468. To Dominique Meynis
S.l. [Paris], January 31, 1843

He reports on the audience Queen Marie-Amélie has just granted him, during which he paid the respects of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith. On M. de Carné’s advice it was judged preferable not to address the king directly. The court is well disposed toward the association. He is preparing the annual report asked of him.

Monsieur le President,

I have just had the honor of being received by the queen and of presenting to her the letter and the medals the council had entrusted to me. Her Majesty accepted this homage with much affability and demonstrated her attachment to the Association of the Propagation of the Faith. She knows its good works, reads the Annales, and is deeply moved, so she told me, by the account of the sufferings and labors and dangers by which the poor missionaries seek out their eternal salvation, while we imagine we can attain ours as easily as possible. When I explained to her the council’s regret that it could not put a gold medal in her casket, “It is better so,” she replied, “for it will leave a little more gold for the missions.” She questioned me with lively interest about the operation and organization of the association, and asked me what hope the opening of the ports in China could afford religion. Finally, after insisting upon knowing the reason for our approach to the king, she offered to herself present to His Majesty the casket and the council’s letter. I thought it proper to accept this offer with gratitude, and when I therefore took it upon myself to do so in line with M. de Carné’s advice, the queen was kind enough to accept immediately, assuring me besides that the gift would be appreciated and that the benevolent solicitude of the king could be counted on for the association as for anything to do with Catholic missions.

Thus have I tried to acquit myself of the honorable commission you have been kind enough to confide to me. I am sorry for the delays, which were inevitable. It would perhaps have been more flattering to get to the king without detour or intermediary. But for the success of the matter nothing could be happier than the intervention of the queen, ever eager, as is known, to advance the interest of religion with the prince and ever assured of a favorable reception. The approach could not be less successful nor make less noise, and we will avoid the embarrassment of indiscreet publicity. Besides, the first step taken, if the council has further wishes later on, it will always be easy for me to make them known to H[er] M[ajesty] the queen through the good offices of M. de Carné and Mme. de Dolomieu. I would be infinitely happy when new occasions arise to make myself useful in the pious plans of the directors of the Propagation of the Faith.

It remains to reply to a note from the secretary who asked to have by February 15 a work destined for the May issue. Figuring that the work should be delivered to the printer no sooner than March 1, I have not taken it up again actively. Now I can promise that the editing will be finished by the 22nd, and it will therefore arrive in good time for the corrections, which I leave entirely to the wisdom of the council.
I have the honor to be, with respect and the deepest devotion to the association whose destinies divine Providence has placed in your hands,

M. le President,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

A.-F. Ozanam

Original: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Unedited.

Notes:
1. The French edition wrongfully addresses this letter to Dominique Meynis. It is obvious from the text that it is addressed to the president of the council, Antoine de Jessé. In fact Meynis, who was secretary, is referred to in the third person.
2. Cf. letter 398, Ozanam to Meynis, May 21, 1842; cf. also letter 392 written between November 15 and 20, 1842, to Marquise de Dolomieu.
3. By the Treaty of Nankin, which ended the Opium War (August 29, 1842), the English had effectively attained the opening of five Chinese ports to their commerce (Shanghai, Amoy, Canton, Fau-Tcheau, Ningpo). France was taking steps to obtain like conditions from China (Cf. P. Renouvin, Histoire des relations internationales, le XIX' siècle, 1" partie, p. 226).

469. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, February 14, 1843

He has still not been able to get in writing confirmation of the court's good disposition toward the Propagation of the Faith. He expresses admiration for the projects, still secret, of the bishop of Nancy and asks whether the rumors about the emperor of China's good dispositions toward the missions have any foundation. He is working happily on the promised article.

Dear friend,

I am late in acknowledging reception of your recent letters. I am deeply sensible of the satisfaction the council feels in the matter of the medals. But I regret not being able to increase it by sending you the information I had hoped to. M. de Carné deems it impossible to obtain a letter from the king's secretary of commands, only perhaps one from the queen expressing a sense of gracious acceptance. In the meantime, it seems to me you could, in approaching Propaganda, count on the amiable assurances of H[er] M[ajesty].

The letter for M. Boré has been sent to his address (rue du Valier, dans le cité, Angers); he is not expected here for a month. Thank you for being so kind as to let me in on the secret of the wonderful project as well as the requests of the bishop of Nancy. It is very consoling to me, at the distance I find myself, to be able to fol-
low the association’s course of business and to be treated always as a member of the family.

This reason and the need for enlightenment in the work given to me make me consult you today. The Catholic papers are filled with a new rumor that has stirred every heart. It absorbs me as well as everyone around me, and I am not sure whether God, who can even now work the greatest miracles, should be thanked or men be distrusted, for they often compromise the divine interests by their indiscreet desires and credulity. If the marvel is true, if the request for forty missionaries by the emperor of China is a fact, we should not be silent. We should have proof of it. I would almost say we should be silent about everything else and that this event, without equal in the church’s history, should itself alone introduce the twenty-second year of the association. For three days I have thought of nothing else: I have made inquiries and know that the internunciature has received affirmations from Rome. You should not be left out. Please write as soon as possible about this matter, then, and instruct me as to what I should say at a time when no word seems to do it justice.

For the rest, the account of the beginnings of the association will take up the largest portion of my article. Your comments about a more generous effort in the future to support the good begun will find their proper place. It will help me to know, however, the total amount of receipts, at least approximately. While I hold myself to the deadline of the 23rd of the current month, as we agreed, if it were strictly possible to keep my article a week longer for further reworking I would rest all the easier for not being able to correct the proofs.

The time I have spent on this article is like a visit with you. I am delighted to find myself for a while in that modest parlor where you show the Christian hospitality of two worlds. I feel myself, unworthy as I am, a part of the grand designs Providence seems to advance by your hands. Do we not share unformed questions in face of this movement which lays hold of both boundaries of the Orient, Syria and the Chinese empire, in order to turn this portion of the globe again to the light of the radiant cross which is the symbol of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith?

Farewell, dear friend, my regards to the members of the council, to you my devoted affection, pray for me.

A.-F. Ozanam

I am going immediately to l’Univers to take care of the errands you entrusted to me.

Address: Monsieur Meynis, Secretary of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith, rue du Perat, n. 6, Lyon.

Postmark: February 14, 1843.
Original: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Unedited.

Notes:
1. Msgr. de Forbin Janson (1785-1844), who was in the process of founding the Association of the Holy Childhood. The Council of Paris of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith had given a favorable reception to Msgr. de Forbin Janson's exploration of a kind of merger of the two associations. The Council of Lyon favored the maintenance of their autonomy. (Cf. minutes of the meetings of the Council of Paris, February 3 and 17, 1843, archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Paris.) Charles, Comte de Forbin Janson, born at Paris, was auditor of the Council of State (1805) but withdrew from the imperial service over the quarrel between Napoleon I and Pius VII. Ordained a priest in 1811, he founded with Rauzan the Society of Missions of France, which organized the missions during the Restoration. As bishop of Nancy (1823-1830), he continued to make the missions priority. From 1839 to 1841 he evangelized Canada and the United States. On his return he founded the Work of the Holy Childhood.
2. L'Univers, Sunday, February 12, 1843, p. 1. When the English signed the Treaty of Nankin with China (1842), France was forced to seek similar advantages by negotiations which were to result in the Treaty of Whampoa, October 24, 1844. Among the clauses of the treaty, France obtained the recognition of freedom of apostolate for Catholic missions and impunity for Chinese converts. Several diplomatic missions were sent to China between 1842 and 1844: the Dubois de Jancigny mission in January 1842, the Lagnéne mission in April 1843. The negotiation alluded to here was previous to Lagnéne's arrival. It undoubtedly concerned a proposal to be discussed by Jancigny and the Imperial Commissar Ki-Ying, which was to result in a provisory agreement of July 15, 1843, never carried out, Ki-Ying boasting that he had tricked the French. The rumor that Ozanam cites here agrees with the general tenor of the negotiations which were seized upon and interpreted by the French with excessive optimism.

470. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, February 28, 1843

He sends the secretary of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith the report of the association's activities of the past year and offers his excuses for being late. He is trying to obtain from l'Univers necessary rectification following an item which could be prejudicial to the Propagation of the Faith. New allusions to the good dispositions of the king. He recommends himself to his friend's prayers at the beginning of Lent.

Dear friend,

Here I am, rather embarrassed, renewing my excuses and sending you my finished article. Yesterday I set aside a half-hour to make a neat copy of it, and the half-hour was stolen by a visit which occurred despite a strict guard of my door. I allotted three weeks for the work and had no doubt of meeting the deadline when a host of unforeseen circumstances thus brought me right down to the wire. Please be assured that I will take better precautions the next time and that you will not experience the inconvenience that I perhaps cause you. I trust that the members of the editing committee will also excuse me, and I have only one anxiety: to know whether my article has come close to satisfying your wishes.
I am sorry that I could not receive more complete information from you before I left Lyon. For lack of more detailed instructions, I thought first, as to length, I should confine myself to moderate limits, about twelve pages of the Annales. Then it seemed to me that the account of the foundation of the association should be as simple as possible, and that is why I have restricted myself to facts and dates, trying to present them in the clearest order, leaving comments to the end. And I have hidden any identity of persons by the use of initials, and have left out small details which have only local or individual interest. The short introduction where I have tried to summarize what preceded the article was fashioned out of the data you supplied me with. The last year, whose purpose is to point out the needs of the new year, might seem too short to you: I was afraid that if I expanded it I might use up more space than I should in the issue. For the rest, you will note that your opinion has been followed as regards the China missions. Finally, it is completely understood that you will make use of the article according to the council’s wisdom and wishes, adding, deleting, and correcting as you will. I make no pretense to be treated better than the venerable missionaries whose letters we have so many times subjected to deletions and retouching. Once in your hands, what I have written is no longer mine. I consider myself already sufficiently honored and happy to serve the publication of so admirable a society. If my pen can again render itself useful on occasion in the same way, I will always be grateful for a use which sanctifies it and must bring it luck.

Now I must consult you about the note which has been sent me for l’Univers. It happens that the editors of this paper have close ties with the priest who is in charge of collecting for an English mission. Consequently they are unwilling to publish your letter in its present text, which could hurt the work in question. The cleric alluded to has come to see me and made some explanations which excuse somewhat the carelessness of his first effort. He then offered me a rewrite which preserves the substance of your note but adds: “However, it can happen that, despite real needs, whether because of a defect of proper solicitation or for other reasons, of which the councils of the association must be the judges, a country or a district does not participate in this support. Such is the case of the mission which we have undertaken to help and for which we continue to solicit alms, etc.” I thought that, by modifying certain phrases, I could accept the compromise, so as to delay no longer in rectifying an error dangerous to the honor of the association. Meanwhile, I wait for your reply.

L’Ami de la religion, not having carried the announcement in question, has felt that it must give the answer that there is hardly a reason for publishing the rectification.

I will see M. de Carné again to find out whether some acknowledgement can be obtained of the king’s gracious acceptance of the medals from the sacred congregation of propaganda.

Farewell, dear friend, pardon a wretch who uses wretched paper and a bad pen and who, I don’t know why, finds the greatest difficulty in expressing today everything he wants to say to you. The holy time of Lent is just beginning. Pray much for
me who, overburdened with duties, has scarcely leisure to pray. Give the council of the association the homage of my respectful devotion, and take for yourself the assurance of my unchangeable friendship.

A.-F. OzANAM

If you see Abbé Desgeorges,1 would you tell him that I received with much thanks his letter and package and have long since done what he asked?

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur D. Meynis, Secretary of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith, rue du Pérat, n. 6, Lyon.

Postmark: February 28, 1843.

Original: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Unedited.

Notes:
2. The appeal in behalf of the English mission, carried in l'Univers of February 11, 1843, was signed by Abbé Hault, chaplain of the Institution Laville, former professor of philosophy at the Collège de Juilly. In the same issue it was said that offerings would be accepted at the archbishop's palace by Abbé Carron, honorary canon, vice-official of the diocese. But it was the custom that every missionary work would submit its requests for help through the Propagation of the Faith. Similar incidents had already resulted in slightly strained relations between l'Univers and the Propagation of the Faith.
3. Amedée Desgeorges (1804-1887), born at Lyon, ordained in 1832, belonged to the Society of Priests of Saint-Irenée or “Chartreux” of Lyon, of which Abbé Alphonse Ozanam was a member from 1835 to 1841. A renowned preacher, Desgeorges was a member of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith of Lyon from 1838. He was superior of the Chartreux from 1856 to 1882.

471. To Francois Lallier
Paris, March 9, 1843

He has been very busy in preparing two articles for the Correspondant1 and the Annales de la propagation de la foi. The common project (translation of the works of St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure) had the approval of Victor Cousin. Announces du Lac's entry into the Benedictines. Reflections on Christian renewal.

Dear Friend,

You must think me blameworthy. After so many work projects carried out together and so much shared discussion, my two-months' silence can seem inexcusable to you. It would be indeed had not two long articles, one for the Correspondant1 and the other for the Annales de la propagation de la foi1 taken up all
my time; and you know that my duties do not leave me much. I have just finished six of the most laborious weeks of my life, which discouraged every distraction and commandeered my evenings. You know with what difficulty I write, and now more than ever I cannot let my pen grow rusty: it is like an old rapier that can no longer be drawn from its scabbard. You will be receiving my published article, along with a short introduction, which shows it for what it is, the opening lesson and general outline of my course for the present year. I would like you to give me your opinion.

Do not think, however, dear friend, that I neglected the plans we made to collaborate for my personal studies. More than a month ago I saw M. Cousin and talked with him about our undertaking at great length. He strongly approves. He finds the choice of the *Itinerarium* especially excellent. As for St. Thomas, he was torn between translating a tract chosen from three or four he mentioned or a treatise drawn from the *Summa* which would have the advantage of better demonstrating his manner and method, translated, however, exactly, forthrightly, and without mutilation. He urged me not occupy myself with Roger Bacon too much, although he offered to give me, if I wished, an unedited treatise of that doctor. He thinks the style of this version should find its source in the theological writings of Bossuet, in the preface of Arnauld’s *Perpetuité de la foi*, and in Malebranche, all excellent models of classical language at the same time faithful to the school. In short, M. Cousin believes in the possibility and probability of a success. (And I have reason to believe that he would assist in asking for the French Academy’s recognition of a work of this kind.)

In another direction we have been less successful. Every attempt to find separate tracts of St. Bonaventure has been in vain. [Four days ago I visited Toulouse, which again has nothing. Méquignon the younger held out some hope of finding them, but this hope has had no results. This same bookseller has only one complete St. Bonaventure, which he will sell for 180 francs. It is the only copy that has turned up to date. Would you agree to such considerable expense? If you are determined on the work in question, I would urge you not to draw back in face of such an expenditure; in other words, burn the ships and refuse to abandon the enterprise. We can, if you wish, wait a while longer, visit other booksellers, and only conclude this expensive bargain for lack of anything else if we have no further information by Easter. Tell me what you want to do.] But is it not shameful and deplorable that in a metropolitan city, an archdiocese with canons and seminaries, no portion of the works of the Seraphic Doctor can be found? There is the result of expelling the monks. If there were Franciscans, you can be sure they would not be missing in their library. I have been asked to tell you a great piece of news that will undoubtedly bring consolation to your friendship as it has to mine. Du Lac enters the Benedictine Fathers of Paris next Wednesday. You perhaps know that he has been entertaining this pious design for a long time. The merger of *l’Univers* with *l’Union* gave him his freedom, and he took advantage of it for the sole purpose of going to immolate himself to God in the cloister. He will find there the peace he needed so much. I am happy to see him leave the harsh and vulgar life of journalism, which he was not made for. This excellent soul will unfold under the influence of prayer and
some day will produce fruits we shall all profit from. The vows of so many friends engaged in a holier vocation, as I see it, are of great help to us left behind in the world. Many have been blessed in our generation. If we consider it rightly, we should look upon it as an elite band which we must follow after under pain of desertion. Do you not contemplate the myriad of confreres of St. Vincent de Paul around us who win us to their ranks, thus committing us to the end of achieving our salvation?

Tell me your news. Madame Ozanam sends her regards to Madame Lallier. We heartily join in your hope of becoming a father for the second time. Tell us, too, whether your first-born's health remains flourishing; and be kind enough to plant a kiss on his forehead for us. Tell me when there is question of your promotion and whether I can do anything for you. Finally, will you see us again at Easter as you have given us to believe? Forgive me if this letter is short after so long a delay. Tomorrow's lesson makes me hurry. But be assured that in silence, as in absence, you are ever remembered by your friend.

A.-F. OzANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Lallier, Acting Judge, Sens, Yonne.

Original: Archives Laporte.
Previous publication: Lettres (1912), t. II, pp. 28-31.
Notes:
1. Cf. Le Correspondant, February 15, 1843, "De la tradition litteraire en Italie."
2. Cf. Annales de la propagation de la foi, XV, March 1843, report (unsigned) of the association's activities in 1842.
3. Follow-up of a letter of October 4, 1842, where a joint work "of great relevance" is spoken of. A like proposal is alluded to in Ozanam's article "De la propagation des études théologiques et de quelques éditions récentes des pères et des docteurs," in l'Université catholique. t. XIV, n. 83, November 1842, pp. 400-404.
4. The complete title is Itinerarium mentis ad Deum.
5. Jacques Benigne Bossuet (1627-1704), bishop of Condrom, then of Meaux, born at Dijon, sacred orator, called the Eagle of Meaux. A disciple of St. Vincent de Paul and member of that saint's famous Tuesday Conferences, a weekly gathering of priests intent on their perfection, he wrote in a magnificent and inspired style, his Sermons being the most sublime monuments of pulpit eloquence.
6. Antoine Arnauld, disciple of Saint-Cyran and Jansenist apologist (De Communion frequente) refuted by St. Vincent de Paul. La Perpétuité de la foi, published in collaboration with Nicole, was written against the Protestants in his usual fine literary style.
7. Dom Guéranger had hired a building at 13 bis de la rue Monsieur where the Priory of Saint-Germain-de-Paris (dependent upon Solesmes) was established on May 14, 1842. Dom Pitra became prior on March 9, 1843. On March 19 of the same year Melchoir du Lac de Montvert received the habit there from Dom Guéranger's hands. (He was not obliged to live in a Benedictine House.) The Parisian prior disappeared in August 1845, following a financial debacle. The monks withdrew to Solesmes (Cf. Dom Cabrol, Histoire de Cardinal Pitra, Paris, V. Retaux, 1893).
8. Merger of l'Union and l'Univers. The allusion is to l'Union catholique, a legitimist and Catholic publication, founded in 1841 and absorbed by l'Univers, January 31, 1843. It had assumed a moderate position in the monopoly dispute.
Interesting, lengthy letter on an article requested by Villemain, minister of public instruction, to refute calumnies on his works. He explains his reasons for obliging and for not signing the article, which he submits to his father-in-law for corrections. He explains how he intends to serve both the church and the university.

Dear Father,

For a long time now I have needed to write to you, first to satisfy a heart which wants to unburden itself, and then about business wherein my inexperience has often enough sought the help of your advice. But this year's multiplied activities have given me no rest. The new duties which the College Stanislas impose on me take the little leisure remaining between my two Sorbonne lessons, and the inevitable interruptions, the cares and conventions of social life vie for the very little time I can give my beloved Amélie. I thus hardly write to anyone and am reduced to preserving in the heart's silence so many relationships of family and friends that I would like to reanimate by an active correspondence.

Meanwhile, I must at least apprise you of the safe arrival of the treasure you have been so kind as to send us; I renew my thanks to you and regret that you may have pressed yourself for the 500 francs of which we have no actual need, for our little bark is afloat, thanks be to God; and, despite the enormous expense of our new installation, I am able to bank a thousand francs. I hold it as a good maxim, when the greatest part of one's possessions come not from interest or capital but in payment of services, to put away as much as possible, a fourth of it annually, so as to create finally the corresponding capital. Such economy is especially wise if one is a bit uncertain of the future and runs the risk of experiencing a promotion which could be momentarily ruinous. That should be explained, and we shall in this long history of my affairs which I must tell you about.

Three weeks ago, on a Thursday evening, at the minister of public instruction's reception, I was approached by M. Vacherot, assistant director of the Ecole normale; he drew me aside, and in confidence which I entrust to you, told me something that he assured me came from his own chief—you may, however, think otherwise. In these circumstances he attested to M. Dubois' wish to name me to the office of master of conferences at the Ecole normale. He assured me that I was first on the next list of candidates. But, he added, the minister, rather timid by nature and frightened further by the violence of present debate, would like to have proof of my devotion, and if I had the occasion to serve him in any way I should do my utmost not to lose the opportunity. For the rest, M. Vacherot declared that, without sharing my beliefs in any way, it was greatly desired to connect me with the ecole, to which it is hoped to draw all ardent spirits to express their opinions. I received this overture with a sincere gratitude, and asked the assistant director to testify if necessary to the proofs of attachment I thought I had given, and went the following Sunday to see M. Dubois, who did not bring up business but chatted with me a great deal about literature.
After some inquiries in knowledgeable places, it appears that he is on the lookout for a replacement for M. Nisard, now a deputy, who had a lot to do, that probably the first year only the title of substitute and a salary of 1,500 francs could be obtained, and that nevertheless it would be infinitely important to accept this position which would give me a foot into the university and would, for example, assure me of an infallible succession to the Faculty of Letters. Matters were at this point until Sunday, March 26, when I received an invitation from the minister’s office to call there the next day, Monday. I appeared at the time indicated and found M. Villedain more gracious than ever. He got to the business at once, and showing me a book that you had sent him from Lyon, *Le monopole universitaire destructeur de la religion et des lois*, he indicated several violent accusations against him. He showed me, on the other hand, his work from which the indicted passages were drawn, with omissions and falsifications which changed the sense of the thought. I expressed my frank indignation to him, and he immediately asked whether I would take on a response which you might publish in one of the city’s journals. It was impossible for me to refuse a request which demanded nothing of me but conformity to truth and justice; I asked only for a little time, and the audience wound up with a long literary conversation wherein the grand master of the university was prodigious in the best evidences of taste and the wisest comments on the classical authors of the seventeenth century.

I must, however, admit that I do not take up without a certain repugnance a task totally foreign to my habits and which may cause me much embarrassment. Besides I am a bit anxious about entering into a dispute where, as I see it, there are many thorns and pitfalls. Study is my thing rather than discussion. Next, M. Villedain did not even give me the book which he wants me to answer; he needed it, he said, for other purposes; consequently, he gave me only a note containing the parallel passages from this work and from his own *Mélanges littéraires* which were attacked in it. This already seems to be less than honorable. But principally I found him so preoccupied with what concerned his own person, and he maltreated so harshly in front of me several distinguished men, that I had difficulty in containing my annoyance. Finally, he finished up by a sovereignly dangerous insinuation, seeking whether he might ask me some day to write a complete critique of his *Mélanges littéraires* in order to defend its purposes and make it serve the interests of religion. But, some days earlier, M. Ampère and M. Fauriel, speaking with me about my collaboration in *Correspondant*, urged me not to withdraw it, because the only means to recommend it is outside support, and that, besides, the minister would demand of me more and more and grant me less and less when he had obtained the more. It is what experience proves every day: favors are for threatening more than helping.

I thought, therefore, in accepting the mission M. Villedain entrusts to me, that I owed it to my dignity and my conscience to inform him under what conditions I would undertake the article. I would not wish by an all-embracing apologia to take up at Lyon the implicit defense of M. Bouillier’s doctrines, for example; I would insist on the gravity and difficulty of the teaching question and the uselessness of compromising it by a harmful debate; finally, I would reprehend with force.
calumnies which every person of good will should denounce. The minister seemed
to accept these conditions, expressing only the wish that I should not give the
impression of approving attacks made on other members of the teaching profession.
For the rest he refused the offer to submit my article to him when it is finished, and
said nothing about my signing it. I avoided bringing the point up, so as to preserve
my total freedom. He dismissed me, as I have said, with perfect courtesy.

Now, good father, you will find the promised article enclosed. After mature
thought and before God, I have decided absolutely not to sign it. Here are my rea-
sons: the Lyon journals have asked me for articles several times and I have always
refused so as to avoid recriminations and jealousies. I do not wish to expose myself
to them now. Besides, granted that Providence tolerates the toilsome but peaceful
preoccupation of knowledge, it is not right for me to jump into disputes where I
would lose, along with my time, the little I have of energy and ardor. I would wind
up playing a role pleasing to nobody: I belong to a side too unhappy with the igno-
rance and bad faith of those who make themselves defenders of the clergy not to
disapprove of them severely; on the other hand, I would not be able to dissemble
about the abuses and detestable teachings I see around me in the central adminis-
tration and the chairs. Finally, I have respect to preserve at Lyon: you know how
much good will has been shown me there, what honorable and warm friendships
have supported me. There are those perhaps, who first of all called your kind atten-
tion to me, an attention later destined to become so fatherly and sweet an affection.
I am bound to give prior loyalty to those who drew me out of affliction when I was
yet without position or future. They hold me in faithful remembrance and, not to
hide anything from you, even what may be a presumptious illusion, it is already
rumored of me that one day, after age has matured my speech, it could well be
considered to confer on me the honor of representing my fellow citizens and in such a
way that monetary considerations would not be an insurmountable obstacle. In
any case I know what resources I can call on in days of reverses, what sympathies in
moments of success. It is among fervent Catholics that my books can hope for
some popularity; it is in their ranks that I find here the small number of men of
position whose influence can protect me; it is in their ranks that I find the youth
who understand and back me. I also find there solid virtues, truly beneficent
works, and models who edify me with the faith which enlightens me. I would not at
any price sadden them by a step which they could take ill and could judge as an
unfortunate intervention in deplorable debates.

These reasons which forbid my signature should at the same time bring me to
write my article in such fashion as to have no reason to disavow it if the author were
discovered. Besides, in honor and conscience, I could not do otherwise. That is
why I have from the first put aside the whole question of the organization of teach-
ing: the king’s government having not yet expressed its opinion, I have thought it
more respectful to imitate its silence and to hide my feeling which inclines more to
authority than to liberty in this matter. In the second place, I have thought it my
duty to show an impartial spirit by condemning with the same mark of disapproval
all the violence of the press against the episcopate and the university. It even seems
to me that in acting with equity I would more positively serve the intentions of the minister, and that, if a refutation were to have some effect in a Christian city, it should be the kind that would be written in the interest of Christianity itself. However, since it is possible that I have not weighed carefully enough the effect of certain passages, I ask you, good father, to be kind enough to read this article carefully and amend or cross out, in your wisdom, whatever seems imprudent to you. This is one of those occasions when I am happy not to feel alone in the world and to have a protective cover over me.

I need to ask you also, to acquit my conscience, to be kind enough to verify the extracts from the anonymous book, which I have not seen, so as not to expose myself to that rashness of judgment I reproach in it. All the texts I have cited, whether from this work or *Mélanges littéraires*, are copied in their entirety on the handwritten note given to me. Finally, will you be so good as to urge publication in the journal, M. Villemain seeming especially impatient to see destroyed as far as possible the calumny which attains his honor?

Pardon the worry I give you, admirable father. I would have infinite comfort if you should approve my conduct in this situation. I am not unaware that I am letting myself in for a harder life and perhaps one with slower advancement by avoiding the paths the greater majority take. But your example has taught me to avoid them. You have always shown me that strict integrity which foresees opposition and is not afraid because it is sure of itself. I am not unaware of the firmness that has made you intervene between the pretences of local interests and the exigencies of power in order to defend the honor of the system and repress the aberrations of individuals. I see here and admire, in the venerable M. Rendu, some of these qualities and align myself with them. I belong both to the church and the university and have dedicated to them without hesitation a life which will be fulfilled if it honors God and serves the state. I want to reconcile these duties, wherein the difficulty seems to lie. I believe that I have partly succeeded when, in a public lecture to an audience of every belief and party, I profess Christian teaching with simplicity. I believe this is the best reply to those who make accusations against our chairs. And I also do not believe it useless for me to wield a university pen in Catholic publications where I attempt, so far as my modest talents allow, to restore the practice here of calm and serious study. Even more, I am not content with strong representations to the editor of the revue; I have written to the author of an article to complain vigorously. I know that I sometimes make my friends unhappy by my disapproval, but in that circumstance I believe that to make them unhappy is to restrain and to be of service to them. I know that some take fright when they see me speaking in a hall where immediately preceding me an ancient history professor attacked Revelation; I am touched at such friendly solicitude, but it does not trouble me. It could not be wished with any more justice that I write in a journal where some enemy of the university preceded me: if there is an established maxim today among men of letters it is that each one bears the responsibility for his works.

Be assured, however, that if the Correspondant assumes a hostile attitude, I
would consider in the hierarchy of proprieties separating myself from it completely; I had already signified such before I received your letter and the wise counsel it gave me. Increase it, admirable father, in order to give guidance to a life wherein your daughter's happiness is concerned. Often from her, also, I have good advice which moderates the first heat of my emotions and ideas. She herself is being strengthened by getting used to an active and occupied life. The company of the excellent friend she found this year helps her a little and comforts her a great deal. It should compensate for the enjoyments which her delicate condition now deprive her of. But it will not suffice to make her listen to reason in regard to the indefinite delay of your trip. I think it is necessary to tell you frankly that your beloved daughter's health being so bound up with her peace of mind, she is suffering more than she will admit from the anxiety of not seeing you. It is infinitely important for you to afford her this consolation, which will be greatly shared by me. We are awaiting you with a desire which no pretext should be able to cheat us of. Come, good father, and let this embrace be one of the last our letters carry you. Please give my good mother my tender regards. A thousand affectionate best wishes to my brothers, and accept yourself the assurance of the filial piety with which I will ever be honored to count myself one of your children.

A.-F. OzANAM

I join your Amélie in thanking you for the charming compliment you paid her. As I would like to have a copy of my article and have not the time to make one, would you be kind enough, if there is someone in your office who does not know my writing, to have a copy made, or better, give the task to the journal's office before it is printed? If you wish to test any doubt about changes to be made you could talk to M. Noirot, in whom, after you, I have the utmost confidence. Except for him I wish to preserve anonymity from everyone at Lyon. Meanwhile, there are three points I absolutely insist upon: 1) that there be no signature; 2) that I reserve my opinion in regard to the organization of teaching; 3) that I highly disapprove of the attacks against the clergy. If one of these three seem to you to create too serious a problem, please delay and write to me. Finally, pardon all the trouble I have given you in the midst of more important business. It is the lot of fathers to see their family cares multiplied.

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Notes:
1. M. Villemain.
2. Etienne Vacherot (1809-1892), agrégé in philosophy, director of studies at the Ecole normale (1837), substitute for Victor Cousin at the Sorbonne (1839), distinguished himself by the independence of his opinions under the empire. Cf. his work La Démocratie (1859).
3. Director of the Ecole normale supérieure and member for literature of the Royal Council.
4. The most recent incident concerning the monopoly of the university had been the delivery in
March 1843 of petitions hostile to the university, which, however, certain Catholic deputies disavowed. It was another episode in a controversy launched in its violent phase on March 10, 1841, by the introduction to the chamber of the Villemain proposal. By entirely restricting university monopoly, the proposal withdrew from the bishops a portion of their authority over minor seminaries (petits seminaires); in face of the bishops' protests the proposal had been withdrawn, but the debate had continued, the attacks from the university side focusing especially on the Jesuits: Michelet's and Quinet's courses at the Collège de France, May 1842; Villemain's discourse to the French Academy, June 30, 1842; Mignet's discourse to the Academy of Moral Sciences, December 8, 1842.

5. Désiré Nisard (1806-1888), professor at the Ecole normale superieure and department head at the Ministry of Public Instruction (Department of Scientific and Literary Institutions), had been elected deputy from the Côte-d'Or in July 1842.

6. Anonymous work (attributed to P. Deschamps, S.J., of Lyon), published by Canon Des Garets, Lyon, Pommet publishing house, 1843. Villemain and Ozanam had consulted a first edition (not found); the one we refer to here is later than May 26, 1843 (allusion to the meeting of the chamber on that date, p. 578). The text of the work had already had partial publication in the form of articles in the Reprateur of Lyon during the elections of 1842.

7. Villemain was cited more than twenty times for his Nouveaux mélange litteraires (Paris, Ladovcat, 1828). Most of the accusatory citations are printed in tome 2 of the work, which is in 3 tomes.

8. Cf. the journal Le Rhône, April 13, 1843, under the heading "Variate" and under the title: Des attaques contre l'université. The article was published in La Gazette spéciale de l'instruction publique of April 27, 1843.


10. The text of this note—which is known only through Ozanam's refutation—is not extant.

11. François Bouillier (1803-1899), taught philosophy at the Faculte de Lyon from 1839 to 1856. He was often the subject of attack from the Catholic side. Director of the Ecole normale superieure in 1867. During the academic year 1842-1843 the subject of his course was the theory of impersonal reason (cf. J. Simon, "Etat de la philosophie en France" (State of philosophy in France), in Revue des deux mondes, February 1843, p. 373. Catholics reproached him for the pantheistic orientation of his teaching. In the university monopoly sides were taken equally and several times, by the following: J.-J. Ampère, Bouillier, Michael Chevalier, Ph. Chasles, Victor Cousin, Fauriel, Ferrari, Guizot, Jouffroy, Lacretelle, Lerminier, Letronne, Libri, Michelet, and Nisard.

12. Allusion to the registration fee (500 francs) required of candidates for the Chamber of Deputies under the July Monarchy.

13. The introduction to the chamber of monopoly suppression was being prepared.

488. To François Lallier
Paris, May 16, 1843

Dear friend,

I come to congratulate you upon your second paternity and to thank you for your kind letters. You have shared in our troubles like a brother. You have acted like a Christian in praying to God for us, and have added the kindest and most affectionate suggestions. Be assured that we will accept them one day, and it is one of our dreamed-of pleasures, my wife's and mine, to go to spend some time amid such pleasant hospitality. Amélie, who is part of our longtime bond, is impatient to know Madame Lallier also; they would not need much time to become the best friends in the world. Regretfully, future uncertainty scarcely allows planning; a sad experience has taught us not to rely upon our plans, and the necessities of weak health can employ leisure hours in a way foreign to our wishes. The convalescence, easy and swift at first, has been slowed by little setbacks. Recovery is still not complete; sea baths are mentioned and perhaps at the end of next month the road to Havre will have to be taken. Then comes the short vacation which we will have to devote entirely to our family at Lyon, and the best we can hope for, going or returning, is a short stay with you. Certainly we could not travel through the good city of Sens twice without embracing you on the way. But if it is necessary that you come here in person we renew our invitation. Your business demands a visit to Paris and friendship will profit from it.

The news of the discovery of the *Itinerarium*¹ has given me great pleasure. I had determined to make a last, desperate effort by inquiring at the Ste. Geneviève library. Now you see that I have not abandoned our joint plan. I deem it useful to solid Christian studies and consequently to God's glory and the good of souls. More than ever it is necessary to refresh the knowledge of this important and holy philosophy of the Middle Ages when overzealous adherence to modern thought carries Catholic writers into the most lamentable excesses.² I do not know what you think of the quarrel, but I rather doubt that you will not share the opinion of the archbishop of Paris,³ of some of the clergy, and of all thoughtful men who deplore and disavow vehemently these outbursts and violence. Out of a question where right was incontestable, they have raised a quarrel in which insults and calumnies vie with one another, and they have succeeded in provoking an irreligious reaction whose formulations can halt the good undertaken with such great pain and conducted with so much care. At the moment the young students are aroused in an alarming way and the tumult which attends the courses of Mm. Michelet and Quinet⁴ threatens too by way of reprisal the lectures of M. Coeur, M. Lenormand,⁵ and perhaps my own. We are in crises of unrest.

These imprudent explosions which compromise the Christian affairs of the country make me prefer more than ever calm and serious study, and I plunge with a certain comfort into historical research where, seeing the religious dangers which other ages have known, I reassure and console myself about those which Providence has reserved for us. I will gladly return to St. Thomas Aquinas, whom I revisit from time to time since I first became acquainted with him, and upon whom I must give several lectures next year. I am therefore going to make a definite choice of

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¹ *Itinerarium*: a medieval Latin document describing journeys from one place to another.
² Interpretation of modern thought as carried out by Catholic writers.
³ Archdiocese of Paris.
⁴ Michelet and Quinet: historical figures.
⁵ M. Coeur, M. Lenormand: historical figures.
the passages to translate, and I will speak to M. Cousin again about the subject. But I beg you not to let your enthusiasm cool, and to count on my faithful cooperation. In the meantime I do not think you should interrupt the work you have undertaken for the Correspondant. M. Wilson, who has rather emptied his bin in order to publish a worthwhile issue, is today short of material. You must bend every effort to help sustain a publication which is now the only serious organ wherein Catholic opinion can make itself heard by the French public. Subscriptions seem to be coming in and give us hope that this year’s success will give a foundation to the future.

I have seen du Lac again since he took the habit, and a man could not be found whose face more expresses contentment and happiness. We talked about you, indeed with whom would we not speak about you? You have so many good friends here that you must make them happy some day by coming to spend at least a winter with them. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul continues to prosper. Lively discussion has arisen within it concerning the means of support, which shows its enthusiasm for the interests of the poor; it all ended satisfactorily, and we have celebrated with great consolation our feast of the Good Shepherd.

Farewell, dear friend, I am glad to know that your children are well. How God blesses those two little angels He has placed under your roof: it is already the first blessing and a rare one today to have a father like you. Amélie sends her congratulations to Madame Lallier. Please add the homage of my own regard.

Your devoted friend,

A.-F. Ozanam

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur F. Lallier, Substitute Judge, Sens, Yonne.

Postmark: May 16, 1843.

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Notes:
1. Cf. letter 471 of March 9, 1843, to Lallier.
2. Since the abandonment of the Villemain proposal (October 1841), the monopoly and the freedom of teaching had become the subjects of interventions in the Chamber (where provisory regulation by ordinance was being considered) and of episcopal measures and quarrels in the press. The eve of the day when Ozanam wrote this letter (May 15) an important debate had taken place in the Chamber about petitions favorable to the freedom of teaching and L’Amie de la religion of May 16 carried an account of it. Ozanam is evidently thinking of Canon Des Garets’ writings.
3. Already publicized, Msgr. Affre’s opinion would be even better known after the publication of his Observations sur la controverse élevée à l’occasion de la liberté d’enseignement (August 1843).
4. Courses by Quinet and de Michelet at the Collège de France, May 1843, on the Jesuits.
489. To Dominique Meynis  
Paris, May 17, 1843

He expresses his pleasure at the publication of his article in the Annales de la propagation de la foi. Praise of M. de Carné and the article he is about to publish in the Revue des deux mondes.

Dear friend,

It was a stroke of good luck to see myself in the pages of the Annales again, and I am very grateful for the publication of my article. The changes made by the council seem opportune; you left out certain details that I had hesitated to include and only in cases to adhere as closely as possible to the notes given me. The council will honor me when it wishes to confide some other work to me. It is now quite a while since I have been given something to do. Kindly renew to the gentlemen, dear friend, my pledges of devotion. M. de Carné is of the opinion that it is absolutely impossible to obtain an acknowledgement of the gift of the medals from the king. This deputy’s zeal for the Association of the Propagation of the Faith, however, has prompted a beautiful article by him in La Revue des deux mondes on what is happening in Oceania. Every Catholic will thank him for it, while the Protestant press heaps insults on him. The article would have been even longer and more positive if M. de Carné had not suffered a serious illness which prevented him from giving the religious section the same attention he gave the political.

When I assisted at the solemn Mass celebrated for the association on May 3 at Saint-Sulpice I united myself in spirit to your pious gathering at Saint-Jean. The ever-increasing amount of our receipts is a sign that we are still blessed; let us pray, nevertheless, that the association will not suffer from the irreligious storm which seems to be brewing.

Farewell, dear friend. Kindly remember me to those we love and allow me a brotherly embrace.

A.-F. Ozanam
rue Garancière, 7.

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Meynis, rue du Pérat, n. 6, Lyon.
Postmark: (probably) May 18, 1843.
Original: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Unedited.
Notes:
491. To Dominique Meynis
Paris, June 5, 1843

He sends the council of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon a report on what Montalembert has just done for the good of the association. Praise of Montalembert. He then tells of an incident which got him into difficulty with l’Univers and asks Meynis to keep his friends at Lyon informed of the matter. He tries to defend the Catholic religion in his courses at the Sorbonne.

Dear friend,

Enclosed is a message Count de Montalembert entrusted to me for the council of the Propagation of the Faith. Forced to spend a year on Madeira for the recovery of Madame de Montalembert’s severely ravaged health, he has just spent two weeks in Europe, but at Europe’s extremity, Gibraltar, without finding it possible to go further or to stay longer. These circumstances, it seems to me, should put his letter in a more favorable light, for no complaint can be made about the brevity of his remarks when the brevity of his stay is taken into consideration. Besides, he is so caught up in great affairs, and his connections are so important and of such integrity that the council of the association can be reassured. I know M. de Montalembert and know him to be too prudent to compromise himself by rash suggestions. I trust therefore that his request will be given consideration. Whatever is done I ask you to see to it and to send me a copy of the letter and to tell me whether the council, acceding to the distinguished peer’s wish, will allow the insertion in l’Univers or l’Ami de la religion of some lines on the good done at Gibraltar by the vicar apostolic.¹

There remains to speak to you, dear friend, of an event of which you have heard something. I have too many friends at Lyon for there not to have been some interest there in an article published by l’Univers on Ascension Day in which I was singled out as having publicly attacked the polemic of Christian newspapers and as a deserter of the good cause who for personal interests had abandoned the fight and gone over to the enemy. Those who love me and recognized me as the object of the attack undoubtedly wish me to explain myself, and there being no way of doing this through the paper, since I was not identified by name nor, besides, do I wish to court scandal, I am sending you documents which have bearing on the affair and some clarifications in order to bring you up to date.

A large number of serious and religious people who want the church to have freedom to teach have long regretted the violence with which imprudent writers compromise this sacred interest while thinking to defend it. Abbé Desgarets’ pamphlet and l’Univers’ invective have put the question back, instead of ahead, and have alienated a great many government officials who were thought in the beginning to be favorably disposed. The vehemence of these quarrels has already provoked an explosion of impious rage and scandalous lessons which excite the youth of the Collège de France. The clergy and the Jesuits have deplored the provocations which have brought these outrages about their heads.

In these circumstances I was asked to take this information to a general meeting
of Cercle catholique. This group was founded to draw those Christians who wished to serve the interests of religion closer together by means of a common meeting place and frequent get-togethers. It includes some of the most distinguished clergy in Paris, peers of France, deputies, councilors of state, members of the institute, several writers, professors, and artists, and a great number of young people who are training themselves through earnest study to carry out in a Christian manner one day their duties. I had been appointed to preside over a literary conference and was asked to treat seriously the literary duties of Christians. I met with the directors and asked them whether they thought it opportune for me to recommend moderation in the controversy. They told me that I would do them a great favor, and several other important people said the same. But as H[is] G[race] the archbishop of Paris was to preside at the meeting, I judged it necessary above all to be sure of his agreement and not force his approval by speaking on delicate questions in his presence. We therefore went to Monseigneur’s residence, where he received me most graciously, and without letting me open my mouth, “You are going to speak next Monday,” he said to me, “and to recommend moderation?” And when I had explained what I thought I should say, he strongly approved; indeed he insisted. I proposed another subject entirely different, but he urged me to stick with the first. He even added fresh and the strongest reasons to those I had outlined. I noted them down so as to cover them. And everyone at the archbishop’s house thought the same, in particular one of the vicars general complained loudly of the rashness of laymen who did not fear to compromise the Church. Monseigneur would not let me leave without reminding me again and charging me anew to carry the message in the sense agreed; I promised him. The meeting was held; it was well attended. Everything I said was concurred in unanimously by the audience, which included Mm. de Tascher, de Carné, de Galbery, Abbé Coeur, Abbé de La Boiullerie, and others no less distinguished. When I finished, Monseigneur, who was happy for the occasion to let his opinion be known, declared that he approved what I had said without restriction and wholeheartedly. He added a few more words and went on to urge peaceful spirits. His words and mine being in agreement, they were published in the Cercle’s bulletin as a kind of reply to l’Univers’s attacks. Certainly this article wounded me. I thought I was known well enough not to incur even a suspicion of self-interest; and, far from deserting the Christian cause, if amid all my weaknesses and faults, which are numerous, I keep a semblance of hope, it is that from my youth I have never ceased to consecrate the little I have of scholarship and energy to the defense of Christian truth. But Monseigneur’s approbation is so great an honor that it suffices to make up for all the unpleasantness, and, besides, the author of the article, seeing the blame he incurred from our mutual friends, has published in the paper frank and honest apologies to me, so that the affair is done with. However, I thought you should be informed so that you could share the information with our friends who might be concerned for me. Tell them that I always need their friendship and their prayers for support in the difficult career divine Providence has wished to assign me. I feel I must acknowledge this, while trying everything in my power, which is slight, to fulfill the duties of my state. I call on them also for Madame Ozanam’s health, who, following a second miscarriage, has just suffered a
serious relapse; it will be a long time before she has recovered completely. The good God has sent us a cruel trial. May you fare better.

Your devoted friend,
A.-F. OZANAM

At the same time that I thought I was calling for a total Christian agreement on useful truths at the Cercle, I was forced at the Sorbonne to defend the monks and the popes attacked at the Collège de France. Le Correspondant has a resumé of these lectures. I am sending you a copy of the Bulletin du Cercle which carries my talk, and I have sent copies also to Mm. Sandier, Desgeorges, Jessé, Terret, Dugas, and Dufieux, but ask that you communicate the details of this letter to them when you get the chance, so that they will not believe me guilty of an act unworthy of a loyal Christian, of a friend of yours, or of a man honored by the trust of the council of the Propagation of the Faith.

Original: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Unedited.

Notes:
1. Msgr. Hughes, who had been forced to leave Gibraltar for several years following a disagreement which had arisen between him and a portion of the Catholic community. L'Univers of March 9, 1843, hailed his return to Gibraltar and the benefit of his presence.
2. The vicars general: Garnier, superior of Saint-Sulpice; Ansoure, curé of Saint-Philippe-du-Roule; Carbon and Carrière, directors of the seminary of Saint-Sulpice; Eglée, Msgr. Affre’s secretary; Gaume, diocesan official; Buquet, diocesan promoter; and Ravinet, director of the secretariat.
3. Abbé de La Bouillerie (the incorrect spelling of proper names is frequent with Ozanam); soon to be vicar general of Paris and a part of every important social Catholicism activity. Cf. J.-B. Duroselle, op. cit., who has nine references to him.

493. To Alexandre Dufieux
Paris, June 5, 1843

Gives news of his wife’s health. Says he is sending his article from the Bulletin du cercle catholique which is his defense against an attack in l'Univers. He is fighting the teaching of Michelet and Quinet by an apologia for Christian civilization.

Dear friend,

When I received your good letter two months ago, I rejoiced in the sense of renewal of relations very dear to me. I did not, however, reply immediately; M. Dider Petit arrived to speak of the business which occupies you, and some days later informed me that negotiations being interrupted, he no longer had reason to look for an editor. Since then a cruel trial has taken up my every moment and thought.
Madame Ozanam had the misfortune of a second miscarriage, whose aftereffects, prolonged by an unexpected relapse, are still causing me great anxiety. This unfortunate mishap has had only one consolation: the pregnancy was only a few weeks old, so that there was no loss of a soul to lament. It was April 7, and since that day, the crisis of the illness, the drawn-out convalescence, the setbacks, have so sadly preoccupied me that aside from the strict duties of my position, all my time had to be given to the poor sick one, and I had to give up all my obligations of friendship. Yet I have had more than ever the need of being sustained by the remembrance of prayers of my friends. Often in praying to God and telling Him my needs, I have thought of yours and hope that you did the same; there is one rendezvous where Christian souls are sure of meeting and conversing together.

Meanwhile I have seized a tiny moment of leisure and am sending with a few lines the Bulletin du cercle catholique* in which you will find one of your friend's speeches on the literary duties of Christians and the archbishop's address in reply. I am also sending it to Dugas, Chaurand, Arthaud, and M. Sandier, Terret, Des-georges, de Jessé, Meynis, etc. in order to defend myself against violent attack in l'Univers. I refer to an article published on Ascension Day entitled De la moderation et du zèle (On Moderation and Zeal) in which I was signaled out as a deserter of the Catholic cause. It was this paper's reply to a speech of mine which did not refer to it in any way. Apologies well made; but I have been very much afraid that my friends in Lyon would be upset for my sake, and this is why I am sending you the facts of the matter and ask you to circulate them among your acquaintances. I have written to Meynis at length to give you every detail that could be useful: he can share them with you. You will note that the Cercle catholique, an institution which you have perhaps heard of, and which brings together a large group of respectable people, had asked me to say a word at an important meeting presided over by Msgr. In accepting this honor I consulted the Cercle's directions about the subject of my speech. Even more, we had consulted His Grace in advance, and he insisted vehemently that I should treat these questions, which appeared very easy to explain in public. The opinion of most of the Parisian clergy was against the outbursts and violence with which pamphlets and newspapers were compromising the Church. And the fact that the entire audience agreed with what I had to say and with what Msgr. was gracious enough to add, consoled and lifted spirits. A speech by M. de Carné in the same vein several days later induced the Chamber of Deputies to send petitions back to the ministry. Weighty thought and serious discussion succeeded, thanks be to God, by prevailing over the arguments of injury and anger at which the impious are better than we.

Do not, however, imagine your friend only in those particular circumstances where severity is reserved for imprudent defenders of the truth. I have lent my efforts, weak as they no doubt are, to sustain, with the help of M. Lenormand, M. Coeur and others, a vigorous struggle against the teaching of professors at the Collège de France. While M. Michelet and M. Quinet were attacking Catholicism as

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*M. Génin has accepted this errand.
Jesuitism, I have tried in three consecutive lectures to defend papacy, monks, and monastic obedience. I have done so before a very large audience composed of the same crowd which the day before had directed its feet elsewhere. But I have had no outcry and, in tracing the literary history of Italy, that is, of one of the most Christian countries under the sun, I have encountered the subject at every step and have never missed an occasion to affirm the teaching, benefits, and marvels of the church. I ask only the assistance of your prayers; obtain for me that spirit of strength and wisdom that the Christian, profoundly prostrate at the solemnities of Pentecost, asks at that moment. I hope with God's grace and your help never to fail the fraternal mandate which my Catholic friends gave me when they enlisted me to take over this chair offered to me for the defense of interests forever inseparable from religion and right thinking.

Be kind enough to convey my compliments to M. Sandier and M. Dugas. Accept the homage of my respect for Madame Dufieux and remember our necessities and trials before the good God. I have learned with extreme satisfaction of the happy circumstances in which you find yourself. I wish you good health, which is so dear to so many people that you must preserve it. Farewell again.

Your friend,

A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Dufieux-Sandier, rue des Augustine, n. 7, Lyon.

Postmark: June 9, 1843.

Original: Archives Laporte.

Previous Publication: Lettres (1912), t. II, p. 31 (with some cuts).

Notes:
2. Ozanam was expressing a prevalent opinion of the time, following St. Alphonsus, that the fetus was not animate until 40 or 80 days after conception. This opinion was to fall within the following twenty years (Cf. John Connery, S.J., Abortion: The Development of the Roman Catholic Perspective, Loyola, 1977, pp. 210-211).
3. Most of the events and allusions treated in this letter are clarified by letter 491, Ozanam to Meynies, June 5, 1843.

496. To Charles Ozanam
Nogent-sur-Marne, June 25, 1843

Request that certain information be sent him through his brother concerning the conferences of St. Vincent de Paul of Lyon in view of a general report of the society. The society
grows and may be the starting point of a Christian renewal. Reflections upon his literary and historical works which draw him ever closer to the Church. Worth in which he holds family life.

It is a long time since I have written to you, good brother. As long as you and Alphonse are together, the authority of the Church and the laws of the time vie for the honor of being addressed. Today, however, I have business for you only, to ask you to give the enclosed letter, which has to do with matters concerning the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, to your neighbor, M. Génin, whose street or number I do not know exactly. I am asking him for information on the conferences of Lyon, so as to be able to speak about them in the general report we will publish on July 19. This publication has become necessary to maintain the unity of our association which God blesses and which today counts approximately 24 conferences in France, two in Rome, several in Belgium, and more than four thousand members.

Let us thank divine Providence, dear friend, for having brought us both to enter this young and growing family which may be destined to regenerate France by preparing for all the liberal professions, science, art, politics, a recruitment of Christians. Whatever is said about it, souls are returning to the faith; it grows slowly like things that last, and will continue on to the end so long as we do not compromise it by our weakness or imprudence. The more seriously you enter into your studies the better you must perceive the higher light religion sheds upon them which nothing can replace.

As for me, I am about to finish the first year of my course in the literary history of Italy; it covers the Christian era up to the time of Charlemagne. The work has been for me, as for my hearers, a most profound and lively study of the papacy by which the difficult passage from antiquity to modern times is accomplished. I have proven all that can be gained by seeing Christianity up close; its benefits, of which I was not ignorant, I have discovered to be far greater than I had ever believed; I am more aware than ever of how much the Church should be loved because of all she has done to preserve us, to educate us, and to make available all there is to know of knowledge, liberty, and civilization.

I will send to your address, and you can share it with Alphonse, a copy of the latest issue of Correspondant. It carries a review of one of my lectures on the monks: which was a reply to the attacks of the professors of the Collège de France.¹

Your last letter crossed mine. Thank you for the kind message. If I have not answered some of your questions, blame my cares, which are infinite. On the other hand, to give an opinion in certain matters you raise it would be necessary to be more up-to-date about them, which I am not; for example, the private lessons in preparation for the baccalaureate in the sciences. I can only agree with Alphonse's judgment, and only the two of you are well enough acquainted with the good Marie's health and inclination to know whether she will be able to come next year. I am writing from the country today and have not brought your former letters so that I cannot refresh myself in the matter of your other requests. It is a sad thing to
have to converse this way over the distance of a hundred leagues; all the correspondence in the world does not match a half-hour’s conversation. I cry out with all my heart’s desire for the moment which will put an end to these eternal separations. We love family life too much for God not to give it to us sooner or later.

Madame Soulacroix has told you that we are spending some days with Mme. Péclet at Nogent-sur-Marne to hasten Amélie’s convalescence. The surroundings are most beautiful, the air fine, and the garden huge. But the misfortune is that you are not here. The poor invalid is finally much better. After two and a half months of anxiety, worry, and hope deceived and reassured in turn, I am beginning to believe that the convalescence is complete. Farewell, dear brother, I tenderly embrace you, and Alphonse, too.

A.-F. Ozanam

A thousand wishes on Amélie’s part and mine to good Marie. If Alphonse is good enough to find a servant for us, tell him to keep it quiet, for if the one we have should hear of it indirectly through her friends in Lyon, she would be very put out and might wish to leave us immediately: we must be careful.

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Charles Ozanam, rue Saint-Jean, n. 19, Lyon.
Original: Archives Laporte.
Previous publication: Lettres (1912), t. II, p. 35 (excerpted and corrected).
Note: 1. June 1843 issue.
for the post you aspire to have arrived in Lyon, and that you are in a good position. Besides you have the best possible recommendations here, and if there is no certainty of success there is at least justifiable hope. If you have some further step to be taken in the same matter, make liberal use of me: should I be happy enough to contribute in some way to your entry into the judiciary I would consider that I have rendered my country a service.

Now I call upon your charity to obtain certain information on the state of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at Lyon. It concerns the general report on the Parisian conferences, the provinces, and abroad which must be made each year on July 19 for later distribution. Last year’s report seems to have made a good impression, and we think we have found the means of achieving unity among the dispersed groups of our large family. A new undertaking is therefore in progress to certify the progress of the society over the past year. Lyon could not be left out: it is one of the finest jewels in our crown. Please, dear friend, trust us to speak worthily of it and supply us with whatever notes you can assemble in a letter, and whatever reports or written accounts there are of your general meetings.

If you have any objections to the manner of last year’s publication, or if you can give any advice on the method of form of the report in progress, your fraternal suggestions would be gratefully received. You well know that I have never believed in the certain reservations that are said to exist between your conferences and ours. But when the possibility exists that there once was such and some shadow of it remains, it must be dissipated. Tell me how I can be of service. Never have we had more need of unity than in a time when religious strife may be on the point of starting up again. Dear friend, the age threatens to be very bad unless the small number of Christians tries to multiply itself by redoubling its energy and wisdom.

You have given me hope of seeing you in the month of July. If you do not come here, I will be going the following month to catch up on your news. It will be a great comfort for me to renew so many old friendships which Lyon holds for me. In the meantime, be kind enough to give a thousand affectionate regards of mine to all our friends: I could name them all but I cannot forbear singling out Dugas, Arthaud, Chaurand, and La Perrière. I am not sure whether my brother Charles is now a member of your conference, but I recommend him always to your fond care. Remember before God sometimes in your prayers him who will ever be

Your devoted friend,
A.-F. OzANAM
Rue Garancière, 7.

Please tell La Perrière that his protegée Mme. Larivoire is now, thanks to the kindness of Mlle. Jaillard and several members of the Society of S[t.] V[incent] de P[aul], lodged, furnished and completely settled with her mother, daughters, and sisters, that they have employment, and that, if God gives them their health, they would seem to be out of difficulty.

You would blame me if I said nothing about Madame Ozanam, who was suffer-
ing when I last saw you. She is much better and progressing in the convalescence, which has a bright future, but it is still necessary to take every precaution. It is certain, dear friend, that on earth good fortune is never unmixed.

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Génin, Lawyer at the Royal Court, Lyon.

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Notes:
1. Pierrette Cornélie Chormy (1794-1875), a first cousin of Ozanam’s mother, the wife of Pierre Jaillard (1788-1851), well-known Lyon businessman.
2. The letter was delivered to Génin by Charles Ozanam. Cf. letter 496 addressed to Charles on the same date.

502. To Dominique Meynis
s.1. [Paris], July 15 [1843]

He is anxious about the protection accorded by l’Univers to the Association of Lebanon, connected with the Holy Land Commission, and mentions certain differences between l’Univers and the Propagation of the Faith which he has been forced to smooth out. Progress of the society which will soon extend itself to the whole Catholic world. Thanks for a check. Family news.

Dear friend,

Today l’Univers brings you a new cause for unhappiness. You will find there the announcement of the Association of Lebanon,1 a new form of the Holy Land Commission,2 created under the inspiration of M. Onfroy, calling himself commandant of the Maronites, and who has indeed made war against the Turks for several months wearing the white cockade. The names of M. Hyde de Neuville, de Bertier, de Baudicour, etc., give sufficient indication of the political character of the association, and I am persuaded that several others figure in it only out of kindness.3 Perhaps the former relationship of the commission with the editors of l’Union catholique has forced the item in the paper which succeeded it.4 Meanwhile, I have not failed to fulfill the council’s wish that I go to the bureau to make strong and powerful protests. I saw the editor-in-chief and complained of the request drawn up by the Denmark mission.5 I spoke of the danger of these individual associations being multiplied against the well-known wish of the Sovereign Pontiff and becoming by their very multiplicity a possible means of deceiving the charity of the faithful. My remarks were listened to and understood; justice was assured me and consideration promised. Their only complaint was that the Propagation of the Faith had never done anything for l’Univers; and I do seem to recall a wish expressed in the past for a sort of alliance of the two enterprises. I replied that
the Propagation of the Faith, shying away from every appearance of political preference, could not even in the new order lend itself to the interests of any paper, and that for that matter several of its most zealous supporters had rendered l'Univers great service by publicizing it in Lyon, and that, after all, the silence that was requested was not an act of obsequiousness toward the council but of deference for the multitude of Christianity's needs. They renewed the assurance of being more prudent in the future.

Now, if the council has some information it wants, some new step to be taken, it has but to order me. I agree wholeheartedly with its opinions on the untimeliness of these upheavals. I want unity and the universality of the association because that is to want its perpetuity and greatness. I hope that soon, resurrected in Spain by the change of circumstances, welcome in Hungary and Austria by the tolerance which has reopened Lombardy to it, spread abroad in America, there will be no longer a Catholic area where it does not strike its roots and consequently no longer an infidel land where it does not spread the beneficent shade of its branches.

Thank you, dear friend, for the check you are holding for me. In the future it will be easier for me, if it makes no difficulty for you, to obtain from M. Guérin a bill of exchange on one of his correspondents here: that would avoid the need of a draft. Farewell. Madame Ozanam's health, in which you have been kind enough to take so friendly an interest, has become much better. I trust that it will permit us to see Lyon again for the holidays.

Please give the members of the council the assurance of my respectful devotion, and accept yourself that of a friendship that nothing will ever change.

Entirely yours,
A.-F. Ozanam

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur de Meynis, Secretary of the Propagation of the Faith, rue du Pérat, n. 6, Lyon.

Postmark: July 15, 1843.

Original: Archives of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon. Unedited.

Notes:
3. The persons alluded to by Ozanam were notorious extremists: the Committee of the Association of Lebanon included besides Baron Cauchy, Abbé Desgenettes, also legitimists, and Eugène Rendu. Onfroy, a Frenchman stationed at Beirut to learn Arabic, assumed in 1840 the leadership of a Maronite revolt against the Egyptians. He designated himself by his own authority “commander-in-chief.” He affected the style of the old Vendée leaders, wearing a costume similar to theirs. Since the month of June 1840 his political and military activities had been disavowed by the French government. (From Pierre Dib, L'Eglise maronite, Beirut, 1962, p. 276 ff.)
4. The merger of l'Univers and l'Union catholique, whose legitimist orientation was notorious, dated from January 31, 1843. Already in 1841 (see letter 287 to Meynis, February 16, 1841), they were worried at the Propagation of the Faith over a like protection accorded by l'Univers to the association of Catholicism in Europe sponsored by Bertier de Sauvigny.
5. It was the association of Catholicism in Europe (cf. letters written in February 1841) that raised the question of Denmark. The two councils of the Propagation of the Faith, especially that of Lyon, reproached l'Univers for protecting this work of ultra-royalist inspiration which risked further division of missionary efforts.

6. The defeat and exile of Espartero.

7. Then an Austrian province.

505. To Henri Pessonneaux
Paris, July 27, 1843

He has done the errands Pessonneaux confided to him. The feast of St. Vincent de Paul was marked by an excellent sermon of Abbé Gabriel. He regrets the need to prolong his sojourn in Paris.

Dear friend,

This too short and too hastily scribbled letter from a man who is always late will only serve to let you know of the reception of your two, safely arrived with the commission enclosed.

I am quite touched to see with what active and persevering charity you occupy yourself in this difficult matter; your edifying example perhaps will render me unworthy of your confidence. It is already eight days since I left the 15 francs at the Hotel Favard. I had boxed it suitably so that no one could guess the contents. Today I just received a letter from Mme. Gayet with a certificate to pay in the amount of 150 francs which I sent immediately to be cashed. I will write to M. Morier and arrange to meet him tomorrow. After speaking with him about where he wants to live I will see to the room and restaurant. If I am hampered in doing so by a trip to Havre next week I will put the matter into M. Leprévost’s hands, which is the same as saying that it would be better entrusted than in your own.

Nothing new here since your departure except the gap your absence leaves among those who love you. My brother has also gone off but to. . . Bordeaux, where his superior sent him on some business. We have had a beautiful feast day of St. Vincent de Paul with a great wealth of members and a good sermon by Abbé Gabriel. I was forgetting that we have settled Spain’s affairs without you: I have held forth at such great length during lunch and dinner with Amélie that Narvaez has ended up by bringing Zurbano to reason, and you see you did right to leave everything to me.

For the rest, I envy you with all my heart that forgetfulness of the city and the miserable problems of Parisian life. At the present time it would be better to talk to the trees than to people, and I curse each day the absurdity of men who condemn themselves to the exile of the streets when one could live in the fatherland of flowers. I try to console myself with work but I have always had a most ungrateful
genius. One cannot have everything at the same time. I gaze again on what I hold most dear, Amélie's health, which seems to be recovered. She is very grateful for your interest in inquiring after her, and recognizes that affection of which you have given such great proof. Be assured that she shares on her side all my fraternal friendship for you.

The hour makes me stop; and although I had a thousand things to tell you, what you know best and what I can least prevent myself from repeating, is the tender attachment of your devoted cousin,

A.-F. OZANAM

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Pessonneaux, at M. le Comte de Beaurepaire, at Beaurepaire, by Louhans.

Postmark: July 27, 1843.

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Notes:
1. Herminie Gayet, Henri Pessonneaux's sister, and her husband were assisting Alphonse Morier (a cousin in difficulties) through Ozanam as intermediary.
2. Alphonse Morier was a relative of Henri Pessonneaux's brother-in-law, Charles Etienne Gayet. Morier was ill, unstable, and legally incompetent.
3. Abbé Ozanam had joined, in 1841, the Society of Marists.
4. Abbé Marie Gabriel, former chaplain of the military hospital at Lyon, was then a canon at Paris. He was very interested in the question of social Catholicism (Cf. letter 478, n. 2). Volume III of Lettres de Frédéric Ozanam, p. 180, n. 53, cites a Jean Louis Gabriel (1796-1866), priest in 1820, curate at Sète (1820), pastor at Pézenas (1836), chaplain of the Ladies of the Assumption at Paris (1836), titular canon of Notre Dame (1848). He finished his career as pastor of Saint-Merri (1852-1866), where he had Abbé Ozanam as his curate (Arch. hist. dioc. Paris).
5. The development of the Spanish situation had probably been the subject of banter in family conversation. Ramon Maria Narvaez (1800-1868), military chief of the Cristinos, had at the beginning of July scored a victory in the wake of which Ballamero Espartero, duke of La Victoire (1792-1879), and regent for Queen Isabella II from 1841 to 1843, was about to take refuge, on July 29, on an English ship. Espartero's lieutenant, Zurbano, had been defeated at Barcelona on July 25.

507. To Emmanuel Bailly
Paris, August 2, [1843]

Note of excuse for his absence from the General Council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Monsieur le President,

An unforeseen circumstance prevents me from attending the council this evening.
The secretary has been kind enough to furnish me with a copy of the general report; I have sent him my personal comments in case it would be too late to wait for the next meeting.

The only thing I reminded him of was that I had sent M. Rendu detailed observations on the Lyon conferences and that it would be helpful to refer to them.

Excuse these few lines, M. le President, for I write in haste and accept the assurance of my respectful and fond regard.

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

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Bailly, rue Madame, n. 41, Paris.


Note:
1. This note can be dated 1843 by consulting the minutes of the meetings of the council.

515. To his wife
Paris, October 13, 1843

Good wishes for her trip. Directions for some business. News of their friends Rendu-Doubet. He wants to help his wife grow in perfection. He condemns his egoism which has diminished at the time the quality of his love and the value of his work. He recognized providential signs in considering the development of his life up to the present. Profession of faith and resolutions. This letter is vital to a profound understanding of Ozanam.

My well-beloved,

[I cannot refrain from writing you yet again,¹ for four endless days seem to me too long to wait to unburden myself in your heart. I thought at first of addressing a short letter to the coach terminal at Châlon Monday evening, so as to come to you in some way and be some company during that long trip. But the line told me they could not be responsible for delivering my letter, and I did not want to risk my endearments to the curiosity of employees. All that is left, then, is to seek you out on the eve of your departure, not to distract you from those embraces and worthy emotions of which I am not jealous, but to give you these pages on parting, and after the tears of separation, when you have recovered some of your calm, you will feel me beside you, you will see that I have not deserted you, and so, in sweet conversation with your well-beloved, you regain some courage and repose.

Besides, it was necessary to let you know that the package of linen for M. Mo-
rier was not put in my trunk and that you must bring it with you. The poor man came to see me last evening and is completely out of clothing. I therefore commend this chore to your charity. I have also forgotten my cane, which ought to be in the country, and could be put with the umbrellas. Nothing else comes to my recollection, and I have reliance on yours for leaving no debt behind at Lyon and securing receipts. I have great need especially for my brothers to bring money with them. Yesterday I had to pay 110 francs in freight charges. The coaches brought it here only too quickly. I expect the furniture next Monday. They arrived at one-thirty, and I had all the trouble in the world separating what belonged to Charles, seeking out Alphonse's landlord for his key, and receiving, verifying, and directing his luggage before going to Collège Stanislas. I had omitted to ask Mme. Dejeux what she wanted for the little room on the fifth floor, but she came to tell me this morning that it would be 120 francs. The amount seems excessive, and we shall try to have her reduce it. Our maids stay well. Although Marie is not sleeping yet, she will be content when she sees all her world reunited.

Marie would like her little lamp, which she left with the porter, brought her.

While I am bringing you up to date on our affairs, I am happy to give you news of Madame Doubet, and here it is. A thousand tender compliments for you, listened to gladly. M. Doubet is not out of bed yet, and it is quite certain now that he will not be before the end of next week. Thus you will have time to visit him, and Madame Doubet, very upset, needs you especially. She cannot wait to tell you her troubles and be consoled. Nevertheless, the family preserves great hope. I stopped at M. Rendu's, who was not at home, but I saw his sons, who acquainted me with the doctor's opinion. According to him, there is only asthma complicated by extreme weakness, and a prolonged stay in a mild climate could bring about a complete recovery. But yet, would he be able to stand the travel, and I cannot but tremble at what could happen in making the attempt. O my dear friend, how less unfortunate we are than others, and how good God is in sparing us the proof.

This brings me to your good letter which I dared not hope for. Thank you for having found the time amid the inevitable distractions of family, friendship, and the country to write me at the intervals I had wished for. Everything you say to me is amiable and tender, and the comments with which you close touch me more than you can believe. Bless you for the prayers you have offered for me, and allow me to pronounce you a bit too hard on yourself. Assuredly, my Amélie, I have no wish to flatter you, nor betray the confidence of that dear soul of which I am also the guardian. For that reason precisely I am aware of all you are capable of, because you have shown me what your heart is endowed with, and I believe that you are capable of growing each day in merit and grace before God and men. Even the saints could be better since the Creator alone enjoys infinite perfection. But as I have known you, as I have loved you, as I see you, there is already more than enough for my pride and happiness. No, I would not discourage your pious resolutions, but I would pray for different motives for them: I would not try to hold you back, my angel, because you draw me with you and so lead me to heaven.

On my side, I have reflected much. My solitude, less agitated, less troubled
than last year, is, however, sad and pensive, and each morning on awaking, still without the sight of you, I think my courage would have failed if I did not reanimate it in prayer. I am trying, then, to gather my ideas and my strength for the laborious year about to begin, and I want to reassemble here under your eyes some ideas I have meditated on.

[See how I was stricken two years ago in what was dearest to me, and after having settled everything for my happiness in this world, it so happened that it was disturbed in an unforeseen and terrible way by the illnesses you have borne in a Christian manner. I ought to regard the trials which are sent me as expiation for my faults, and as a proof to test my fidelity.] In thus turning in on myself and questioning these two years passed in the state of marriage, I find that I have ill-used their benefits and graces. A spouse has been given me to be for me an image of the goodness of God and make me better by the charming power she exercises over me. Instead of loving in her Him who gave her to me, it is myself I have sought in her, it is myself I have wished to have adored in her heart, it is myself alone I have wished to be allowed in her thoughts, and this miserable egoism, not understanding itself to be at the caprice of its impatience, has been the cause of all my anxieties. Of all these annoying preoccupations, the black humors which are taking root and growing, the longings for Lyon, the distaste for men and things, that fear of failing in my career, and those cowardly apprehensions that it was too much for me. Were I to abandon myself to such any longer, I should little by little be discouraged in my vocation, preferring the security of a position to the generous struggle of work, and would fall into the shameful habits of softness and self-interest that I have so often reproached in the men of our days. In the same way that I have weakened myself by these useless solicitudes and vain imaginings, I have made my work harder and prayer less fervent. I lost what contrariwise I ought to be acquiring: energy and activity. You would recall me in vain to better thoughts, I would willingly plunge myself in that melancholy where there was I do not know what miserable pleasure of pride and sloth: you have nothing to reproach yourself with, O my well-beloved, and on the contrary it is to you that I owe, after God, the resolution I now take to change and no longer sadden with my weaknesses your young years which I have promised to adorn.

I then recalled in memory so many souvenirs which cast light on my future duties: the first inspiration I felt fourteen years ago to consecrate myself to the propagation of the truth, after having had the good fortune to know it in the midst of doubts from which my mind and those of my young friends suffered so cruelly; the singular favor which surrounded me with excellent teachers, the hospitality of M. Ampère, the literary conferences, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, all those things done to protect my youth, stir my intelligence, and encourage my studies; finally the circumstances so unforeseen, so little sought after, which transferred me from law to letters, from Lyon to Paris, and into this chair at the Sorbonne to which I would have been too far away to aspire to when I sat in the benches. Then, three years ago, when the success of my teaching was uncertain, I did not falter. I did not listen to dictates of self-interest: I sought in my career knowledge only. I believe that
it was God who thus inspired me, and made me act with a confidence that was foreign to my weak character. Then Providence led you into my path, and I offered you the sharing of a life poor, for long and perhaps ever obscure, but sanctified, enabled by the cultivation of all that is beautiful: I offered you solitude far from all belonging to you, but with the tenderness of a heart which had never belonged to anyone but you. You were, as I had a presentiment of, courageous and devoted. You accepted, and I must say to your everlasting praise, you have never made me feel the great extent of your sacrifice; you have never regretted it; the uncertainties from the past, the hesitations for the future, the thoughts which attack and demoralize, they never came from you. [Whenever my weary head rested on your knees, it lifted itself stronger and with serenest brow.]

Now then, my well-beloved, in comparing and discussing all the diverse reflections, I am strong in this belief in my vocation of which all the events of my latest years render me more certain. Truth has no need of me, but I have need of it. The cause of Christian knowledge, the cause of the faith, is what I hold to the roots of my heart; and in any way I can serve it, I will be worthily employed the years accounted me on the earth. Since it is threatened, and since literature is the field of battle where the quarrel is drawn, and teaching is a large part of it, and Paris is the French city and perhaps for the world where the debates of ideas seem to be decided, and Providence by the advice of my friends and family and the irresistible inspiration I experience has put me on the rampart, I shall not come down from it. Good can be done here which would be impossible elsewhere. I will make use of that power of the public word with which they have wished to honor me, and I will grow firmer in making it certain and prolonging its effectiveness by marshaling and leading young Christian youth into the path of worthwhile study. I will write also so as not lose in fleeting speech the little given me to expound to men. It is possible that I will attain neither honors nor fortune, but until now daily bread is not lacking me, and it is enough for me when the hand of a sweet and pious friend dispenses it. But in order to accomplish this task there must be work, firmness, and perseverance. The first means is to ask them of God from the beginning and then to resist every temptation which could get in the way. I have promised to repress the anxieties, the reveries, and the depressions, to vanquish the flights of imagination and not to allow in the employment of my time an empty space where idleness could intrude with the disorders of mind it brings in its wake. I find that work is salutary for my character, as for my health. I will place these resolutions and others to follow under the protection of Hirn who gave me birth; I will carry them to His altars, and when you see me again, I trust that you will find me capable of carrying them out.

Under these conditions I come to beg you to pardon my faults and the annoyances they have given you: I come to ask again for your trust, your esteem, and that love which never fails me. I will make better use of it. The sacrifices will no longer be pure loss. If the joy of seeing play around us little angels which life may give us must be awaited in happier times, our union will have other enjoyments. You are in love with everything great; you will sustain me, assist me, be the ray of light ever there in my thoughts. You will study besides for your own good, or better, we will read to-
gether and pass instructive and profitable hours. I reproach myself for not giving you enough of my attention: this year we shall have leisure for it. We will not, for all that, break off our circle of acquaintances and the simple pleasures I can give you: I will be happy to find occasions to divert you, and we will try to do better than last winter. We will have our brothers, also. Nevertheless, our best moment will be those when, alone together, we will talk to each other about our efforts toward duty and our good thoughts in behalf of virtue. Your voice, your glance, your smile, even those melodies you are adept at choosing for me on your piano, all of these will spur me on to good and turn back the clouds I would not know how to chase by myself. I am experiencing them now, O my friend, and if I had not the hope of seeing you soon, maybe all the good dispositions would have gone by the time you come. Come, then, my well-beloved, my dove, my angel, come into my arms, against my heart, come bringing me yours so pure and generous: come and God bless you that after two years we love each other a thousand times more than on the first day!

[I have still to thank you for the sadness of the leave-taking of which I am about to be the cause, and for the weariness of that long journey of which I am the goal. How sad and painful it is for me not to be able to make it at your side, to support your head in sleep and to squeeze your hands during the conversations which would fill the hours of the journey. I commend you to my brothers; they are also yours: the four children of our father and mother who dwell in heaven cannot cease being one. As for our well-loved parents of Lyon, I thank them again as on the first day they gave you to me: they renew the same sacrifice, and I accept it with the same gratitude. Tell your father again of my desire of being useful to him here, your good mother of the share I take in her troubles, Théophile of my hope of finding him better next year, Charles of my desires for the development of the talent bestowed on him, and promise them that I shall welcome you again as soon as possible. Do not forget me with my aunt and Aménaïde.\(^4\) The best from me to Marie and Joseph\(^5\) whom I hold in happy remembrance. I am half with you wherever your heart is. Accept, my well-beloved, the tenderest and purest kiss that the love of a husband content with your tenderness can give.]

A.-F. OzANAM

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**Original:** Archives Laporte.

**Previous Publication:** in *l'Anneau d'or*, n. 54, November-December, 1953, pp. 505-509, with the exception of the passages bracketed.

**Notes:**

1. Ozanam had already written three letters to his wife: on October 8, 10, and 11.
2. The Doubets were friends of the Ozanams. Madame Doubet was the daughter of Ambroise Rendu (Cf. note 3 below), who with her husband had recently founded the *Cercle catholique*.
3. Ambroise Rendu (1778-1860), member of the royal council of public instruction.
4. Philippine Larrey (1805-1852), the wife of Madame Ozanam's uncle Joseph Soulacroix (1789-1864), and their daughter Aménaïde (1826-1878).
5. Soulacroix servants.
516. To Théophile Foisset
Paris, October 21, 1843

Vacation employment. Recalls a visit he made to Foisset and expresses admiration for him. Deplores the division among Catholics. Correspondant's opinion is right. Regrets that Montalembert put him in opposition to his Sorbonne colleagues in an article whose text Foisset had just given him.

Sir and dear friend,

I have just now received your kind letter: it did not reach me at Lyon where I had too short a vacation, cut short by the rigid demands of Collège Stanislas. The five weeks granted me passed very quickly in a sweet family reunion in the country; but the daily trips to town, the homecoming visits to make and receive, some inheritance business to be straightened out, and so soon again, the farewells, all these duties so completely ate up my time that I could hardly find a few hours of quiet for an article intended for the November Correspondant.¹ Still, I have done scarcely anything, because of that infirmity of mind which renders me incapable of work when I breathe an air of dissipation and have not shut myself up in absolute retirement. My life thus passes in fighting with events to struggle for a leisure from which I profit badly. Often in this way I bind myself to the land,² so to speak, refusing what I owe to the amenities, to friendship, and even to relaxation of mind, seeing no one, writing not a scrap; and so I make long days of work for myself, and yet it is with great trouble that I wrest any fruit from it. Then I give way to anxiety, and repent having entered without calling upon a literary career I was not made for. I reckon my thirty years and regard hands empty of works, without merit before God, without qualifications before men. I grow alarmed for my temporal and spiritual interests, and discouraged at seeing I was wrong thus to interrupt friendly relationships and correspondence which would have prevented a great deal of anxiety.

There is the explanation of my long silence. It is not honorable and you see in it that wavering of soul from which I suffer constantly. I have inside myself lively experience of an evil I believe belongs to the present generation. There are many good intentions, many generous inspirations, few resolutions, and still less perseverance. I note high intelligences, right wills, but little character. I am speaking here only of well-meaning people. Of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, that which is most lacking is strength. So little is known about it that many think they possess it because they possess violence and intensity which are, on the contrary, like everything convulsive, proofs of malaise and weakness. The air we breathe is unhealthy and everything conspires to make us soft. In those short moments I spent with you at Bligny,³ seeing you surrounded by that pious and affectionate family, so beloved by everyone, so devoted to every public interest, joining to your onerous duties preoccupation with so many good works, and yet finding great energy for the rapports of friendship, so much leisure for letters, I thought I beheld a vision of another age: one of those seventeenth century magistrates, with their patriarchial house and retreat for learning, the model of a common life foreign to me and what I would like
for my own, filled with deeds and not words. That memory, with the beautiful
night, your garden seen in torchlight, that religious chapel where we prayed togeth-
er, and the gracious hospitality following in your house at Beaune, forms one of the
happiest travel experiences I have ever locked away in my heart.

I hope, therefore, that from the bedrock of that retreat where you have found
energy in calm, you will continue to extend your hand to us amid this agitated,
tumultuous, and consequently ineffective life we lead. Nourished by reading in the
good centuries, your mind takes on their solidity: you are a man of thought and
action simultaneously. More than ever, perhaps, your intervention is going to be
necessary to engage in a war that will be perilous to Catholic interests.

I look with sorrow on great divisions among us, mutual challenges and recrimi-
nations; even the clergy divided, the laity forced by publicity to judge their pastors,
those who are neutral scandalized, the provocation of the malicious carried to ex-
tremes, the political parties taking advantage of religious quarrels and insinuating
into them their own detestable attitudes. Nor do I consider a lesser peril the soft-
ness which would yield something of dogma's absoluteness in argument, or the
rights of the church in these matters. The Correspondant's position seems to me the
right one; it has only the misfortune of not being followed up: no propagation, no
serious publicity, nor advertisements, nor handbills, but an imposed obscurity
which will bury the opinions which should be held by all men of good will. Insist, I
beg you in the name of those who care, upon a reform to change this state of things
and put the material to work with in more active hands. The fall of the only com-
pendium we can avow with honor before the church and the world would be a
great misfortune. As for me, in my humble position, I will assist in any way I can.
Furthermore I ask your advice and especially call upon it in regard to my next arti-
cle, which follows the first and will itself be followed by a third. You will be able
to judge the outline of the book from these three chapters. Soon perhaps I will have to
consult you again concerning my willingness to compete for the Voltaire lecture at
the French Academy. But for the moment I want to thank you for your kind
communication. Nevertheless I cannot hide from you the fact that it causes me embara-
rassment. I would have preferred not to know in advance that my name was cited in
M. de Montalembert's article, so as to be able to say to the minister, if necessary, that
my lectures being public, I could not teach what a peer of France could not express his
opinion about. 4 There is certainly a dubious honor in being singled out as an excep-
tion to an offensive rule. But it is an honor, and it would be cowardly to cause the
allusion to be suppressed: I can therefore formally neither acknowledge nor disclaim
the praise, and must stay neutral. But to banish all reserve between us, this is what I
think and you may use it as you deem fit. If you are empowered to make slight correc-
tions, I would request one, not in my own interest but in that of truth.

1) It is not true that in the university there is only a small number of exceptions;
the archbishop of Lyon's letter said yesterday that they are numerous, and I am
proof that Catholics are in the university, as nearly everywhere in a public capacity,
a considerable minority. 2) It is not true that M. Lenormand and M. Ozanam pro-
test against the teaching of their colleagues. First, because we have no colleagues
except the professors of the Sorbonne, those belonging to the Collège de France having nothing in common with us; that at the Sorbonne, out of 13 professors or agrégés' teaching, there are not perhaps two who have expressed heterodox doctrines in the last three years; on the contrary, several others, M. Saint-Marc Girardin for example, have fought for true, moral, and Christian ideas. Finally, we have not protested because there was no reason to do so; we have proudly professed our faith and refuted contrary systems, striving to fulfill our vocation as professors in a Christian manner and to serve God in serving wholesome teaching. But we have not sought to make a division in the Faculty of Paris that does not exist, to effect two camps and give battle, and I believe that it is very important for the good of young people that such be not the case, that our lectures not be looked upon by our colleagues as provocations demanding a reply and that, if some are strangers to the faith, they not be made its enemies. If, however, you do not think it possible to modify the phrase it should be entirely suppressed. However, if M. de Montalembert's noble conscience, in entrusting you with the manuscript, had the intention of submitting the eloquent boldness of his first impulse to a delicate but firm appraisal, I believe that editing is owed in strict justice and that you need only dilate upon it in a few words and change these: protest against the teaching of their colleagues. Then, if the phrase no longer gives the impression of hostility and general condemnation which would be applied unjustly to the Sorbonne, I do not see why the two names cannot be used, especially if it is indicated that they are not the only ones. Certainly it would draw attention to us and provoke the recriminations of every enemy of Christianity. But we are too much men of honor to be afraid of that. We are happy that a complimentary allusion demonstrates to our brothers that truth has its agents everywhere.

Adieu, sir and dear friend. Be kind enough to present my deep respects to Mme. Foisset, with the regrets of Mme. Ozanam, who cannot console herself for having so unfortunately missed the occasion of making her acquaintance. We put off our hopes for another trip, but happily where we can recover them. It is in the union of heart, mind, and prayer that I am your grateful and devoted friend.

A.-F. Ozanam

Original: Foisset family archives.

Previous publications: Lettres (1912), t. II, pp. 39-46, and article cited in La Vie spirituelle, t. XXXV, May 1933, pp. 185-220.

Notes:
1. An article which actually appeared in the review, but in the December 15 issue, pp. 357-398: "On the Establishment of Christianity in Germany."
2. A literary allusion to feudalism, wherein serfs were bound to a certain portion of land.
3. Bligny-sur-Ouche, near Beauve, where the Foissets owned property.
4. Montalembert's article was published first in L'Univers (October 1843), then in the form of a brochure, "Le Devoir des catholiques et la question de la liberté d'enseignement" ("The Duty of Catholics and the Freedom of Teaching Question").
5. Agrégés is here understood as “substitutes.”

522. To François Lallier
Paris, January 14, 1844

He assures him of the faithfulness of his friendship. Congratulations on an article published by Lallier in l’Univers. Admiration for Père Lacordaire. News of La Perrière, some friends, and his own family. Allusion to the criticisms circulating concerning the administration of the archbishopric of Sens.

Dear friend,

At the same time that you might be blaming yourself for not writing to your old Parisian friend, I could be indicting myself for neglecting my former comrade from Sens, and just as your enormous occupations would justify your stubborn silence, the cares that weigh me down would perhaps excuse my delay. Several times since returning to Paris I have taken up the pen to converse with you a while, and some insistent obligation has taken it from my hand. But after all, friendship, too, has its obligations, and I will positively not go to bed today without finishing this letter. I need, besides, to be the personal bearer of those New Year’s wishes that I made you two weeks ago in recommending to God, one after the other, all those dear to me. I, who am unworthy of finding any consolation in prayer, always find it in that. I experience very great comfort in telling Our Lord of the needs of my absent friends: I know yours well, and since I ceased living alone, I understand what graces are necessary for the welfare of a young family.

I also want to compliment you on the article I have started to read in l’Univers in which I recognize your hand. It is very well written: but it is better than an expression of talent, it is an act of courage. You have fulfilled your duties as magistrate honorably in denouncing out in the open the extravagances of a man you have made your enemy but who, on another occasion, will not be as bold, knowing that eyes are open to his behavior.¹

If Catholics would make up their minds to publicize every tyranny of which they are certain, and to be certain of each one they want to publicize, I have no doubt that they would sooner or later command respect: but the times and upheavals make it necessary to check out and verify and not to be satisfied with nearly, which ought never to satisfy a Christian conscience when defending the cause of truth is at stake. This must be said apropos of present controversies. I note with pleasure that men of substance are coming forward, and deem that M. de Montalembert has restated the question in all its importance, putting it where it always belonged: between the universal church and the universal state.²
No one can bring to the discussion of religion more dignity, prudence, and charity than a man from whom this kind of approach is not really looked for: I mean P. Lacordaire. *L'Univers* gives you analyses, but what he manages to impart is emphasis, gesture, emotion, and that power over an audience which makes him the greatest orator of the day. From the beginning he had a great fund of theology and great facility in presentation, and he has lost nothing since the days when we listened to him together, getting across his message amid the rumbling of his vast congregation. I cannot listen to him without recalling the happy time of our youth, without thinking of you and regretting that you cannot be here, as I am, to relive our enthusiasms of nine years ago. For it is no less than that, dear friend, and see how we grow older! Indeed it would be inconvenient to come to Paris for the final conference, which will be next Sunday.

A great gentleman like you, soon to have a house of your own, must not think of traveling! [But, despite all your excuses, I do not release you from your New Year's visit.]

Besides, after five months' separation, we would have so much to tell each other. You will not tell me only about your children; and Madame Ozanam would not wish you to refrain from giving her news of Madame Lallier. By the way, she joins me in thanking you for that amiable hospitality so graciously offered that one could hardly pass up the opportunity some day or other. On my side, I would have much to talk with you about. You are probably ignorant of the shocking and unhappy state of our poor friend La Perrière, who does not seem to pick up in the wake of his brain fever. It is my guess that complex political affairs, along with intensive work and extreme efforts to realize his plans for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, have affected his head and brought on this insanity in which lucid intervals have been increasing for some time but without coming to a complete recovery. You can have no idea of the painful and widespread sensation it has caused in Lyon, and which is far from over; possibly enough of it will linger to compromise a life whose piety, intelligence, and good fortune seemed to foreshadow brilliance. Since you last saw him, his talent has taken steady and soaring flight, and his firm, warm, and judicious speech showed promise of an orator in the Chamber and an excellent defender of Catholic interests. Pray for him; I cannot believe that God will allow everything great and fruitful which He has put in this soul to be lost.

Otherwise, there is nothing else new among my old friends. Lamache is a candidate for the doctorate, and Henri Demante is on the point of being named substitute following a respectable competition. I had forgotten to tell you that I have the joy of having my two brothers here: one is superior of a house of missionaries who appear to be solidly established, the other is beginning his second year of medicine with every success that could be wished for. At the same time, we have brought our old maid here: she could not bring herself, after fifty-eight years of service, to leave the children of her masters. Thus, you see, I have in a sense torn down the walls of the paternal home to rebuild them in Paris: all the family portraits, and some old furniture of my grandmother, relics to which so many memories are attached: we have thus repopulated our formerly rather solitary existence; and my happiness would be perfect if Madame Ozanam's health, although perfect—
ly restored, did not always give me some anxiety for the future. Many other wishes disturb our hearts, and we know that despite the cares which are taken as happiness here below, God foresees our need to hope for another.

Be kind enough to give my regards, with my wife's compliments, to Madame Lallier, who should be ready to make a trip to Paris.]

Accept the fond remembrances of my brothers, and be well assured that our friendship is far from over.

Your devoted,
A.-F. Ozanam

[P.S. I have heard nothing reassuring said about your archbishop-designate. No reproach as to his character, but strong criticism of his administration. Poor du Lac was obliged to leave for a while the novitiate where he found so much consolation to go to Castres to negotiate with his family's creditors.]
7. Marie, mentioned in a number of letters.
8. Msgr. Mellon Jolly, native of Sézanne (Marne), ordained bishop of Séez in 1836; named archbishop of Sens by royal decree of November 19, 1843. He had been chaplain to the Duchesse de Berry.

535. To Mme. Haraneder
Paris, April 8, 1844

He describes for his aunt the feast of Easter at Paris: the men’s retreat preached by P. de Ravignan and followed by a Communion Mass attracting three thousand men to Notre Dame. He emphasizes the mixture of social classes making up this assemblage, then expresses the wish that this proof of vitality demonstrated by Catholicism in France be known in Italy. He commends his friend Doubet, who is about to visit Italy, to his aunt.

Dear Aunt,

Your kind and affectionate letter reached us a few days ago, enabling us to pass this Easter season more pleasantly and intimately. Besides, when God is given more attention, His absent loved ones share in the attention too. Yesterday, a beautiful Easter Day, you can be sure that your nephews did not forget you. We had here a fine celebration which Catholic Italy could envy. Following a men’s retreat preached by Père Ravignan, the most eloquent of our preachers along with P. Lacordaire, a men’s corporate communion took place at Notre Dame. There were more than three thousand of us, the great nave completely filled from the altar to the door and crowds of people in the sides, all so closely packed that you could not kneel but had to stand erect. Nearly all belonged to the upper or middle classes of society; there were also, however, members of the working class and the poor. You saw peers of France, deputies, soldiers, and students from all the schools right down to poor servants in livery communicating beside their masters and old men partially blind being led by their sons. The archbishop of Paris and P. Ravignan gave out Communion on either side: it took an hour and a quarter and with perfect recollection and order. When amid this crowd seven or eight hundred voices were raised in the singing of the Magnificat, you would say that the vaulted ceiling thrilled and the old cathedral trembled with joy at having within its walls this believing, praying multitude which brought back the faith and devotion of the Middle Ages. As for myself, profoundly moved at so great a spectacle and finding my heart a little less cold than ordinarily amid the touching solemnity, I profited by it to recommend those I love to God with more fervor than usual. Would I forget my excellent uncle and the aunt who inherited our mother’s affection for us and Jules and my cousins? I would hazard a guess that we were probably dreamed about in Florence that morning, and that all the distance and separation in the world could not prevent our being together.

You will excuse this long description which I judged would give you some com-
fort. Besides it would be useful if you would spread it abroad so that Italy would know that there is still religion in the France of which so much bad is said. For the throng which filled Notre Dame was repeated in other churches and there was such confusion that soldiers had to be stationed at the doors to maintain order. For the rest, if it pleases you, you can chat at greater length about Paris with two likable tourists who asked immediately to visit you, and who will probably be doing so in a few days. They are M. and Mme. Doubet, the best friends we have found here, and with whom we have spent many pleasant moments during the past year. Madame Doubet is the daughter of M. Rendu, a trustee of the university; his is a most respectable and pious family entirely taken up with God, studies, and good works. And yet gaiety and enjoyment are not lacking. Madame Doubet especially has been a constant amiable and faithful friend to Amélie: visiting her when she is ill, comforting her in her troubles while at the same time herself bearing a great sorrow with courage, for M. Doubet has suffered for a long time with asthma which has obliged him to spend the winter at Pisa, which is why he intends to pass the spring in the country near Florence. Since they do not know anyone in that city, think how happy they will be to see you, to chat and to show you their pretty little daughter who is four years old and will have a very good time, I trust, with my own little girl. Nor will they be in the way: they know Italian and are familiar enough with art to visit your wonderful galleries without a guide.

I cannot close, kind Aunt, without giving you news of our health since you are good enough to be so interested in it. We are well and with the good weather we are enjoying which coaxes you to breathe the fine air, I hope that Amélie will gain even more strength; as for myself, I am in perfect health during these two weeks of vacation the university gives us at Easter. My brothers are writing to you, and all of us embrace you from the depths and affection of our hearts, as well as you, Uncle, and our beloved cousins; nor do we forget M. Leblanc; a thousand best wishes to that young family of little cousins, boys and girls, that you see growing around you. Goodbye again, kind Aunt, pray often for your nephew.

A.-F. Ozanam

Address: Al Signor, Signor Luigi Haraneder, Florence, Italy. Via Marseille.

Postmark: Livorno, by Sea, date illegible.

Original: Archives Laporte. Unedited.

Notes:
2. L'Univers estimates "about 2,000 Communions."
537. To Emmanuel Bailly
Paris, April 26, [1844']

Bailly being about to submit his resignation as president of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul that same evening, Ozanam declines in advance his own nomination to succeed him and supports Comudet.

Sir and dear friend,

Rumor has it in the society that you intend to announce your retirement this evening and to offer me the honor of being president general. Our recent conversations and everything that has happened in the last several months lead me to believe that the first of the two rumors is well-founded. But for what concerns the second, I dare hope it is not and that you have taken into consideration the urgent reasons that made me duty bound to refuse the post of vice-president. I come then to beg you earnestly not to make a nomination that I would not accept and which would have the unhappy result of complicating by my immediate resignation the unfortunately inevitable crisis into which yours would plunge us. Why not designate, at least temporarily, M. Cornudet?

Forgive me if I write these lines in haste. The preparation of my class does not permit me to attend this evening's meeting. But I will be there in spirit, as with everything connected with the society and him who has for so long been its support and guide.

Your fondly devoted servant,
A.-F. Ozanam

Address: Monsieur, Monsieur Bailly, rue Madame, n. 41. Very urgent.

Note:
1. Cf. minutes book of the meetings.

538. To Montalembert
Paris, May 6, 1844

Deferential and enthusiastic congratulations for the campaign he is waging in favor of the church’s liberties and especially for his latest speech.

Count,

If I were not afraid of interrupting your extremely busy affairs, I would have been honored to call in person to express my delight and, permit me to say, my
fraternal pride as a Christian. I do not think that language could ever be elevated more highly in our political gatherings than in the peroration of your latest speech. The masters and companions you took with you in your exile on Madeira are plain enough; and I recognize the accents of St. Gregory VII, St. Anselm, and St. Bernard when you defend the Church’s liberties, the oldest and the most recent and the only imperishable liberties.

[Would it be indiscreet to impose once more upon your kindness by asking as a favor to Madame Ozanam, who has never seen the Chamber of Peers, for two tickets for Wednesday or for the nearest day on which you foresee an interesting discussion, especially if you will be taking part in it? Saturday is the only day impossible for me.

I have the honor to be, Count, with a respectful but very lively affection,

Your devoted servant,

A.-F. Ozanam]

Original: Property of the Montalembert family. The original carries in Montalembert’s hand the note: “support—Ozanam on the freedom of teaching.”

Previous publication: Lettres (1912), t. II, p. 50, except for the passage in brackets.

Notes:
2. Allusion to a recent work of Montalembert’s.

539. To Ernest Falconnet
Paris, May 22, 1844

After many steps taken, the nomination of his father-in-law to a division of the Ministry of Public Instruction is on the point of success. Teaching and personal work occupy him a great deal. Comments on the spirit of youth and on the university. Joy at his brothers’ move to Paris.

Dear friend,

I want to say how much pleasure your good letter gave me. Since your nomination I have several times been on the point of writing to congratulate you, and to congratulate myself on a promotion which gives me hope of seeing you more often, since I never leave Lyon without the intention of returning and thus, whether my life be established elsewhere, at least I will always make frequent visits to a city to which so many dear friendships draw me. What excuses my silence a bit and makes me less culpable for not having written earlier is the extreme activity my father-in-
law's candidacy has added to my usual occupations. As nothing is more painful to M. Soulacroix than to ask for himself, I have had to take chief conduct of an affair in which, after all, the greatest interest was that of Madame Ozanam, and I occupied myself with approaches for which I had neither taste nor experience. They seem to have attained their end. The nomination of my father-in-law to a division of the Ministry of Public Instruction has been decided; but there remains that uncertainty which only ceases with the signature. You understand in what perplexities and anxieties four months of waiting, hopes, and alarms were necessarily spent and if you add to those inquietudes the unyielding faculty toil, a section of rhetoric at Collège Stanislas, and an unfortunate book whose interminable editing I am laboriously pushing, you will appreciate how little time I have had for the needs of the heart, family relationships, and the cultivation of old friends. And meanwhile the entire necessity of these consolations is felt all the more when you begin to live in the tumult of business, and in the middle of contradictions and difficulties, in Paris especially, where men are as polished as marble but often as cold and hard.

Assuredly I have no complaints of those around me. With never the need to dissimulate or water down my convictions, I have always met with a sympathetic hearing from the young people in my courses at the Sorbonne, and there is no talking back, no matter how the irreligious prejudices of the Reformation or even the doctrines of absolutism are treated. I continue to strive, therefore, as far as my humble capacities allow, for that alliance of science and faith, of the Church and freedom, which I hope to see emerge from the storms of the nineteenth century. Besides, in so far as the professors and substitutes are concerned, I have scarcely found anything but good will and encouragement. Advice and books are never lacking, and to the degree that, if there were nothing else, I would encounter few difficulties. The thorny problem is advancement, to attain titular rank and become part of that group which delights in making itself inaccessible. Happily, Providence provides me with certain very active and efficacious friendships, such as those of M. Ampère, M. Lenormant and several others. Writers enliven our solitude, for we scarcely ever go out. For that matter, we could easily be self-sufficient now that we have reunited a part of our family around us: Alphonse, at the head of a house of Marists, lives five minutes away from my house, Charles lives with us, and our good old Marie as well, who has never been happier than among her children. Amélie manages her increased household marvelously, and in her sweet company, that knowing and lively kindness, that Christian union under the eye of God, I have found the only kind of good fortune which does not dry up.

I could not resist telling you about this domestic happiness you may taste soon. Believe, dear friend, that while writing you so little I nonetheless think of you much. I was especially anxious to know whether your change of address would not endanger the charming intention you had confided to me last year. I am happy to see that, on the contrary, it grows stronger and is drawing toward its goal. Your invitation is tendered well in advance: I nonetheless accept it enthusiastically. If God permits, I will be delighted to be able to take Amélie to a family solemnity which will give us another amiable cousin. And in case it will be impossible for us to go, be
well assured that our hearts will be at that gathering with those of all who love you, and with the souls of both our good mothers' whose memory you so piously evoke.

Permit, as a favor to my right as elder, to complain a bit of your not having given me any news of M. and Mme. Populus, your sister, and especially your excellent father to whom, as you know, I am bound by an almost filial bond. Be good enough to tell me about them in replying and to give them the expression of my respectful attachment. My brothers join with me; in their name as well as my own I embrace you as cordially as your procurator general's train permits. Adieu.

Your tenderly devoted cousin,

A.-F. OzANAM

I run into Pessonneaux frequently here; he has not forgotten you.

Address: Monsieur Ernest Falconnet, Substitute of the Procurator of the King at the Tribunal of the First Instance, rue du Rempart-d'Ainay, Lyon.

Postmark: May 23, 1844.

Original: Belonging to a private collection. Text verified from a photocopy belonging to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Notes:
1. From the internal evidence of this letter, Falconnet had been named to the post of procurator general.
2. The Ozanams and the Falconnets were related on Ozanam's father's side.
3. Cousins of Ozanam and Falconnet.
A FINAL WORD

To read the private letters of great men and women for love and knowledge is a privilege indeed. When their writers were holy as well, it is a grace from God.

There can be no doubt that, although the cause for the beatification and canonization of Frédéric Ozanam is still undergoing the rigorous inspection of the Holy See, God wishes his letters to be shared with others, especially his brothers and sisters of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

The consummate teacher in his chosen profession, Ozanam continues to teach, quietly and unobtrusively, in his letters and writings. Here he is the loving son, the devoted brother, the faithful friend, the chaste but ardent lover, the supreme husband and father. Above all, he reveals himself in these intimate pages—never meant for other eyes than those of family and friends—as the devout and committed Catholic Christian, steeped in God and fiercely loyal to the Church he defended vigorously with speech and pen, and with his unique Society dedicated to the souls and bodies of the poor.

Unique, for that matter, best describes Ozanam himself. How often do we find in the one person the head of family, founder of fresh charity, friend of many, the intellectual, the exceptional scholar, popular teacher, astute diplomat in the service of Church and society—and all of these simultaneously and most fruitfully in the short space of forty years?

To find the like we must turn to his spiritual father, Vincent de Paul, who lived a dozen lifetimes in one and changed the whole course and practice of charity in the Church. It was no accident that Ozanam chose Vincent de Paul as the patron of his Society, and how providentially and enthusiastically Vincent answered the call!

The light of Frédéric Ozanam shines in evergrowing luster before all men and women. May his words inculcate in them the love of God and neighbor.

A PERSONAL NOTE

I found great personal enjoyment in translating these letters of Frédéric Ozanam: there is always a special satisfaction in making the acquaintance of another human being, a satisfaction that is enhanced by personal letters which bring the blessed knowledge of friendship. There is further satisfaction for a priest in discovering new facets of holiness in a fellow being, because the priest knows how urgently role models of sanctity are needed in this decadent world.

I am humbly grateful for being allowed to help in making Frédéric Ozanam
better known and hope to be able to continue doing so. I am thoroughly convinced that the translation and publication of these letters has been providential, from the beginning which was not of my seeking, to the selection of these particular letters which was dictated over a period of time by particular circumstances.

I am, therefore, most grateful to Henry Gieffers, longtime official champion of Ozanam’s cause, who first approached me with the project and guided it through early days; to John Simmons, president of the Society’s Council of the United States, and Dudley Baker, late executive secretary, who believed in it; to Father William Sheldon, C.M., former postulator of Ozanam’s cause, who provided me with vital information and texts; and Rita Porter, executive secretary, and Roy Porter, who helped bring it at last to the light of day. I am especially grateful to God whose salvific Will continues to be manifested in the life of Frédéric Ozanam, in the spread of the Vincentian apostolate through his Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and in the proclamation of the good news of that life and works by word of mouth and through the printed word of marvelous letters like these.

Joseph I. Dirvin, C.M.
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