Chapter 3

Restoration, Dissolution, Restoration, and Schism
Napoleon and the Daughters of Charity

On 13 February 1806, Napoleon wrote Pius VII, “In the temporal sphere your Holiness will have for me the regard that I have for him in the spiritual. Your Holiness is the sovereign of Rome, but I am the Emperor and all my enemies must be his.”¹ The pope, however, refused to support the emperor’s anti-English foreign policy. He also wanted to safeguard the sovereignty of the Papal States. These positions caused relations between the Holy See and the emperor to worsen. On 17 May 1809, these relations collapsed as the empire annexed the Papal States. Several months later, the French took the pope into custody, beginning a five-year incarceration.

Simultaneously, because of the British sea blockade, the foreign missions played less of a factor in the emperor’s plans. Because of these developments, the Lazarists’ utility became more tenuous. Fattally, Napoleon also came to doubt their loyalty. The most important factor, however, in the Congregation’s and Hanon’s fall from favor, concerned a struggle over the control of the Daughters of Charity. By 1809, 1,653 sisters were serving in 274 houses scattered throughout France.² After the restoration of 1804, the French vicar general again exercised his authority as the sisters’ ecclesiastical superior. The restoration of this authority, however, was not acceptable to all the sisters. In his Notice, Étienne described the situation in this way: “Another intrigue was hatched in Paris. This had the goal of removing the Company of the Daughters of Charity from the authority of the superior general of the Congregation of the Mission and to place them instead under the authority of the archdiocese of Paris. The idea behind this schism was not new. The Daughters of Charity who had reestablished the Company in 1800 were the ones who had conceived this plan. These sisters were inclined to novelty, and they were inspired by a love of independence.”³

On at least three occasions between 1800 and 1807, the government requested that the community submit a copy of its constitutions. Sisters

¹ Quoted in Dansette, Histoire Religieuse, 1: 154-55.
² AN.F.4.1048.
³ Étienne, Notice, 12.
working in the administration of the mother house submitted versions omitting mention of the constitutional dependence on the Lazarist superior general. For example, the version submitted in October 1807 stated: "The Sisters of Charity do not form a religious body but a Company of Daughters occupied with the care of the sick and the instruction of the poor. They are submissive to an ecclesiastical superior chosen by them and approved by the Archbishop of Paris and a Superior General." By contrast, the authentic rule said the following: "The Company of the Daughters of Charity is not erected as a religious order but only as a community of young women who work toward Christian perfection and are obedient, according to their Institute, to the bishops and the Superior General of their Company [the Lazarist superior general] and the one among them who is elected superior." 

According to Étienne, the desire of some sisters to break ties with their rightful superior found support from the vicars general of the then vacant see of Paris. These men "were quick to support a project that could only help to extend their own authority and influence." The vicars general also presumed that this plan "was agreeable to the emperor's mother who was the protectress of the Company of the Daughters of Charity, and who under this title felt justified in interfering in its governance." Again, however, Étienne's version is a biased, compressed, chronologically distorted, careless version of the actual course of events.

Napoleon had an obsession for order, uniformity, and centralization. He also was abysmally ignorant of religious issues. In 1807, he formulated a plan to bring the governmentally approved communities of sisters into one group organized under the common title "sis-

---

4 Gabriel Perboyre, C.M., *Histoire de la Compagnie des Filles de la Charité sous M. Hanon, Vicaire-Général*, 73. For more information on this era see also "Filles de la Charité, Documents Diverses: 1807-1825: Période critique au temps des vicaires-généraux. Schismes," C 196, 1°, ACMP, and "Sur le schisme des Filles de la Charité." C 197, 2°, ACMP.
5 The sisters also elected a superior general. Hanon, *Circulaires*, 2:104.
6 The archbishop of Paris, Jean-Baptiste du Belloy, had died on 6 June 1808. In his struggles with Napoleon, Pius VII used one of the few weapons available to him which was to refuse to give canonical institution to new French bishops. After Du Belloy's death, the emperor named his uncle Cardinal Fesch and then Cardinal Maury to the vacant see. Neither of these prelates ever took canonical possession of the archdiocese. The see remained vacant until 1817. For details of this phase of the struggle between the emperor and Pius VII see Dansette, *Histoire Religieuse*, 2:218-31.
7 Etienne, *Notice*, 12
8 Ibid.
9 The role of Napoleon's mother, Laetitia Bonaparte, as the patroness of all French sisters dated from 1805. There is no evidence that this position was anything but purely honorific or that "Madame-Mère" ever tried to exercise any jurisdiction over the Daughters of Charity. Hanon did not mention the emperor's mother as in any way involved in the controversy. See G. Canton, "Napoléon et l'abbé Hanon, supérieur des missions étrangères et des sœurs de saint-Vincent de Paul," *Revue Historique* 111 (1909): 92
Claude-Joseph Placiard, C.M., French vicar general, 1806-1807
sters of charity." In each diocese, these sisters were to come under the authority of the bishop. At the emperor's direction, a "general chapter of the sisters of charity and other establishments dedicated to the service of the poor" met in Paris in November and December 1807.\(^{10}\)

As the government prepared to settle the status of the Daughters of Charity, Hanon continued to work for the Lazarists' full restoration. On 28 May 1808, for example, he wrote to the Minister of Cults, "The Congregation of Saint-Lazare has been reestablished by various imperial decrees for the work of the foreign missions. These missions are important for religion, commerce, the sciences, and the honor of France. The community has endured obstacle after obstacle, and suffered blows and losses over which its superior has no control. Its complete ruin soon is approaching, unless Your Excellency deigns to support it with your powerful protection."\(^{11}\) Hanon requested protection for all Lazarist houses, especially in conquered territories,\(^{12}\) more funds for the foreign missions that were "falling apart,"\(^{13}\) the selection of the long-promised new mother house in Paris, and the return of the Congregation's prer evolutionary properties that the government had not yet alienated.\(^{14}\) Hanon also petitioned for the Congregation's affiliation with the Imperial University. This move would give its educational efforts in seminaries and colleges official status.\(^{15}\)

As 1809 dawned, storm clouds were on the horizon. In his New Year's circular, Hanon made no mention of any approaching difficul-

---

\(^{10}\)See also "Adresse à Sa Majesté l'Empereur et Roi par les députés au Chapitre Général des Soeurs de la Charité, 2 décembre 1807," "Rapport fait par M. Guieu, Secrétaire des commandements de Madame et membre de la Cour de Cassation, au Chapitre Général des Soeurs de la Charité, Hospitaliers, etc.," and "Rapport de Madame Mère sur le Chapitre Général des Soeurs de la Charité," AN.F19.6247.

\(^{11}\)AN.F19.6239.2.61.

\(^{12}\)When the French invaded Italy, Spain, and Portugal they legislated the suppression of the religious orders. French local officials often tried to apply these new regulations to Lazarist houses. Hanon successfully claimed government protection of these houses on the basis of the Congregation's legal standing in France, and their dependence on a French superior in Paris. See, for example, the letter of 31 August 1808, from Hanon to Cardinal Fesch with regard to the Lazarist house in Florence. Hanon, ACMP. Hanon also successfully appealed for draft exemptions for Lazarist seminarians in imperial territories in Italy. See, for example, "28 janvier 1808-Décision de Napoléon I exemptant du service militaire quatre étudiants du séminaire de la Mission de Saint-Lazare de Gênes," Actes du Gouvernement, 101-02.

\(^{13}\)Much of Hanon's activity during this period involved giving the government extensive information on the state of the foreign missions. See, for example, the letter of 21 November 1808, from Hanon to Cardinal Fesch in which Hanon gives news of the mission in Persia, gives his views on how best to organize the foreign missions administered by the Congregation, and reminds the cardinal that the missionaries in Algeria had not received any funds from the government for the last two years. Hanon, ACMP.

\(^{14}\)AN.F19.6239.2.61.

\(^{15}\)Hanon to the Grand Master of the Imperial University, memorandum of 8 November 1808, Hanon, ACMP. Hanon also appealed to the Minister of Cults to support his request. No action was taken by the university.
ties. He did, however, send a confidential letter to each visitor along with the public circular. In this letter Hanon said,

The most important of my duties... is to see to the conservation of our dear Congregation and consequently to foresee and prevent anything that could destroy it. It is not that I see anything happening or that we have anything to fear, right now. To the contrary, divine providence has blessed us richly with favors that have not been accorded to other of the former ecclesiastical and religious corporations.... On the other hand, given the times in which we live, anything is possible. We must continue with prudence and caution.... Our essential task is always to preserve the authority of our superiors and to preserve the centers out of which they exercise their authority. In accord with the brief that confirmed my possession of the vicariate general, I have the right of designating my successor. I will fulfill this duty with God's help. For the same reason, it is necessary to see to it that our provinces, which are like branches on a tree, can continue to exist in other lands even if they are separated from the trunk of the mother house.16

Hanon envisioned a scenario in which the Congregation's central authority again disappeared or relations with Paris proved impossible because of actions taken by a "political power."17 Under these conditions the visitors would have the delegation, for the duration of the crisis, to exercise the authority of the superiors and vicars general.18 Hanon also wrote to Sicardi asking him to obtain papal approval for this plan.19 This approval came on 16 April 1809.20

In his letter to the visitors, Hanon had played down the seriousness of the situation. The true extent of his fears at this time appears, however, in a letter written to Cardinal Fesch at the end of January. Hanon acknowledged that given the emperor's imminent return to Paris, the details of the Sisters of Charity's reorganization would soon be settled on a basis that threatened not only his authority as vicar general but the very existence of the communities. He described them as perhaps now facing "their last moments in France."21 Hanon explained to Fesch that the Daughters of Charity's dependence on the Lazarist superior general dated from their foundation. He noted that the Holy See had sanctioned this dependence, and no one had ever before questioned it. Thus, the plan to place the sisters

---

16Hanon, Circulaires, 2: 288-89.
17Ibid.
18Ibid.
19Hanon to Sicardi, 9 January 1809, Hanon, ACMP.
20Acta Apostolica, 233.
under the authority of the bishops was incompatible with their papally approved constitutional structure. Hanon also told Fesch that if the government went through with its plans his only alternative would then be to offer his resignation to the pope. He predicted that if the pope accepted his resignation as superior of the Daughters whether absolutely, partially, or only regarding the sisters in France the consequences would be the same: “France would no longer be the central point of our relations with Lazarists and sisters of other countries.”

All the scenarios painted by Hanon had the same result, chaos and disunity within the double family, and an end to their utility. He closed by asking Fesch to intervene so that “things would be left as Saint Vincent had arranged them.”

However, things were not to be left as Saint Vincent had arranged them. On 18 February 1809, the emperor issued a decree requiring all groups of sisters to submit their rule for governmental approval in light of the new regulations. The deadline for this action was 1 January 1810. The penalty for the failure to comply was legal dissolution. Article seventeen of the decree declared that each house of sisters, including each “headquarters,” was under the authority of the local bishop. This provision was exactly what Hanon and the sisters who supported his authority feared most. The Daughters of Charity split into two factions, the “Vincentines” who accepted the traditional governing structure and Hanon’s authority, and the “Jalabertines” who wanted independence from the Lazarists.

On 6 May 1809, after some negotiations, Cardinal Fesch sent the sisters the government-approved version of their new rule. The most important provisions included:

Article two: The Company is not erected as a religious order, but only as a Congregation of Daughters who are obedient, according to their rules, to the archbishop of Paris or his delegate. The archbishop serves as superior general of the entire Company. The sisters are also obedient to the one among them who through election serves as superior and also to the other community officers.

Article fourteen: Together with the archbishop’s delegate, the superior will be responsible for the direction of the entire Company.
McHanon, Dominique - François.
Vicaire général
Élu 1807 — Décédé 1816.

Dominique Hanon, C.M., French vicar general, 1807-1816
pany. She will serve as the soul of the Company's body.

Article sixteen: The sisters stationed in the departments will be obedient to their bishops concerning the interior discipline of their establishments. They will be subject to spiritual visitations by them.

Article seventeen: Nevertheless, the interior rule followed in each establishment must conform to that practiced in the mother house.27

For a brief time it looked as if a compromise was possible. The vicars general named Hanon as their delegate over the Daughters.28 Almost immediately, however, this arrangement began to fall apart.29 Within a month, Jalabert was writing to the Minister of Cults complaining about Hanon, "It is clear to me that M. Hanon is too full of himself and his domination. I believe that given his false interpretation of his delegation, we must issue a new ordinance that is more explicit and precise. If this is done with firmness, perhaps we can avoid the necessity of a more severe action."30 Hanon continued to defend the historicity and necessity of the connection between the Daughters of Charity and the Lazarist superior general. The vicars general stepped up their attack. Hanon meanwhile appealed to the Council of State. He attacked the "usurpations" of the vicars general.31

On 1 July 1809, Jalabert wrote to Cardinal Fesch, claiming that the original confirmation of the Daughters of Charity by Cardinal de Retz had specified their dependence on the archbishop of Paris. He claimed that the jurisdiction of the Lazarist superior general "came much later, and is consequently quite recent in origin."32 The vicars general dismissed the sister who had been serving as superior general because she supported Hanon’s position.33 They appointed a superior who supported the new rules.34 These actions deepened the schism within the community. Both sides recruited as many adherents as possible, while appealing to the government against the opposing side.35

27Cardinal Fesch to Sister (Beaudoin?), 6 May 1809, AN.F19.6240.233.
28Hanon to Cardinal Fesch, 19 May 1809, informing him that he will accept the delegation with respect to the Daughters. AN.F19.6240.230. See also the 26 May 1809, from the vicars general of Paris to Hanon, naming him as delegate. AN.F19.6240.242.
29Planchet, Schisme, 24.
30Jalabert to the Minister of Cults, 19 June 1809, AN.F19.6240.246.
31Planchet, Schisme, 24.
32Jalabert to Cardinal Fesch, 1 July 1809, AN.F19.6240.249.
33Planchet, Schisme, 25.
34Ibid., 33-34.
35See, for example, AN.F7.7935.
Napoleon as Emperor. Portrait by Jacques-Louis David. Corbis Bettmann
The Napoleonic dissolution

The continuing struggle forced Hanon to become more outspoken and ultramontane in his rhetoric. He wrote,

Even the temporal authority's suppression of the Congregation of the Mission cannot stop the superior general from exercising his responsibilities regarding the Daughters of Charity. The civil authority has the legal right not to recognize the superior general of the Congregation of the Mission throughout the French Empire. However, it cannot deprive him of the rights granted to him by the Sovereign Pontiff. Only the ecclesiastical power can deprive him of a jurisdiction that is totally spiritual. As long as it is the Sovereign Pontiff's will, he will always remain as superior of the Daughters of Charity.36

Hanon held that if any sister submitted to the authority of a local bishop, she no longer was a true Daughter of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul.37

Hanon's ultramontane defense of his authority came as the emperor was holding the pope captive and imprisoning many other ecclesiastics throughout the empire because of their opposition to his policies.38 Hanon would soon share this fate.39 During July 1809, the government ordered Hanon's arrest. He underwent nineteen days of questioning.40 Meanwhile, events were unfolding toward drastic government action against the Lazarists.

In early September, Félix-Julien Bigot de Préameneu requested the emperor to approve a new grant for the Lazarists' Levantine missions.41 The emperor refused this request. He scrawled the sentence, "I no longer desire any missions," across the paper.42 At the end of September, the Minister of Cults submitted a report to the emperor on the foreign missions. The document had taken more than a year to compile.43 He also submitted "a proposal for a decree of revocation" as the emperor had requested earlier in the month. Préameneu observed that even an increase of government support could not guar-

---

36Hanon, quoted in Girard, Saint Vincent de Paul, 188.
37Ibid., 198.
39One of these was Benedetto Fenaja, the Italian Lazarist, who had played a role in the Italian-French schism and served as the pope's vice regent for Rome. Fenaja died in Paris in 1812, during his imprisonment.
40Fenaja to M. Rauzan, 14 August 1809, Hanon, ACMP.
42This detail appeared in the speech given by Jean Feutrier, Bishop of Beauvais and the Ministre des Affaires Ecclesiastiques, during a 1829 debate over the Lazarists' legal status in the Chamber of Deputies. See Actes du Gouvernement, 204.
43"Tableau Général des Missions Françaises servies par les trois Congrégations de Missionnaires, dont le chef-lieu est à Paris," AN.F.1047.3:50.
antee that the foreign missionaries "would not sell themselves for English gold and become our enemies' spies and partisans." Nevertheless, he recommended that the government consider maintaining its support of the Lazarists.45

On 26 September, in a fit of anger, Napoleon revoked the decree of "7 Prairial, An XII." Article two of this new decree read: "We also revoke all our previous decrees concerning the establishment, or confirmation, of congregations of priests dedicated to the foreign missions, and in particular the decree...with respect to the establishment of an association of secular priests who, under the title of Priests of the Foreign Missions, administer the foreign missions."46 Inexplicably, however, the emperor added a note directing that the decree "should neither be published nor printed."47 Not even a plea from Cardinal Fesch could change the emperor's mind about the suppression.48 On 6 October 1809, Hanon received the order from the Prefect of the Seine for the Congregation to disband.49 On 29 October, the police arrested Hanon at his rented quarters on the rue du Cherche-Midi.

In his Notice, Étienne presented a very different version of the events leading up to the Congregation's Napoleonic dissolution. He blamed the suppression entirely on Hanon's attempts to preserve his authority over the Daughters of Charity against the "pretensions of

---

44 Bigot de Préameneu, Minister of Cults, to Napoléon, undated, AN.F4.1047.3.49.
45 Ibid.
46 AN.F4.2545.75. See also Actes du Gouvernement, 106-11. The editor of the Actes du Gouvernement notes that "The signature on the decree carries evidence of imperial anger. While all the rest of the Emperor's signatures on documents signed that day are written in a normal hand, his signature on this decree was written with heavy strokes of the pen that caused the ink to blot," xxiii. The decree also "forbade missions within the country" and specifically dissolved the three groups in Genoa which had been established for this purpose. The Minister of Police had urged this action because of the alleged subversive activities of some preachers. Cardinal Fesch thought that given the shortage of priests, this action was disastrous for the French Church. He counseled that it would be better to deal individually with hommes irredeemable ou malveillants. AN.F4.1046.3.59
47 This act would be of crucial importance in the Lazarists' Bourbon restoration. In order for an imperial decree to have legal force it was necessary that it be published in the Bulletin des Lois. Since this was not the case here, Napoleon's suppression was administrative and personal rather than legal and public. The immediate effect, however, with respect to the Lazarists was their suppression. AN.F4.1046.3.59.
48 Nicolas Frochot, the Prefect of the Department of the Seine, to Hanon, 6 October.

In light of orders that I have received, I have the honor of informing you that the decrees that permitted the reestablishment of the foreign missions are revoked...Consequently, those establishments that are organized on the basis of these decrees are dissolved and are no longer in existence. I invite you to conform to the decision taken by His Majesty the Emperor on this matter by ceasing your functions as a missionary and as superior of the Mission of Saint-Lazare. You also are no longer permitted to reside among the Sisters of Charity. I also request, Monsieur, that you inform all persons attached to the missions who are subordinate to you that they are no longer authorized to live in community and that they must disperse without delay.

Hanon, ACMP.
the vicars general of Paris.” According to the account given in the Notice, Hanon had proved that the claims of the vicars general over the Daughters were “without a solid foundation.” In response to Hanon’s defense, the “unreasonable intrigue that had tried every means possible to attain its ends decided now to employ an extreme means.” According to Étienne, “the emperor and the Council of State had recognized M. Hanon’s authority as vicar general.” However, since an integral part of his responsibilities was to be the sisters’ superior, the leaders of the “intrigue” saw no other way to attain their goal than to seek the Congregation’s suppression. If the Congregation no longer existed, the vicars general of Paris reasoned that they would be “free to exercise their authority over the Company of the Daughters of Charity.” Thus, according to Étienne’s view, it was these “agents of intrigue” who turned the emperor against the Congregation. Their conspiracy brought him to the point where he finally said, “I no longer desire the Mission,” and consented to a decree of suppression.

Again, Étienne’s mythic version only superficially resembles the unfolding of events. By virtue of the February 1809 decree, the government had separated the Daughters from their dependence on the superior of the Congregation of the Mission. The temporary experiment of having Hanon serve as the delegate of the vicars general failed. The result was a schism among the sisters. In theory, the removal of the sisters from Hanon’s jurisdiction need not have affected the Congregation’s legal existence. However, Hanon’s continued ultramontane opposition to the government’s policies provoked the emperor. Napoleon’s anger and dissatisfaction with the Lazarists, combined with his anger and dissatisfaction with the interior and foreign missions provoked him to his drastic actions. No evidence supports Étienne’s claim that the vicars general of Paris played a role in the Congregation’s suppression.

Another point on which Étienne reveals his Vincentian-centric myth-making, concerns his claim that Napoleon had declared, with sole reference to the Congregation of the Mission, “I no longer desire the Mission.” His misquotation made it appear as if the vicars general had maneuvered the emperor into dissolving the Congregation. However,
the emperor's actual words were, "I no longer desire the missions." This phrase clearly referred to the foreign and interior missions and the approved congregations that conducted them. Étienne also does not mention that the suppression decree concerned not only the Congregation of the Mission but the other approved missionary groups as well.

According to Étienne, the Congregation's suppression did not have the immediate results desired by the vicars general. Hanon still contended that since he held his position by virtue of papal authority, the government could not unilaterally destroy his jurisdiction. In light of this position, his opponents realized that "the only way they would be victorious would be by arranging his [Hanon's] exile from Paris and from France."54 The records of Hanon's interrogations after his October arrest show that the government suspected him of disloyalty. Police suspicions went beyond his role in the schism among the Daughters of Charity.55 Given his international contacts with Lazarists and Daughters of Charity, the government suspected him of "perhaps being a redoubtable agent of opposition and a dangerous agitator."56 The police therefore conducted a careful review of his confiscated correspondence. They concluded that "nothing indicates that Hanon has been involved in political matters."57 Interestingly, they also concluded that the Lazarists seemed to hold not only "a correct attitude with respect to relations with Rome but also were very mistrustful of the English."58 The police did conclude, however, that Hanon's correspondence with the rebellious Daughters of Charity was "overall written in a very bad spirit...It is very reprehensible, and one could even say it was seditious."59

Hanon incorrectly believed that his struggle was with the vicars general and not the government. However, the government, which had issued the legislation upon which the vicars general based their claims, saw Hanon's opposition as something that "was not just between him and the archdiocese of Paris but as part of the imperial struggle against the papacy."60

On 19 November 1809, the authorities released Hanon. The government placed him under police surveillance and sentenced him to

---

54 Étienne, Notice, 13.
55 During his incarceration, his jailers questioned Hanon on 29 and 30 October and then again on 11 November. AN.F7.7935.
56 Canton, Abbé Hanon, 95.
57 AN.F7.7935.
58 Canton, Abbé Hanon, 96.
59 AN.F7.7935.
60 Canton, Abbé Hanon, 99.
internal exile at his birthplace. Earlier on 8 November, the government issued a decree suppressing the office of superior general of the Daughters of Charity. Of the 1,653 sisters in France, 560 protested individually or collectively against this modification of their rule. Ninety-three of the 274 houses broke off relations with the new superior general.

The quarrels among the sisters continued unabated. In February 1811, Napoleon ordered Hanon’s arrest and imprisonment. While in custody, the police questioned him about his continuing relations with the dissident Daughters of Charity. They asked him to explain again the basis for his claims to jurisdiction over the community. Finally, they were interested in finding out what he planned to do after his release. On 19 April, however, the Emperor ordered that “the minister of Police imprison him [Hanon] at Fenestrelle, and that he remain there until the issuance of further orders.” Because of his unrepentant ultramontanism and his “obstinate character,” Hanon’s imprisonment ended only with Napoleon’s fall in 1814.

With respect to Hanon’s imprisonment Etienne commented, “Thus M. Sicardi arrived at the fulfillment of the plan he had pursued for such a long time. Using the pretext that it was impossible for M. Hanon to govern the Congregation, he obtained from the Sovereign Pontiff the powers of vicar general of the entire Congregation.” The Holy See had agreed previously, at Hanon’s request and with Sicardi’s support, to delegate extraordinary powers to the provincial visitors.

---

41 Saint-Pol in the department of Pas-de-Calais.
42 Planchet, Schisme, 33.
43 AN.F4.1048.
44 The Fenestrelle prison was located at Savona in Italy. Many of the emperor’s ecclesiastical opponents were imprisoned here during this period, for example, Cardinal Bartolomeo Pacca.
45 Quoted in Canton, Abbe Hanon, 319.
46 Comment made by the Minister of Cults to Anne Savary the Minister of Police, quoted ibid., 324.
47 In 1812, Hanon asked the police officials to forward his resignation as vicar general to the pope. The police refused, because Hanon’s request presumed that his authority came from the papacy and not the government. Hanon’s letter to the pope read in part,

At the request of my confreres who gathered in Paris in October 1807, Your Holiness deigned to name me as superior of the two congregations instituted by Saint Vincent de Paul, namely, the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity. You also deigned to invest me with all the ecclesiastical and spiritual powers that were necessary for me to govern what had been confided to my care. By a series of unfortunate circumstances that would be inconvenient to inform you of in detail, I find myself far from these two families. I am no longer able to govern them nor exercise in their regard the powers that I received from Your Holiness. The obstacles that I have encountered are of such a nature that they are beyond my power to do anything about.

Ibid., 323.
48 Etienne, Notice, 13.
However, Sicardi now seized the opportunity provided by the dissolution to concentrate power in his hands again. At some point, he apparently persuaded the Holy See, *ad tempus*, to appoint him as vicar general for Spain and Italy. Sicardi could have exercised this office only for a short time, if at all.

On 25 April 1810, Napoleon suppressed all religious communities within the empire’s boundaries. The previous imperial protection afforded to Lazarist houses outside France was withdrawn. Until the end of French rule in Italy, Monte Citorio was the only Lazarist house that survived unscathed “by a disposition of divine providence.” Early in 1814, as the allied troops closed in on France, the government transferred Hanon to a prison in Bourges. The victorious allies entered Paris on 10 April 1814, and the emperor abdicated. Hanon made his way back to Paris. Without an income and without resources, he initially lived at the sisters’ Hospital for Incurable Women. This was a house belonging to the “true Daughters of Charity.” Hanon was not welcome at the Daughters’ mother house on the rue du Vieux-Colombier. The sisters who had rejected his authority still controlled this establishment.

On 26 April 1814, Hanon wrote to Cardinal Bartolomeo Pacca in Rome. He asked the cardinal’s assistance in petitioning the Holy See to seek the Double Family’s restoration. Hanon wanted to resign, and he hoped that someone else would agree to lead the restoration effort. However, only a handful of former Lazarists were in Paris, and none of them was willing or able to take on the burden. Hanon had to continue in office. At the beginning of May, Louis XVIII entered the capital. In June, Hanon met with Alexandre-Angélique de Talleyrand-Périgord, the archbishop of Reims, who was serving as the restored king’s Grand-Aumônier. At the archbishop’s urging, Hanon presented his first re-

---

71 Perboyre, *Vicaires Généraux*, 386.
72 Pacca had been imprisoned with Hanon at Fenestrelle.
73 Hanon to Cardinal Pacca, 26 April 1814, *Hanon*, ACMP.
74 See, for example, Hanon to Sicardi, May 1814, ibid.
75 See, for example, Jean-Mathurin Legall to Hanon, 19 August 1814, ibid.
quest to the Bourbon government for the Lazarists’ restoration.76

Hanon felt frustrated by the difficulties facing his efforts in France. Under the circumstances, he felt that had no choice but to recognize Sicardi’s authority over the Congregation outside the kingdom. “I submit, as I have in every circumstance and instance, to the dispositions made in your favor by the Sovereign Pontiff’s authority. Given the present circumstances, I find them to be wise and useful to the Congregation. A thousand more means are available to you than are available to me to govern our houses in Spain and Italy.77 The confreres at Savona have written to me requesting that I appoint a superior. Under the circumstances, I have referred them to you.”78 Étienne, of course, does not mention this telling concession by Hanon.

The Bourbon Restoration

In January 1815, Hanon rented a large apartment in Paris near the church of Saint-Sulpice. He wrote to Sicardi that he hoped after the winter several others would join him there to work toward a restoration. Until then, he acknowledged they somehow would have to support themselves from their personal savings and resources.79 With his attention focused on affairs in France he first moved, with papal support, to end the schism within the Daughters of Charity.80

On 1 January, Hanon wrote a circular to the sisters detailing the Holy See’s position on reestablishing peace. He also noted, “In a letter

76 Hanon to Louis XVIII, petition of 10 June 1814, for the reestablishment of the Congregation, Hanon, ACMP. The petition read in part:

The general proscription of 1792 enveloped the priests of the Congregation of the Mission, also known as the Lazarists. In 1804, at the request of the Sovereign Pontiff they were reestablished. They were again suppressed in 1809, and with their suppression the foreign and national missions which are so necessary and so honorable to France were also destroyed. Filled with the desire to consecrate itself again to the salvation of the people and to be of service to Your Majesty, they await with confidence the moment when in your elevated wisdom you will be pleased to recall them and designate their works, the destinations where they will go, and the means that will assure the solidity of their reestablishment. In order that they may be found ready to receive immediately the first orders that you give them, and to avoid all obstacles which may keep them from so responding, they solicit from your goodness provisional permission either to reunite immediately in Paris or a decree from Your Majesty explicitly stating that the Congregation of the Mission called of Saint-Lazare is reestablished in the state that it was found before 1789.

77 Because communication with Hanon was impossible, on 26 September 1812 the papal nuncio to Portugal, Monsignor Vincenzo Macchi, named the provincial visitor of Portugal, Antonio Martins y Silva, as the Congregation’s vicar apostolic in that kingdom. The nuncio commissioned Martins to govern the Congregation with full authority until the regular election of a superior general. See Circulaires, 2: 635.

78 Hanon to Sicardi, 6 December 1814, Hanon, ACMP.

79 Hanon to Sicardi, 15 January 1815, ibid.

80 Hanon also wrote to Sicardi, asking for his help in Rome to promote a settlement of the Daughters’ schism. Planchet, Schisme, 49.
from Rome dated 13 August, we learned that the Sovereign Pontiff has taken an interest in the preservation and tranquillity of the Sisters of Charity. We also learned that he has agreed, in principle, that the Congregation should be reestablished upon its primitive constitutions."\(^8^1\) The Holy See ruled that the sister who had been serving as the superior general had been doing so under civil and not canonical authority. Hanon concluded, "Consequently the Sisters who, during the last three years have refused to acknowledge her title as contrary to the rules of Saint Vincent, have surely suffered for justice sake and the legitimate defense of their state."\(^8^2\)

Hanon also mentioned a letter he received from Sicardi. "This worthy Missionary writes... that the Holy Father has spoken to him twice about our affairs and that he knows very well who it is that has excited this insubordination among you. He considers those who have separated from the establishment founded by Saint Vincent as rebels....He has promised to support what you and I desire....Our correspondent adds, that with a little patience, you will again see all the Daughters of Charity reunited under the same government and authority."\(^8^3\) The imperial government had expelled many sisters who had opposed its policies.\(^8^4\) Hanon now invited these sisters to rejoin the community. They would join "those who have not laid aside your costume or abandoned your ministry with the poor. Those sisters who have preserved these without adopting novelties and without taking any part in the agitations around them. They have always observed their vows, and preserved the sentiments transmitted to you by your excellent mothers."\(^8^5\) Hanon thus welcomed back the exiled sisters and recognized the fidelity of those who had never accepted the government imposed regime.

The vicar general realized that with the schism's end, all groups would have to live together. Therefore he also said, "Let there be an absolute silence and general forgetfulness of the past. Show the same justice, regard, affection, and kindness to all sisters without exception, whatever may have

---

\(^8^1\) Hanon, Circulars of the Superiors General of the Congregation of the Mission to the Daughters of Charity (Emmitsburg: St. Joseph's Provincial House, 1895), 2: 12.
\(^8^2\) Ibid., 2: 81.
\(^8^3\) Ibid., 2: 81.
\(^8^4\) At the height of the schism under Napoleon, the Minister of Cults wrote to the French bishops, "There are sisters who feel that they are free to remain in the Congregation even though they do not recognize the authority of their superioress. They even have declared themselves to be disobedient; not only must they withdraw their opposition, but if they cannot be recalled to their duty they must be publicly and shamefully dismissed from the Congregation." Quoted in Planchet, Schisme, 38.
\(^8^5\) Hanon, Circulars, 2: 82.
been their previous sentiments, language and conduct."

On 24 February 1815, Hanon sent another circular letter to the French houses. He enclosed a copy of the long-awaited papal brief. The document began by stating,

It has been made known to Us that for several years dissensions and disputes have existed among the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul. We also have learned that they still exist among the sisters like gangrene, because of the iniquity of these deplorable times. We would seek in vain for terms to express the profound sorrow that Our paternal heart has experienced in this regard. This is because of the particular affection We feel for this Institute, which is as commendable for its eminent sanctity as it is by its utility. These flames of discord have caused great evils and seem to threaten its entire destruction....Now, many letters have been addressed to Us that are full of humble supplications and ardent desires that We remedy these evils by an apostolic decision. We have, without delay, examined the whole affair with great care, exactitude, and diligence....After having left nothing undone to discover the truth, behold, at last, the most prompt and efficacious means that We think can be taken to reestablish peace and to destroy all that remains of these dissensions."

Pius VII named Paul David d’Astros, the vicar general of the still vacant archdiocese of Paris, as “Apostolic Visitor” of the French Daughters of Charity. D’Astros was to supervise the regular election of a new superioress general. The pope ordered that this was to be done “while respecting the rights of M. Hanon....He is to assist at the assembly and fulfill all the functions assigned to him in the statutes.”

Étienne speaks of these events in this way: “To end the deadly schism... Pius VII, by a brief, reestablished M. Hanon in his rights. So that the archdiocese of Paris could expiate its ambitious pretensions, the pope ordered M. d’Astros a grand vicar of this diocese...to promulgate this brief in the community chapel in M. Hanon’s presence.”

---

* Ibid.
* Ibid., 2: 87.
* Rome also told D’Astros that “In all things he [Hanon] will advise you, so that through your cooperation all the dispersed sisters may be brought back into the family. All hearts will then be reunited by the bonds of peace and charity, and everything will be reestablished in the ancient good order and unity.” Hanon, Circulars, 2: 88.
* For the text of the papal decree see Hanon, Circulars, 2: 86-88. According to the statutes of the Daughters of Charity, the role of the superior general in the superioress general’s election was to preside at the assembly, to propose the two sisters to whom the votes are to be given, to receive the votes, to proclaim the new superioress general, to confirm the election, to draw up a legal record of it, and to sign it. See note ibid., 1: 88, 92.
* Étienne, Notice, 14.
Étienne blamed the schism on the "intrigues" of the Parisian vicars general. He thus ignored the roles played by Napoleon and the imperial government in the entire affair.\textsuperscript{91} The text of the papal decree, however, does not blame the schism on the vicars general. A footnote stated that "the late government's impiety, schismatic spirit, and despotism were the cause of these troubles and divisions."\textsuperscript{92}

On 12 March 1815, the sisters gathered in Paris. In Hanon's presence they elected a new superioress general, ending the schism.\textsuperscript{93} Several weeks later, the sisters transferred their mother house a short distance from the rue du Vieux-Colombier. The government provided them with a new building on the nearby rue du Bac.\textsuperscript{94} Hanon resumed his duties with respect to the sisters,\textsuperscript{95} including the approbation of their annual vows.\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{91} Throughout his career, Étienne always took great care to insure that the government could never accuse the Congregation of any disloyalty. Writing in 1870, at the height of Napoleon III's Second Empire, Étienne was an ardent imperialist and admirer of Napoleon I.

\textsuperscript{92} "Hanon, Circulars, 2: 88.

\textsuperscript{93} Napoleon reentered France on 1 March. News of this did not reach Paris until 5 March. Louis XVIII fled the capital on 20 March. During the "Hundred Days," Hanon went into hiding to avoid arrest. Louis XVIII reentered the capital on 20 July. See G. de Bertier de Sauvigny, Le Restauration (Paris: Flammarion, 1955).

\textsuperscript{94} The sisters transferred the relics of Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac to their new headquarters.

\textsuperscript{95} The canonical restoration of the Lazarist superior's authority over the Daughters of Charity in France did not immediately heal their divisions. In his Notice, Étienne recalled how those Daughters who had contributed to the Congregation's restoration were opposed and punished "by the sisters who then governed their Company ... since the spirit of the Maison-Mère was not yet what it would later become." Notice, 16. The new superioress general elected in 1815 was a "Jalabertiste." At the end of 1815, Hanon wrote to Cardinal Pacca: "I am obliged to report to Your Eminence that the superioress general and three or four of the sisters who unfortunately head the community with her are always opinionated and disrespectful of authority. They have sustained the abuses and the disorders in the community and have sought to cause problems for the sisters who wish to reenter." In January 1816, Hanon had a showdown with the leadership of the sisters. He went to great lengths to gather together the documentary evidence that would remind them that the supreme authority in the Company of the Daughters of Charity resided in the superior general of the Congregation of the Mission and not in the superioress general. He also sternly reminded them that their vows and constitutions originated with Saint Vincent himself and were not a product of a later time. See Planchet, Schisme, 53. The divisions within the sisters would continue on for many years.

\textsuperscript{96} According to the Constitutions of the Daughters of Charity the sisters renew their simple private vows annually after receiving permission from the superior general. In 1815, as Hanon tried to regularize the renewal of vows he noted.

The two families of Saint Vincent have never recognized any other [formula for the holy vows] for you, my very dear Sisters, than that which expresses obedience to the venerable superior general of the Congregation of the Mission. It is only five years since the second formula was given, [the one imposed by the government]. What bitter fruits are enclosed in it! For from this period, scandals and troubles have displayed themselves. It was on this occasion that your worthy superioress ... was constrained to abandon her charge and to flee, that I was exiled and cast into prison, that so many of your Companions were denounced, chased from the Hospitals, forcibly deprived of the holy habit, deserted from all functions towards the unfortunate, and pursued from place to place with fury, a prey to misery and sufferings under which many succumbed. These facts are recent, they are public, known by you and all France. ... Let us say, my Sisters, as in the Gospel, the tree is known by its fruits, this formula of 1810, is judged by its consequences, as also by the principles and spirit which dictated and approved of it. ... Let us speak of it no more.

Hanon, Circulars, 2: 83.
M. "Verbert, Marie-Charles-Emmanuel."
Vicaire général.
Élu 1816... Décédé 1819.

Charles E. Verbert, C.M., French vicar general, 1816-1819
On 19 July, the feast of Saint Vincent, Hanon presided over the feast day activities at the new mother house. Nine or ten former missionaries who lived in Paris and the surrounding area joined him for the celebration.

On the eve of the “100 Days” interregnum, Louis XVIII restored the legal status of the Foreign Mission priests of the rue du Bac. On 28 August 1815, Hanon wrote again to the Minister of Cults requesting the reestablishment of the Congregation of the Mission, as it had existed before the revolution. He also asked for the confirmation of its right to take possession of the Daughters’ former house on the rue du Vieux-Colombier as the Congregation’s new mother house. Finally, on 3 February 1816, Louis XVIII issued an ordinance applying his decree of 2 March 1815 to the Lazarists and the Spiritans. Thus, the government reestablished the Lazarists based on the terms of the 1804 Napoleonic decree. On 16 March, Hanon issued a circular informing the former Lazarists in France of the “precious news that a royal ordinance has reestablished our dear Congregation of the Mission.”

Hanon immediately began laying plans for the future. “For our part we will neglect nothing in preparing for the prompt reunion of our confreres, the formation of a new internal seminary, and the

---

97 In his Notice, Étienne took care to comment with regard to the role played by another Lazarist in the schism of the Daughters of Charity.

I cannot help but mention that there was a poignant pain in this situation which tried the heart of M. Hanon during his captivity. He saw a false brother accept from the archdiocese the powers of director of the Daughters of Charity and undertake their direction. This was M. Viguier, who previously had been a missionary in Constantinople, and who had returned to France... His culpable weakness was expiated by the feelings of repulsion and scorn that were felt towards him by most Daughters of Charity who were horrified at his defection. After the reestablishment of legitimate authority, he retired and lived with his sister who was the sister servant of the Daughters of Charity in the parish of Saint-Sulpice.

98 Étienne failed to mention the fact that Viguier had played a crucial role in the 1804 restoration of the Congregation, that Hanon had also initially accepted the position as the vicars general delegate over the Daughters, and that after the Restoration Viguier served as secretary general of the Congregation in France until his death in 1821. Planchet also has an interesting account of Viguier’s service as the vicars’ general delegate over the Daughters. See Schisme, 30.

99 One possible explanation of why the Congregation was not reestablished at the same time as the rue du Bac missionaries might have been the fact that the Lazarists were divided among themselves. Evidence suggests a split between Hanon and Dubois. See, for example, the 6 December 1814, from Hanon to Scardini, Hanon, ACMP. Here, Hanon speaks about Dubois’s “intrigues.” See also ibid., the memo of February 1815 from Dubois to Louis XVIII, giving his views on the state of the Congregation and its proposed reestablishment. In an attempt to settle the disagreements between them, Hanon invited Dubois to officiate at the July feast day celebrations at the Daughters’ new mother house. Dubois declined the offer and was not present. Dubois never returned to the Congregation. See Perboyre, Vicaires Généraux, 395.

100 See Hanon to Louis XVIII, memo of 28 August 1815, with respect to the reestablishment of the Congregation of the Mission, Hanon, ACMP.

101 AN.Fla.96.1806. See also Actes du Gouvernement, 112. Two months later the king also authorized an annual subsidy of 4,000 francs. Ibid., 113.

102 Hanon, Circulaires, 2: 290.
reconstitution of the Company's general government.” He noted that while the last missionary in Barbary had died, the other foreign missions in China and the Levant were still in existence. These missions would need immediate assistance. Regarding France, the vicar general noted “The seminaries, the missions, the direction of our sisters, pastoral ministry, all our former and ordinary functions can from this moment provide a rich field of labor for your zeal and your love for the salvation of souls.” Hanon urged his correspondants not to wait for the Congregation’s “effective reestablishment” but to return immediately to help in the effort. He promised that he would contact each person to propose a place and a work that would “conform to your talents and preferences.” However, little more than a month later on 24 April, Hanon who had been in poor health for some time died.

The vicar general’s death brought the newly-restored Congregation in France into yet another period of crisis and confusion. Hanon had named Jean-Mathurin Legall, the superior of the seminary at Vannes, as his vicar general. Legall refused to accept the position. Under the circumstances Pierre Claude, Hanon’s first assistant, temporarily assumed authority. Despite its legal restoration, the community still did not possess a regular canonical structure. Also, few former Lazarists had responded to Hanon’s impassioned call to return. It would not be until July that Claude would issue a letter of convocation for the election of a new vicar general.

In his circular Claude noted,

There is no member of our Congregation, not filled with the spirit of our Holy Founder, who does not long for our reestablishment. The time has arrived for our desires to be fulfilled. The Holy See and the king, whom God in his mercy has given us, favor our wishes and have assured us of their powerful protection....The first thing that we must do is to choose a head noted for his love of his vocation, and his zeal for the good of the Church....Already our confreres of Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Poland have a vicar general named by the pope. The King’s intention is that we give

---

102 Ibid.
103 Ibid., 2: 291.
104 Approximately seventy former Lazarists responded to Hanon’s appeal to rejoin the community. See Perboyre, Vicaires-Généraux, 399.
105 In his March circular, Hanon had explained that the reasons for the delay in writing the circular announcing the royal reestablishment were his “indispositions and a serious illness.” Circulaires, 2: 290. In his Notice Éternelle, with characteristic imprecision, gave Hanon’s age at death as being forty-nine. Being born on 3 July 1757, however, Hanon was fifty-eight at the time of his death.
106 Claude, Circulaires, 2: 292.
ourselves, as head, a provisory vicar general.\footnote{107}

Claude recalled that only a handful of missionaries had nominated Hanon. He wanted the upcoming election to be more representative. He therefore urged the priests scattered in the provinces to elect delegates and give them the means to come to Paris for the election. Failing this, these deputies were to submit their nominations in writing. The assembly was to meet on 12 August. The meeting place was the rectory of Sainte-Marguerite in the faubourg Saint-Antoine. This was the residence of Jean-Jacques Dubois, who had put it at the service of the Congregation.\footnote{108}

This assembly nominated Marie-Charles-Emmanuel Verbert, not as vicar general but as superior general.\footnote{109} At the time, Verbert had not even rejoined the Congregation. He was teaching theology at the University of Aix in Provence.\footnote{110} Accepting his election with some reluctance, it would take him two months to arrange his affairs and travel to Paris to take up his duties.\footnote{111} In his first circular issued on 6 October 1816, he repeated Hanon's appeal for his former compatriots living in France to return to the Congregation. "Hasten to gather around me. Let us leave our captivity behind and reenter upon the soil of our fathers. Let us reconstruct the temple that their presence sanctified and that impious hands reduced to a heap of ruins. Let us reunite around the king who loves us and has called Saint Vincent de Paul the saint of the Bourbons and us the Missionaries of the Bourbons. He supports our reunion, and awaits the moment when he can show us his paternal and royal favor."\footnote{112}

The next request for Louis XVIII to show his "paternal and royal favor" toward the Congregation came with the negotiations for the grant of a new mother house. The 1816 assembly had authorized Jean-Jacques Dubois to persuade the government to find a suitable house. Dubois wrote to Louis XVIII in early October. He asked that old Saint-Lazare be ceded back to the Congregation. The community was willing, temporarily, to share the vast old complex with its prisoners. As Dubois noted, "We believe that the house of Saint-Lazare is the only house available which offers the double advantage of being

\footnote{107}Ibid.\footnote{108}Ibid.\footnote{109}For a brief biographical sketch of Verbert see ibid., 294-96.\footnote{110}The assembly also decided that if Verbert should decline his election, the runner-up, Jean Compans, would be presented to the Holy See for confirmation. See Perbyore, Vicaires-Généraux, 418.\footnote{111}For text of the letter from Claude to Verbert informing him of his election see Circulaires, 2: 640.\footnote{112}Verbert, Circulaires, 2: 298.
economical for the government to dispose of and provides the space the Congregations needs so that it can promptly return to the exercise of all their honorable ministries." The king was inclined at first to grant the request. However, the opposition of the prefect of Police, the prefect of the department of the Seine, and the Ministry of the Interior was enough to prevent the Lazarists from again taking possession of old Saint-Lazare.

After long negotiations, the government offered to purchase the hôtel des Lorges located at ninety-five rue de Sèvres. On 10 July 1817, the Congregation accepted this offer. The community took possession of the property on 9 November 1817, though the royal ordinance authorizing its purchase did not come until 3 December. The low price paid by the government reflected the property's state of ruin. After years of waiting, however, the Congregation was willing to take whatever the government would give it. Individual Daughters of Charity and Lazarists contributed their personal resources to make the new mother house livable. The first residents included thirteen priests, eight novices, two brothers, and two domestics.

The Governmental Schism Continues

Six months after his election, Verbert still had received no acknowledgment from the Holy See concerning his nomination as superior general. Writing to Rome in early March, he said that he was willing to allow Sicardi to continue to possess the title of vicar general and exercise jurisdiction, until his (Sicardi's) death, over the provinces

113 Jean-Jacques Dubois, Cure de Ste. Marguerite, Agent Général de la Congrégation de la Mission, to Louis XVIII, memo of 9 October 1816, AN.F19.6240.60.
114 At the meeting of the Council of State at which the Lazarists' request was considered, Louis XVIII said that he desired "that the Lazarists among whom he had been raised should be given their ancient house." The king pointed out that the Lazarists had been the pastors at Versailles, that one of them had accompanied his wife in exile, and that they had suffered for their loyalty to the king. A member of the council replied, "Sire, if Your Majesty so orders it will be done, but may I be permitted to point out that this resolution to reestablish the Lazarists in their ancient house will cost the government a million-and-a-half francs" (the cost of another prison). The king responded at this point, "Oh, I am not rich enough to make this sacrifice. I therefore direct the Prefect of the Seine to find them a house." Recueil de documents originaux minutes et copies, relatifs à la Congrégation des Lazaristes (1825-27) XIXe siècle, BN. Nouvelle Acquisitions Françaises, 21798.1.
115 Memorandum of October 1816, from the "préfecture de police, 2e division, 3ème bureau, No. 71965, Préfet de Police, Comte Angles à son Ex. le Ministre de l'Intérieur," AN.F19.6240.61.
118 Actes du Gouvernement, 115-16.
119 Étienne, Notice, 15.
of Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Poland. The papal brief finally arrived in July 1817. Verbert learned that Sicardi and the Italians had outmaneuvered him as they had his predecessors. The Holy See recognized Verbert as vicar general only for the Congregation in France and for the Daughters of Charity in France and elsewhere. Rome thus reestablished the status quo of 1805, when Sicardi had first received recognition as vicar general.

Verbert, who realized that Rome had taken his request for confirmation as superior general rather than as vicar general very badly, wrote to Cardinal Consalvi to justify himself. He denied that his request had been “motivated by any pride or ambition.” He noted that since conditions still did not allow the convocation of a general assembly, the French had asked for papal approval of his election as superior general to end “this division of authority and lack of unity.” Verbert expressed the French opinion that if the division was “perpetuated habitually, that in the future it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to restore unity.” He closed by saying, “I rely totally on the wisdom of your Eminence to decide whether my request was well founded.”

On 1 January 1818, the aged Sicardi issued a circular informing the Congregation that with the Holy See’s permission he was naming Francesco Antonio Baccari as pro-vicar general. In May, Sicardi wrote to Verbert responding to his plea to end the schism, “Regarding the office of vicar general of the Missionaries in France that you exercise and that of superior general that you have spoken to me about, let me say in all simplicity that I am responsible for arranging things in the way in which they have been decided. I personally have written to and spoken with the pope, and I am content with the outcome. Allow the Lord to assist you and give you the courage to put in good order that which providence has given you.”

Slowly, the French began to reestablish the Congregation in their country. Some former members were still trickling back as they could detach themselves from their responsibilities among the diocesan clergy. In 1818-1819, the first aspirants entered the new internal seminary at rue de Sèvres. Pierre Le Go returned to the Congregation to

---

120 Sicardi was then eighty-seven years of age.
121 The brief was dated 16 July and was entitled Habita ratione (Acta Apostolica, 186).
123 Ibid.
124 Sicardi, Circulaires, 2: 337-38.
125 Sicardi to Verbert, 2 May 1818, quoted in Perboyre, Vicaires-Généraux, 432.
serve as the seminary’s first postrevolutionary director.

During the winter of 1818-1819 Verbert fell dangerously ill. The French were concerned because he had not yet received the faculty of naming his successor. They successfully petitioned the Holy See for this permission. In case of Verbert’s death, the brief authorized them to nominate a new vicar general for confirmation by the Holy See. The brief was dated 21 March. Verbert died on 4 March. Again, the French confreres gathered in Paris to elect a vicar general. At the assembly held on 13 May, the twenty-one missionaries present elected Charles-Vincent de Paul Boujard as vicar general.

Étienne in his Notice gives the following account of Boujard’s election without any further comment.

An assembly composed of those Missionaries who resided in Paris, and many others who came from various other parts of France, proceeded to the choice of the confrere who would succeed M. Verbert. The votes were cast in favor of M. Boujard. Rome ratified his election, and he received his brief of nomination dated 10 August 1820. However, he only had the power to govern the members of the Congregation in France and the Daughters of Charity in France and Switzerland. All the foreign provinces were administered by another vicar general appointed by Rome. This was M. Baccari, who also governed the Daughters of Charity in Spain and Poland.

There was much more that went on, however, concerning Boujard’s appointment than Étienne admitted. The bitter schism between the Italians and the French continued.

For some reason, the French had written to the Congregation of Propaganda Fide asking permission for Verbert to name his successor. The Cardinal Prefect of this Congregation issued the requested brief. After Boujard’s election Joseph Boulangier, the French procurator general, wrote to the pope and to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. He asked for confirmation of Boujard’s election as vicar general for France, the foreign missions, and as superior general of the Daughters of Charity.

126 Acta Apostolica, 234.
127 Sicardi died on 13 June and was succeeded automatically by Antonio Baccari.
128 Boujard, Circulaires, 2: 300-01.
129 For a brief biographical sketch of Boujard see Circulaires, 2: 299-300.
130 Étienne, Notice, 15-16.
131 Acta Apostolica, 234.
132 Perboyre, Vicaires-Généraux, 558.
Ms. Baccari, C. Antoine,
Nomme Vicaire Général
en 1819 jusqu’au 16 Janvier 1827.

Antonio Baccari, C.M., Italian vicar general, 1819-1827
Meanwhile, in Rome, Baccari learned of Verbert's death only by accident. He was unaware of the permission from Propaganda Fide, authorizing the French to nominate a successor to Verbert. Baccari took matters in his own hands and approached the Holy See to ask how the next French vicar general should be chosen. This situation illustrates the fact that at this stage of the schism there was a complete lack of communication between the French and Italians.

After his audience with Pius VII, Baccari wrote to the French instructing them on how to proceed in the nomination of a new vicar general. He sent this letter on the same date that the French missionaries were gathering in Paris. The letter still had not reached Paris when Boullangier wrote to the Holy See asking for Boujard's confirmation. 133 When the French did not respond to this initial letter, Baccari wrote again instructing them to propose two or three names for the Holy See's consideration. In July, the French received a letter from Propaganda. The Congregation noted that it had learned of Verbert's death and wondered why it had not received a request for his successor's confirmation. Boullangier wrote back informing Propaganda that the matter now rested with the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. To counteract Baccari's influence in Rome, the French enlisted the aid of Joachim Isoard, the French auditor at the Sacred Rota. The rest of 1819 and the first eight months of 1820 passed without any news. The decision finally came on 10 August 1820. The terms again represented a French defeat. 134 Boujard found his jurisdiction limited to the Lazarists and Daughters of Charity in France and the Levantine missions. The Holy See denied him the faculty of naming his successor and stated its intention to name a superior general. The new superior general would reside in Rome and govern the Double Family outside France. 135

133 In his letter, Baccari informed the French of the displeasure of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars because of their appeals to Propaganda Fide. He told them that they were to transmit the names of candidates for the position to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. Finally, he told them not to ask that the vicar general be named as superior general of the Daughters of Charity since the king of Spain had requested that the Daughters in his kingdom be placed under the jurisdiction of the Roman vicar general and since the Russian emperor had forbade the sisters in Poland to have any dealings with their foreign superiors. Perboyre, Vicaires-Generaux, 558.

134 Acta Apostolica, 187.

135 Ibid.
Boujard wrote to the papal nuncio in Paris protesting the papal brief’s terms. He claimed that they “destroyed the essence of the Congregation of the Mission whose superior general has always resided in France and whose mother house has always been in Paris.”

Boujard pointed out that the 1817 brief confirming Verbert as vicar general had promised the French that “the Congregation of the Mission would be reestablished under its ancient form.” Boujard also predicted that this action would keep former members from rejoining the Congregation, would cause others to leave, and would trouble, divide, and quickly ruin the Daughters of Charity. However, the most important objection raised by Boujard was that “The government, and above all the king of France, will not permit these changes.”

On 25 January 1821, Boujard and Boullangier had an audience in Paris with the nuncio, Vincenzo Macchi. According to Boujard, the nuncio informed them that the Holy See would soon confirm Boujard as vicar general. The nuncio told the Frenchmen that “The pope had no intention of appointing a superior general in Rome and that the seat of the superior general would remain in Paris.” Macchi also told them that it was the Holy See’s decision, “until a new order of things can be established to maintain the status quo.” This meant the continued existence of two vicars general. For the moment, this status quo satisfied both the French and the Italians, even though it meant the continuation of the schism.

It was at the height of this controversy that Jean-Baptiste Étienne arrived at the mother house to begin his long career in the Congregation of the Mission. Étienne’s biographer, Edouard Rosset had this to say about the arrival of Étienne and another seminarian from Metz:

---

136 “Réponse à être remise à Mgr. le nonce du Pape, le 23 novembre 1820,” Dossier: Boujard, Casier 38, bas 3°, ACMP.
137 Ibid.
138 Ibid.
139 Acta Apostolica, 188.
140 In a subsequent letter to Boujard, the nuncio claimed that the Holy See never had the intention of establishing a superior general in Rome. According to the nuncio, what the brief had meant was that the Italian missionaries were to be allowed to elect a new vicar general to replace Baccari who had long requested permission to resign. This explanation rings hollow since Baccari remained as Italian vicar general until the end of the schism six years later. Macchi to Boujard, 25 February 1821, Boujard, ACMP.
141 Cardinal Consalvi told Monsignor Isoard that “the actions taken were only temporary and at a more favorable time the Holy See would take other actions that would be advantageous to an institute that the Holy See has always regarded with special favor.” Cardinal Consalvi to Monsignor Isoard, 12 November 1820, Boujard, ACMP. These actions would include the convocation of a general assembly, the regular election of a superior general, and the return of constitutional government.
142 “Visite de M.M. Boujard et Boullangier chez Mgr. Le nonce du Pape, le 25 janvier 1821,” Boujard, ACMP.
When they entered this house they were very disappointed by what they saw. They had expected to find a community that was numerous and prosperous. They found practically nothing. This unexpected sight was a rude trial for them, and their resolution was shaken. Nevertheless, they made the retreat that ordinarily precedes admission and during these days consecrated to prayer they overcame this very human initial reaction...They encouraged each other and decided to remain....Thus, in the silence of a retreat God prepared the man destined by providence to overcome these disasters.¹⁴

¹⁴Rosset, Vie Émilie, 21-22.