1817

Only eleven letters remain from 1817, but they show Felix happy and blissful amid the poverty of life at Saint Thomas, Kentucky. He writes his first English letter (number 30) and reports that he has begun to preach and hear confessions in that language. His preoccupation with a future mission among the native Americans is evident. Felix and the other missioners spend their time studying and putting up with the hard frontier life he describes. The cold of winter and rough food are hard on his frail health. He runs up against the realities of living as a Catholic among Protestants. The results of his fundraising efforts for Bishop Flaget are unknown (number 38). His retreat resolutions, never meant to be published, show his concern to let his words match his deeds (number 39).

30. TO SIMON BRUTÉ, S.S., PRIEST, BALTIMORE

(Saint Thomas)
(January 1817)

... therefore all my endeavours are always employed in order to cut off from my heart as much it is possible all earthly wishes and desires, retaining but one desire that is for God alone, in order to know him evermore, and to love him, and to worship him, as yet to spread his happy knowledge, love, and worship, if it be possible, to whole the world. On the rest I am sorry, because we have too much deal of effects and baggages.243 I esteem much more poverty so much recommended by our Saviour to his Apostles, than all riches of the world. There I pray you to employ your burning charity to obtain us from the God's mercy that we may die entirely to ourselves, and to all our passions,

242 Letter 30. Fragment of an autographed letter, English, one page, written on the back of a subsequent letter written by Bishop Simon Bruté of Vincennes, in the archives of the Eastern Province, Germantown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Bruté letter was addressed to John Baptist Tornatore, Perryville, Missouri, from Vincennes, 6 March 1835. This letter is reproduced as written, the pronounced grammatical difficulties reflecting a man learning the English language.

Based on remarks in the text, the letter is tentatively dated to Saint Thomas, January 1817.

243 A letter of David's, superior of the seminary, mentioned that "the enormous amount of baggage of those gentlemen who are on their way will cost quite a lot." David to Bruté, Saint Thomas Seminary, 13 September 1816; in AUND; David letter book, 5-6. 
and earthly affections in order to live only to the love of our most amiable, and sweet Redeemer, that we may conquer to His love a great deal of souls working without weariness in his vineyard until death ready, if it would be necessary, to spread all our blood for his sake. These are only the things which I seek after to, leading all the rest in the hand of him who said: your Father knoweth what you have need of. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not solicitous for to-morrow for the tomorrow will be solicitous for itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. In fine I beg pardon, if I dare to write in a tongue of which I have so little practise and consequently I expose myself to perform it with many faults. Let it be for your amusement and my exercise. I am penetrated with a deep esteem and respect for your person, and by an heart full of gratitude, and attachment in the love of our Lord. J[esus] C[hrist], and of his blessed M[other] I am and be always

Your most humbly and obligd Servant

F. De Andreis, Miss[ionary].

31. TO CARLO DOMENICO SICARDI, C.M.,
VICAR GENERAL, ROME

Bardstown, Kentucky
5 January 1817

Very Reverend Sir, Very Dear Father,

I very willingly set myself to the task of fulfilling my duty of reporting to you about the state in which the Congregation in these

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In his New Year’s letter for 1817, Sicardi reported to his confreres about the American mission as follows:

I cannot pass over in silence our new foundation in Louisiana, in the southern part of North America. This establishment was made
Correspondence 1817

parts finds itself. In our present situation, I see myself having the responsibility to give a more extended report, because we are now, so to speak, nearly at destination. Saint Louis is only some 300 miles from here, and we can go there in eight days on horseback without having to go up the Mississippi.245

One would have to be blind to the non plus ultra ["no more besides"] not to perceive clearly God’s hand in all this. It moves us forward, it arranges attitudes and hearts in our favor. It opens up the way for us, keeps danger away, provides abundantly for all our needs with unexpected help in a place where, according to the English custom, everything is very expensive. It makes us find everywhere a better welcome than we would have been able to expect even from our confreres in Europe or our own families. The expenses were very great: the journey, clothing and food for twelve young men with good appetites. I can assure you, however, that up to now, I have not thought any longer of what we had imagined at Monte Citorio. The Lord has always put us in the midst of abundance without our thinking of it. Yet we are always disposed to suffer poverty, the beloved treasure of apostles. We certainly suffered much in the difficult and uncomfortable trip down the Ohio in a boat that looked like a cabin. The water managed to find its way even into our beds, and in the space of a few feet everything else was piled together: chests, trunks, along with kitchen, dining room, church, sacristy, bedroom, and everything else, for about a month. Yet we disembarked successfully at Louisville, after having made about 700 miles and more by water. We found there a

last year at the request of Bishop Dubourg. One of our priests, Father Felix De Andreis, is the superior. He left here, in possession of all the needed powers for his whole life, with two other confreres: Fathers Joseph Rosati and John Baptist Acquaroni. They left Bordeaux for America. After a very long and difficult journey, they arrived at a city [Baltimore] where they found eight or nine [Protestant] heretical sects. Catholics, however, are in the majority and are the most esteemed. That is why they were well received, and Father Felix De Andreis was able to celebrate mass there. Then, our three confreres and other priests, seminarians and lay brothers, numbering eleven [thirteen] persons, began their trip for Louisiana, their destination. We do not know yet if they have arrived there.

(Recueil, 2:336.)

245 That is, by going overland, and not down the Ohio and up the Mississippi, a trip of about 600 miles.
Correspondence 1817

courteous welcome at the home of a good Catholic man sent by the amiable Bishop Flaget, bishop of Bardstown.

After a few days, I left Louisville according to the bishop’s directions, and arrived here, the bishop’s residence, to discuss with him whether he thought it apropos for us to continue our trip to Saint Louis, or to remain here in Kentucky, since our trip would be dangerous so late in the season. Propaganda had placed Bishop Flaget in charge as the administrator of this part of the diocese of Louisiana in the absence of Bishop Dubourg. He agreed with me that for several reasons the wiser plan was to remain here until Bishop Dubourg arrives, so that we could all make a formal and solemn entry together. I relayed this to our companions, and they all rode across this immense forest and came to where we are. We will all remain here for a while to rest our bodies and spirits, and to learn English as we ought. For this, Providence has had us find a good teacher, and I hope that after a few weeks we will be ready to start preaching.

We are here in a seminary somewhat like a Carthusian or Trappist monastery in log cabins in the middle of the woods. The bishop runs the seminary, although he is always on the road here and there to visit the various Catholic settlements. Missionaries spend entire days here on horseback, going 90 or 100 miles, something which would seem almost unbelievable over there. I am responsible for teaching a class in moral theology to seven young men, four of whom are members of our company. I do not know if there is any country in the world where the Gospel saying applies better than here: "Messis quidem multa, operarii auem pauci ["The harvest is indeed great, but the laborers are few"]. The poor missionaries are always occupied beyond their

246 Mr. Modde [or Mudd], according to Rosati’s account; or, more likely, a Mr. Tarascon, who lived two miles from the town. Mudd had received the bishop’s letter to transmit to the missionaries. (Rosati, “Itineraire,” 19 November 1816; also, Ricciardelli, Vita, 300.)

247 In his "Itinerary," he says that he remained two days, that is, the 20th and 21st of November. He arrived on the 19th and left on the 22nd, after their goods had been unloaded.

248 John Baptist David.

249 That is, postulants, since he says below that there were only four members in the strict sense. He did not specify which language he taught in, but it must have been French.

250 Matt 9:37.
Correspondence 1817

capabilities, always on horseback traveling through the immense woods to assist the various Catholic settlements scattered all over. They have no time to work on the conversion of the heretics who are so well disposed and eager to hear our preaching, and hence be easily converted.

Not far from the seminary we have a monastery of Daughters of Charity, established by a zealous pastor. They follow the rules of Saint Vincent, although adapted to the country. They have changed some things in the habit and in the rule, and they make perpetual vows. Here we cannot appear in public except in secular clothes, a cravat and a round hat. We wear the cassock only at home, since it has been observed that some people came from distances to see, as they said, a Roman priest dressed like a woman.

Up to now only four of us make up the Congregation. Brother Blanka is doing well, although he suffers a lot, since with the help of only two postulants, he is the only one to supply everything for the entire service of the Congregation. It is no small task for him to take care of our belongings, and this is hindered by a thousand problems of transport, arrangements and other similar things. Consequently he greatly needs help. Father Acquaroni does the procurator’s job as best he can, and he supplies for the openness and frankness missing in Father

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251 The Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, founded in the United States in 1812. Their first house was located on the Saint Thomas grounds. The writer refers to Bishop Flaget. (See letter 37.)

252 That is, four members with vows: De Andreis, Rosati, Acquaroni and Brother Blanka.

253 Borawanski and either Deys or Philip J. Hosten (sometimes spelled Kosten, Austin or Horstman), one of Dubourg’s recruits from the diocese of Ghent, Belgium. Rosati alone mentions his name as a candidate in Rosati to Nervi, from Saint Thomas, 26 December 1817 (original in Collegio Brignole-Sale, Genoa; copy in DRMA, Rosati papers), although one letter from him betrays significant indecision regarding which diocese or religious community to enter (Hosten to Rosati, from Saint Rose, Ky., 25 May 1817; SLAA, Hosten file). Hosten returned to Kentucky from the Barrens, was ordained in September 1820, and died two years later from typhoid or yellow fever.
De Andreis the frontier missionary, as depicted among the native Americans. 
Formerly in the Vincentian house at Casale Monferrato, present location unknown. 
Photograph in papers of Postulator General, Congregation of the Mission, Rome Italy.
Correspondence 1817

Rosati and myself.254 Father Rosati is making rapid progress in the language, and promises to do immense good with his zeal, health and other good qualities. Miserably unworthy of my post of vicar general, I hope to pay to divine justice, with my fatigues and sufferings until death, some of the manifold debt which I owe it. We have here only fresh water to drink, a little coffee in the morning, and some tea in the evening, with cornbread. My stomach struggles to adapt, but I never cease crying out: *Felix necessitas quae nos ad meliora compellit* [“Happy the need which forces us to better things”].255

We celebrated Christmas with great solemnity according to the *Pontificale*,256 something so extraordinary here that it attracted a large crowd. The only Sulpician,257 who has the entire responsibility of the seminary, with about forty young men,258 preached a fine public sermon when we arrived, and he demonstrated quite well the truth of the Roman Church by our arrival.259

To my special satisfaction I see clearly that the Lord wants me to use mercy, since he never stops sending me great humiliations and crosses to check my self-love and restrain it from breaking out. Please help me and have others help me thank him, because I admit frankly that I have not known more precious graces than these joys of paradise.

Here, approaching our destination and seeing how things are, I am assured, according to the bishop’s information, of establishing our seminary and finding candidates who will seek to become members of our Congregation. As a result, it will be easy to have more establishments elsewhere. We already have the example of the

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254 Acquaroni also had to pay Bishop Flaget for the expenses of the group at Saint Thomas. The bishop noted in his diary dated 15 January 1817: “Father Aquaron [sic] paid me $50(). It came right on time. God be forever blessed.” (“Notes Mgr. Flaget,” in seven numbered notebooks, copies of Flaget’s original diary sent to François Amédée Desgeorge [1804-1887], a Flaget biographer in Lyons. Archives de la Maison des Chartreux, Lyons, boîte 38 bis.) They cover the period from 1 January 1816 through 1 April 1821.


256 The ritual for bishops, followed by Bishop Flaget, since he had sufficient personnel to carry out the full ceremonies.

257 John Baptist David.

258 One text has “20,” which may reflect only the diocesan students, minus the Vincentian group.

259 That is, their arrival showed that the Roman Church was the true Church. This idea is explained more fully below.
Dominicans and the Jesuits who are well established in several places. I have had a conversation with Father [Edward Dominic] Fenwick, superior of the Dominicans, and I have had some correspondence with good Father Grassi, an Italian, and vicar general of the Jesuits, a man about my age, but with excellent gifts. He does marvels in this country, and I am greatly indebted to him also for a large subsidy that he gave, together with many marvelous proofs [of his goodwill]. I regret that I have not been able to talk with him, since the plans I made for this have been frustrated on both sides for some reason.

I sense in myself a strong desire to consecrate myself particularly to the conversion of the Indians on the other side of the Mississippi, since on this side hardly any remain. The Mississippi serves as the border of the United States, and separates it from the immense desert that stretches to the Pacific Ocean. It flows past Saint Louis, making it the center of all those Indian nations. The light of the Gospel has never yet penetrated among them, yet they seem ready to receive it. So my intention has been, once our seminary takes good shape, to leave Father Rosati at its head, and then take the proper measures to translate the catechism into the Indian language with the help of those Indians who from time to time come to Saint Louis. After that, with the help of various inhabitants of the city having a good knowledge of the language, I will start out, in nomine Domini ["in the name of the Lord"], along the Mississippi and the Missouri and will start to evangelize these poor people. With the help of practical persons who have brought to light all the difficulties and the means to overcome them, and with God’s help, this already seems easy to me, as if I could even now see the results. I will have much to suffer, but I do not dwell on this, nor do I want to think about it. I am already too much occupied with myself, and I am embarrassed to be that way, and besides I no longer want to be occupied with anything other than God and the affairs of his glory. I see clearly that God is thinking of me, and I would be a sinner if I did not confide myself to him, following only the guidance

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260 That is, “served,” since the boundary of the nation moved westward with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.

261 In the terminology of the time, the area between the Mississippi and the west coast was regarded as a desert, that is, inhospitable and uninhabited.

262 Matt 21:9.
of his spirit. To tell the truth, the Indians are barbaric, fierce, inconstant and haughty. They habitually lead a very austere life, even spending whole days without eating anything, and then, when they go hunting a buffalo or deer, they hardly let it see the fire. They eat it right away almost raw. This is how they live: they go about almost naked, and they cruelly chastise their bodies to please the creator. The elderly, the women and the children remain with the tents, but the others are nearly always on the hunt for wild game and for the skins that they work beautifully, as I have seen. They do business with the Americans to get provisions: vermilion to paint their faces, silver pendants for nose and ears, and above all, the alcoholic drinks of which they are very fond. This forms one of the main difficulties for the missionaries who devote themselves to working with them.

This holy bishop and, in general, all good people regard our arrival as the sign that the time of mercy has arrived for these regions. I sense myself irresistibly drawn in the same way. But the works of God, according to the saying of Saint Vincent, have their own beginnings, their progress, and their end, and we have to follow Providence step by step, without interrupting it, anticipating it or abandoning it. Please recommend us to God that we might be always faithful to this maxim.

This morning a priest came to ask me to give him the faculty of blessing rosaries, a devotion which is in great fashion here. I had to tell him that I could bless them myself, but that I could not grant the faculty to others. I promised him to write to Rome where it would be possible either to obtain this faculty of being able to subdelegate for some determined number, or at least on the other hand to obtain for this priest (Father [James] Derigaud) the broadest possible faculty he wishes. I will be much obliged to you.


264 Bishop Flaget ordained James Derigaud, 21 December 1816, at Saint Thomas during a lengthy ceremony which included baptism, confirmation, clerical tonsure, and all minor and major orders. A brief account of his life appears in Marin J. Spalding, Sketches of the Life, Times and Character of the Right Reverend Benedict Joseph Flaget, First Bishop of Louisville (Louisville: Webb and Levering, 1852), 262-64. (Flaget, “Journal,” 21 December 1816.)
Correspondence 1817

Half the people of Saint Louis speak French, and the rest English. We have to do our [sermon] writing in two columns, one French and the other English. This is our current occupation. Meanwhile, I am beginning to realize that I am gradually losing the use of Italian, since I have been obliged to forbid it completely to gain fluency in the other two languages. They are absolutely necessary.

The various different events to which our situation has exposed us, and is exposing us, have not for one instant been able to give birth in my heart to any regret for coming to this country. Rather, my contentment increases daily, and does not let me desire anything except death by being consumed. The world has vanished from our sight. We all consider ourselves as sacrificial victims for God's glory and the salvation of these poor souls, and not even one thinks of returning to Europe.

Father Rosati has composed a diary of our entire long journey.265 In it are found some features that I would not call miraculous but which are of a very special providence. For at least one example, we tried to hire a ship at Bordeaux for our transport. I do not know why, but we did not conclude an agreement with a ship that left for Baltimore two weeks before we did. When we had arrived in America we found out that that ship had perished. Had we embarked on it, we would all be food for the whales. We received much help even from Protestants. All the Catholics of the city of Pittsburgh, beyond the great hospitality shown us, taxed themselves to take up a collection for us, something we did not anticipate. They gathered more than 100 scudi, although the Catholics there are just a few, and are not rich. In general we observe feast days by abstaining from servile work, but the Protestants do so with such care as to put our European Catholics to shame. My good host in Pittsburgh intended to move to Rome with his family. He requested a letter of recommendation from me for his direction, so I gave him one addressed to Father [Francesco] Alessi.

For the rest, we are always mindful of our dear confreres in Italy. We have performed the usual suffrages for Fathers [Pietro Paolo] Blasini, [Vincenzo] Petrarca and [Giuseppe] Lusardi, whose deaths Fathers Ceracchi and De Petris communicated to us. We would long to have

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265 This unpublished diary formed part of the source material used by Rosati in composing his “Recollections,” VH 1 through 5:2.
already begun this work of God, prout est vere opus Dei ["as it is truly the work of God"],
and not with the all too human worries, and never wishing to leave the tiny confines of their particular viewpoints. The Congregation exists for the Church and not the Church for the Congregation. On the contrary I thank God that I have learned, to my cost, to say mihi autem pro minimo est, etc., qui autem iudicat me, Dominus est ["It matters little to me whether, etc., the Lord is the one to judge me"].

Our most respectful and cordial greetings to all; we count greatly on your prayers. After Easter Father Rosati will travel 300 miles away with another priest, a Sulpician, to give the first mission. They will also have there the opportunity to deal with Indians. Excuse the length of this letter. I believe that it would not be worth the expense of writing from such a distance and not filling the paper. I have an opportunity now of sending this to New Orleans, and I do not know when another one will arise. If you want to console us with news about you and the Congregation, you only have to send the letter to Father Bruté, President of the College of Saint Mary, Baltimore, for Saint Louis; or even better yet, for Bardstown, Kentucky.

I am with the most profound respect and veneration for you,
your most humble and obedient servant,
Felix De Andreis,
unworthy priest of the Congregation of the Mission.

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366 See John 6:29.
367 1 Cor 4:3-4.
368 Guy Ignatius Chabrat.
Correspondence 1817

32. TO SIMON BRUTÉ, S.S., PRIEST, BALTIMORE\textsuperscript{269}

Saint Thomas Seminary
23 April 1817

According to my calculation, the time is approaching for our very worthy pastor, Bishop Dubourg, to arrive on this continent. Although I never forget it, I always remind myself of the thousand benefits that I have received, and am continuing to receive, from your gracious charity either to me or to our entire group since we left Baltimore. I think I will never find a better person to ask to take charge of my needs and those of our group in this circumstance of the landing of our "hierarch." Consequently, I ask you to do so. The attached letter\textsuperscript{270} destined to await them will supply all the rest of the information. Despite the difficulty I am still finding in the language, I have begun to devote myself to the ministry of preaching and hearing confession.\textsuperscript{271} Father

\textsuperscript{269} Letter 32. Copy, French, in SLAA, De Andreis papers. Location of the original is unknown.

\textsuperscript{270} This letter is not extant.

\textsuperscript{271} The Paris manuscript recalls the following incident:

While he was still in Kentucky at the Seminary of Saint Thomas, where [he had] to preach on Sundays in English, he found there a very great occasion of humbling himself fearlessly in the sight of the faithful, because he used to preach only in the presence of clerics. He would go up to the altar with his notebook, and since he was nearsighted he kept his notebook for the entire time of his discourses almost glued to his face, with his notebook in one hand and with the other making gestures in a very unusual fashion.

(\textit{Notices VI, 1801-1847}, AMP, 438.)
Rosati is doing the same and he has even preceded me. He left with Father [Guy Ignatius] Chabrat to go to Post Vincennes to preach a mission there. The other priests are working ceaselessly to get ready. The clerics, along with the other seminarians, are writing out the seminary rule, and the brothers are always employed in working according to their profession. They are all awaiting the moment that will give the signal to set forth to hurry to our destination.

The obligations we have contracted, and which we continue to contract, with the tireless Father [John Baptist] David are numberless. A happy set of circumstances has combined to make our stay here very pleasant and fruitful. I hope that, since this is nearly the center of North America, it might be for us the center of the land where the European grain could completely decay, to be able, therefore, to produce an abundant crop, nisi granum frumenti cadens in terram mortuum fuerit ["unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies"].

To tell the truth, our health is a little weak, but may it please God that licet is qui foris est noster homo corrumpatur, tamen is qui intus est renovetur de die in diem ["even though our body is being destroyed, yet our inner being is renewed each day"] This is our great goal; all the rest is only extrinsic and subordinate to it. I am charmed by your letters, whether direct or indirect. The spirit and the warmth [——] more at leisure than in conversation. I would be [happy] to get them more

272 Rosati's diary records that he preached for the first time in English on Quinquagesima Sunday, 2 March 1817, at Saint Thomas. (Rosati diary, copy in DRMA.) Rosati reported that Father David had given them nine classes a week in English, and that on 3 March, the day after his first English sermon, he departed for Vincennes. (Rosati to Nervi, from Bardstown, 8 June 1817; original in Collegia Brignole-Sale, Genoa.)

273 In the same letter of 8 June 1817, Rosati recorded that:

He [De Andreis] gives classes in theology, preaches on Sundays and hears confessions in English. The Lord is bestowing special blessings on his labors, and his sermons are very fruitful. He enjoys the esteem and the veneration of all. Certainly he deserves it, and I cannot believe the progress I have seen in the health of this most worthy son of Saint Vincent.

(Rosati to Nervi, ibid.) De Andreis, however, had already studied English before leaving Europe. (Rosati, "Life," Summarium, 88.)

274 Blank in copy.


276 2 Cor 4:16.

277 Several blanks occur in the next few lines. Some have been filled in conjecturally.
often, but postal expenses [keep] me from doing so.\textsuperscript{278} It is enough for me to have a [remembrance] in your prayers and sacrifices. For the rest, I am content [to be able] to find in them what is called by certain fathers the \textit{unio spirituum} ["union of spirits"]. Alas! When will we be placed there forever, without interruption and without turning away?

\textsuperscript{278} In those days, the addressee had to pay the expenses of postage.
Correspondence 1817

But there are souls to save and the blind to enlighten, the hardened to arouse, precious pearls bought by the blood of a God to cleanse from the dust, the mud and the rust, to make them worthy of being placed in the firmament. Et gemma, deterso luto, nitore vincit sydera ["and the jewel, cleansed of dirt, outshines the stars in splendor"].  

This is a work worthy of better hands than mine, since I am beginning to find in myself an abyss of darkness, weakness and evil which should be repaired beforehand. Et qui sibi nequam est cui bonus erit? Et qui domui suae praeesse nescit quomodo ecclesiae Dei diligentiam habebit? Ab immundo quis mundabitur? ["And to whom will he be good if he is not good to himself?""]  

And if he who does not know how to manage his own household, how will he be diligent for the Church of God?”  

I well know that he can do so in an instant. He is the Promissum Patris ["the one promised by the Father"], whose wonders will occupy our spirits and our hearts in these days, which we are approaching. I am speaking in this way to engage you more and more in our groans to obtain this grace from him [God] for me and for all those who need it... ut exposita necessitate conjungas orationem ["that when our need is made known, you would add your prayers"].

Everyone here asks me to send you their compliments. Please add mine to all those I have at other times named as if they were named here in a list.

In the love of our good Master, with sentiments of profound respect and veneration, I am, Father, your very humble servant, Felix De Andreis, unworthy priest of the Congregation of the Mission.

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279 From the hymn for Lauds, of Saint Mary Magdalene, “Summi parentis Unice,”

22 July.

280 Sir 14:5 NAB: “To whom will he be generous who is stingy with himself ... ?”

281 1 Tim 3:5.

282 Sir 34:4 NAB: “Can the unclean produce the clean?”


284 Pentecost, 25 May.
Correspondence 1817

33. TO CARLO DOMENICO SICARDI, C.M., VICAR GENERAL, ROME

Bardstown, Kentucky
20 May 1817

Very Reverend and Dear Father:

I am taking advantage of the opportunity that the worthy [John Anthony Grassi] vicar general of the Jesuit Fathers in America is offering me of bringing this letter to the heart of the Catholic world. I acknowledge my special debt to him, although I have not had the honor of knowing him other than by letter. If you are so kind as to answer my letter, you could have your answer come back through this same priest to me. These opportunities are so rare that I cannot let them escape me.

The change of climate and food, and the other vicissitudes of living caused me no little suffering this past winter. The cold was so extreme that once it even made me collapse nearly lifeless at the altar, since little by little the cold crept in to freeze the blood in my heart; it took a lot to bring me around. I am well now, and since the beginning of Lent I have begun preaching and hearing confession in English. Father Rosati, too, is preaching and hearing confession, and the other three

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286 Grassi traveled to his Italian homeland by the end of September 1817, returning to the United States two years later. He had been president of Georgetown College from 1812 to 1817. Biographical information and the text of his account of the reestablishment of the Jesuits in the United States is found in Arthur J. Arrieri, "The Memoirs of Father John Anthony Grassi, S.J.," Historical Records and Studies 47 (1959): 196-233; a brief notice on him is also found in American Catholic Historical Researches 8:3 (July 1891): 111-12.
Correspondence 1817

priests are getting ready for this. After Easter Father Rosati left with a Sulpician missionary for a mission in a poor place inhabited by immigrants from France, Post Vincennes. They see a priest’s face there only every six months. I am awaiting his return in the next few days.

A missionary’s life here is quite hard. He has to spend every moment on horseback to ride all around these immense forests to care for the congregations and visit the sick. It takes thirty or forty miles to visit a sick person. The “congregations” are what parishes are called here. The churches are really like caves made of by large tree trunks

287 That is, Acquaroni, Caretti and Ferrari. David reported as follows:
I hope that M. Ferrari will soon be able to preach, and M. Caretti as well. I am now correcting a sermon of the latter, in which I am astonished to find so few mistakes in grammar. As for M. Acquaroni, he is far behind, because he lost the first month of the English class, and it has been impossible for him to begin it again. Besides he is less disposed both as to voice and memory. Nevertheless, he will succeed by dint of labor.

(David to Bruté, [Saint Thomas, 7 May 1817?], AUND, David letter book, 9-11.) Because of crowded conditions, Acquaroni had to live temporarily some five miles from Saint Thomas with a Catholic family.

288 Guy Ignatius Chabrat. At least one letter survives from Chabrat to a tavern keeper, Colonel H. Lasselle (or LaSelle), in Vincennes. In it, Chabrat shows that he continued to visit the town and to have good relations with its Catholic inhabitants.

(Chabrat to Lasselle, 29 April 1818; original in Indiana State Library; copy in DRMA, Acquaroni papers.) In 1834, Chabrat became coadjutor bishop of Bardstown.

289 David referred to Rosati’s preaching and mission work:
M. Rosati went also to preach in one of the congregations. He preached twice at the Seminary, and finally he accompanied M. Chabrat to the post of Vincennes, where he is now. Before leaving, he helped him to hear confessions at Saint Michael [Fairfield] and Louisville.

(David to Bruté, [Saint Thomas, 7 May 1817?], in AUND, David letter book, 9-11.) Rosati’s own memoirs record that he preached on 27 April and gave his last sermon one month later, 26 May. (Rosati diary, copy in DRMA.)

290 David reported on De Andreis’s missionary work as follows:
Father De Andreis left on Holy Saturday to go to celebrate in the congregations that the bishop takes care of. He preached there and caused his listeners to break out in tears. Later, he continued to give a mission in the chapel of Saint Joseph near Bardstown. He preaches there every two weeks, hears confessions, goes to visit the sick, baptizes. He is going to preach here next Sunday.

(David to Bruté, from Bardstown, 7 May 1815 [1817]; French, original in AUND, II-3-n. Flagel’s diary reports a similar event, and adds: “Father De Andreis assures me that he has understood the confessions as if the people had spoken to him in Italian.” 8 April 1817.)
laid one on top of the other, with the gaps plugged up by mud. The majority of houses are built in this fashion, but wind and rain get in everywhere. The churches of this region are all the same: no pictures, no ornaments, just a poor wooden altar. They are scattered all over in the woods. On feast days the Catholics gather, and often heretics too, from an area of ten, fifteen and more miles. They all come by horse, and it is quite a sight to see the entire woods all around filled with horses, and to hear the sound of the neighing, just like a cavalry regiment. Confessions are heard until noon, and then mass is said or sung. We preach or give a homily, and then usually we have several baptisms to perform and the sick to visit. At the end, exhausted by the fast, the fatigues, the travel, the sun, we then have to beg a meal somewhere. This means roast meat with a little bit of cornbread and water, no wine, no vinegar or oil, no soup, etc. Sometimes we say several masses a day and preach in many different places, since the people here live widely separated, each one farming his own lands. There are no cities or villages, and, really, there are no farmers or servants. Black slaves, of whom there is a great number, do everything.

The other evening, I was called to assist a sick man about twenty miles away. I found myself alone at night in the middle of the woods,
Correspondence 1817

without a guide and without a horse, since the guide went aside for some need, and his horse took off in the woods. The guide had to struggle to get it back. I say this as an example of similar events that happen here to the missionaries each day. But we are consoled by the good that is being done and by our hope.

Last week, I was called to visit a poor sick woman who had only a tiny cabin to house all her family. They could not put me up, nor take care of my horse, but a rich Protestant who lived a quarter of a mile away came in person to offer me lodging in his house. I found it full of people, and they proposed some points of controversy. The gentleman seemed very satisfied with the solution given to his objections, and promised me with great certitude that he would become a Catholic.\footnote{David reported more fully on the same event:}

This is the way the Protestants in general respect priests, and they make it a point of honor to treat them with all kindness and generosity. But the priests are too few to go around. They cannot even come to visit the Catholics. How many sick people die without a priest and, without a priest, are buried! How many congregations [go] months at a time and spend the great feasts of the year without mass, in a word without a priest! In this diocese of Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio, states with a size equal to half of Europe, there are scarcely twelve priests, including the bishop. He is always on horseback going all over like the youngest missionary, all alone, without any distinction, to say nothing of taking for himself the most difficult and painful part of the ministry.

The Sulpicians are doing great good. We are very obliged to them for the charitable attention that we received at Montpellier, Toulouse,
Correspondence 1817

Bordeaux and Baltimore, and in this seminary as well. They are all men full of religion, piety and zeal. They are tireless and fervent, and very attached to our holy faith and to untainted doctrine. The Dominicans, too, do much good here. I have had the honor of knowing personally their founder in this area, Father Fenwick,292 as well as various other American members. I have no doubt and am certain that we, too, will find members once we have begun our establishment. We also expect our bishop this summer, and we will go with him to our destination. Thanks be to God, I experience the truth of what Saint Vincent says in his conferences, that we are well lodged under the banner of Providence.293 To think of nothing and to lack nothing is our condition. On the one hand I know that I am not good enough to do anything as a superior, but on the other I see that everything is going along marvelously, and I could not expect anything better if I placed my trust somewhere else. As it is God who does everything, I have no other wishes than to annihilate myself in his presence, to act, to speak, to let go, to run, to stop and blindly to follow his most holy will in all things and for all things until death. From now on, this is the only goal I have in view.

I have written you several times,294 and I have given you news about everything that concerns Notre Bande ["our group"]. For six months I have been giving a class in moral theology in this seminary, and I have ten students, four of whom belong to our colony, and the others to Kentucky. Father Rosati promises great things. I can see that God has called him to this mission to carry out great designs. He has a very robust health, and he has done marvels in the English language, beginning to preach even before I did. I should humble myself at his feet, as I am happy to do. I see that the Lord is granting him the lights and graces that he justly denies me because of my sins, my ingratitude and my insuperable pride. I believe that I must beg you with all

292 A generic citation, quoted from memory. Probably another version of "He who lodges under the banner of confidence in God will ever be favored by His special protection." (Conference 24, in Pierre Coste, ed., Saint Vincent de Paul, Correspondance, Entretiens, Documents, 14 vols. [Paris: Librairie Lecoffre J. Gabalda, 1920-26], 11:39. Hereinafter CED, followed by volume and page number.)
293 The extant letters are 29 December 1815; 1 February, 28 May, 28 July, 22 September 1816; and 5 January 1817.
Correspondence 1817

sincerity for many reasons, which I do not have room to explain here, to please transfer the duty of superior onto him. This will, I hope, find general approval, and will redound to the greater good of the Congregation and our mission. I have written the same to Bishop Dubourg regarding the responsibility of vicar general. My pride needs a superior, and my insights are too restricted to guide a ship like this one. I will continue the duty without stint as long as I have breath, and will tire myself under obedience. I can assure you that I see nothing more in this world capable of making me relent, and so life for me is a burden, and I long only for death. I should tremble for myself, but I hope in God’s infinite mercy.

We all recommend ourselves to your prayers and to those of the Congregation.

I am your reverence’s most humble, devoted and obedient servant, with the deepest respect and veneration,

Felix De Andreis,
unworthy priest of the Congregation of the Mission.

Addressed: To Reverend Father Carlo Domenico Sicardi, Priest, and Vicar General of the Congregation of the Mission, Monte Citorio, Rome.

In another hand: Received in Rome 5 September 1817.
Bardstown, Kentucky
20 May 1817

Most esteemed and dear father,

On the occasion provided me by the return to Rome of the worthy Father Grassi, vicar general of the American Jesuits, I am happy to take a moment to communicate sincerely with you, whose company has often been so happy for me. Recently, for my spiritual reading, I have been reading a wonderful little work of Henri-Marie Boudon, Les Saintes Voyes de la Croix, and I recalled the impression which you told me you had received from reading another work by the same author, La vie cachée, and I resolved to scribble these few lines.  

Father Sicardi—I don’t know if he is still living—is the one who ought to inform you about our situation. I have never passed happier days in my life. God’s ways are marvelous, the world is nothing, God is all, men are simply abysses of darkness, weakness and evil, I more than any other. I say this sincerely since I experience it, I feel it, I see it, I more than any other. But, on the other hand, God is an abyss of light, power and holiness. Hence, mihi adhaerere Deo bonum est [“for me to cling to God is good”], but here there are still woes, since I call woes only that which threatens to separate us from God. Among other things, I would beg you to give me your thoughts about a situation that is

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296 Boudon (1624-1702) was a writer of numerous popular religious books, often reprinted and translated. Les Saintes Voyes de la Croix, où il est traité de plusieurs peines intérieures et extérieures, et des moyens d’en faire un bon usage, was reprinted in Toulouse, 1819, and may be the edition which De Andreis used; La vie cachée avec Jésus en Dieu is the title of the second work.

297 He died 13 June 1819, at about age 90.

298 Ps 73:28.
Correspondence 1817

common here, and to secure an authentic response ab alto ["from on high"] to guide me and those who depend on me.299

Here loans of money are very commonly made at six percent interest, according to the general laws of the United States. The universal opinion among the clergy is that this is licit, since this is a democratic government. The laws are made by the people, and with such law censetur populus, et singuli de populo cessisse juri suo ["the people judge, and each individual among the people is presumed to have abdicated his right"] for the good of commerce, and thus volenti, et consentienti non fit injuria ["no injury is done to one who wills and (another who) consents"]. Consequently [the lender] in tuta conscientia percipere ["may with a safe conscience take (the interest)"] since the money comes not vi mutui ["by reason of a loan"], but vi consensus, et cessionis universalis ["by reason of consent, and general agreement"].

Father Rosati agrees with this, but along with my other companions I disagree, and share with my students a different opinion. It seems to us that at least it is conceptual usury, and that the agreement of a people cannot legitimize what has been condemned by natural and divine jus ["law"]. Besides, theologians presume this implied agreement, but the people for the most part are Protestants, and they do not scruple to make loans to people in the business of money, and they do not pay a bit of attention to any [presumptive] agreement, deeming it unnecessary. I would like to be convinced of the error in my reasoning to abandon an opinion that could be a source for great worries for me in practice.300

In the second place, since the Catholics here live in the midst of heretics, it is nearly impossible because of the great liberty in this sort of government to keep Catholics from having and reading books written by heretics, and especially the Bible translations which are always being

299 Flaget noted in his "Journal," 10 January 1817, that he had three theological questions to ask De Andreis: legal interest, mixed marriages, and dispensation of consanguinity. He concluded: "This fine man is very meticulous and has a excessively good opinion of me."

300 The question of usury, or interest on money, is one of the oldest questions in Christian theology, with opinions varying from its being forbidden always, to being forbidden in certain circumstances. De Andreis is stating clearly the issue on whether civil law could recognize a certain amount. The question is not treated in the 1983 Code of Canon Law.
reprinted with amazing zeal. They distribute copies everywhere, and they hand them out freely to anyone who wants some—and even to people who do not want them—in English for the English, in French for the French, and in Spanish for the Spanish. Our missionaries resist as best they can, but the great calumny of the heretics against the Roman Church is constantly increasing, namely, that the pope, the bishops and the priests hide the Bible from the people to keep them in ignorance, and to keep the people in servitude to their prejudices.

It seems to me that it is right to temper ecclesiastical laws here and to have some epikeia, because, through their constant contact with heretics, the Catholics here are better informed about all the points of controversy than are the priests in Italy. There are women here who challenge the ministers to dispute, and who best them at it. In matters of religion, Catholics have an absolute advantage over all the sects. I am amazed at finding in these regions such a large number of books of controversy, which succinctly, clearly, triumphantly and in great detail refute all the heresies and calumnies of the heterodox. These books are in everyone's hands. Protestants vie with Catholics to show their esteem for Catholic priests. They respect them and venerate them even more than they do their own ministers. In Pittsburgh we officiated in the Roman style, and all the people ran to the Catholic church, even though it was uncomfortable and on the edge of town. The large Protestant churches stood empty, and the ministers preached to the walls. We received so much courtesy from Protestants that you could write a book about it. Many times they spoke of us in the public papers in the most obliging manner, and even telling a little white lie, out of the goodness of their heart, supposing something to be true which was not so. The American is by character frank, honest, taciturn, not given to compliments, and extremely serious. They lead a hard and laborious life, they eat little and badly. The big passion here is business. Refinements in the use of steam and gas power lead to very amazing

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301 A Greek term, meaning literally "reasonableness." It is used in theology to refer to a restrictive interpretation of positive law based on the benign will of the legislator, who would certainly not have wanted to bind his subjects in certain circumstances.

302 Research into the newspapers of the time has failed to uncover any references to the missionaries.
things: to inventions of laborsaving devices and to supply for the defects of the climate.

But my time flies, and other duties call. All send greetings and say hello to everyone. Father Colucci could act in place of Father Grassi and for a certain Mr. Cooper who is supposed to go there too, and soon, and he could send us some holy cards that are so much desired here.  

Dear Father Ugo, pray for us, and have others pray because the need is so great. I am, nevertheless, full of the most sincere esteem and veneration for you.

Your most humble and devoted servant,
Felix De Andreis,
unworthy priest of the Congregation of the Mission

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Samuel Sutherland Cooper (1769-1843), a convert, traveled to Italy on 19 June 1817, returning at the end of July, still a seminarian. He was ordained 15 August 1818, and made pastor at Emmitsburg, Maryland.
35. TO SIMON BRUTÉ, S.S., PRIEST, BALTIMORE

Saint Thomas
1 July 1817

Your letter made our whole band rejoice with the news that you sent that our worthy pastor would soon arrive. We are anxious to see him and under his auspices to begin the work for which Providence has brought us to these lands. I would have liked to discover his intentions about our destination, to see whether he would have preferred us to wait here or in Saint Louis. But since we had no precise order about this from his mouth, I thought it best to rely completely on Bishop Flaget’s advice. From the beginning he judged it more convenient, for several reasons, for us to remain here. Besides, I well recall that in the letter he [Dubourg] wrote me before arriving in Bordeaux, in which he announced to me this new destination, Baltimore instead of New Orleans, he said to me directly: “You should [travel].”

304 Letter 35. Copy, French, in SLAA, De Andreis papers.
305 Blank in copy.
Correspondence 1817

to Kentucky and spend the winter, and there you can learn English. In the spring Bishop Flaget will bring you himself into Upper Louisiana. 306 Also, in the letter which he gave to me for Bishop Flaget, you can read as follows: "It will be desirable that you bring them to Saint Louis and the surrounding country as soon as you have made plans for the establishment, etc.", but this was never done. I have often spoken about this with the bishop [Flaget], taking his advice about whether I should write or take some steps. He always answered that my conscience was clear, and that it would be better to wait for Bishop Dubourg. I write this since in the last letter that our good bishop wrote from Paris to Bishop Flaget, he expressed his great astonishment on discovering that we are here in Kentucky. I would never try to justify myself, and if I have done wrong I will admit my fault at his feet. But I can only present the motives that led me to resolve to wait here, as I am obliged to inform him.

1. I had heard that in Saint Louis there was no priest, no church, nor even a house for us, not to speak of any basis for an agreement to establish the seminary, the main reason for our mission. Quite the contrary, the obstacles among the inhabitants were such that we would have to handle the matter with great skill and delicacy. Great experience was needed for this, as well as knowledge of the customs of the region, since imprudent zeal could cause needless regrets.

2. It is very reasonable and even indispensable to allow newly-arrived foreign missionaries some considerable time to learn the languages, so as not to offer any basis for ridicule to people already disposed against them and against religion. Consequently I thought it necessary to take advantage of the special opportunity that this seminary offered us of learning English, practicing our French and preparing for the pulpit by translating our writings from Italian or by composing some new sermons in both languages.

306 Letter 13, 24 April 1816, has the following instructions: "Arriving at Baltimore toward the end of summer you could travel to the bishop of Kentucky where you would stop before winter. You would spend the winter learning English and doing missionary work in the country, and in the spring, the bishop [Flaget] himself would bring you to Saint Louis."
Correspondence 1817

Therefore, our stay here has not been useless. We have tried to do what we could. We exercised our ministry, held classes in theology, made an apprenticeship in running a seminary by practicing ceremonies, plain-chant, etc. We also gave our bodies, which are not even yet perfectly acclimated, a needed rest, without which they would have refused the functions of the mind. No one is in perfect health, and several, especially Messrs. Caretti, Dahmen, Tichitoli, Casto, Brother Blanka, and myself, are quite weak, since our stomachs cannot yet deal with the food of the region, but they will become accustomed by and

307 The Paris manuscript notes in this connection:

When he was in Kentucky at the Seminary of Saint Thomas, the seminarians had a young professor [David] filled with knowledge and talent. Bishop Flaget gave him other duties and had him replaced by Father De Andreis. The seminarians were full of admiration for their professor, and it was painful for them to see him leave; and their pain was even greater when they saw him replaced by this little man who looked so ignorant. "What are we going to do?" they said. "Is this man capable of teaching us like this other man did who has now gone?" With the very first class, they soon changed their talk. Knowledge in the mouth gives not only light, but also heat. It did not only breathe forth the spirit, but also lifted up the soul and embraced it. A class with Father De Andreis did not resemble a sermon, but he spoke with firmness and result. Nothing could relate the sublimity and the fire of his speech when he developed the dogmas of the faith, the riches of God to be drawn from his breast in order to manifest them to us, the flow of graces which came from the abundance of the holy humanity of Our Savior, as he caused his students to understand the marvels which were expressed by Our Savior in these words, "You are my friends because everything which I learned from my father, I have manifested to you."

(Notices VI, 442-44.)

308 David announced that "Father De Andreis has joined my theology class with his," in a letter dated Saint Thomas Seminary, 9 June 1817. (AUND, David letter book, 12-14.)
If you would please present these reasons to the bishop [Dubourg] when he arrives, I hope that they will cause his astonishment in this matter to cease.

I think that it will be apropos especially for the running of the seminary to have a copy or two of the excellent dictionary by Dufief, since Boyer’s, which we have, is quite imperfect, and in general we do not have English books or school texts and rituals in English.

I am very sorry that the letter confided to Mister Cooper for Father Sicardi, written in the supposition that it would be confided to the care of Father Grassi, said nothing about its bearer, whose journey was described in your letter as in a dubious and even distant future. But if before his departure another letter from Father Rosati arrives for him, that will supply for the mistake in the other. And in case it arrives here after his departure, please have it sent to him however you can by putting it in the small envelope. Mister Cooper could speak to my confreres in Rome about the books that you mentioned to me, provided the memorial is presented to the Cardinal Prefect in proper form. They [the confreres] will smooth out the way for him. Any steps which I might take here would have no effect; everything that I could do I have put in the letter. Father Ferrari is in some distress, doubting whether it arrived for you and whether you had been kind enough to forward to Europe a letter that he sent you four months ago when the opportunity presented itself.

I am quite embarrassed at causing you so much trouble and distress, and it would be but poor thanks on my part if I could help you to get

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309 Rosati described their normal life to his brother Nicola in the following terms:

“They never use soup; the French never omit having soup for their lunches. In all the houses they go to table three times a day, and the Americans always have meat for these three meals, usually salt pork which they call bacon, which they eat with some boiled potatoes, without any seasoning. Bread is ordinarily made from corn.” He describes whiskey, its making and influences, and concludes: “The missionaries normally abstain from any kind of liquor.”

(Joseph Rosati to Nicola Rosati, from Bardstown, August 1818; copy in DRMA, Rosati papers; also, Rosati, “Life,” Summarium, 87.)

310 Nicolas Gouin Dufief, Dictionnaire nouveau et universel des langues française et anglaise... 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Palmer, 1810). Abel Boyer, Le dictionnaire royal, français-anglois et anglois-français (London: Rivington, 1816). (There were many other previous and subsequent editions.)
the books in question. But I know Rome, and my credit is not good enough there to act at a distance, especially from such a distance. And besides I know that your views aspire ad meliorem et manentem substantiam ["to the greater and abiding substance"]. Nevertheless, tentare non nocet ["there is no harm in trying"].

Although wicked, I nevertheless do not like someone to be deceived about me, thinking me to be what I am not. No, I thank you sincerely, but I am not a good preacher nor a good director, nor a scholar, nor a saint. I am quite angry that a hypocrisy that I cannot perceive myself should become an object of belief, and that there might be something special about me. I was very happy to be able to be removed from such a situation on leaving Rome and Europe. I would not like to become engaged in the same unhappiness in America. Ego vir videns paupertatem meam ["I am a man aware of my poverty"], poor in lights, poor in virtue, poor in everything, and there exists only qui eliget pauperes in hoc mundo ... qui contemptibilia mundi, etc. ["he who chooses the poor in this world," “who (chooses) the contemptible things of the world,” etc. who could impart any value to someone so blameworthy and such a shabby instrument, worthless in himself. And so I beg your pardon, and ask you please to refashion the good opinion that your charity suggested in view of these proofs of the honest truth, in veritate sua humiliavit me ["in his truth he has humbled me"].

I thank you from my heart for all your acts of friendship and for your good graces. I pray the good Master to reward you for them. Our men join their wishes to mine in the same sentiment of thanks. I ask you also to convey our sentiments to the gentlemen of the seminary and the college, and others quibus de jure ["to whom we rightly (owe thanks)"]. I am, in the love of him in quo vivimus, movemur et sumus

311 Heb 10:34 NAB: "(You even joined in the sufferings of those who were in prison and joyfully assented to the confiscation of your goods, knowing that you had) better and more permanent possessions."
312 Lam 3:1 NAB: "I am a man who knows affliction."
313 See James 2:5.
314 1 Cor 1:28.
315 See Ps 142:3 NAB: "... he has crushed my life to the ground."
Correspondence 1817

["in whom we live, move and have our being"],\textsuperscript{316} with the most profound respect,

your most humble servant,

Felix De Andreis,

unworthy priest of the Congregation of the Mission

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\textsuperscript{316} Acts 17:28.
Correspondence 1817

36. TO ARCHBISHOP AMBROSE MARECHAL, S.S.,
BALTIMORE

Saint Thomas
8 July 1817

The terrible news that you deigned to communicate to me seized us immediately with regret and sadness. Yet it turned into joy when we learned how Providence is going to fill the vacant dignity and thus repair the damage done to the poor American church through the loss that it has just suffered. The very fear that you acknowledge is the best way to make you less fearful. We hasten in advance to congratulate the entire ecclesiastical province, and him who will preside over it, on the happy outcome of such a choice. At the same time we address our poor prayers to the Eternal that he would deign to cast his merciful eye on this entire nascent church.

You began by granting us a sign of the zeal inspired by your new dignity when you asked us for missionaries. I would be very happy to be able to respond quickly to your zeal, and I am not without the hope of one day being in a position to do so. At this moment, however, especially without informing my superior about this matter, you can see that it is impossible. When Father David found out about your request, it threw him into a fit of anger, and he claimed his rights. He thought that, after having worked so hard to have us learn English, he should have these rights in preference to anyone else. But *uxorem duximus* ["we have married a wife"]: this is the issue. Providence has destined us for Louisiana. Louisiana claims us *stricto jure* ["in strict justice"]. Along the Mississippi Catholics are spread out over 900 miles without priests. Do you think that our group is large enough to supply such needs? We are too few even to run the seminary, which is our main purpose and the reason why the pope assigned us this mission. Besides, Bishop Dubourg is just about to appear with another group. I

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318 De Andreis referred to the news of the death of Archbishop Leonard Neale of Baltimore, who died 18 June 1817.
believe that you could negotiate the matter with him personally with greater success. I am very sorry that I cannot on this occasion prove my gratitude by agreeing to your holy plans. I hope that Providence will not fail to bring me someone else for them. I rejoice at least that our entire band and I have had this opportunity to present you our congratulations and thanks, with sentiments of the most profound respect, esteem and veneration. In this, I am, bishop,
your very humble and obedient servant
Felix De Andreis,
unworthy priest of the Mission

37. TO FRANÇOISE VICTOIRE FOURNIER, BORDEAUX\(^{320}\)

Bardstown
20 July 1817

We stopped here in Kentucky to wait for the bishop [Dubourg] and to pounce upon the twelve apostles of Satan who are trying to disturb our spirits.\(^{321}\) Up to now, only Father Rosati and I can exercise the ministry. The others are preparing slowly, and that is why it would be imprudent to leave the others and go to Saint Louis without having a house, or any friends, or a priest, or church, or any means to become established. On the contrary, this proves that conditions are not right to receive us. I have absolutely no doubt that all this will vanish when the bishop arrives.

The feast of Corpus Christi offered the opportunity for a completely new ceremony in these parts. The procession with the blessed sacrament attracted a crowd of persons, even Protestants. They observed our regulations politely, as they had been instructed, and they

\(^{320}\) Letter 37. Extracts, French, from a letter in the "Journal de la Société du Sacré-Cœur;" copy in the General Archives of the Society of the Sacred Heart, Rome, C-VII 2 c), Box 6, 4. The letter had been copied by (Saint) Philippine Duchesne, by order of Mother (Saint) Madeleine Sophie Barat.

\(^{321}\) A reference to the sins and vices in the lives of those when the missionaries were being sent.
Correspondence 1817

RT. REV. BENEDICT JOSEPH FLAGET
BISHOP OF BARSTOW AND LOUISVILLE

Copyright: John B. Hayes, 1867

Portrait of Benedict Joseph Flaget.
Collection of the De Andreis-Rosati Memorial Archives
Correspondence 1817

held their hats in their hands. We arranged a repository in the woods worthy of the simple first centuries of the Church. The girls residing with the Sisters of Charity carried the banner of the blessed sacrament, and other girls followed, all dressed in white. Then came the sisters, singing English canticles. Then followed the seminary, the clergy and the bishop, all singing hymns. A large crowd of people, attending with the greatest respect, completed the procession. The same ceremony was repeated in another parish or congregation, the first in Kentucky. On Sundays and feast days, I sometimes go to one or other to preach, hear confessions or baptize. There is great good to be done everywhere, but the dearth of clergy is severely restricting the work of God.

Father Rosati went much farther, to Post Vincennes, a French colony, and, with Father Chabrat, did much good. The most remarkable thing was that they baptized an Indian, the brother of a king. They met him one day as they were walking along, and with the aid of an interpreter introduced themselves to him as two priests. The Indian showed his respect and told them that he knew that Catholic priests were the “friends of the great spirit,” who had “left them his papers,” and that they “knew” what was to be done to please Him. As for me,

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322 David also reported on this same event:

We erected a beautiful repository on a small mound in the center of the majestic woods, which formed a perfect arch of branches of pines, the place is about a quarter mile from the church. We made a nice aisle with leaves of trees spread on it. . . . We heard [the bishop] from all sides, and God gave him the grace to speak on that day more distinctly and correctly than he is in the habit of doing.

(David to Bruté, from Saint Thomas Seminary, 9 June 1817; AUND, David letter book, 12-14.)

323 Holy Cross, founded in 1785.

324 A note by the copyist, Philippine Duchesne, adds: “People attribute to Father [Del Andreis the gift of tongues, since in the one or two months that he, an Italian, had been in Bordeaux, he was preaching in French; and the same for English in America. (These were notes from Mother Duchesne, who copied the documents, from pages 34 to 38, to send them to Mother Barat.)”

325 Rosati reports substantially the same events in his letter to Gaetano Nervi, from Bardstown, 8 June 1817. (Original in archives of Collegio Brignole-Sale, Genoa; copy in DRMA, Rosati papers.) He added, in his “Recollections,” that another success was a vocation to the priesthood, Simon Petit La Lumiere, who returned with them to Saint Thomas and was later ordained. (Rosati, “Recollections,” VH 4:2, 135-36.)
he said, every day I thank the great spirit (God) for having preserved me, and I beg him to continue to give me his help.

A few days after, this man fell sick and sent for one of the priests. Father Rosati went to him. Speaking still through an interpreter, the Indian told him that he was going to die, that nothing on earth attracted him, and that he wanted nothing else than to go and see the great spirit. He well knew that, in the state he was in, he could never arrive there, and so he begged him [Rosati] to tell him what he should do. Father Rosati instructed him, baptized him, and made him the happiest man in the world. He kept addressing himself to God, and repeated over and over _mon Dieu_ [“my God”], the only French words which he had remembered. Two days later he died like a “blessed.” The Catholics celebrated a solemn funeral for him.

The children of the deceased were very happy, and promised to become Catholics. These are the first fruits of the abundant harvest that we can rightly expect beyond Saint Louis in those immense territories extending from the Mississippi all the way to the Pacific Ocean. Indians inhabit all of them, and the light of faith has not been brought to them. This is a delicious morsel for a priest with even a little zeal.

In the United States there are several prosperous religious houses. The Sisters of Charity have succeeded very well a few miles from Baltimore. Bishop Dubourg established them. The sisters [of Charity] in [Nazareth,] Kentucky were founded by Bishop Flaget. The Carmelites always have a full house, and the Visitandines of Georgetown, the same city as Washington, separated only by a river, have thirty members, though they have been established for only two years. The Ursulines of New Orleans regularly have seventy boarders, and since they cannot keep up with demand, they have been happy to have two boarding houses built for seculars, one of them with ninety boarders.

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326 The bishop played a role in their foundation, but was not the founder as this letter implies.

327 The sisters look to John Baptist David as their founder, with Mother Catherine Spalding.

328 Port Tobacco, Maryland.
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I think that a person brought up at La Reunion established them.\textsuperscript{329} It will not be the same in the north, where you do not run across islands and other towns.

38(a). TO PAOLINO MARTORELLI, PRIEST, ROME\textsuperscript{330}

Bardstown, Kentucky, U.S.A.
24 August 1817

Very Reverend Monsignor:

When I had the honor of knowing you in Rome, especially in our house of Monte Citorio, I conceived favorable impressions of your piety and singular zeal. In my present circumstance these move me to furnish you a noteworthy opportunity of recalling the great obligations which I admit having to the worthy prelate\textsuperscript{331} in whom I am interested, and in whose seminary I have been enjoying, with the other twelve members of our band, a courteous hospitality for about the past ten months. I also especially enjoy the intrinsic merit concerning the outcome of the Memorial, and these circumstances move me to become involved. I am enclosing the appeal in this letter, which I send to you translated into Italian.\textsuperscript{332} Please have it copied as a Memorial, and present it in

\textsuperscript{329} La Réunion, the popular name of a community of French sisters, founded as “Dames de la réunion au Sacré-Cœur de Jésus” in 1799 by Vincent Wechmans, a Vincentian, and Marie-Eulalie Fatin. Wechmans, who befriended De Andreis during his stay in Bordeaux, received a dispensation from his vows in the Congregation in 1819. He died in 1831. The sisters are now known as the “Réparatrices du Sacré-Cœur de Jésus.”


Monsignor Paolo (Paolino) Martorelli was a canon of Saint John Lateran, and apparently exercised some responsibilities in the Roman curia.

\textsuperscript{331} Bishop Flaget.

\textsuperscript{332} This probably means that De Andreis translated the work into Italian himself, and he may have aided in composing it.
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the name of the bishop to His Eminence [Lorenzo Litta] the cardinal prefect of Propaganda. The last paragraph could be removed from it when he will try to have it printed in the form of an appeal. Please excuse the liberty I am taking, and be persuaded that the work is worthy of the full zeal of a priest who loves God and the Church sincerely.

I am writing at the same time and for the same purpose to Father [Francesco Alessi, our confere who is well known to you. I am asking him to join in completing and bringing to a good end the entire matter treated in the enclosed paper. Rome, as the Mother Church, has always sent out missionaries to the most distant peoples, and through them has established the faith with opportune aid, and sustains and propagates it there. By means of such examples Rome furnishes to missionaries the means of shutting the mouth of the enemies of the Roman Church. They calumniate her unceasingly and also pass her off among peoples they have seduced as if she were a ravenous Charybdis which swallows up everything, and which, under the pretext of religion, seeks only her own interests. Thus, when they come to know of your liberality in favor of the young Churches they will be forced, in spite of themselves, to reconsider their judgment.

It would be difficult and tedious to recount here completely the state of the Church in America, since people over there have no idea of this country. They should realize the extent of a very vast and boundless country covered with thickets and woods. To clear it and cultivate it, each one has his land. The dwellings are scattered around haphazardly, since only rarely are there cities and towns. Because of the small number of priests, and to avoid problems, the churches are located in a field surrounded by woods. On feast days men and women of every age and condition come on horseback. They come from ten or fifteen miles away to hear mass, to listen to the word of God and receive the holy sacraments. To receive communion they must, despite the tiring round trip, remain fasting until evening when they return home. These churches are usually like the other houses, log cabins, made of tree trunks (which are not lacking here), joined together with mud where the wind, the cold, the heat and the rain can take advantage of the situation. These cabins are so bereft of any decoration that it is surprising to learn the use to which they are destined. Although these

333 This letter is not extant.
334 A whirlpool famous in antiquity for devouring ships.
churches are quite rare and few in number compared with the population, priests are rarer still. Each one has charge of four, five or six of these parishes, called congregations here, and consequently the same priest says several masses on the same day. In various places, many congregations spend months without a priest.

The distance between these places keeps the missionary here always on horseback to run hither and yon preaching and assisting the sick. They travel thirty, forty, fifty, even ninety miles, in one day. These are ordinary trips for him, and a more tiring life is hard to find. Today he is here, but tomorrow, no one knows where he will be. His bed, food and needs depend on the hospitality of the inhabitants, which, thanks be to God, they offer freely to priests; even heretics themselves do so. Nevertheless, the best gift that can be given is only a little badly cooked cornbread, hard salted pork, potatoes and water. This is the refreshment that the mendicant missionary finds after having made a long trip, heard confessions the whole morning long until 1 or 2 p.m., sung or recited mass, preached, baptized, etc. Many times he is still fasting at 5 p.m.

But blessed be the Lord, who causes us to find amid such fatigues the most exquisite consolations, both exterior and interior. These would be greater should there be more aid to help these poor souls. Really, in what greater way could a person use his talent, his money, his goods, whether lay Christian or priest, than to cooperate in this precious work? For lack of aid, we can only succeed in helping the Catholics, as we must, but without trying to convert heretics and infidels, who otherwise are marvelously disposed. How many heretical ministers could be converted if they, as well as the family which now depends on the unhappy minister, could be given a means to live! Who would not be moved to compassion for such souls!

For someone who has seen Rome and then finds himself in these regions, it is a great affliction. I recommend myself to your prayers that they might obtain for me the grace of dying with my weapons in my hands. I have no remaining comfort in this world apart from this alone. I beseech you as best I know how and can that you take the matter to heart. Although it is a bother and troublesome, it is so worthy of your zeal. Also, I have no need of suggesting that you make use of the zeal of those good priests whom the Lord will deign to inspire with efficacious sentiments of interest in the spiritual good of this vast
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country. We are awaiting Bishop Dubourg. He is to arrive soon with 28 more missionaries so that together we can all enter Louisiana, our destination. That area borders Kentucky, where matters of religion are nearly on the same footing, but with more obstacles. I am happy that our stay here has helped us practice the languages and customs of the country. We have made our novitiate in the ministry here, and we will do better when we have to act *ex professo* ["on our own"].

For a correct address when you want to send a letter to America, you can address it either to the firm of Carsamiglia in Marseilles, or to Mr. Caseau, a businessman in Bordeaux. They will be responsible for handling whatever refers to us.

Lastly, I am in the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ, with the most profound respect and veneration for you,

Your humble, devoted and most obedient servant,

Felix De Andreis,
unworthy priest of the Mission.

*Addressed:* To Monsignor Paolino Martorelli, Canon of the Basilica of Saint John Lateran, Rome.

38(b). MEMORIAL ON THE DIOCESE OF BARDSTOWN, 1817

The bishop of Bardstown, Kentucky, in the United States of America has been able, with great consolation, to count on the contributions that the charity of the faithful in Rome and other parts of Italy has offered to the bishop of New Orleans for his enormous diocese. It is quite without resources for the establishments needed to propagate our holy religion. The bishop of Bardstown has thought that he could have recourse to the same charity for his diocese, which is no less vast and no less deprived of resources. Up to now he has had no other help than divine providence. It has furnished him the means to begin a seminary composed at present of fifteen members, among whom are one priest, one deacon, two subdeacons, two in minor orders, five tonsured clerics, and four lay students. Three of these latter will be very shortly admitted to first tonsure.

These men are today lodged in a poor log cabin, but at last a small seminary is about to be completed. It will be able to hold about 20,
with one or two exceptions. For their room and board the seminarians will be able to contribute the small sum of 50 scudi a year, with the rest coming from [the bishop]. The resources that Providence has helped him to find in the charity of some friends and in mass stipends sent to him are nearly exhausted. Yet he confides in God's goodness to open for him some other source that will let him continue the work so happily begun.

The bishop also has established in Kentucky two communities of young women for the education of the youth of their sex. One is under the rule prescribed for them by Father [Charles] Nerinckx. He is a Flemish priest just recently returned from Rome, where his establishment was approved. The others are Daughters of Charity under the rule of Saint Vincent de Paul adapted to their work. These latter have no other means of support than their own work and the very small tuition paid by their students. For a home they have a narrow and uncomfortable hut. There are fifteen Sisters, of whom four are novices.

The generosity of the people of Bardstown, Catholics as well as Protestants, has enabled the bishop of Kentucky to undertake the building of a cathedral 125 feet long, 60 feet wide. The subscription for this was truly great, but they have begun to run into difficulties, and it will probably take a long time to complete the building. Once completed, it will be necessary to build next to it an episcopal residence and a seminary for the bishop to have a respectable clergy with him. The more advanced students will be moved there from the present seminary. That will then become a minor seminary for young boys receiving their primary ecclesiastical education.

The bishop of Bardstown is counting on the generosity of good persons principally for the cathedral and seminary. He hopes they will contribute generously as best they can. They will thus be able to take part in the precious results which will doubtless result. They will be contributing to the formation of a seedbed of American missionaries. Later on, these priests will actively be able to help the many thousands of Catholics scattered here and there in the states of Kentucky,

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Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. These states are truly deprived of every spiritual help. Some of them are reduced to not seeing a priest more than once or twice a year. Contributors will also take part in the conversion of a large number of heretics. They are heretics only materially, since they live in ignorance. They would soon cease being heretics if they had zealous missionaries coming to instruct them and opening for them the way of salvation. Contributors will also have a part in the destruction or at least the weakening of the many sects that are multiplying everywhere. These are taking root only because of the lack of preachers of the Gospel.

The bishop would then plan, were it possible, to found a community of men dedicated to the education of young boys. They would not only be able to learn how to read, write and count, but also [would learn] agriculture and other useful crafts. The primary purpose of such an institution would be to guard young men from the corruption of bad the examples that cause so much damage among the youth of these lands of liberty. They will have them learn Christian doctrine and make their first communion, for which it would otherwise be difficult to prepare them. They will give them a taste for piety, and they will lay in their hearts the foundations of a truly Christian life. From them will come the confraternities of their respective parishes, which will then become the support of religion and a good life.

How many spiritual benefits would result from similar establishments! How many blind would be enlightened! How many sinners converted! How many souls preserved from the world’s corruption! How many in error consecrated to virtue! How many elect sent off to heaven! What an abundant harvest! What merit before God for those who would have contributed with their charitable gifts!

Although the great need is money, the bishop of Kentucky would gladly be able to handle any serviceable items, particularly for the benefit and the adornment of the church, such as books of theology or of the Fathers of the Church, Latin bibles, missals, vestments or vestment cloth, chalices, ciboria, monstrances, holy water vessels, processional crosses, altar candlesticks, etc. The priests [there] could easily contribute to the good work by celebrating for the intention [of the donors] a certain number of masses, and sending the bishop the stipends from these for his use. In the course of the years 1818 and 1819 they could contribute up to two thousand. The certificate of
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celebration of these masses could be sent to them as quickly as possible.

The bishop also takes the liberty of addressing this memorial to His Eminence, the cardinal prefect of Propaganda Fide. He humbly asks him to deign to have it approved by His Holiness, who takes such a great interest in the new dioceses erected in the United States. The cardinal is asked to support with his authority the entire affair, and to have this memorial printed and distributed around Rome and in other parts of Italy. From those persons whom His Eminence judges proper to interest in this activity, he is asked to receive contributions, and to have them sent to a safe place, from where they will eventually be sent to America. The bishop hopes that the zealous person responsible for presenting this paper will also become involved, and will follow the decisions of His Eminence.

The diocese of Kentucky will be indebted to His Eminence’s zeal for all the inestimable advantages that will happily result. The bishop and his priests and people will not cease offering their prayers to heaven for His Eminence’s prosperity, and for that of all those who have, because of him, opened up their hearts and their wallets on behalf of the good work proposed to them.

Benedict Joseph,
Bishop of Bardstown

39. RETREAT RESOLUTIONS, 1817

Resolutions of the Spiritual retirement made at the St. Thomas’s Seminary to Bardstown in Kentucky in September of 1817.

1. I find still in myself a great deal of self-sufficiency and a hidden and secret fondness to appear, and to be esteemed a genius, a man of wit,
and reputation; which is the chiefest hindrance to my spiritual progress, and total union with God.

2. The ground of this bad disposition is the remembrance of the reputation, and of deeds of Rome, and of the news of them, which I know have come to this country, with a great expectation of wonderful things from my ministry.

3. But indeed I was nothing at Rome, and I am nothing here; God only who has been pleased to operate something at Rome by any means can operate the same, and also much more here, provided I will be truly humble, and simple, as never to attribute any thing to me, except sin.

4. I am therefore in a great need of studying well the Christian and evangelical childhood in this retreat consisting in a great innocence, simplicity, humility, charity and meekness.

5. For this reason I must be persuaded that whensoever a man arrogate to himself what God has not given him he becomes an hypocrite; and as we cannot know precisely what is God’s pleasure upon us, we must always place ourselves in the last place, despising most sincerely ourselves in all things, and never attributing any thing to ourselves unless it may be said to us: *ascende superius* ["go up higher"] giving then to God all glory.

6. Thus I will think on myself always as a poor wretch, idiot, sinner, profligate, and useless, and unprofitable servant, and undeserving minister, who only deserves confusion, shame, and reproach, never going out of this low esteem of myself for whatever prosperous or flattering event may happen.

7. To behave with generosity without listening so much to the delicacy, and softness of thy self-love either as to the health, or as to the esteem, or also as to the spiritual things relying entirely, and confidently in the providence.

8. [Italian] As much health, esteem and holiness as God wishes, and nothing else. In whatever lofty situation you find yourself placed, [take] joy in the reflection that such is the [will of the] Divine Benefactor for your betterment, and [then] remain at peace.

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9. [French] Under the pretext and ruse of protecting one's own health, the demons entrap many. They know that the more we treat ourselves with delicacy, and the more we are subject to bodily illness, then the reflections which we make about the amount, etc., of the same inconveniences cause souls to be concerned with these pretexts, and prevent their entire abandonment to God.

Tempus Faciendi, Domine ["This the time to act, O Lord"].

10. [French] For so many years I have only written and talked; now should be the time to act in good faith. To be a saint, I need only one thing: deeds....

[Italian] Deeds, deeds, and not words. Probatio dilectionis exhibitio est operis ["The proof of love is an evident deed"].

[French] My misfortune in the past has been the lack of opportunities to execute good resolutions. Finally the time and the opportunity have arrived. Let us now see if my deeds will correspond to my affections. If not, there will be reason to conclude that all your fervor has resulted only in hypocrisy, all your holiness has been only superficial by means of which, after being deceived yourself, you have deceived many others about yourself. So, now, the time to prove things is here. Heaven, earth, men, have the right to expect from you effects proportionate to the preceding resolutions. Usquequo pueri diligitis infantiam ["How long, children, will you love your childhood"]? At the age of almost forty, is it still right to be toying with so many weaknesses and such childishness? What delicacy! What shame! What a small spirit! Dixi, nunc coepi in Deo mea transgrediar murum. Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat ["I said, now I begin, with the help of my God, to leap over a wall," I can do all things in him who strengthens me"]. At last we are going to leave for Saint Louis in two days.

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340 Ps 119:126.
341 Gregory the Great, Homily 30 on the Gospel "Si quis diligit me," PL 76:1220.
342 Prov 1:22 NAB: "How long, you simple ones, will you love inanity ... ?"
343 Ps 18:30.
344 Phil 4:13.
345 David and Flaget date the departure of the group as 2 October; consequently this paragraph must have been written about 29 September. The members were Bishop Flaget, Fathers De Andreis and Rosati, and Brother Blanka. (Same to same, ibid.)