1837-1840
141. To Pierre Ballofet  
Lyon, January 23, 1837


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 archéologique 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 to Lallier, August 1, 1838.)
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 brothers will be happy and proud to be in communication with it. 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.*

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 businessman 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.
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, 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 Lafitte 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 pulpit; the Course in Embryogeny given by M. Coste 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. (Rhone). 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.
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 solicitudes 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 Epidèmes and was getting ready to publish another one at the same time; I will have the printed article sent to Papa. Levrant, Treuttel, 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, 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. Valellion 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 archbishop.
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. 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. Mathevon 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! 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.


Original: Archives Laporte. Ed.: Bulletin de la Société 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 Collège 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 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.

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 kindesses 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 Perri-
ère 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, Mon-
sieur, the steps you have pursued for me at Paris. In a week I will resume the work I
interrupted. 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 what-
ever 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 ad-
dressed 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. 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

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

Congratulationson 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 insconsolable 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!

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.

Your 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

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Note:
1. Live happy, you whose future is cast.

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158. To Emmanuel Bailly
Lyon, September 11, 1837


Monsieur,

In sending you in haste the review of M. Michelet’s 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. 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
A Life in Letters

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.


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 Révolution 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


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. 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 be 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 consequence. 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 Tail-
landier. 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 brood-
ing on my interior and exterior misfortunes has so upset my mind that I am incap-
able 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 af-
fairs 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, pusillanimi-
tas, desperatio, torpor cinea praecipit; 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. 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 movemus et sumus, 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, because God Himself is the cause of this joy unknown to nature: Gaudete in Domino.

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; 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's 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; 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. Morvonnais 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 longino reverentia.* 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.

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 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, 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, Dufieux, La Perrière, Charaund, Arthaud, Bouchacourt, 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


Notes:
1. See letter 141, Ozanam to Ballofet, January 23, 1837.
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, vanity, 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.
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").
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.
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.

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
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, 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. 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’s 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 re-
cently 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 assist-
ance which is growing larger still this year, although fortunately the immense mis-
ery 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 theepoch of December 8.¹ Do you not find it marvellous-
ly 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 aban-
donied 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

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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


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


Notes:
1. A member of the Haraneder family, importers and exporters, who were close relatives of Ozanam. Mme. Haraneder (nee Benoite 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.
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 Quelen.

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, 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 pray­
ers 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. 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 Ravignan in the
Advent sermons. Our metropolis is filled with his voice. He repeated his confer­
ences of last year here: they have effected two kinds of good: First, they have a hap­
py 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. The pa­
tience 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 af­
fair. Perhaps, for that matter, the Europe of today is more perceptive than the Eu­
rope of that time. A pistol shot fired at a royal personnage 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 dis­
course of Abbé Pavy. I think it produced the desired effect, and I attest to the grati­
tude of the author with my own.

Adieu, monsieur, yes indeed, to God. 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

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.
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


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. 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: 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 Hermit 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. 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."

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


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.
5. The rallying cry of the Crusades.
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'epargne 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. 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* 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 have been able to settle, 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 hyperbole 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; 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. 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, 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. The existence of three new groups at Paris has caused us much joy. The two Mm. Guillemin 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, Louis XIV and Henry VIII are joined with the rationalism of Kant, Hegel, and Goethe under the cloak of Frederick William? Or in the one where behind Gregory XVI reappear the great figures of Pius VII, Innocent XI, Innocent IV, and Gregory VII with the faith of St. Ambrose, St. John Chrysostom, and St. Thomas? 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 certain-
ly receive him at your best. My friendly wishes to you.


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 Œuvres.
5. Victor Le Clerc (1789-1865), Latinist and historian, had been dean of the Faculty of Letters at
Paris since 1832.
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 Conference 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.
11. Emmanuel Kant, German philosopher (1724-1804).
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.
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’Aillaud
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 Casaneuve 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, 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 eglangines 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 anguishes; 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 manuever 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 Cousin’ 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 Migne 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 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 people 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 rivals, 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 subterfuges, 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 anathematized, M. de Ravignan pronounced unintelligible, Abbé Coeur 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 Perriere 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, 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 Benedict, 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 turns' 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. 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, 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, La­mache, 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

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.)
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.
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-Nicolas under the presidency of M. Dupanloup. 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 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


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

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

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**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), councilor (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.
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. 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 19th about thirty members from the two conferences met at the cathedral in the chapel where the saint’s heart is preserved. 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. 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 convocate 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 île-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.


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 Compostela; 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

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Original: Robillard de Beaurepaire Family.

Notes:
2. The shrine of St. James the Apostle in Spain.
184. To Henri Pessonneaux
Lyon, August 21, 1838


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 anywhere 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 wearisome 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. Debecourt, 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? 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


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? 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 feast 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 association 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 Charles’, 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.
201. To Emmanuel Bailly  
Lyon, April 5, 1839  


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, of Beaune, yesterday, and we spoke at length of you and our mutual friends. Mm. Wilson and de Champagny 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. Debecourt 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, Roger Bacon, St. Thomas, and St. Bonaventure 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.-E. Ozanam
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).

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 Baudicour 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-Severin, Saint-Louis d'Antin, and Saint-Medard. 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 Clave and several of our old friends compose the nucleus, is forming under the auspices of its saintly bishop.

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. 1

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 feast) 4 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 presumptious, 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'Isoard 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, bishop of Perigueux. The king did not find him a sufficiently great personnage 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 Parquet 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 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's letter, and ask Eugène
Rieussec\textsuperscript{12} 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.
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'Isaard (1766-1839), archbishop of Auch, had been named archbishop of Lyon on June 13. He died at Lyon on October 7.
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] 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 Alphonse 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, Charles' are over; he is well again. Is he still at home? Has he gone to seek prizes with the Minims? 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, 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 Heart 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 Cazalès 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. Anastasie 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
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.
7. Edmond de Cazalés (1814-1876), magistrate, journalist, and professor, who became a priest in 1843, and deputy under the Second Republic.

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 unhoped 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, 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. Buloz' 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 Mémoire 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 ascendency; 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. Buchez' and M. Bastide; 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. 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 Preachers 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: Monsieur, Monsieur l’abbé Lacordaire, at the Rev. Dominican Fathers of Le Quercia, Viterbo, States of the Church.


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. Phillippe 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.
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 Montpel­
lier 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 re­
mained indifferent. Nantes and Angers, Dijon and Moulins are prospering. Bor­
deaux 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 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).
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's 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-
ercised 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.


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


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 man 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 almstgiving. 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 worldly celebration, but a sweet atmosphere, a sort of reminder of Isaac and Tobias, 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. 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! 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 Ferrière 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.-E. Ozanam

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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.
3. The date of Lallier’s marriage.
4. Referring to his deceased parents.

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; 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's 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 professor 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 Fortoul 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. Cousin 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 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’s 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.

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’indifference 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 Algiers 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 perhaps the first to tell you that Père Lallier, assuming the name or 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.

A.-F. Ozanam
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... is all at once a fictitious member as far as the conference is concerned.


Notes:
1. A critical success.
2. Louis Alloury had already reviewed it in the Débats issue of July 26, 1839.
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.
10. The ends of seven lines are torn off in the original.

229. To Henri Pessoneaux
Lyons, 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, 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


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 européeenne, 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. Péricaud 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, 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 Bore. 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.

A.-F. OZANAM

Original: Archives of the Foisset Family. Ed. by Jean Morienval, Sept Lettres inédites d'Ozanam à Théophile Foisset, in La Vie Spirituelle, t. XXXV (May 1, 1933), pp. 185-220.

Notes:
1. Antoine Péricaud, Lyon archeologist (1782-1865), librarian of the city of Lyon, also wrote on the history of the city.
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. Notre Seigneur Jesus 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
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, whom you told me about, Cornudet, master of requests in the Council of State, Ferrand, 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, 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. 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.

Père 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 (?) 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, Gaillaud, Bougeon, Hignard, 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 Ly-
on 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 co-
operate 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 processions 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,3 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

Notes:
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 corre-
spondence 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. 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* 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 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, de Gazalis, Veuillot, 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’Ère 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 Boyes (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


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 tended 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 unhoped-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’Univer, 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, and more than six distinct categories among the dynasties. 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 Villemain took over the Sorbonne, a tribune no less powerful than that of the Palais-Bourbon. 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 its 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 Bonald 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 allocations 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, of the Empire, and the Restoration, 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 chasse 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 literature, 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 indis-
pensable 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 prodi-
gious heights; turning aside to greet Fribourg, Berne, Thun, Schwitz, Einseidehn,
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 pe-
dantic 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 les-
sions 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 La-
cordaire. After completing his own novitiate, he directed that of eight young men,
al 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 imita-
tors. 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 sev-
eral 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 Sa-
lins not become too monotous 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
Franchecomte 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 remem-
ber 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 imagin-
ings 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 seri-
ously annoyed you.

Adieu, your friend,

A.-F. Ozanam


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 Vilemain (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 Perigueux, to the archbishopric of
(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 Girondons were an influential and moderating party in the French Revolution.
7. The reign of Napoléon Bonaparte.
8. The Restoration of the Bourbons (Louis XVII 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

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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 Taillandier 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.

Note:
1. Claude Fauriel (1772-1844), French critic and historian. Former secretary to Joseph Fouche. 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


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 Beaurepaire family.