Chapter 4

The End of the Schism
Étienne as a Young Lazarist

Beginning his life in the internal seminary, Étienne fell under the direction of Pierre Le Go. This priest had only recently returned to the community from the diocesan clergy of Le Mans. Rosset gives this judgment concerning Le Go: "He was formed at old Saint-Lazare in all our holy state's virtues. During the days of persecution and exile, he faithfully conserved the Little Company's spirit. No one could better have inspired the mother house's new generations in the esteem and practice of these virtues." According to Rosset, Le Go "promptly discerned the merit of the seminarian from Metz. He "spared no effort to develop the rare qualities that he had noticed." These qualities included "a solid piety, a sweet gravity, the greatest facility in adapting himself to the exigencies of community life, and a fidelity to all the community's rules, which he kept perfectly."

Étienne's talents attracted favorable attention from the small community living at the mother house, including the vicar general, Charles Boujard. From his earliest days in the community, Étienne was a favorite. His elders saw him as a "young man destined for great things, who one day will undoubtedly render the Congregation eminent services." Étienne would always speak with great respect of "these venerable ancient Missionaries, whom I was honored to be the student of and from whom I received the most benevolent affection."

These senior confères regaled Étienne with vivid, if highly subjective, remembrances of the prerevolutionary community. He heard of the "ancien régime's splendors and abuses. He learned of Saint-
According to his biographer, it was through these accounts that Étienne's "precocious intelligence" discerned important lessons for the future, "as he discovered in the unfolding of events divine providence's secret actions and hidden designs."9

As a seminarian and young priest, Étienne's education took place in the traditions and attitudes of the Restoration's ecclesiastical culture. This milieu looked to the restoration of the altar and throne's prerevolutionary relationship. Étienne and most of his clerical contemporaries received an archaic and superficial education. Lammenais for his part observed, "Never have the clergy, taken as a whole, been as ignorant as they are today."10 The contemporary clergy possessed a strong faith, a devotional piety, and a rigid, authoritarian, traditionalist philosophy.11 Adrien Dansette has described these "rigorous notions" in the following way:

Although they might have been relatively uneducated, the clergy did possess a political and social doctrine that supported their ideology. Developed during the time of the Empire by the laymen, Joseph de Maistre and Louis de Bonald,12 this philosophy was not widely propagated until after the re-establishment of the throne. Essentially counter-revolutionary, it interpreted the events of the revolution and Empire in light of traditional ideas. It opposed reason to tradition, the individual to society, and placed God at the summit of the human edifice. Only historical reality, and not human intelligence, is capable of discovering the truth; and this truth reveals that the human being not only has rights with respect to society but duties as well. This foundational truth is transmitted under God's hierarchical authority to the sovereign and to the head of the family.13

The restored Congregation had intimate ties to the royal government because of its legal existence. Thus, the French Lazarists were supporters of the era's traditionalism and revived Gallicanism.14 The confrères would have enthusiastically echoed a popular royalist chant: "Vive la France! Vive le roi! Toujours en France, les Bourbons et la

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9Rosset, Vie Étienne, 26.
10Ibid.
11Quoted in Dansette, Histoire Religieuse, 1: 175.
12Ibid., 1: 241-42.
13See, for example, Louis de Bonald, Législation primitive, considérée dans les derniers temps par les seules lumières de la raison, suivie de divers traités et discours politiques, volume 2 in Œuvres de M. de Bonald (Paris: Adrien Le Clerc, 1829).
14Dansette, Histoire Religieuse, 1: 243-44.
15Ibid., 1: 241-43.
The archbishop of Paris, Hyacinth Louis de Queléon, ordained Étienne in his private chapel on 27 September 1825. Even before his ordination, because of the acute shortage of priests, Étienne taught dogmatic theology, chant, and rubrics to the younger seminarians at the mother house. Immediately after his ordination he became secretary to the vicar general, procurator of the house of Saint-Lazare, and prefect of the community chapel. During his entire community life, Étienne would know no other assignment than at the mother house and no other position than a position of leadership.

Rosset spoke about the beginning of Étienne’s public career in this way: “The time had arrived for him to enter the active life. Provided with a solid education and formed in all the Company’s virtues, he left the solitude of the seminary to begin the career of good works that God had opened before him...From now on no important matter took place at Saint-Lazare, or in the entire Congregation, in which he did not play a key role.”

A concern of the young Lazarist was to expand the cramped mother house. His highest priority was to provide it, for the first time, with an appropriate chapel. The community appealed to the government for financial assistance. Étienne met with the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, Denis Frayssinous. Again, the Lazarists’ loyalty, utility, and service to the government did not go unrewarded. Even in his old age, Étienne never tired of repeating what the minister had said to him during their interview:

I greatly respect your Congregation. Do you know why? I previously had no contact with it, but I have closely studied the history of the religious orders. As a result of this study, I have concluded that today it is your Congregation that is best prepared for the future; this is because its spirit is the only one that has adapted itself to the times in which we live. I want to do all that I can to support it. I want to see it grow and better organize itself so that it can respond effectively to the needs of our age. If the government is wise, it will confer on it all the religious responsibilities that depend on it.

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15 Bertier De Sauvigny, La Restauration, 322.
16 Rosset, Vie Étienne, 29.
18 Étienne, Notice, 18.
Under Frayssinous’ urging, in spite of tight budgetary restrictions, the king and the government agreed to provide the necessary 200,000 francs. The ordinance directed that the adjoining property on the rue de Sèvres, “will be given over to the Congregation of the Missionaries of Saint-Lazare in order to assist in the establishment of this Congregation.” Less than two months later, the community laid the cornerstone for their chapel. The new chapel was dedicated on 1 November 1827.

The End of the Governmental Schism: 1825-1827

As a novice and seminarian, Étienne also learned of the antagonisms and schism between the French and their confreres in the foreign provinces, especially the Italians. He would only have recently arrived in Paris, when the dispute over the terms of Boujard’s succession as vicar general and the papal confirmation of the continuing schism took place. In the early 1820s, the French and the Italians had little if any contact. However, as the decade wore on there was growing dissatisfaction over the continuing separation.

The newly-ordained Étienne, as secretary to the elderly vicar general, took part in “the important negotiations that had for their goal the nomination of a superior general.” Rosset summarized the thought of both sides regarding the schism:

The Congregation, deprived of its head for more than twenty-seven years and divided into two jurisdictions, ardently wanted to end this sad division. It wanted to reunite all the provinces under only one superior. Both Rome and Paris agreed on this point, but they continued to disagree on the conditions and means. Where would the assembly that would choose the new superior general take place? Where would the general ultimately reside? These questions remained divisive, and seemed impossible to reconcile.

In Paris, the community had planned that the chapel’s dedication would culminate with the translation of Saint Vincent’s relics to their new resting place. However, Boujard decided to delay the translation to

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19 "14 juin 1826-Ordonnance de Charles X, autorisant le préfet de la Seine à acquérir la maison, située rue de Sèvres, 93, pour la Congrégation de la Mission," *Actes du Gouvernement*, 120-21. The king paid one half of this sum out of his own budget, the Ministry of Marine and Colonies paid one fourth, and the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs paid the other one fourth.

20 Ibid., 122.

21 Rosset, *Vie Étienne*, 32.

22 Ibid., 33.
await the production of a magnificent silver reliquary. Archbishop de Quélen had promised to donate the reliquary in the name of the archdiocese of Paris. This delayed the ceremony until the spring of 1830.

According to Étienne, “It was undoubtedly providential that our holy founder’s body did not enter our new mother house while internal divisions existed in the Company. It awaited the Congregation’s restoration on its ancient foundation, and reestablishment in its normal state.” As far as Étienne, the French Lazarists, and the French government were concerned, this meant reunification under a French superior general who would continue to reside in Paris. The Italians wanted the schism to end by the papal appointment of a superior general. They hoped that the new general would not be French and would reside in Rome.

The first crack in the logjam between the French and the Italians came early in 1825. Francesco Antonio Baccari wrote to Boujard suggesting that the time had come to end the schism. He proposed that the Holy See convene a general assembly to elect a superior general. Baccari said that he was willing to attend the assembly either as a simple delegate or even not to attend the gathering at all. The implication was that he would be willing to resign as vicar general. When Boujard failed to reply, Baccari wrote again in April suggesting that the pope could break the impasse by appointing a new general. Simultaneously, Boujard received a letter from the Holy See that said,
said that His Holiness is disposed to reestablish the general in France and to restore all things on their ancient bases. Therefore, the Missionaries are to send His Holiness the necessary supplication.28

Boujard wrote for advice to Joachim d’Isoard, now the Dean of the Sacred Rota. D’Isoard was a strong ally in the Vatican’s corridors. The Frenchman replied in October, suggesting that the time for favorable papal action had arrived.29 To pave the way for the Lazarists’ reunion, the pope made it known that he would welcome the resignation of both vicars general. Baccari had already stated his willingness to resign. Boujard, however, refused to consider such a move. Étienne commented, concerning Boujard, that “although blessed with many excellent qualities his great weakness was his attachment to power.”30 According to Étienne’s account, Rome sent a representative to Paris to speak with the vicar general. This was M. de Sambucy from the French embassy to the Holy See. Sambucy insisted on the need to end “the abnormal state of affairs in the Congregation.” He supposedly led Boujard “to believe that it was the intention of the Holy Father to name him as superior general.”31 Thinking his appointment as superior general was secure, Boujard hopefully would then resign.

In January 1826, Boujard received a summons from the nuncio in Paris, Antonio Macchi. Boujard brought Étienne to this meeting. The nuncio began by asking the vicar general if he favored the restoration of governmental unity. Boujard replied that he wanted unity as much as his foreign brothers did, whenever the timing was right. The nuncio then asked Boujard if he knew that the opinion in Rome was that a “coldness and antagonism” existed between the French and the Italians. Boujard characterized this as an “unjust imputation,” and expressed the desire that the Italians match the attachment that the French felt for them. The nuncio directed Boujard to prepare a report on the state of the Congregation in France, an explanation of the events that had led to the schism, and suggestions for means to restore unity.32 The nuncio also told Boujard that Rome was considering naming a “foreigner” as superior general. The next day, Boujard sent Étienne to the nunciature with a memorandum opposing these proposals.33

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28 Undated manuscript, Boujard, ACMP. See also Perboyre, Vicaires Généraux, 567.
29 Isoard to Boujard, 12 October 1825, Boujard, ACMP.
30 Étienne, Notice, 20.
31 Ibid.
32 Early in the discussions, it was apparent that given the disorganized state of the Congregation it would not be possible to convok a general assembly for the election of a superior general. Therefore, the only way to rectify the situation was for the Holy See to take action. See Perboyre, Vicaires Généraux, 570.
33 Boujard to Macchi, note of 20 January 1826, Boujard, ACMP.
The vicar general immediately reported these conversations to Frayssinous and forwarded copies of these memoranda. In both cases, Étienne drafted the documents. In his *Notice*, Étienne recalled that after he had written the required memorandum Boujard signed it and sent him to deliver it to the nuncio. Étienne said that “All this was done in the greatest secrecy and without informing any of the Missionaries at the mother house. At this time, the vicar general had no assistants or counselors to help in the company’s administration.” Étienne recalled that after delivering the memorandum to the nuncio, he engaged me in a conversation about the choice of a superior general. He spoke at length about the small number of French confreres and the impossibility of finding among them a man capable of filling this important post. The nuncio told me that the pope had decided not to name Monsieur Boujard. I realized that his goal was to persuade me that under the circumstances the pope would have to look for someone outside France. All I said was that while we may have not been rich as to the numbers of our subjects, despite this poverty it would not be impossible to find among us a Missionary capable of governing. Our conversation ended on these terms.

In his *Note sur la Congrégation de la Mission de St. Vincent de Paul, dite Lazaristes*, submitted to the nuncio, Étienne traced the Congregation’s establishment in France under Saint Vincent and its foreign expansion. He recalled that “The Missionaries in all these countries were under obedience to Saint Vincent de Paul who resided in Paris.” Étienne went on to point out that “from Saint Vincent’s time until the French Revolution all his successors [as superior general] were French, resided like him in France, and preserved their authority over the Lazarist Missionaries everywhere. Thus, the headquarters in Paris gave birth to all the foreign foundations.”

According to Étienne, during the reign of Louis XIV and then during the French Revolution, the Italian missionaries had tried to have the Congregation’s headquarters transferred to Rome under an
Italian superior general. These attempts, however, "had been unsuccessful because of the opposition of the French government and the French Lazarists." He pointed out that the chaos of the revolutionary era had not allowed the convocation of a regular general assembly to elect a superior general. The Holy See, therefore, had named vicars general to govern the Congregation's two halves until an assembly could be convoked. Now that the Church was at peace, "His Holiness wants to reunite the Congregation of the Mission under one head residing in Paris." Étienne noted that some in Rome remained unconvinced that "this head must be French." They were considering appointing "a foreign Missionary as superior general."

In his memorandum Étienne concluded, "The needs of the Congregation of Saint-Lazare demand that its government always remain the same, which is to say, that its superior general must be French and must reside in Paris." The reasons that he gave were,

1. The Bull of Urban VIII approved the Congregation of Saint Lazare as a French Congregation. Louis XIII confirmed this by his Letters Patent. The community is universally recognized as having been born in France, as always having had a French superior general, and as having its headquarters in Paris. It is natural that a Frenchman govern such a Congregation.

2. In the past, when a superior general has been elected the choice has always been made from among the French Lazarists. Any other choice would lead to grave problems and division.

3. Since the administration of the Congregation of the Mission is united with the administration of the Company of Daughters of Charity, the superior general serves as head of both groups. This Company of the Daughters of Charity is composed of around 4,000 members distributed in 308 establishments. Since it is entirely French, it demands a French superior. It is easy to imagine the unfortunate results of nominating a foreign superior for this community.

4. If it should happen that the superior general of the Congregation of the Lazarists is a foreigner, nothing could stop him from taking as his assis-

*Étienne is referring here to the eighteenth-century nationalistic antagonisms between the French and the Italians which were of course not limited to the Louis XIV's reign.
*Étienne, Note, ACMP.
*Ibid.
*Ibid. A version of this memorandum as forwarded to the government, can be found in the BN, Nouvelles acquisitions françaises, 21798.15.
**Ibid. Some revealing differences in detail and wording appear between the memorandum submitted by Étienne to the nuncio and the memorandum submitted to the government. One difference appears at this point. In the document sent to the government Étienne stated that "the declaration of Louis XIV on this subject was that the election of a foreign Lazarist was in opposition to the kingdom's laws." Étienne is referring to Louis XIV's veto of Maurice Faure in the 1697 election.
*On this point, Étienne stated a downright falsehood. Daughters of Charity did exist outside France in Italy, Spain, and Poland. In these countries, rule by a French superior was problematic.
tants foreigners like himself. Also, nothing could prevent him from putting foreigners at the head of the Lazarist houses in France. Thus, insensibly, the Congregation of the Mission in France would cease to be French.

5. Today, the Congregation of the Lazarists owes its legal existence in France to a royal ordinance dated 3 February 1816. This ordinance reestablished the Congregation on the basis that it had existed before the revolution. Legally speaking, if it had a foreign administration it would lose its legal existence.

Étienne ended by saying, “It is to prevent the effects of the appointment of a foreign superior that the French Lazarists have commissioned me to address Your Excellency with this exposé of the principal reasons that require that their Congregation remain as it has always existed, which is to say having a French superior general residing in Paris. They request that Your Excellency consider these points and support them with your authority.” The government needed little urging to take up the French Lazarists’ cause. According to Étienne’s Notice, it was Monsignor d’Isoard who warned Frayssinous of the Roman plan “to have the pope name a non-French superior general who would reside in the capital of the Catholic world.” With this advance knowledge, Charles X “immediately ordered his ambassador to the Holy See to express his veto.” Following this action, the government negotiated with the Holy See to resolve the issue. Étienne said that the community had no role in these negotiations. When the French cause was victorious, Étienne claimed, “Thus, without any intervention on our part, providence stopped all the schismatic intrigues of the Italian Missionaries. Providence overcame their efforts with a result that was totally opposite of what they wanted. They had been confident of

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*Again on this point, Étienne was being less than honest. According to the Constitutions of the Congregation, the general assembly elected the assistants general. A superior general could appoint an assistant general between meetings of general assemblies given the death or resignation of an elected assistant. In this case, the general had to consult the visitors of the European provinces, and the next general assembly would have to confirm the appointed assistant in office.

*In his governmental memorandum, Étienne is more explicit on this point:

It was M. Hanon, a French Lazarist (who while serving as vicar general under papal authority and approved in this position by the government) solicited and obtained from His Majesty Louis XVIII, a royal ordinance dated 3 February 1816. This act reestablished the Congregation of Saint-Lazare as it existed before the Revolution. Also, this act reestablished this Congregation as a French Congregation. In the eyes of the government it would evidently cease to be French if a foreign superior governed it. Under these circumstances, the community would lose its legal existence, a legal existence upon which depends its possession of its headquarters, its resources, and its ability to fulfill its functions in France. It would find itself deprived of all these inestimable advantages without which it would be nothing, and it could never regain them because of the law adopted by the two legislative bodies in 1825 regarding the religious communities.


*BN 21796.

*Étienne, Notice, 19.

*In 1824, Charles X succeeded his brother Louis XVIII.
victory, but because of the government's intervention, which we did not request, their success was changed into confusion."

Undoubtedly, D'Isoard did warn the French government of the plans under discussion at the Vatican. However, Boujard and Étienne also gave the government details of the Roman proposal after their January interviews with the nuncio. Étienne's memorandum besides attacking the Holy See's plan, also requested government intervention. Available documents also show Étienne's contention that the French Lazarists had nothing to do with the government's activities was false. Throughout the negotiations, Étienne and the Lazarists in Paris fed the government information, positioning themselves to insure the Italians' defeat.

**The Negotiations**

On 11 March 1826, Ange-Hyacinth-Maxence, Baron de Damas, the French Foreign Minister, wrote to the French ambassador in Rome, Mathieu-Felicité the duke de Montmorency-Laval, concerning the Lazarist dispute. Damas related that he had received a dispatch from Monsignor Frayssinous dated 4 March. The Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs warned him that the pope appeared to have the intention of naming a superior general for the Lazarists and "that this dignity would be conferred upon a foreigner. Further, this new head of the Congregation would not reside in Paris." Damas observed,

"France has incontestable precedents to support the position that the superior general of the Lazarists cannot be chosen except from..."
among the French ecclesiastics who belong to this Congregation. This community was born in France. It has always named a superior from among the French Lazarists. Paris has always been the place of his residence. The election of a foreign superior would cause inconveniences that are easy to foresee. A foreigner would bring other foreigners with him. He could place these foreigners as the heads of all the Congregation’s French establishments. Thus, these foundations that from their origin have been entirely French would cease to be so. As you know, this is already the case in the establishments that the French Lazarists have founded in the Levant. These missions have almost as many Italians and native missionaries as Frenchmen. The royal government believes in the importance of conserving the national character of these missions and is very interested in the means to insure the proper subjects to serve them. The nomination of a foreign superior general would not be in line with this policy, as everyone agrees.57

The ambassador received instructions to ask at the Holy See if such an appointment was under consideration. If such a plan was being considered, he was to “demand in the name of His Majesty’s government and by virtue of a right consecrated by precedent, that the chief superior of the Congregation must be chosen from among the French Lazarists.”58

On 5 April 1826, Montmorency wrote to Baron de Damas telling him that on the previous day he had met with the pope. At the end of the audience, the ambassador raised the issue of the Lazarists’ superior general. Montmorency wondered aloud to the pontiff if a good reason existed for not choosing, as was customary, “an ecclesiastic who was a subject of the King.”59 The ambassador told the pope that a rumor was circulating that he intended to appoint a foreigner. Leo XII replied that he had thought that “a precedent already existed for a foreigner to occupy the position of superior general.”60 The ambassador commented that he had informed the pontiff to the contrary and that he had “agreed with our position.”61

On 24 April 1826, Damas wrote to Montmorency saying, “The dispositions that His Holiness has manifested about the future nomination of a superior general of the Lazarists could not be more satisfying. You have successfully defended the right we have that this dignity must go to a Frenchman. I have asked the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs to inform

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57 Ibid.
58 Ibid.
59 This is a rather surprising misconception on the pontiff’s part. Perhaps, Leo XII was thinking about the Italian vicars general whom the papacy had appointed since the beginning of the century.
60 Montmorency to Damas, 5 April 1826, Correspondance Politique: Rome, 960: 183, AMAE.
61 Ibid.
me concerning which subjects may be worthy of presenting to His Holiness. I will have the honor of forwarding these recommendations to you."62 Before this letter could reach Montmorency, he had written to Damas. The ambassador reported that after his papal audience the Cardinal Secretary of State, Giulio della Somaglia, had asked him to submit a memorandum "giving the reasons for the legitimacy of our claims."63 Montmorency noted that he had presented this memorandum based on the information contained in the March dispatch. The ambassador concluded, "The dispositions that I have recognized in the Holy Father and in his Minister give me the confidence to say that the final decision of the Holy See cannot but be favorable to us."64

A few weeks later, on 13 May 1826, Montmorency reported to Damas that "the Holy Father has agreed to the nomination of a Frenchman as the Lazarists' superior general."65 The ambassador had some surprising news, however, for the pope already had a particular Frenchman in mind. The Holy See favored the appointment of Théodore Bricet. Bricet was then the superior of the Lazarist Levantine missions headquartered at the college of Saint-Benoît in Constantinople.66 A month later, the chargé d' affaires of the French embassy in Rome received a letter from Paris informing him that the testimonies gathered concerning Bricet were all favorable.67 Nevertheless, the government judged that his continued presence in the Levant was necessary to watch over French interests.68 Therefore, the government had looked elsewhere among the Lazarists in France for someone qualified to become superior general. Their choice was Pierre de Wailly, then the

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63Montmorency to Damas, 27 April 1826, ibid., 960: 222.
64Ibid.
65Montmorency to Damas, 13 May 1826, ibid., 960: 265.
66For a lengthy biographical notice of Bricet see Relations Abrégées, 2: 98-225. In 1822, the Congregation of Propaganda Fide had named Bricet prefect apostolic at Constantinople. He held this post until his departure from the region in 1838. Undoubtedly, it was on the basis of this contact that the Congregation recommended Bricet to the Cardinal Secretary of State.
67In 1832, a fellow missionary in Constantinople wrote this description of Bricet:

The venerable M. Bricet, our prefect apostolic, does immense good here. A week does not pass that he does not gather many heretics to instruct them in the truths of the faith. Above all, he has the confidence of the Armenians. Over the last four years, he has reconciled more than one hundred of them to the Church. His great charity toward the poor has made everyone venerate him as another Saint Vincent de Paul. Although his health is very delicate, he sustains an unbelievable level of activity, and this activity is entirely dedicated to good works. He shows a tenderness and paternal care for the foundlings whose mothers abandon them at the door of our church, as they are in France. He raises these children at the mission's expense. Even the heretics cannot stop rendering homage to his zeal and his charity. Pray God to conserve our venerable superior, who is the soul of our college and our mission.

68Damas to M. Artaud, 12 June 1826, Correspondance Politique: Rome, 960: 327, AMAE.
superior of the Lazarist-run diocesan seminary at Amiens.

According to Étienne’s account, Frayssinous, “a devoted protector of the Congregation,” had consulted his friend Cousergues about an acceptable candidate for superior general. Cousergues, who was familiar with the Lazarists in Amiens, warmly recommended De Wailly. Frayssinous then submitted his own recommendation of De Wailly to the Foreign Minister. The Foreign Ministry instructed the chargé d’affaires in Rome to inform the Holy See that the French government preferred the nomination of De Wailly over Bricet.

Negotiations continued throughout the summer of 1826. The pope assured the French that “the king would see on this occasion how much the Holy See wishes to respond favorably to His Majesty’s desires.” Although it had agreed in principle to De Wailly’s appointment and the superior general’s continued residence in Paris, Rome was concerned that these actions still would not guarantee the Congregation’s unity. The Holy See acknowledged that the Roman Missionaries “were accustomed to their independence.” Cardinal Della Somaglia told the French chargé d’affaires in an audience of 11 August 1826,

Have no fear, it has been a long time since there has been a superior general. This Congregation is in a state of anarchy. We want everything to go well. We do not want any resistance or disobedience. We have the best of intentions. Just a little while longer, and we will have everything arranged…The pope has said that we should build a strong edifice. He has given his approval. What you have asked for, he has agreed to provide. Just a little more time is needed so that all the missionaries in France and Italy agree, and they achieve a most desirable unity.

Artaud ended his account of the audience by saying, “I could add nothing to such a wise policy.” At this point, it was the French Lazarists who tried to delay the appointment. The Cardinal Secretary of State had asked the Lazarists in Paris their reaction to the proposed nomination of De Wailly. Joseph Boulangier, the procurator general, responded. He requested a year’s delay in the appointment.

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69 For a short biographical sketch of De Wailly (1759-1828) see Circulaires, 2: 410-11.
60 Cousergues was then the vicar general of Amiens, and the administrator of the diocese of Beauvais.
61 Étienne, Notice, 21.
62 Damas to Artaud, 12 June 1826, Correspondance Politique: Rome, 960: 327, AMAE.
63 Artaud to Damas, 18 July 1826, ibid., 961: 50-52.
64 Damas to Artaud, 4 August 1826, ibid., 961: 92.
65 Artaud to Damas, 11 August 1826, ibid., 961: 107.
66 Ibid.
67 For a brief biographical sketch of Boulangier see Relations Abrégées, 1: 122-40.
Boullangier praised Boujard's attachment to the Congregation, his services as vicar general, and the personal sacrifices that he had made on the community's behalf. He pointed out that the building program at the mother house that was then underway, despite royal generosity, still needed substantial funds to be completed. Boujard had already given the community 60,000 francs from his own funds to purchase a country home at Gentilly. Boullangier observed that Boujard also had made other sacrifices, "and was disposed to continue to do so."\(^{78}\)

Boullangier suggested that if Boujard remained as vicar general until the end of the summer of 1827, he would then have presided over the completion of the new chapel, the planned translation of Saint Vincent's relics and the election of a new superior general for the Daughters of Charity. He concluded with the observation that I believe that we can regard it certain that if the above events take place during the coming year, then Monsieur Boujard will ask on his own to have a successor. In any event, setting him aside then will be easier. Subsequently, the election or the nomination by the Supreme Pontiff of a superior general for our entire Congregation can take place with the least amount of commotion and with the greatest amount of satisfaction for all concerned, the priests of the Congregation and the Daughters of Charity. This would not be the case if he leaves under the present circumstances.\(^{79}\)

Artaud admitted that the "government may not have weighed sufficiently all the difficulties that could arise in Paris" nor allowed for the "extreme delicacy" of Boujard's feelings. Nevertheless, he recommended that the government continue to solicit the immediate appointment of De Wailly. Artaud believed that this was the most favorable time to confirm this appointment with the Cardinal Secretary of State and the pope. Delay would not only cause more difficulties among the Lazarists in Paris, but the Roman Missionaries undoubtedly would use this as a pretext to preserve their independence.\(^{80}\)

Leo XII asked the French government to give an official reaction to Boullangier's request. This move delayed De Wailly's appointment.\(^{81}\) In November, Damas wrote to Montmorency repeating that the appointment of Pierre de Wailly as superior general was more important than preserving Boujard's delicate feelings. The Foreign Minister also pointed

\(^{78}\) Ibid.
\(^{79}\) Artaud to Damas, 13 September 1826, Correspondance Politique: Rome, 961: 187-90, AMAE. Attached was a copy of Boullangier's "Rêflexions."
\(^{80}\) Ibid., 961: 187.
\(^{81}\) Artaud to Damas, 15 September 1826, ibid., 961: 193.
out that it was possible that the Holy See was taking advantage of these objections to delay a nomination that it really did not support. Damas instructed Montmorency, "consequently you must insist on the prompt expedition of the bull appointing Monsieur de Wailly as superior general of the Congregation of Saint Lazare. You are to tell the pope that the King awaits this new testimony of friendship, and that he will be displeased if the nomination meets with new delays." 82

Finally on 17 January 1827, Montmorency reported to Damas that he had received a copy of the papal bull appointing De Wailly. The ambassador also related that, as was customary, he had gone to the undersecretary of Briefs to obtain an official copy for the government. According to the ambassador, when he examined the brief he had been shocked to discover that it did not contain all the wording that the government expected. Montmorency reported that he had required the undersecretary, in his presence, to amend the official text. This amendment specified that the Lazarist superior general had to be a subject of the king. 83 The ambassador also directed the official to amend the Holy See’s copy in his presence. 84 The brief arrived in Paris on 31 January 1827.

After receiving the papal brief, Damas wrote to Frayssinous. He expressed his satisfaction with the document’s contents and wording. He noted “that there was nothing in its terms that violated the government’s rights nor anything against the principles of French legislation.” 85 Damas noted with pleasure that the brief confirmed that the superior general had to be a Frenchman, that the Congregation’s seat of government should be Paris, and that the administration of the Daughters of Charity was attached to that of the Congregation of the Mission. These terms marked a complete victory for the French Lazarists and the government.

Damas then referred to Boullangier’s request for the government to give special consideration to Boujard. According to Damas, now that the Holy See had confirmed De Wailly’s nomination, the government conceivably could delay its own approval. This move would allow
Boujard the satisfaction of presiding over the translation of Saint Vincent’s relics and the upcoming election of the new superior general. The Foreign Minister commented,

It is up to you to judge whether allowing this ecclesiastic some particular marks of favor to relieve the painful blow of being relieved of his functions is possible or advantageous. The recommendation of the Parisian house to the Holy See leads us to believe that these marks of condescendence and regard for such a venerable figure can only have a good effect. They truly could be of advantage to Monsieur de Wailly by contributing to his nomination’s favorable reception by the Congregation that he must administer. I will say nothing else, but I leave these reflections to your discernment to make whatever decision you believe appropriate.86

On 8 February, Damas wrote to Montmorency congratulating him on his caution in first examining the text of the brief before accepting it on the government’s behalf. The Foreign Minister interpreted the omission of the phrase acknowledging that the Lazarist general had to be a French subject as a purposeful act of bad faith by the Holy See. He described this as an “inconceivable and unjustifiable chicanery.”87 For the Foreign Minister, this action again proved the necessity of the “measures of surveillance and precaution that France has long observed regarding the acts emanating from the Court of Rome.”88 Damas reported that he was now forwarding the brief to the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs. It would be his responsibility to submit it to the Council of State for approval and then see to its execution.89 The minutes of the Congregation’s general council simply say that although Rome had issued the brief on 16 January “various events would intervene to prevent its promulgation until July of the same year.”90

On 16 February, Frayssinous submitted a report to Charles X. He recommended the delay of De Wailly’s nomination. He based this recommendation on “various circumstances but principally that more time would give the respectable vicar general, who presently governs this Congregation, the opportunity to finish the enterprises that he

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86 Ibid.
87 Damas to Montmorency, 8 February 1827, Correspondance Politique: Rome, 962: 54-55, AMAE.
88 Ibid. The Foreign Minister was referring here to the Gallican requirement that acts of the Holy See be approved and registered by the Council of State before they could be promulgated within the kingdom.
89 Ibid.
90 Minutes of the General Council of the Congregation of the Mission, 1: 1, ACGR.
happily has begun for the Lazarists and the Daughters of Charity."\(^91\)

Étienne’s *Notice* gives the following account of the events following the issuance of the papal brief. According to Étienne, Boujard still believed that the Holy See intended to appoint him as superior general. He was dismayed when he secretly learned of the brief’s contents. Supposedly, Boujard told the news of the unexpected papal appointment only to Joseph Boullangier. Étienne’s assessment of Boullangier was a harsh one: “He had a weak character and little capacity.”\(^92\) Boullangier contacted Frayssinous to request that he delay sending the brief to the Council of State for registration and promulgation. Boullangier hoped that this would gain enough time to allow the aged Boujard to decide of his own accord “to surrender his authority to the new superior general.” Frayssinous, because he believed that this request came on behalf of all the members of the community, then was supposed to have agreed to the delay.\(^93\)

Again, as to chronology and accuracy, Étienne’s account is not satisfactory. The inner circle of Lazarists at the mother house had participated in the negotiations for the nomination of a new superior general. Boullangier originally had asked the Holy See to extend Boujard’s mandate as vicar general. The government had opposed this concession. However, once the Holy See named De Wailly on the conditions demanded by the French, the government was willing to delay Boujard’s departure until the summer of 1827.

Étienne said at this point, the Roman vicar general [Francesco Antonio Baccari], sent a circular letter to the provinces under his jurisdiction.\(^94\) He announced that he had resigned, and that from now on all provinces should contact the new papally-appointed superior general in Paris.\(^95\) However, De Wailly had not received any official notification of his nomination, and he naturally refused to exercise any acts of jurisdiction. Thus, according to Étienne, “The Congregation found itself without a head, and Monsieur Boujard found himself without any authority.”\(^96\) Given that this situation “could only have the gravest consequences,”

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\(^91\) Frayssinous to Charles X, 16 February 1827, AN, F19.686.73.
\(^92\) Étienne, *Notice*, 22.
\(^93\) Ibid.
\(^94\) Baccari, circular 10 February 1827, *Boujard*, ACMP.
\(^95\) Étienne, *Notice*, 22.
\(^96\) Ibid. The text of the papal decree had said, “Finally, in virtue of holy obedience, We enjoin all the Congregation’s members to recognize the authority of the one on whom We have conferred this charge. We desire that from the moment when this decree is made known, the two actual vicars general lose their rights, and neither can exercise a general authority over all the Congregation.” For the text of the papal decree See Acta Apostolica, 191-92.
the senior confreres at the mother house met. They sent a representa­tive to Frayssinous to inform him of the impasse. According to Étienne, "The Minister understood the importance of the present situation and realized that he had received false information from Monsieur Boullangier." Frayssinous then sent the brief to the Council of State and the king for promulgation.98

At the Council of State meeting held on 28 June 1827, the members approved the brief nominating Pierre de Wailly as superior general. Charles X gave his assent on 1 July.99 On 2 July, Frayssinous conveyed the news to De Wailly:

Monsieur l'abbé, I have the honor of transmitting to you a brief issued from Rome on 16 January 1827 by which His Holiness, upon presentation of the King, has named you superior general of the Congregation of the priests of the Mission of Saint Lazare... No one rejoices more than I, Monsieur, of the choice to call you to the head of a Congregation that by the good that it has done since its foundation, and the many services that it has performed to the present time for religion and society, has merited the special attention and favor of His Majesty's government. The personal qualities that distinguish you, your proven zeal, and the wisdom that is the result of your many years of experience, more than justify the testimony of the great confidence by which the Sovereign Pontiff and the King have honored you.100

Just as these events were taking place in France, Francesco Antonio Baccari, who still had not received word of the resolution of this long-delayed affair, issued his last circular letter as vicar general. Speaking of the long period that had elapsed since his last letter Baccari commented,

Since last year, and especially during the first four months of this year, I believed that the present Sovereign Pontiff had sent a brief to Paris to be put into effect. The purpose of this brief was to select one of our venerable confreres as superior general of the entire

97Ibid.
98For Frayssinous's memoranda to the king and Council of State see "Ministère des Affaires Eclésiastiques et de l'Instruction publique: Note sur la Congrégation des Lazaristes," and "2° note sur les Lazaristes au sujet du bref qui nomme un supérieur général," BN.21798.52.65.
99"1er juillet 1827-Ordonnance de Charles X concernant le nomination de M. De Wailly supérieur général de la Congrégation de la Mission," Actes du Gouvernement, 122-23. Article two of the decree reads: "We receive the said brief without approving the clauses, formulas, and expressions which are or could be construed to be contrary to the constitutional charter, to the laws of this kingdom, and to the franchises, liberties, and maxims of the Gallican Church."
100Frayssinous to De Wailly, 2 July 1827, quoted in Actes du Gouvernement, 124.
Congregation. His Holiness, in the year previously, had in his wisdom decided that the Congregation should be united under one head. Alas! I have been misled! Up to the present moment the reason for the delay in the resolution of the entire affair is not clear, and no one knows the reason. We hope that this situation will soon end with the publication of the said brief and the revelation of the new superior general’s name.  

When De Wailly received official word of his appointment his first reaction was to decline.  

According to Étienne, “Monsieur De Wailly could not decide whether to accept a charge that his age of sixty-eight, and his failing health, made him believe was beyond his physical capacity.” De Wailly had all but resolved to ask the pontiff to appoint someone else. However, as he later related, “All the confreres whom I consulted declared that after having considered the question prayerfully before God, they remained convinced that divine providence was calling me to this redoubtable dignity and that I was conscience-bound to accept. They said that my refusal would create great obstacles to the reestablishment of our Congregation.” De Wailly accepted his nomination, and departed for Paris. He arrived at the mother house for his installation on 5 July.  

Unity Restored?  

In his Notice, Étienne pointed out that De Wailly’s apprehensions as to the insufficiency of his health proved true since he died a little over a year later on 23 October 1828. Yet this short time was enough to restore Congregational unity and constitutional government for the first time since 1792. As authorized by the papal brief, De Wailly named his assistants. He also named the twenty-seven year old Étienne as secretary general and procurator general, the two highest appointed positions in the Community. Étienne held both positions until his election as gen-

102 According to a note in Étienne’s handwriting, dated 1828, as soon as Rome sent the brief naming De Wailly, Baccari had written both to Boujard and to De Wailly informing them unofficially of its contents. Note sur M. Baccari, prieur de la Mission, Visiteur, de la Province de Rome, M. De Wailly, 1827-28, C 39, ACMP.  
103 De Wailly, Circulaires, 2: 413.  
104 Étienne, Notice, 23.  
105 De Wailly, Circulaires, 2: 413-14.  
106 The general council minutes contain a verbatim report on the conference held on 19 August 1827 at the mother house. At this meeting, De Wailly named the members of the General Council and administration. See General Council Minutes, 1: 7, ACGR.
eral in 1843.

For his French assistants, De Wailly named Pierre Le Go, Joseph Boullangier, and Dominique Salhorgne. As for naming the fourth assistant “who according to custom must be Italian,” De Wailly said that he was delaying until he had the necessary information to appoint a qualified Italian missionary. Beneath this statement, however, was another emerging controversy with Baccari, the Italians, and the Holy See. Meanwhile, De Wailly began his administration over the Congregation in France and elsewhere. On 27 August 1827, the general council met for the first time since the Revolution.

The hopes that the French had that the papal nomination of De Wailly would bring an end to the governmental schism and to the Italian-French antagonisms quickly dissipated. In August 1827, Baccari wrote to the superior general asking to be relieved of his office as visitor of the Roman province: “It is absolutely necessary that you consider choosing with great care a visitor for this province. It is morally, or better yet physically, impossible for me to continue to fulfill this office. I am in my eighty-first year. I am tired and infirm. How can I, at this advanced age and with my illnesses, continue to carry the burdens of this office and visit the houses?” De Wailly at first demurred from accepting the resignation. However, when Baccari insisted, the general named Filippo Girodi, superior of the seminary at Piacenza. Girodi declined to accept.

Meanwhile, in a letter dated 17 September, Baccari informed De Wailly that the pope had refused to allow him to lay down the office of visitor under any circumstances. In the future, he could only do so with the Holy See’s permission. Baccari informed Girodi of the papal decision. This move threw the French into confusion. De Wailly and his council could not understand this papal intervention. They were also suspicious that Baccari did not cite any official and authentic brief to support this extraordinary pontifical action. To the French, since the superior general had accepted Baccari’s resignation he no longer could exercise any authority as visitor. De Wailly wrote to Baccari concerning the irregularity of his position.

The superior general and his council also received another dis-

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107 See, for example, the letters of De Wailly concerning serious divisions within the province of Portugal. *Lettres Importantes aux missionnaires* 1° de M. Pierre De Wailly, Supr. Gal, ACMP.
108 General Council Minutes, 1:12, ACGR.
109 Etienne, *Note: Baccari*, ACMP.
110 De Wailly to Girodi, 16 October 1827, *Lettres Importantes: De Wailly*, ACMP.
111 Etienne, *Note: Baccari*, ACMP.
112 Ibid.
113 De Wailly to Baccari, 10 November 1827, *Lettres Importantes: De Wailly*, ACMP.
turbing report. They heard that Baccari was claiming that not only had
the Holy See upheld his position as visitor but that it had gone beyond
this to appoint him as “vicar general, or pro-vicar general, or procu­
rator general.” This position gave him authority “to handle affairs of
the Congregation in Rome and the necessary powers to administer the
provinces outside France.” When De Wailly asked the general council
for its advice on how to act they advised him to undertake “a confidenti­
al correspondence with someone residing in Rome.” By this means he
could “determine the facts of the situation and then act accordingly.”

In the minutes of a later council meeting, Étienne gave a different
version of events.

The council considered taking measures to stop an appointment
that was unheard of and appeared to be the result of secret activi­
ties. After serious reflection, however, they decided to await in
silence whatever notification would come. They believed that the
Court of Rome would make no decision on this matter without
serious reflection. The Council also believed that the Holy See
would not proceed to make a nomination that so disregarded the
provisions of our Constitutions, without first consulting the supe­
rior general. They therefore decided not to take any action.

Baccari “was very angered” at the letter the general had written
him. He replied that “he would have read the letter to the pope if he
had not feared it would offend him.” Baccari also pointedly told De
Wailly that “The Sovereign Pontiff is not obliged to manifest his will
to subordinates…and that no one has the right to demand a written
notification of his nominations.” However, Baccari told De Wailly
that he could expect to receive some official notification from the
Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars.

At the beginning of 1828, De Wailly wrote the annual New Year’s
circular letter. He sent the document directly to the Roman province’s
local superiors instead of to Baccari whom he no longer recognized as
visitor. Étienne, as secretary general, wrote a note to accompany the
circular explaining the French position. Later in January, Baccari
wrote to De Wailly informing him that soon he would receive a letter
from the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. According to Baccari,

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114 General Council Minutes, meeting of 26 November 1827, 1: 20, ACGR.
115 Ibid.
116 Meeting of 9 May 1828, ibid., 1: 29.
117 Étienne, Note: Baccari, ACMP.
118 Ibid.
119 Lettres Importantes: De Wailly, 7, ACMP.
this letter would be “written on the Sovereign Pontiff’s orders, and it will not only confirm me in the office of visitor but also as commissary to handle the affairs of the entire Congregation.”

On 21 January, the nuncio transmitted this unwelcome news to De Wailly. The pope had confirmed Baccari in the offices of visitor and as “commissary general for the entire Congregation before the Holy See.” This Roman action stunned De Wailly and his council. The superior general and the council first interpreted this new position of a “commissary general” to be analogous to the position of procurator general at the Holy See. In the past, the superior general had appointed someone to this position “to take care of all the Congregation’s business with the Holy See.” In this case, however, the procurator possessed no authority to deal independently with Rome, but acted only on the general’s instructions. De Wailly and his council concluded that “although Monsieur Baccari was blameworthy for having solicited from pontifical authority a nomination that belonged to the superior general to make, it was necessary to submit respectfully to the Sovereign Pontiff’s will and reestablish relations with the visitor named by His Holiness.” The assumption that the general and his council had made that “the Sovereign Pontiff would not destroy with one hand what he had raised up with the other” [referring to the restored governmental unity of the Congregation] proved to be incorrect.

Word reached Paris that Baccari also was saying that “The Sovereign pontiff had given him all the powers of the superior general but that he would only exercise them secretly for the sake of peace.” Baccari also supposedly said that he would only exercise his authority “for the good of the Congregation and that he would take care to inform him [the superior general] of all his actions.” Baccari made several decisions that heightened the concern of the French. Accord-
M. De Wailly, Pierre
XIe Supérieur
Fut le 2 Juillet 1827 - Mort le 23 Octobre 1828

Pierre de Wailly, C.M., superior general of the Congregation of the Mission, 1827-1828
ing to the Congregation’s constitutions, it was up to the superior general with the consent of his council, and only for grave reasons, to dismiss members from the Congregation. Baccari dismissed two Italian missionaries and simply informed the superior general of his actions. He claimed that he had acted under “apostolic authority.”

Baccari disallowed De Wailly’s appointments of two local superiors in the Roman province, again based on his “apostolic authority.” During this time, the Holy See asked Baccari and the Roman province to establish a house at the Papal States’ port of Civitavecchia. This foundation was to care for prisoners condemned to the galleys. Baccari established this house and assigned missionaries from the Italian provinces to staff it. Again, Baccari merely informed De Wailly of an accomplished fact.

In the eyes of the French, these actions proved that Baccari was exercising the powers of the superior general. They believed that this situation again created a governmental split in the Congregation. Étienne noted, “It follows [from this situation] that the superior general no longer had any guarantee of the execution of his orders.” Baccari could always justify his own actions “by virtue of apostolic authority.”

The explanation that emerged for the granting of Baccari’s extended powers by the Holy See concerned the missionaries in Russian-controlled Poland. Baccari had reported to the Holy See that the missionaries in Poland “were not able nor willing to depend directly on a superior general who was French.” Étienne noted, however, that the superior general had received a letter from the Poles. They acknowledged that they were forbidden from directly depending on a French superior general. However, they said they could be under the authority of a procurator general appointed by him who would reside in Rome, as before the revolution. De Wailly had been considering making this appointment when he was upstaged by Baccari. The French position was that while Baccari possessed apostolic authority to represent the Polish province, he did not have this authority for the

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129 Ibid.
130 Ibid.
131 General Council Minutes, meeting of 9 May 1828, 1: 30, ACGR.
132 Ibid.
133 Etienne noted that, “The general believed that it was his duty to inform his council of Monsieur Baccari’s conduct in an important matter concerning essential articles of the Company’s Constitutions. He directed that this account be entered in the council’s register as a formal protest against Monsieur Baccari’s conduct.” General Council Minutes, meeting of 15 May 1828, 1: 31, ACGR.
134 Ibid.
135 Ibid.
136 Etienne, Note: Baccari, ACMP, 82.
137 Ibid.
other provinces who still owed obedience to the superior general.\textsuperscript{136}

The standoff between De Wailly and Baccari continued until the former’s death on 23 October 1828. Before his illness, De Wailly had considered the question of whom to nominate to serve as vicar general upon his death. His sudden final illness made him unable to fulfill this duty in writing. However, he told Pierre Le Go and Étienne that his choice was the first assistant, Dominique Salhorgne.\textsuperscript{137}

The Congregation’s constitutions required the convocation of a general assembly within six months of a superior general’s death. Salhorgne and the general council set 2 March 1829 as the date for the general assembly’s opening. On 29 October 1828, Étienne forwarded the letters convoking the assembly to the provinces.\textsuperscript{138} When Baccari received this notice, he immediately went to the Holy See. He requested the assembly’s postponement until May because of the difficulties of winter travel. After receiving papal approval of this request Baccari wrote to Salhorgne to inform him of this fait accompli.\textsuperscript{139}

Baccari’s end-run in Rome again surprised the French. The constitutions already gave the vicar general authority to delay the general assembly’s convocation “for grave reasons.” Baccari, instead of asking Salhorgne, had gone over his head for the sake of invoking papal authority.\textsuperscript{140} Salhorgne wrote to Baccari asking that he send a copy of

\textsuperscript{136}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{137}For a short biographical sketch of Salhorgne see \textit{Circulaires}, 2: 425-27. In his \textit{Notice}, Étienne gives an interesting account of Salhorgne’s return to the community. This reveals something of the internal politics among the French Lazarists in this period. According to Étienne, Salhorgne did not return until after Pierre de Wailly’s installation as superior general. He had been working in the diocese of Tours and was vicar general and a canon of the cathedral. As much as he loved his work in the diocese, “his love for the Congregation was greater than all these considerations.” He applied to Charles Boujard to rejoin the community. Boujard refused “under the pretext that his advanced age would not permit him to render any services to the Congregation.” Étienne claimed that this was only a “pretext” since Salhorgne had a pension that would have provided for his support. According to Étienne, “The true reasons for his refusal I am obliged to say, was his [Boujard’s] fear that if a Missionary of such merit and reputation was present at the mother house, he would become a likely candidate for the office of superior general.” To eliminate Salhorgne from the picture, Boujard not only refused to readmit him to the Congregation but sent him a dispensation for his vows, a dispensation Salhorgne had neither requested nor wanted. Étienne who served as Boujard’s secretary, secretly informed the senior missionaries living at the mother house of Boujard’s action. These missionaries “were profoundly afflicted” by Boujard’s unconstitutional actions and directed Étienne to write to Salhorgne expressing their opinion that Boujard’s action was “radically null” and advising him to wait patiently for the appointment of the new superior general. Salhorgne took their advice and when De Wailly’s appointment became public wrote to him asking for permission to return. De Wailly not only immediately invited him to return but named him his first assistant.

\textsuperscript{138}General Council Minutes, 1: 34, ACGR. See also, Salhorgne, \textit{Circulaires}, 2: 122-23.

\textsuperscript{139}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{140}Ibid.
the Holy See’s rescript authorizing the prorogation, so that he could inform the visitors and their provinces of this delay.141

The seventeenth general assembly opened at the mother house on 15 May 1829.142 This was the first assembly held in more than forty years.143 Étienne gives this romantic description of the gathered delegates: “The assembly presented a most venerable spectacle. All those who took part were old men. They were burdened by their years and whitened by the tribulations of exile and long years of ministry.144 This gathering of the debris of the Company’s ancient edifice was particularly touching since these confreres became the foundation stones of the new company. They were reminiscent of the ancients of Israel returning from the Babylonian captivity to rebuild the Lord’s temple ruined by the fury of barbarian peoples.”145

According to Étienne, “Among these venerable old men, it was difficult to find someone who could carry the weight of the generalate.”146 Salhorgne also appreciated this fact.147 He feared that, under the circumstances, his own election was likely. Before the assembly, he confidentially wrote to the Holy See.148 Salhorgne asked for a rescript allowing the assembly to elect someone who did not yet meet the constitutional requirement of having had vows for at least twelve years.149

Étienne said that Salhorgne requested this rescript to ensure that someone else would be elected as superior general.150 As the assembly prepared for the election, Salhorgne produced

141 General Council Minutes, meeting of 30 November 1828, 1: 35, ACGR. Étienne also recorded that “The council judges that in this circumstance Monsieur Baccari is guilty of violating the rules prescribed in our Constitutions and directs that this statement be recorded in the minutes of this meeting in a formal protest against his actions.” The general council also recorded another formal protest again Baccari’s actions at the meeting of 16 March 1829, 1: 40. See also, Salhorgne, Circulaires, 2: 123-24.

142 Acta XVII Conventus Generalis, 1829, 777-92, ACGR.

143 For a list of the assembly delegates see Circulaires, 2: 427. All the Congregation’s provinces were represented except Poland and Naples. The Russian government had forbidden the Poles from attending. The Neapolitans absented themselves without giving a reason.

144 This is yet another important inaccuracy on Étienne’s part. Of the twenty-four delegates to the 1829 general assembly, fourteen entered the Congregation before the Revolution, and ten afterward. Circulaires, 2: 427.

145 Étienne, Notice, 25.

146 Ibid.

147 Ibid.

148 The minutes for the general council meetings during this period record no discussion of this move by Salhorgne.

149 Étienne, Notice, 25. There were approximately six French delegates to the assembly who fell into this category. Given Salhorgne’s close working relationship with Étienne it is reasonable to assume that if he did not have Étienne specifically in mind, he was thinking at least of someone among the young French priests like him. The most likely French candidate besides Étienne was Ferdinand Joseph Bailly. He was the superior of the seminary at Amiens and the visitor of the province of Picardy. Bailly had taken vows in 1819 and thus was ineligible for election under the regular constitutional requirements.

150 Ibid.
According to Étienne, "Providence had plans that differed from his Salhorgne's, and he did not obtain the result that he wanted. The assembly voted to observe the constitutions." Unfortunately, the minutes composed by Étienne as the assembly's secretary give an account that contradicts the one he gave later in his Notice. At the assembly's third session, held on 17 May, Salhorgne told the delegates about the pontifical rescript. He asked them to vote on whether the assembly should accept the dispensation. The minutes record that the vote was thirteen to eleven in favor of acceptance. According to the assembly's minutes, on the first ballot, Salhorgne received eight votes, Ferdinand Bailly received seven votes, Pierre Le Go received six votes, with the remaining three votes spread among three other confreres. On the second ballot, only Salhorgne, Bailly, and Le Go were eligible to receive votes. At this point, the minutes record that Salhorgne beseeched the delegates not to vote for him. On the second ballot, fourteen of the twenty-four delegates voted for Salhorgne electing him as superior general.

Again, Étienne's version of these events is all but unrecognizable in comparison to the official account. In Étienne's version, after the assembly had declined to accept the papal dispensation it immediately went on to the election. He claimed that as the officials began counting the votes aloud Salhorgne, seeing that each ballot was naming him, got up and ordered that the counting stop. He then supposedly produced a copy of the dismissal previously sent to him by Boujard. Salhorgne claimed that this act had removed him from the Congregation, and made him ineligible for election. According to Étienne, "The effect produced by this incident was exactly the opposite of what he [Salhorgne] had hoped. It permitted us to learn the details surrounding this dismissal by Monsieur Boujard. This revelation only served to give new luster to his humility and to increase the veneration that he inspired in all the assembly members. The ballot counting continued. The result was that Monsieur Salhorgne received an immense majority of votes and won the election. This decision greatly pleased the members of Saint Vincent's Double Family."
Étienne’s version of the election strains credulity beyond the breaking point. If Salhorgne’s original dismissal by Boujard was valid, then Salhorgne could not have legitimately functioned as a first assistant under De Wailly. His appointment as vicar general would also have been invalid. In addition, any actions taken by him as vicar general would have been invalid, including the general assembly’s convocation. If Salhorgne believed all along that Boujard’s action had been valid, he could not in conscience have acted as if it were invalid only until it was a question of his election as superior general. The proper time for Salhorgne to have revealed his dismissal would have been long before the balloting began. The assembly’s minutes record no hint of such a dramatic scene. The only thing the assembly notes is Salhorgne’s impassioned plea before the second ballot that the electors did not vote for him. Finally, Salhorgne’s election was not by an “immense majority” as Étienne claimed.\footnote{There can be no doubt as to Salhorgne’s extreme reluctance to accept his election as superior general. In his circular letter announcing his election he commented, “It is with a feeling of profound sadness that I write to you about the results of the election. Despite my prayers and my repeated requests, despite my advanced age and my infirmities, the community has placed this burden on my shoulders. Only my fear of resisting God’s will, has kept me from refusing.” Salhorgne, \textit{Circulaires}, 2: 430.}

In the \textit{Notice}, Étienne next turned his attention to Francesco Antonio Baccari. “Monsieur Baccari, the former Roman vicar general, was present at the assembly. The papal bull naming Monsieur de Wailly as superior general had deprived him of his authority. However, he had taken measures to assure the revival of his intrigues and pretensions. He arranged for the pope to name him as the Congregation’s commissary general. Coming from the Holy See, this decision established a rival authority to that of the superior general, it interfered in his administration and caused new complications.”\footnote{Étienne, \textit{Notice}, 26.} According to Étienne, the assembly “had the wisdom to elect him [Baccari] as the Italian assistant general. His election required him to reside in Paris and to participate in the company’s administration. Most importantly this move kept him far from the center of Italian intrigue and paralyzed the authority conferred upon him under the title of commissary general.”\footnote{Ibid.}

In this instance, Étienne’s account is accurate. At the assembly’s sixth session on 12 May, the delegates did elect Baccari as the Italian assistant general.\footnote{\textit{Acta XVII}, 784, ACGR.} Étienne also is correct when he claimed that his election had “greatly disconcerted” Baccari because he could not de-
cline it. The Italian claimed that he would need papal permission to take up this new post. The assembly directed that the general ask the Holy See to grant this permission. Baccari took the prescribed oath as an assistant conditionally.162

Not surprisingly, Baccari's service as an assistant in Paris did not last long. The General Council minutes record his presence at the meetings held during May and June of 1829 but none after these dates.163 Étienne notes that Baccari soon “expressed his desire to return to Rome under the pretext that the French climate was harmful to his health.”164 The condition under which Salhorgne and the council agreed to accept Baccari's resignation as an assistant was that he also resign as commissary general.165 Baccari agreed and returned to Rome as visitor of that province.166

Again, however, the French mistakenly thought that the struggles with Baccari were finally over. In a papal audience on 8 December 1829, Baccari told the pope that the good of the Congregation required that he serve as its commissary general. The pope referred the matter to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. The French denied that Baccari's services were needed. They said that to place him in this position “would be a mortal blow to the community's unity.”167

Salhorgne told the Holy See that the best way to handle the Congregation's affairs in Rome would be by means of a French procurator general appointed by the superior general. The French also reminded the Holy See that Baccari had resigned both the offices of assistant general and commissary general in July.168 Salhorgne went on the counterattack. He not only opposed Baccari's reappointment as commissary general, but also requested that the Holy See allow his replacement as visitor of the Roman province.

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162 Ibid.
163 General Council Minutes, 1: 42-44, ACGR.
164 Étienne, Notice, 26.
165 “28 mars 1820, Note du supérieur général de la Congrégation de la Mission à son Excellence le Nonce du Pape.” Lettres importantes: Salhorgne, ACMP.
166 Although Etienne claimed that this agreement had been reached in the general council there is no mention of this decision in its minutes. Salhorgne never officially announced the departure of Baccari nor did he choose another Italian confrere to serve as an assistant. This post remained vacant until the 1835 general assembly.
167 Salhorgne: Nonce, ACMP.
168 For good measure, the French included a signed copy of Baccari's resignation. Ibid.
Monsieur Baccari feels the great burdens of his age and infirmities. He is no longer in a state where he can fulfill his duties as visitor despite his zeal and good will which he always preserves. We have received reliable reports from our confreres in Rome and in the province. These inform us that during the last several years a deplorable and increasing relaxation in regularity has led to a general malaise. This situation demands a new visitor who can repair the gaps of the past, provide for the needs of the present, and prevent these problems in the future. Until now the superior general has refrained from taking this measure out of respect for the Holy Father...who established Monsieur Baccari in his office as visitor.169

The nuncio forwarded the superior general’s request to the Cardinal Secretary of State, Giuseppe Albani. The cardinal consulted with the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. In April, Cardinal Albani wrote to the nuncio in Paris that the pope had decided that it was no longer necessary for there to be a commissary general. He had concluded that such an appointment would be “prejudicial to the perfect unity of this family.”170 Cardinal Albani made a point of saying that Baccari had served as commissary general “at the express wish of Pope Leo XII and not out of any personal ambition or request on his part.”171 Regarding Salhorgne’s request that a new visitor replace Baccari because of his age and infirmities, the Secretary of State reported that the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars had paid a visit to Monte Citorio. He wanted to observe first-hand the state of Baccari’s health and his administration as visitor. The Cardinal reported that “Monsieur Baccari is still vigorous enough in body and spirit to fulfill the office of visitor. The complaints registered against him in Paris have come from only two or three discontented Italian confreres. He [Baccari] had previously taken rigorous measures against these men to maintain their observance of the rule.” Cardinal Albani ended by noting that “The Holy Father has approved the details of this report.” Baccari continued as visitor of the Roman province until his death, at age eighty-seven in 1834. With this papal decision, another fragile truce between the French and Italians came into being.

169 Ibid.
170 Ibid.
171 Ibid.
In his *Notice*, Étienne did not mention the continuing difficulties with Baccari after his resignation and departure from Paris. However, he did have this to say about the return to united government under Dominique Salhorgne.

Thus ended a long crisis that had lasted for almost half a century. During this time the Congregation experienced material destruction. It also felt the threat of a spiritual destruction. Thus, the Company, which had been shaken to its foundations, found itself again established on the same foundation and in the same condition in which its Holy Founder had established it. Thus, providence manifested its special protection of Saint Vincent's work by appeasing the storm that could have engulfed it in a lamentable shipwreck. Providence guided it instead to triumph over all the efforts of men and of hell. Finally, the community found itself healed of its cruel wounds that blind and unnatural children had inflicted upon the mother who had carried them within her, and had nourished them with the milk of her teachings. \(^{172}\)

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