonneaux, at M. le Comte de Beaurepaire, at Beaurepaire, by Louhans.

Postmark: July 27, 1843.

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Herminie Gayet, Henri Pessonneaux's sister, and her husband were assisting Alphonse Morier (a cousin in difficulties) through Ozanam as intermediary.
2. Alphonse Morier was a relative of Henri Pessonneaux's brother-in-law, Charles Etienne Gayet. Morier was ill, unstable, and legally incompetent.
3. Abbé Ozanam had joined, in 1841, the Society of Marists.
4. Abbé Marie Gabriel, former chaplain of the military hospital at Lyon, was then a canon at Paris. He was very interested in the question of social Catholicism (Cf. letter 478, n. 2). Volume III of *Lettres de Frédéric Ozanam*, p. 180, n. 53, cites a Jean Louis Gabriel (1796-1866), priest in 1820, curate at Sète (1820), pastor at Pèzenas (1836), chaplain of the Ladies of the Assumption at Paris (1836), titular canon of Notre Dame (1848). He finished his career as pastor of Saint-Merri (1852-1866), where he had Abbé Ozanam as his curate (Arch. hist. dioc. Paris).
5. The development of the Spanish situation had probably been the subject of banter in family conversation. Ramon Maria Narvaez (1800-1868), military chief of the Cristinos, had at the beginning of July scored a victory in the wake of which Ballamero Espartero, duke of La Victoire (1792-1879), and regent for Queen Isabella II from 1841 to 1843, was about to take refuge, on July 29, on an English ship. Espartero's lieutenant, Zurbano, had been defeated at Barcelona on July 25.



507. To Emmanuel Bailly
Paris, August 2, [1843]¹

Note of excuse for his absence from the General Council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Monsieur le President,

An unforeseen circumstance prevents me from attending the council this evening.

The secretary has been kind enough to furnish me with a copy of the general report; I have sent him my personal comments in case it would be too late to wait for the next meeting.

The only thing I reminded him of was that I had sent M. Rendu detailed observations on the Lyon conferences and that it would be helpful to refer to them.

Excuse these few lines, M. le President, for I write in haste and accept the assurance of my respectful and fond regard.

Your grateful and devoted servant,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Bailly, rue Madame, n. 41, Paris.

Original: Archives of the motherhouse of the Assumptionists, Rome. Photostat provided by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Unedited.

Note:

1. This note can be dated 1843 by consulting the minutes of the meetings of the council.



515. To his wife
Paris, October 13, 1843

Good wishes for her trip. Directions for some business. News of their friends Rendu-Doubet. He wants to help his wife grow in perfection. He condemns his egoism which has diminished at the time the quality of his love and the value of his work. He recognized providential signs in considering the development of his life up to the present. Profession of faith and resolutions. This letter is vital to a profound understanding of Ozanam.

My well-beloved,

[I cannot refrain from writing you yet again,¹ for four endless days seem to me too long to wait to unburden myself in your heart. I thought at first of addressing a short letter to the coach terminal at Châlon Monday evening, so as to come to you in some way and be some company during that long trip. But the line told me they could not be responsible for delivering my letter, and I did not want to risk my endearments to the curiosity of employees. All that is left, then, is to seek you out on the eve of your departure, not to distract you from those embraces and worthy emotions of which I am not jealous, but to give you these pages on parting, and after the tears of separation, when you have recovered some of your calm, you will feel me beside you, you will see that I have not deserted you, and so, in sweet conversation with your well-beloved, you regain some courage and repose.

Besides, it was necessary to let you know that the package of linen for M. Mo-

rier was not put in my trunk and that you must bring it with you. The poor man came to see me last evening and is completely out of clothing. I therefore commend this chore to your charity. I have also forgotten my cane, which ought to be in the country, and could be put with the umbrellas. Nothing else comes to my recollection, and I have reliance on yours for leaving no debt behind at Lyon and securing *receipts*. I have great need especially for my brothers to bring money with them. Yesterday I had to pay 110 francs in freight charges. The coaches brought it here only too quickly. I expect the furniture next Monday. They arrived at one-thirty, and I had all the trouble in the world separating what belonged to Charles, seeking out Alphonse's landlord for his key, and receiving, verifying, and directing his luggage before going to Collège Stanislas. I had omitted to ask Mme. Dejeux what she wanted for the little room on the fifth floor, but she came to tell me this morning that it would be 120 francs. The amount seems excessive, and we shall try to have her reduce it. Our maids stay well. Although Marie is not sleeping yet, she will be content when she sees all her world reunited.

Marie would like her little lamp, which she left with the porter, brought her.

While I am bringing you up to date on our affairs, I am happy to give you news of Madame Doubet,² and here it is. A thousand tender compliments for you, listened to gladly. M. Doubet is not out of bed yet, and it is quite certain now that he will not be before the end of next week. Thus you will have time to visit him, and Madame Doubet, very upset, needs you especially. She cannot wait to tell you her troubles and be consoled. Nevertheless, the family preserves great hope. I stopped at M. Rendu's,³ who was not at home, but I saw his sons, who acquainted me with the doctor's opinion. According to him, there is only asthma complicated by extreme weakness, and a prolonged stay in a mild climate could bring about a complete recovery. But yet, would he be able to stand the travel, and I cannot but tremble at what could happen in making the attempt. O my dear friend, how less unfortunate we are than others, and how good God is in sparing us the proof.

This brings me to your good letter which I dared not hope for. Thank you for having found the time amid the inevitable distractions of family, friendship, and the country to write me at the intervals I had wished for. Everything you say to me is amiable and tender, and the comments with which you close touch me more than you can believe. Bless you for the prayers you have offered for me, and allow me to pronounce you a bit too hard on yourself. Assuredly, my Amélie,] I have no wish to flatter you, nor betray the confidence of that dear soul of which I am also the guardian. For that reason precisely I am aware of all you are capable of, because you have shown me what your heart is endowed with, and I believe that you are capable of growing each day in merit and grace before God and men. Even the saints could be better since the Creator alone enjoys infinite perfection. But as I have known you, as I have loved you, as I see you, there is already more than enough for my pride and happiness. No, I would not discourage your pious resolutions, but I would pray for different motives for them: I would not try to hold you back, my angel, because you draw me with you and so lead me to heaven.

On my side, I have reflected much. My solitude, less agitated, less troubled

than last year, is, however, sad and pensive, and each morning on awaking, still without the sight of you, I think my courage would have failed if I did not reanimate it in prayer. I am trying, then, to gather my ideas and my strength for the laborious year about to begin, and I want to reassemble here under your eyes some ideas I have meditated on.

[See how I was stricken two years ago in what was dearest to me, and after having settled everything for my happiness in this world, it so happened that it was disturbed in an unforeseen and terrible way by the illnesses you have borne in a Christian manner. I ought to regard the trials which are sent me as expiation for my faults, and as a proof to test my fidelity.] In thus turning in on myself and questioning these two years passed in the state of marriage, I find that I have ill-used their benefits and graces. A spouse has been given me to be for me an image of the goodness of God and make me better by the charming power she exercises over me. Instead of loving in her Him who gave her to me, it is myself I have sought in her, it is myself I have wished to have adored in her heart, it is myself alone I have wished to be allowed in her thoughts, and this miserable egoism, not understanding itself to be at the caprice of its impatience, has been the cause of all my anxieties. Of all these annoying preoccupations, the black humors which are taking root and growing, the longings for Lyon, the distaste for men and things, that fear of failing in my career, and those cowardly apprehensions that it was too much for me. Were I to abandon myself to such any longer, I should little by little be discouraged in my vocation, preferring the security of a position to the generous struggle of work, and would fall into the shameful habits of softness and self-interest that I have so often reproached in the men of our days. In the same way that I have weakened myself by these useless solitudes and vain imaginings, I have made my work harder and prayer less fervent. I lost what contrariwise I ought to be acquiring: energy and activity. You would recall me in vain to better thoughts, I would willingly plunge myself in that melancholy where there was I do not know what miserable pleasure of pride and sloth: you have nothing to reproach yourself with, O my well-beloved, and on the contrary it is to you that I owe, after God, the resolution I now take to change and no longer sadden with my weaknesses your young years which I have promised to adorn.

I then recalled in memory so many souvenirs which cast light on my future duties: the first inspiration I felt fourteen years ago to consecrate myself to the propagation of the truth, after having had the good fortune to know it in the midst of doubts from which my mind and those of my young friends suffered so cruelly; the singular favor which surrounded me with excellent teachers, the hospitality of M. Ampère, the literary conferences, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, all those things done to protect my youth, stir my intelligence, and encourage my studies; finally the circumstances so unforeseen, so little sought after, which transferred me from law to letters, from Lyon to Paris, and into this chair at the Sorbonne to which I would have been too far away to aspire to when I sat in the benches. Then, three years ago, when the success of my teaching was uncertain, I did not falter. I did not listen to dictates of self-interest: I sought in my career knowledge only. I believe that

it was God who thus inspired me, and made me act with a confidence that was foreign to my weak character. Then Providence led you into my path, and I offered you the sharing of a life poor, for long and perhaps ever obscure, but sanctified, enobled by the cultivation of all that is beautiful: I offered you solitude far from all belonging to you, but with the tenderness of a heart which had never belonged to anyone but you. You were, as I had a presentiment of, courageous and devoted. You accepted, and I must say to your everlasting praise, you have never made me feel the great extent of your sacrifice, you have never regretted it; the uncertainties from the past, the hesitations for the future, the thoughts which attack and demoralize, they never came from you. [Whenever my weary head rested on your knees, it lifted itself stronger and with serenest brow.]

Now then, my well-beloved, in comparing and discussing all the diverse reflections, I am strong in this belief in my vocation of which all the events of my latest years render me more certain. Truth has no need of me, but I have need of it. The cause of Christian knowledge, the cause of the faith, is what I hold to the roots of my heart; and in any way I can serve it, I will be worthily employed the years accounted me on the earth. Since it is threatened, and since literature is the field of battle where the quarrel is drawn, and teaching is a large part of it, and Paris is the French city and perhaps for the world where the debates of ideas seem to be decided, and Providence by the advice of my friends and family and the irresistible inspiration I experience has put me on the rampart, I shall not come down from it. Good can be done here which would be impossible elsewhere. I will make use of that power of the public word with which they have wished to honor me, and I will grow firmer in making it certain and prolonging its effectiveness by marshaling and leading young Christian youth into the path of worthwhile study. I will write also so as not lose in fleeting speech the little given me to expound to men. It is possible that I will attain neither honors nor fortune, but until now daily bread is not lacking me, and it is enough for me when the hand of a sweet and pious friend dispenses it. But in order to accomplish this task there must be work, firmness, and perseverance. The first means is to ask them of God from the beginning and then to resist every temptation which could get in the way. I have promised to repress the anxieties, the reveries, and the depressions, to vanquish the flights of imagination and not to allow in the employment of my time an empty space where idleness could intrude with the disorders of mind it brings in its wake. I find that work is salutary for my character, as for my health. I will place these resolutions and others to follow under the protection of Him who gave me birth; I will carry them to His altars, and when you see me again, I trust that you will find me capable of carrying them out.

Under these conditions I come to beg you to pardon my faults and the annoyances they have given you: I come to ask again for your trust, your esteem, and that love which never fails me. I will make better use of it. The sacrifices will no longer be pure loss. If the joy of seeing play around us little angels which life may give us must be awaited in happier times, our union will have other enjoyments. You are in love with everything great; you will sustain me, assist me, be the ray of light ever there in my thoughts. You will study besides for your own good, or better, we will read to-

gether and pass instructive and profitable hours. I reproach myself for not giving you enough of my attention: this year we shall have leisure for it. We will not, for all that, break off our circle of acquaintances and the simple pleasures I can give you: I will be happy to find occasions to divert you, and we will try to do better than last winter. We will have our brothers, also. Nevertheless, our best moment will be those when, alone together, we will talk to each other about our efforts toward duty and our good thoughts in behalf of virtue. Your voice, your glance, your smile, even those melodies you are adept at choosing for me on your piano, all of these will spur me on to good and turn back the clouds I would not know how to chase by myself. I am experiencing them now, O my friend, and if I had not the hope of seeing you soon, maybe all the good dispositions would have gone by the time you come. Come, then, my well-beloved, my dove, my angel, come into my arms, against my heart, come bringing me yours so pure and generous: come and God bless you that after two years we love each other a thousand times more than on the first day!

[I have still to thank you for the sadness of the leave-taking of which I am about to be the cause, and for the weariness of that long journey of which I am the goal. How sad and painful it is for me not to be able to make it at your side, to support your head in sleep and to squeeze your hands during the conversations which would fill the hours of the journey. I commend you to my brothers; they are also yours: the four children of our father and mother who dwell in heaven cannot cease being one. As for our well-loved parents of Lyon, I thank them again as on the first day they gave you to me: they renew the same sacrifice, and I accept it with the same gratitude. Tell your father again of my desire of being useful to him here, your good mother of the share I take in her troubles, Théophile of my hope of finding him better next year, Charles of my desires for the development of the talent bestowed on him, and promise them that I shall welcome you again as soon as possible. Do not forget me with my aunt and Aménaide.⁴ The best from me to Marie and Joseph⁵ whom I hold in happy remembrance. I am half with you wherever your heart is. Accept, my well-beloved, the tenderest and purest kiss that the love of a husband content with your tenderness can give.]

A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives Laporte.

Previous Publication: in *l'Anneau d'or*, n. 54, November-December, 1953, pp. 505-509, with the exception of the passages bracketed.

Notes:

1. Ozanam had already written three letters to his wife: on October 8, 10, and 11.
2. The Doubets were friends of the Ozanams. Madame Doubet was the daughter of Ambroise Rendu (Cf. note 3 below), who with her husband had recently founded the *Cercle catholique*.
3. Ambroise Rendu (1778-1860), member of the royal council of public instruction.
4. Philippine Larrey (1805-1852), the wife of Madame Ozanam's uncle Joseph Soulacroix (1789-1864), and their daughter Aménaide (1826-1878).
5. Soulacroix servants.

516. To Théophile Foisset
Paris, October 21, 1843

Vacation employment. Recalls a visit he made to Foisset and expresses admiration for him. Deplores the division among Catholics. Correspondant's opinion is right. Regrets that Montalembert put him in opposition to his Sorbonne colleagues in an article whose text Foisset had just given him.

Sir and dear friend,

I have just now received your kind letter: it did not reach me at Lyon where I had too short a vacation, cut short by the rigid demands of Collège Stanislas. The five weeks granted me passed very quickly in a sweet family reunion in the country; but the daily trips to town, the homecoming visits to make and receive, some inheritance business to be straightened out, and so soon again, the farewells, all these duties so completely ate up my time that I could hardly find a few hours of quiet for an article intended for the November *Correspondant*.¹ Still, I have done scarcely anything, because of that infirmity of mind which renders me incapable of work when I breathe an air of dissipation and have not shut myself up in absolute retirement. My life thus passes in fighting with events to struggle for a leisure from which I profit badly. Often in this way I bind myself to the land,² so to speak, refusing what I owe to the amenities, to friendship, and even to relaxation of mind, seeing no one, writing not a scrap; and so I make long days of work for myself, and yet it is with great trouble that I wrest any fruit from it. Then I give way to anxiety, and repent having entered without calling upon a literary career I was not made for. I reckon my thirty years and regard hands empty of works, without merit before God, without qualifications before men. I grow alarmed for my temporal and spiritual interests, and discouraged at seeing I was wrong thus to interrupt friendly relationships and correspondence which would have prevented a great deal of anxiety.

There is the explanation of my long silence. It is not honorable and you see in it that wavering of soul from which I suffer constantly. I have inside myself lively experience of an evil I believe belongs to the present generation. There are many good intentions, many generous inspirations, few resolutions, and still less perseverance. I note high intelligences, right wills, but little *character*. I am speaking here only of well-meaning people. Of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, that which is most lacking is *strength*. So little is known about it that many think they possess it because they possess violence and intensity which are, on the contrary, like everything convulsive, proofs of malaise and weakness. The air we breathe is unhealthy and everything conspires to make us soft. In those short moments I spent with you at Bligny,³ seeing you surrounded by that pious and affectionate family, so beloved by everyone, so devoted to every public interest, joining to your onerous duties preoccupation with so many good works, and yet finding great energy for the rapports of friendship, so much leisure for letters, I thought I beheld a vision of another age: one of those seventeenth century magistrates, with their patriarchal house and retreat for learning, the model of a common life foreign to me and what I would like

for my own, filled with deeds and not words. That memory, with the beautiful night, your garden seen in torchlight, that religious chapel where we prayed together, and the gracious hospitality following in your house at Beaune, forms one of the happiest travel experiences I have ever locked away in my heart.

I hope, therefore, that from the bedrock of that retreat where you have found energy in calm, you will continue to extend your hand to us amid this agitated, tumultuous, and consequently ineffective life we lead. Nourished by reading in the good centuries, your mind takes on their solidity: you are a man of thought and action simultaneously. More than ever, perhaps, your intervention is going to be necessary to engage in a war that will be perilous to Catholic interests.

I look with sorrow on great divisions among us, mutual challenges and recriminations; even the clergy divided, the laity forced by publicity to judge their pastors, those who are neutral scandalized, the provocation of the malicious carried to extremes, the political parties taking advantage of religious quarrels and insinuating into them their own detestable attitudes. Nor do I consider a lesser peril the softness which would yield something of dogma's absoluteness in argument, or the rights of the church in these matters. The *Correspondant's* position seems to me the right one; it has only the misfortune of not being followed up: no propagation, no serious publicity, nor advertisements, nor handbills, but an imposed obscurity which will bury the opinions which should be held by all men of good will. Insist, I beg you in the name of those who care, upon a reform to change this state of things and put the material to work with in more active hands. The fall of the only compendium we can avow with honor before the church and the world would be a great misfortune. As for me, in my humble position, I will assist in any way I can. Furthermore I ask your advice and especially call upon it in regard to my next article, which follows the first and will itself be followed by a third. You will be able to judge the outline of the book from these three chapters. Soon perhaps I will have to consult you again concerning my willingness to compete for the Voltaire lecture at the French Academy. But for the moment I want to thank you for your kind communication. Nevertheless I cannot hide from you the fact that it causes me embarrassment. I would have preferred not to know in advance that my name was cited in M. de Montalembert's article, so as to be able to say to the minister, if necessary, that my lectures being public, I could not teach what a peer of France could not express his opinion about.⁴ There is certainly a dubious honor in being singled out as an exception to an offensive rule. But it is an honor, and it would be cowardly to cause the allusion to be suppressed: I can therefore formally neither acknowledge nor disclaim the praise, and must stay neutral. But to banish all reserve between us, this is what I think and you may use it as you deem fit. If you are empowered to make slight corrections, I would request one, not in my own interest but in that of truth.

1) It is not true that in the university there is only a *small number* of exceptions; the archbishop of Lyon's letter said yesterday that they are *numerous*, and I am proof that Catholics are in the university, as nearly everywhere in a public capacity, a considerable minority. 2) It is not true that M. Lenormand and M. Ozanam protest against the teaching of their colleagues. First, because we have no colleagues

except the professors of the Sorbonne, those belonging to the Collège de France having nothing in common with us; that at the Sorbonne, out of 13 professors or *agrégés*⁵ teaching, there are not perhaps two who have expressed heterodox doctrines in the last three years; on the contrary, several others, M. Saint-Marc Girardin⁶ for example, have fought for true, moral, and Christian ideas. Finally, we have not protested because there was no reason to do so; we have proudly professed our faith and refuted contrary systems, striving to fulfill our vocation as professors in a Christian manner and to serve God in serving wholesome teaching. But we have not sought to make a division in the Faculty of Paris that does not exist, to effect two camps and give battle, and I believe that it is very important for the good of young people that such be not the case, that our lectures not be looked upon by our colleagues as provocations demanding a reply and that, if some are strangers to the faith, they not be made its enemies. If, however, you do not think it possible to modify the phrase it should be entirely suppressed. However, if M. de Montalembert's noble conscience, in entrusting you with the manuscript, had the intention of submitting the eloquent boldness of his first impulse to a delicate but firm appraisal, I believe that editing is owed in strict justice and that you need only dilate upon it in a few words and change these: *protest against the teaching of their colleagues*. Then, if the phrase no longer gives the impression of hostility and general condemnation which would be applied unjustly to the Sorbonne, I do not see why the two names cannot be used, especially if it is indicated that they are not the only ones. Certainly it would draw attention to us and provoke the recriminations of every enemy of Christianity. But we are too much men of honor to be afraid of that. We are happy that a complimentary allusion demonstrates to our brothers that truth has its agents everywhere.

Adieu, sir and dear friend. Be kind enough to present my deep respects to Mme. Foisset, with the regrets of Mme. Ozanam, who cannot console herself for having so unfortunately missed the occasion of making her acquaintance. We put off our hopes for another trip, but happily where we can recover them. It is in the union of heart, mind, and prayer that I am your grateful and devoted friend.

A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Foisset family archives.

Previous publications: *Lettres* (1912), t. II, pp. 39-46, and article cited in *La Vie spirituelle*, t. XXXV, May 1933, pp. 185-220.

Notes:

1. An article which actually appeared in the review, but in the December 15 issue, pp. 357-398: "On the Establishment of Christianity in Germany."
2. A literary allusion to feudalism, wherein serfs were bound to a certain portion of land.
3. Bigny-sur-Ouche, near Beaune, where the Foissets owned property.
4. Montalembert's article was published first in *L'Univers* (October 1843), then in the form of a brochure, "Le Devoir des catholiques et la question de la liberté d'enseignement" ("The Duty of Catholics and the Freedom of Teaching Question").

5. *Agrégés* is here understood as “substitutes.”

6. Cf. his *Cours de littérature dramatique*, Paris, Charpentier, 1843.



522. To François Lallier
Paris, January 14, 1844

He assures him of the faithfulness of his friendship. Congratulations on an article published by Lallier in l'Univers. Admiration for Père Lacordaire. News of La Perrière, some friends, and his own family. Allusion to the criticisms circulating concerning the administration of the archbishopric of Sens.

Dear friend,

At the same time that you might be blaming yourself for not writing to your old Parisian friend, I could be indicting myself for neglecting my former comrade from Sens, and just as your enormous occupations would justify your stubborn silence, the cares that weigh me down would perhaps excuse my delay. Several times since returning to Paris I have taken up the pen to converse with you a while, and some insistent obligation has taken it from my hand. But after all, friendship, too, has its obligations, and I will positively not go to bed today without finishing this letter. I need, besides, to be the personal bearer of those New Year's wishes that I made you two weeks ago in recommending to God, one after the other, all those dear to me. I, who am unworthy of finding any consolation in prayer, always find it in that. I experience very great comfort in telling Our Lord of the needs of my absent friends: I know yours well, and since I ceased living alone, I understand what graces are necessary for the welfare of a young family.

I also want to compliment you on the article I have started to read in *l'Univers* in which I recognize your hand. It is very well written: but it is better than an expression of talent, it is an act of courage. You have fulfilled your duties as magistrate honorably in denouncing out in the open the extravagances of a man you have made your enemy but who, on another occasion, will not be as bold, knowing that eyes are open to his behavior.¹

If Catholics would make up their minds to publicize every tyranny of which they are certain, and to be certain of each one they want to publicize, I have no doubt that they would sooner or later command respect: but the times and upheavals make it necessary to check out and verify and not to be satisfied with *nearly*, which ought never to satisfy a Christian conscience when defending the cause of truth is at stake. This must be said apropos of present controversies. I note with pleasure that men of substance are coming forward, and deem that M. de Montalembert has restated the question in all its importance, putting it where it always belonged: between the universal church and the universal state.²

No one can bring to the discussion of religion more dignity, prudence, and charity than a man from whom this kind of approach is not really looked for: I mean P. Lacordaire. *L'Univers* gives you analyses, but what he manages to impart is emphasis, gesture, emotion, and that power over an audience which makes him the greatest orator of the day. From the beginning he had a great fund of theology and great facility in presentation, and he has lost nothing since the days when we listened to him together, getting across his message amid the rumbling of his vast congregation.³ I cannot listen to him without recalling the happy time of your youth, without thinking of you and regretting that you cannot be here, as I am, to relive our enthusiasms of nine years ago. For it is no less than that, dear friend, and see how we grow older! Indeed it would be inconvenient to come to Paris for the final conference, which will be next Sunday. A great gentleman like you, soon to have a house of your own, must not think of traveling! [But, despite all your excuses, I do not release you from your New Year's visit.

Besides, after five months' separation, we would have so much to tell each other. You will not tell me only about your children; and Madame Ozanam would not wish you to refrain from giving her news of Madame Lallier. By the way, she joins me in thanking you for that amiable hospitality so graciously offered that one could hardly pass up the opportunity some day or other. On my side, I would have much to talk with you about. You are probably ignorant of the shocking and unhappy state of our poor friend La Perrière, who does not seem to pick up in the wake of his brain fever. It is my guess that complex political affairs, along with intensive work and extreme efforts to realize his plans for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, have affected his head and brought on this insanity in which lucid intervals have been increasing for some time but without coming to a complete recovery. You can have no idea of the painful and wide-spread sensation it has caused in Lyon, and which is far from over; possibly enough of it will linger to compromise a life whose piety, intelligence, and good fortune seemed to foreshadow brilliance. Since you last saw him, his talent has taken steady and soaring flight, and his firm, warm, and judicious speech showed promise of an orator in the Chamber and an excellent defender of Catholic interests. Pray for him; I cannot believe that God will allow everything great and fruitful which He has put in this soul to be lost.⁴

Otherwise, there is nothing else new among my old friends. Lamache is a candidate for the doctorate, and Henri Demante⁵ is on the point of being named substitute following a respectable competition.] I had forgotten to tell you that I have the joy of having my two brothers here: [one is superior of a house of missionaries who appear to be solidly established,⁶ the other is beginning his second year of medicine with every success that could be wished for. At the same time, we have brought our old maid⁷ here: she could not bring herself, after fifty-eight years of service, to leave the children of her masters. Thus, you see, I have in a sense torn down the walls of the paternal home to rebuild them in Paris: all the family portraits, and some old furniture of my grandmother, relics to which so many memories are attached: we have thus repopulated our formerly rather solitary existence; and my happiness would be perfect if Madame Ozanam's health, although perfect-

ly restored, did not always give me some anxiety for the future. Many other wishes disturb our hearts, and we know that despite the cares which are taken as happiness here below, God foresees our need to hope for another.

Be kind enough to give my regards, with my wife's compliments, to Madame Lallier, who should be ready to make a trip to Paris.]

Accept the fond remembrances of my brothers, and be well assured that our friendship is far from over.

Your devoted,
A.-F. OZANAM

[P.S. I have heard nothing reassuring said about your archbishop-designate.⁸ No reproach as to his character, but strong criticism of his administration. Poor du Lac was obliged to leave for a while the novitiate where he found so much consolation to go to Castres to negotiate with his family's creditors.]

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Lallier, Doctor of Laws, Substitute Judge of the Tribunal of the First Instance, Sens, Yonne.

Original: Archives Laporte.

Previous Publication: *Lettres*, ed. 1912, t.II, pp. 46-49, with the exception of the passages in brackets.

Notes:

1. Cf. the article entitled "Les religieuses du bon pasteur et M. le maire de la ville de Sens" ("The Religious of the Good Shepherd and the Mayor of the City of Sens"). The article relates the intrusion of the police into the House of the Good Shepherd (which took in young "penitents") at the orders of the city mayor, Parent, who was shown to be rude to the religious (*L'Univers*, Wednesday, January 12, 1844).
2. The monopoly controversy was reaching the stage of parliamentary debates in view of drafting a law. The question had been studied in the commissions which were preparing the address. Cf. *l'Univers*, January 12. The Villemain proposal would be submitted on February 2. In like manner, written discussion followed. Cf. *Memoire aux évêques de France* of Abbé Combalot, which led to his trial in the Court of Assizes on March 6 and his sentencing to two weeks in prison. Allusion is to Montalembert's brochure: "Du devoir des catholiques dans la question de la liberté d'enseignement" of November 1843. On March 19, Carné expressed the same sentiments in the Chamber of Deputies: "The rapports to institute between church and state are the basis of the debate." Cf. *Moniteur* March 20, 1844.
3. Series of conferences given in Notre Dame by Lacordaire on the subject of the certitude of Catholic doctrine, "higher and greater than rational certitude," in December-January 1843-1844. The paragraph evokes Lacordaire's career: his first sermons at Rome, during which he entered the Order of St. Dominic, and his return to Paris in 1841.
4. La Perrière's health was restored. He died in 1894, president of the Central Council of Lyon of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.
5. Perhaps son of Antoine-Marie Demante (1789-1856), holder of a chair of civil law in the Faculty of Law of Paris for 36 years. Ozanam described him as "one of the strictest professors and most rigid Catholics of the law school."
6. The Congregation of Marist Fathers, founded in 1836 by Père Colin, superior of the diocesan missions of Belley. Abbé Alphonse Ozanam, diocesan missionary from the beginning, had bonds with the diocese of Belley. It is in this role that he is known to be associated with the origins of the Society of Marist Fathers.

7. Marie, mentioned in a number of letters.
8. Msgr. Mellon Jolly, native of Sézanne (Marne), ordained bishop of Séz in 1836; named archbishop of Sens by royal decree of November 19, 1843. He had been chaplain to the Duchesse de Berry.



535. To Mme. Haraneder
Paris, April 8, 1844

He describes for his aunt the feast of Easter at Paris: the men's retreat preached by P. de Ravignan and followed by a Communion Mass attracting three thousand men to Notre Dame. He emphasizes the mixture of social classes making up this assemblage, then expresses the wish that this proof of vitality demonstrated by Catholicism in France be known in Italy. He commends his friend Doubet, who is about to visit Italy, to his aunt.

Dear Aunt,

Your kind and affectionate letter reached us a few days ago, enabling us to pass this Easter season more pleasantly and intimately. Besides, when God is given more attention, His absent loved ones share in the attention too. Yesterday, a beautiful Easter Day, you can be sure that your nephews did not forget you. We had here a fine celebration which Catholic Italy could envy. Following a men's retreat preached by Père Ravignan, the most eloquent of our preachers along with P. Larcordaire, a men's corporate communion took place at Notre Dame.¹ There were more than three thousand of us,² the great nave completely filled from the altar to the door and crowds of people in the sides, all so closely packed that you could not kneel but had to stand erect. Nearly all belonged to the upper or middle classes of society; there were also, however, members of the working class and the poor. You saw peers of France, deputies, soldiers, and students from all the schools right down to poor servants in livery communicating beside their masters and old men partially blind being led by their sons. The archbishop of Paris and P. Ravignan gave out Communion on either side: it took an hour and a quarter and with perfect recollection and order. When amid this crowd seven or eight hundred voices were raised in the singing of the *Magnificat*, you would say that the vaulted ceiling thrilled and the old cathedral trembled with joy at having within its walls this believing, praying multitude which brought back the faith and devotion of the Middle Ages. As for myself, profoundly moved at so great a spectacle and finding my heart a little less cold than ordinarily amid the touching solemnity, I profited by it to recommend those I love to God with more fervor than usual. Would I forget my excellent uncle and the aunt who inherited our mother's affection for us and Jules and my cousins? I would hazard a guess that we were probably dreamed about in Florence that morning, and that all the distance and separation in the world could not prevent our being together.

You will excuse this long description which I judged would give you some com-

fort. Besides it would be useful if you would spread it abroad so that Italy would know that there is still religion in the France of which so much bad is said. For the throng which filled Notre Dame was repeated in other churches and there was such confusion that soldiers had to be stationed at the doors to maintain order. For the rest, if it pleases you, you can chat at greater length about Paris with two likable tourists who asked immediately to visit you, and who will probably be doing so in a few days. They are M. and Mme. Doubet, the best friends we have found here, and with whom we have spent many pleasant moments during the past year. Madame Doubet is the daughter of M. Rendu, a trustee of the university; his is a most respectable and pious family entirely taken up with God, studies, and good works. And yet gaiety and enjoyment are not lacking. Madame Doubet especially has been a constant amiable and faithful friend to Amélie: visiting her when she is ill, comforting her in her troubles while at the same time herself bearing a great sorrow with courage, for M. Doubet has suffered for a long time with asthma which has obliged him to spend the winter at Pisa, which is why he intends to pass the spring in the country near Florence. Since they do not know anyone in that city, think how happy they will be to see you, to chat and to show you their pretty little daughter who is four years old and will have a very good time, I trust, with my own little girl. Nor will they be in the way: they know Italian and are familiar enough with art to visit your wonderful galleries without a guide.

I cannot close, kind Aunt, without giving you news of our health since you are good enough to be so interested in it. We are well and with the good weather we are enjoying which coaxes you to breathe the fine air, I hope that Amélie will gain even more strength; as for myself, I am in perfect health during these two weeks of vacation the university gives us at Easter. My brothers are writing to you, and all of us embrace you from the depths and affection of our hearts, as well as you, Uncle, and our beloved cousins; nor do we forget M. Leblanc; a thousand best wishes to that young family of little cousins, boys and girls, that you see growing around you. Goodbye again, kind Aunt, pray often for your nephew.

A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Al Signor, Signor Luigi Haraneder, Florence, Italy. Via Marseille.

Postmark: Livorno, by Sea, date illegible.

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Notes:

1. Cf. *l'Univers* of Tuesday, April 9. P. de Ravignan attained his object of preaching an Easter retreat for men only for the first time during Holy Week of 1841, and of a men's corporate Communion on Easter Day 1842. (Cf. Burnichon, *La Campagne de Jésus en France. Histoire d'un siècle*, vol. 2, pp. 228-229.)
2. *l'Univers* estimates "about 2,000 Communions."



537. To Emmanuel Bailly
Paris, April 26, [1844']

Bailly being about to submit his resignation as president of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul that same evening, Ozanam declines in advance his own nomination to succeed him and supports Cornudet.

Sir and dear friend,

Rumor has it in the society that you intend to announce your retirement this evening and to offer me the honor of being president general. Our recent conversations and everything that has happened in the last several months lead me to believe that the first of the two rumors is well-founded. But for what concerns the second, I dare hope it is not and that you have taken into consideration the urgent reasons that made me duty bound to refuse the post of vice-president. I come then to beg you earnestly not to make a nomination that I would not accept and which would have the unhappy result of complicating by my immediate resignation the unfortunately inevitable crisis into which yours would plunge us. Why not designate, at least temporarily, M. Cornudet?

Forgive me if I write these lines in haste. The preparation of my class does not permit me to attend this evening's meeting. But I will be there in spirit, as with everything connected with the society and him who has for so long been its support and guide.

Your fondly devoted servant,
A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Bailly, rue Madame, n. 41. Very urgent.

Original: Archives of the motherhouse of the Assumptionists, Rome. Photostats furnished by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Unedited.

Note:

1. Cf. minutes book of the meetings.



538. To Montalembert
Paris, May 6, 1844

Deferential and enthusiastic congratulations for the campaign he is waging in favor of the church's liberties and especially for his latest speech.

Count,

If I were not afraid of interrupting your extremely busy affairs, I would have been honored to call in person to express my delight and, permit me to say, my

fraternal pride as a Christian. I do not think that language could ever be elevated more highly in our political gatherings than in the peroration of your latest speech.¹ The masters and companions you took with you in your exile on Madeira are plain enough; and I recognize the accents of St. Gregory VII, St. Anselm, and St. Bernard² when you defend the Church's liberties, the oldest and the most recent and the only imperishable liberties.

[Would it be indiscreet to impose once more upon your kindness by asking as a favor to Madame Ozanam, who has never seen the Chamber of Peers, for two tickets for Wednesday or for the nearest day on which you foresee an interesting discussion, especially if you will be taking part in it? Saturday is the only day impossible for me.

I have the honor to be, Count, with a respectful but very lively affection,

Your devoted servant,
A.-F. OZANAM]

Original: Property of the Montalembert family. The original carries in Montalembert's hand the note: "support—Ozanam on the freedom of teaching."

Previous publication: *Lettres* (1912), t. II, p. 50, except for the passage in brackets.

Notes:

1. Cf. *Le Moniteur*, April 27, and *l'Univers*, April 28.
2. Allusion to a recent work of Montalembert's.



539. To Ernest Falconnet
Paris, May 22, 1844

After many steps taken, the nomination of his father-in-law to a division of the Ministry of Public Instruction is on the point of success. Teaching and personal work occupy him a great deal. Comments on the spirit of youth and on the university. Joy at his brothers' move to Paris.

Dear friend,

I want to say how much pleasure your good letter gave me. Since your nomination¹ I have several times been on the point of writing to congratulate you, and to congratulate myself on a promotion which gives me hope of seeing you more often, since I never leave Lyon without the intention of returning and thus, whether my life be established elsewhere, at least I will always make frequent visits to a city to which so many dear friendships draw me. What excuses my silence a bit and makes me less culpable for not having written earlier is the extreme activity my father-in-

law's candidacy has added to my usual occupations. As nothing is more painful to M. Soulacroix than to ask for himself, I have had to take chief conduct of an affair in which, after all, the greatest interest was that of Madame Ozanam, and I occupied myself with approaches for which I had neither taste nor experience. They seem to have attained their end. The nomination of my father-in-law to a division of the Ministry of Public Instruction has been decided; but there remains that uncertainty which only ceases with the signature. You understand in what perplexities and anxieties four months of waiting, hopes, and alarms were necessarily spent and if you add to those inquietudes the unyielding faculty toil, a section of rhetoric at Collège Stanislas, and an unfortunate book whose interminable editing I am laboriously pushing, you will appreciate how little time I have had for the needs of the heart, family relationships, and the cultivation of old friends. And meanwhile the entire necessity of these consolations is felt all the more when you begin to live in the tumult of business, and in the middle of contradictions and difficulties, in Paris especially, where men are as polished as marble but often as cold and hard.

Assuredly I have no complaints of those around me. With never the need to dissimulate or water down my convictions, I have always met with a sympathetic hearing from the young people in my courses at the Sorbonne, and there is no talking back, no matter how the irreligious prejudices of the Reformation or even the doctrines of absolutism are treated. I continue to strive, therefore, as far as my humble capacities allow, for that alliance of science and faith, of the Church and freedom, which I hope to see emerge from the storms of the nineteenth century. Besides, in so far as the professors and substitutes are concerned, I have scarcely found anything but good will and encouragement. Advice and books are never lacking, and to the degree that, if there were nothing else, I would encounter few difficulties. The thorny problem is advancement, to attain titular rank and become part of that group which delights in making itself inaccessible. Happily, Providence provides me with certain very active and efficacious friendships, such as those of M. Ampère, M. Lenormant and several others. Writers enliven our solitude, for we scarcely ever go out. For that matter, we could easily be self-sufficient now that we have reunited a part of our family around us: Alphonse, at the head of a house of Marists, lives five minutes away from my house, Charles lives with us, and our good old Marie as well, who has never been happier than among her *children*. Amélie manages her increased household marvelously, and in her sweet company, that knowing and lively kindness, that Christian union under the eye of God, I have found the only kind of good fortune which does not dry up.

I could not resist telling you about this domestic happiness you may taste soon. Believe, dear friend, that while writing you so little I nonetheless think of you much. I was especially anxious to know whether your change of address would not endanger the charming intention you had confided to me last year. I am happy to see that, on the contrary, it grows stronger and is drawing toward its goal. Your invitation is tendered well in advance: I nonetheless accept it enthusiastically. If God permits, I will be delighted to be able to take Amélie to a family solemnity which will give us another amiable cousin. And in case it will be impossible for us to go, be

well assured that our hearts will be at that gathering with those of all who love you, and with the souls of both our good mothers² whose memory you so piously evoke.

Permit, as a favor to my right as elder, to complain a bit of your not having given me any news of M. and Mme. Populus,³ your sister, and especially your excellent father to whom, as you know, I am bound by an almost filial bond. Be good enough to tell me about them in replying and to give them the expression of my respectful attachment. My brothers join with me; in their name as well as my own I embrace you as cordially as your procurator general's train permits. Adieu.

Your tenderly devoted cousin,
A.-F. OZANAM

I run into Personneaux frequently here; he has not forgotten you.

Address: Monsieur Ernest Falconnet, Substitute of the Procurator of the King at the Tribunal of the First Instance, rue du Rempart-d'Ainay, Lyon.

Postmark: May 23, 1844.

Original: Belonging to a private collection. Text verified from a photocopy belonging to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Notes:

1. From the internal evidence of this letter, Falconnet had been named to the post of procurator general.
2. The Ozanams and the Falconnets were related on Ozanam's father's side.
3. Cousins of Ozanam and Falconnet.





A FINAL WORD

To read the private letters of great men and women for love and knowledge is a privilege indeed. When their writers were holy as well, it is a grace from God.

There can be no doubt that, although the cause for the beatification and canonization of Frédéric Ozanam is still undergoing the rigorous inspection of the Holy See, God wishes his letters to be shared with others, especially his brothers and sisters of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

The consummate teacher in his chosen profession, Ozanam continues to teach, quietly and unobtrusively, in his letters and writings. Here he is the loving son, the devoted brother, the faithful friend, the chaste but ardent lover, the supreme husband and father. Above all, he reveals himself in these intimate pages—never meant for other eyes than those of family and friends—as the devout and committed Catholic Christian, steeped in God and fiercely loyal to the Church he defended vigorously with speech and pen, and with his unique Society dedicated to the souls and bodies of the poor.

Unique, for that matter, best describes Ozanam himself. How often do we find in the one person the head of family, founder of fresh charity, friend of many, the intellectual, the exceptional scholar, popular teacher, astute diplomat in the service of Church and society—and all of these simultaneously and most fruitfully in the short space of forty years?

To find the like we must turn to his spiritual father, Vincent de Paul, who lived a dozen lifetimes in one and changed the whole course and practice of charity in the Church. It was no accident that Ozanam chose Vincent de Paul as the patron of his Society, and how providentially and enthusiastically Vincent answered the call!

The light of Frédéric Ozanam shines in evergrowing luster before all men and women. May his words inculcate in them the love of God and neighbor.

A PERSONAL NOTE

I found great personal enjoyment in translating these letters of Frédéric Ozanam: there is always a special satisfaction in making the acquaintance of another human being, a satisfaction that is enhanced by personal letters which bring the blessed knowledge of friendship. There is further satisfaction for a priest in discovering new facets of holiness in a fellow being, because the priest knows how urgently role models of sanctity are needed in this decadent world.

I am humbly grateful for being allowed to help in making Frédéric Ozanam

better known and hope to be able to continue doing so. I am thoroughly convinced that the translation and publication of these letters has been providential, from the beginning which was not of my seeking, to the selection of these particular letters which was dictated over a period of time by particular circumstances.

I am, therefore, most grateful to Henry Gieffers, longtime official champion of Ozanam's cause, who first approached me with the project and guided it through early days; to John Simmons, president of the Society's Council of the United States, and Dudley Baker, late executive secretary, who believed in it; to Father William Sheldon, C.M., former postulator of Ozanam's cause, who provided me with vital information and texts; and Rita Porter, executive secretary, and Roy Porter, who helped bring it at last to the light of day. I am especially grateful to God whose salvific Will continues to be manifested in the life of Frédéric Ozanam, in the spread of the Vincentian apostolate through his Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and in the proclamation of the good news of that life and works by word of mouth and through the printed word of marvelous letters like these.

JOSEPH I. DIRVIN, C.M.

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