North
Seminary chapel, Cambrai
Although this northern region received the ministry of Daughters of Charity in the time of the founders, it is better known for being the site of brutality and suffering associated with the Revolution. Four Daughters of Charity were martyred here. One Vincentian, the future martyr Louis Joseph François, was born in this region.
The presence of the Double Family of Saint Vincent de Paul, the Daughters of Charity and the Congregation of the Mission, goes back in Arras for centuries. The Sisters arrived here early in 1656, under Vincent’s direction to serve the poor and to keep a small school. In his instructions to them at their departure, Vincent said: *it may happen that you will be despised and that people will have a poor opinion of you. Even if some were to say that you keep the money that belongs to the poor and that you do not expend all the money that you receive for them, humble yourselves.* . . . (Conference 77) When they arrived, they received very poor lodgings, and were soon forced to go from door to door to beg food. Marguerite Chétif (1621-1694) was superior of the house when Vincent appointed her superior general to succeed Louise.

The Congregation of the Mission had a house in Arras from 1677 to 1791, taught in the major seminary here and received many vocations from the diocese. Before all that, Guillaume Delville (1608-1658), something of a free spirit, accepted in his own name the pastorate of Saint Jean de Renville in Arras—without informing Vincent. The founder was understandably distressed and left the elderly Delville mildly chastised, but in any case he did not live very long afterwards. Another free spirit was Philippe Ignace Boucher (b. 1631). He took his role as a military chaplain too seriously and started firing at the enemy. In so doing, he would have incurred a canonical penalty had he killed or wounded someone. Vincent worked on the issue.

What is of more historical importance is the ministry of the Daughters at the Revolution. The house where they lived from 1779 to 1794 is still standing. They returned after the Revolution, 1801, and remained until 1904. The house was probably rebuilt after the first World War, which damaged the town terribly. (26, rue des Teinturiers) The sisters have returned and continue their works in Arras.

At the time of the Revolution, seven Daughters were working in Arras. When the anti-religious laws came into force, one sister returned to her family, and two others went into hiding, escaping to Poland. The other four Daughters of Charity, Sisters Marie Madeleine Fontaine, Marie Françoise Lanel, Marie Thérèse Fantou and Jeanne Gérard, were arrested for refusing to take the oath in support of the constitution. They were also accused of anti-Revolutionary activities. They were imprisoned in the Hôtel de Beaufort in Arras from 14 April to 25 June 1794. Probably to avoid public outcry, the authorities transferred them by night to Cambrai.
When the sisters arrived in Cambrai, they were brought that same day to the major seminary. They would soon face the revolutionary tribunal, meeting in the former study room of the Jesuits. Their prosecutor was the notorious Joseph Lebon, mayor of Arras and deputy to the national assembly. This former Oratorian sent some 40 priests and 15 sisters to death by the guillotine.

After their summary trial and subsequent refusal to take the oath, the sisters were hustled to the guillotine for execution, according to the laws of the time. The Cambrai guillotine was erected on the main square, the Grande Place, but nothing now recalls its evil presence. The four Daughters of Charity were the last to die here. They had been in Cambrai, however, only one day, since they were executed on the day of their arrival, 26 June 1794. The sisters were buried in the town cemetery. In Section I, an engraved stone lists the names of the sisters and recounts the events of their death. Lebon himself suffered the same penalty in 1795. Many felt he richly deserved it. At least two of the Sisters have statues erected to honor them in their native towns: Blessed Lanel in Eu, and Blessed Fantou in Miniac-Morvan.

The seminary buildings were finished in 1614. A plaque on the exterior notes that the Revolutionary Tribunal sat here in 1794. By an odd coincidence, this seminary had been in Vincentian hands until 1791. Jesuits ran it until their suppression in 1764, and Vincentians arrived in 1772. It is regarded as one of the most elegant churches of northern France and was completed in 1694. (Rue Grand Séminaire) Besides Vincentians, there had also been Daughters of Charity in Cambrai from 1702 until the Revolution, and again afterward. The five sisters of the house were imprisoned in Cambrai, and later in Compiègne, but did not suffer martyrdom.

The cathedral of Notre Dame faces the old major seminary where the sisters were condemned, across the Place Saint Sepulchre. It was built in 1702 as a parish church. After the destruction of the old Gothic cathedral during the Revolution, it was chosen as the cathedral in 1804. Much of the building was restored and decorated in the nineteenth century. After the sisters were beatified in 1920, a modern stained glass window
In the Footsteps of Vincent de Paul

Commemorative window, Cathedral, Cambrai

was installed to honor them, depicted with the revolutionary soldiers. However, no inscription or anything else explains the meaning of the window.

The cathedral also contains the tomb of François de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon (1651-1715), archbishop of Cambrai from 1695 until his death. This eloquent preacher also became involved in the struggles around Quietism and in the resurgent Jansenism of his period. Nevertheless, he was one of many bishops who wrote the pope to support the beatification of Vincent de Paul, who had known his uncle, Antoine de Salignac, marquis of La Mothe Fénelon (1577-1639), Vincent and he had worked together in a campaign to prevent dueling.

Vincentians returned to direct the Cambrai seminary in 1857, where they remained until their forced expulsion in 1903. The two Daughters who had fled Arras disguised as peasant women returned in 1801 and with four others began their service again in Rue des Teinturiers. A small statue of the Virgin Mary, said to be a gift from Vincent himself to the Arras house, is now in the Daughters of Charity motherhouse, Paris.

Today, Arras is a city of some 39,000 inhabitants; Cambrai is a little smaller.

Busigny

The small town of Busigny has no known connection with Vincent de Paul. Instead, it was the birthplace of Louis Joseph François (1751-1792). He spent most of the years from 1772 to 1790 teaching in Vincentian seminaries. He also was briefly the secretary general of the Congregation in 1786 and was a well-known preacher. In 1788, he was appointed superior of Saint Firmin, the seminary at the old Bons Enfants, in Paris. François's most important contributions were his ten pamphlets defending the interests of the Church in the revolutionary period. Most of his writings went through several editions and made him well known. In the summer of 1792, the seminary of Saint Firmin had been changed into a prison for clerics who had refused the constitutional oath. Early in the morning of 3 September 1792, death came for most of the clergy inside as they were killed in their rooms and hurled out of the windows to the
crowd below. François, similarly treated, was finished off by a group of women who beat him to death with heavy wooden clubs. He was beatified in 1926. In all, 77 died in this massacre.

Two of his brothers, Jean Baptiste (1753-1839) and Jean Jacques (b. 1760) also entered the Congregation. By a strange coincidence and in contrast to their older brother, both took the constitutional oath. Jean Baptiste did so at Chartres and became the superior of the constitutional seminary there. Jean Jacques was assigned to Metz in 1791. He is thought to have become a parish priest and then married.

Besides Louis Joseph François and his brothers, two other Busigny natives should be noted. Jean Antoine Joseph de Villette (c. 1731-1792) spent his life soldiering. Probably because he was a relative of Jean Humbert Cousin (1731-1788), Louis Joseph's predecessor at Saint Firmin, he retired there and spent his days in prayerful service. This layman suffered martyrdom with his friend and was beatified with him. Jean Jacques Dubois (1750-1817) also joined the Congregation. During the revolutionary period he retained his ties as a Vincentian and worked to reestablish the community in France. He became the pastor of Sainte Marguerite parish in Paris. These two also received their secondary education with the Jesuits at Le Cateau.

The only thing to see in Busigny is the parish church of their baptism. Louis Joseph's statue is found here, but it is not well identified. In addition, a stained glass window commemorates Saint Vincent de Paul. Busigny is a town of perhaps 2500 people.

In Le Cateau-Cambrésis, the Jesuit school that the martyr attended is still standing. It is now used as a Lycée. Its chapel has been taken down, but other parts of the building remain.

**MONTREUIL, CALAIS**

The count of Lannoy called the Daughters of Charity to take charge of the hospital and orphans in Montreuil, commonly called Montreuil-sur-Mer. Two of his brothers, two other Busigny natives should be noted. Jean Antoine Joseph de Villette (c. 1731-1792) spent his life soldiering. Probably because he was a relative of Jean Humbert Cousin (1731-1788), Louis Joseph's predecessor at Saint Firmin, he retired there and spent his days in prayerful service. This layman suffered martyrdom with his friend and was beatified with him. Jean Jacques Dubois (1750-1817) also joined the Congregation. During the revolutionary period he retained his ties as a Vincentian and worked to reestablish the community in France. He became the pastor of Sainte Marguerite parish in Paris. These two also received their secondary education with the Jesuits at Le Cateau.

The only thing to see in Montreuil is the parish church of their baptism. Louis Joseph's statue is found here, but it is not well identified. In addition, a stained glass window commemorates Saint Vincent de Paul. Montreuil is a town of perhaps 2500 people.

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**MONTREUIL, CALAIS**

The count of Lannoy called the Daughters of Charity to take charge of the hospital and orphans in Montreuil, commonly called Montreuil-sur-Mer. Two sisters set out in 1647 but quickly encountered problems with the sisters of another community who had preceded them. Vincent's letter to Anne Hardemont, superior, is a model of directness and efficiency. He wrote on 9 May 1650: Since there is still a lack of understanding with the former Community at the hospital, giving us good reason to fear that you will not find sufficient peace there, we think it advisable for you to leave and for us to withdraw you. Besides, we need you and your Sister here. Therefore, I ask you to take leave of the Governor, his lieutenant, and the town leaders. Thank them for the honor they have done you, ask them to excuse you for not giving them all the satisfaction they expect and say that you are sorry for being unable to continue to serve at the hospital because Providence has determined otherwise.

Another short-lived work was at Calais. Anne of Austria called, in 1658, for Daughters of Charity to care for wounded and sick soldiers. Two of the sisters died in the work, and two others fell ill in their service. Vincent selected
four others, and his words to them are still preserved. (Conference 100, 4
August 1658) The sister who copied down his words also noted that he often
broke down in tears while speaking to them on this occasion. The work at
Calais was later suspended but taken up again in 1760, lasting, in all probability,
until the Revolution. Most of old Calais was destroyed in the second World War,
but it has recovered and has a population of about 80,000. The Daughters of
Charity have returned to Calais where they work in various pastoral ministries.
The modern region of lower Normandy was the site of only one of Vincent's early works. He planned to open a house here at a famous pilgrimage shrine, an apostolate that came to fruition only after his death.
DOUVRES-LA-DÉLIVRANDE

In 1657, Vincent agreed to accept the direction of a small seminary attached to the ancient shrine of Notre-Dame-de-la-Délivrande, one of the oldest in Normandy. Negotiations dragged on beyond his death, and at length, in 1692 the Congregation of the Mission began its work, which included the seminary and may have included the pilgrimages. The object of the pilgrimage is a wooden statue of the Virgin Mary and the child Jesus, itself a replacement of an early one. The Vincentians remained until the Revolution. At that time, one of the priests, Jean Baptiste Hénin, was arrested and imprisoned at Caen, where he died. The seminary buildings appear to have been demolished at that period. The present basilica dates from the nineteenth century, and serves as the parish church in this town of about 4500. The Délivrande seminary, whose site is not known, was a sort of annex to the seminary of Bayeux, whose site is well known, since it houses the famous tapestry depicting the conquest of England by the Normans. (Rue de Nesmond) Daughters of Charity were also present at the general hospital of Bayeux from 1704.
The modern region of upper Normandy is rich in Vincentian involvement: Vincent's early companion Calon came from Aumale; Vincent visited Forges for his health; he gave missions here; he worked as a vicar general in the Rouen area. Louise de Marillac also made several important Norman foundations of the Daughters of Charity.
Vincent is said to have given missions in the deanery of Aumale, at the time in the archdiocese of Rouen. It is clear from his letters that others gave missions here, however. The reason is that on 23 August 1629 Vincent and Louis Calon (or Callon) (d. 1647), doctor at the Sorbonne and resident at Aumale, had signed a contract. It bound Vincent to supply two priests each year to preach, catechize, hear general confessions of the poor people of the diocese of Rouen, and especially of the deanery of Aumale, Calon’s birthplace. Later, the same priest established a Confraternity of Charity in this country town, and it appears that Vincent had something to do with it.

Whether he was here in person is unknown. Daughters of Charity served in the local hospital (part of which remains) from 1690 to the Revolution. Although the sisters spent three days in jail during the Terror, they were permitted to remain at the works. They resumed the habit in 1803 and remained until 1906. The large collegiate church, Saints Peter and Paul, has nothing to recall the work of Calon, of Vincent or of the Daughters of Charity. Aumale has a modern population of perhaps 2800.

Louis Calon’s connection with Vincent de Paul went back to 1 July 1626, when he entered the College des Bons Enfants in Paris intending to become one of Vincent’s first missionaries. Illness, however, kept him from this,
and consequently he was not one of those who signed the act of association between Vincent de Paul and Antoine Portail, François Du Coudray and Jean De la Salle. Although not strictly a member of the Congregation, Calon continued his interest in it and gave missions as well. Daughters of Charity came to the hospital of Aumale in 1690, remaining until the Revolution. They resumed their work shortly after, and remained until 1965.

Aumale is not far from Neufchâtel-en-Bray nor from Forges-les-Eaux where Vincent certainly came to visit. Consequently, it might be presumed that he took the occasion to visit his erstwhile confrere Louis Calon when opportunity arose.

An old tradition has it that Vincent also came to Thibouville. The writer Veuclin, a priest from Rouen, cited the testimony of another priest, who claimed to have seen a letter written by Vincent and dated “Thibouville.” This town is southwest of Rouen. Daughters of Charity were sent here perhaps as early as 1638 to help in a time of plague, but a formal foundation began only in 1680, lasting until the Revolution. They returned in 1824 and continue to work in this old mission in favor of children. A copy of a nineteenth-century painting by Frédéric Legrip shows Vincent bringing a foundling to the first Sisters at Thibouville, thus continuing the tradition of his presence here. The original of this painting is now in the hospital of Bellême, where the Daughters left it on their departure. They had been here from 1695 to 1990.

Bernay tells the same story: the Daughters of Charity came here in 1654 to help with the parish Charity and to instruct poor girls; perhaps Vincent came as well. A Confraternity of Charity had been founded here in 1650-1651, and it was the Ladies of Charity (with the count of Bernay) who requested the Daughters. A remarkable twentieth-century window in the parish church pictures Vincent with Daughters depicted as caring for children, the sick, and particularly orphaned girls, all dressed alike in blue. In this way Vincent’s memory is kept alive in this district, along with Beaumesnil, because of the ministry of the sisters. Veuclin listed all these towns in his search for traces of Saint Vincent de Paul in the archdiocese of Rouen. Most of the towns Veuclin mentioned are small. The Daughters returned to Bernay in 1804, remaining until 1896 when the government suppressed their school. They continued to work in the orphanage until 1945. The hospital was under their administration from 1830 until 1980.

ECOUIS*

During Vincent’s early life, he was an absentee canon and treasurer of the collegiate church of Notre Dame of Ecouis. Like many other priests in his day, Vincent received income from his canonry. He was nominated to it by Philippe Emmanuel de Gondi, who, since he was baron of Plessis, near Ecouis, had the right to name a canon and treasurer. Vincent took official possession of this office in May 1615 and visited here 16-17 September. Records
show that Vincent appeared in person at Ecouis, took the usual oath and invited his new confrères to a dinner, probably served in the canons' residence. With this office, together with his other benefices, Vincent was continuing his plan of making himself financially independent, much as he had written to his mother that he would do. (Letter 3, 1610) His office as treasurer, however, was not entirely problem-free. The canons registered a complaint with Monsieur de Gondi about Vincent's lack of residence and so summoned him to appear in person and explain. Vincent did not appear, and no records exist to explain what happened next.

Vincent later resigned his position or positions (as canon and/or treasurer), but the date for this remains unknown. Local historians have suggested that he may have held it for as long as 30 years. Even Pierre Coste was uncertain and spoke of Vincent's early resignation as only "probable."

The church building began in 1310 and a papal legate consecrated it on 9 September 1313. This splendid old church still stands, and it has continued to keep the elaborate choir stalls for the

Canons. Although it has stalls for 36 persons, only about eight were listed in the documents concerning Vincent de Paul. The woodwork dates from the Renaissance and was doubtlessly new in 1615. The church also preserves fine old statues, many of which contain traces of their original polychrome painting. In the sanctuary is a large round plaque with the head of Saint Vincent de Paul, with the notation, "Canon of Ecouis, 1615." The plaque is undated, but the model was that used for the tercentenary of his death, 1960, celebrated solemnly here at Ecouis.

The little town, like the church, has managed to preserve many old houses that would have been here when the saint made his one and only visit here. Ecouis today numbers some 700 inhabitants.

A small community of Daughters of Charity should also be listed here, since it is in Normandy, although quite far from Ecouis. This house of Sainte-Marie-du-Mont opened in 1655, or perhaps as early as 1650. As elsewhere, the sisters worked in a small hospital and saw to the education of the children. They remained here until at least the Revolution.
FORGES-LES-EAUX

Forges-les-Eaux is an ancient town, dating back at least to Roman times. The name Forges recalls the important iron forges here, also from the Roman period. Iron working continued through the Middle Ages and kept the town busy. Unfortunately, a fire destroyed most of the town in 1607 and reached as far as the parish church of Saint Eloi, a patron of metalworkers.

The name of the town changed in the seventeenth century through the addition of “les Eaux,” (the Waters), showing the importance of the three medicinal iron springs of the area in that period. Monks at Bois de l’Epiney, west of the town, began in the medieval period to construct artificial ponds whose water was of thermal origin. The monks kept carp and other fish in them for their use and most likely to raise for sale.

In the seventeenth century, Forges became a fashionable place to visit for medicinal cures through the taking of certain waters. An old stone gate has been reerected near the site of today’s main entrance to the park. A modern thermal establishment and clinic continues the centuries-old tradition. Vincent took the waters here, as did some of his other confères (Marc Cogley, for example, in 1657, who returned no better) and Daughters of Charity, particularly as he recommended them. He wrote to Louise in Letter 29: [My confèreres] are strongly urging me to [go to Forges], because they have been told that the mineral waters did me some good in past years when I had similar illnesses. I have finally decided to offer no resistance . . . . In any case, Vincent was in good company since Louis XIII, Queen Anne of Austria and Cardinal Richelieu came here in 1632. Vincent admitted, however, that waters have never done me any good during my fever [malaria? in Forges. (Letter 394)

The neo-Gothic parish church was completed in 1878. It has nothing special to mark the presence of the saint in the area, who probably celebrated mass in the church. Forges today numbers about 3500 inhabitants.

The Daughters of Charity worked in Serqueux, just north of Forges on route D1314, beginning in 1645. Their works of charity extended as well to Forges, within walking distance. The sisters faced an unusual problem, since their confessor, the pastor of Serqueux, was deaf. Vincent told them to go to Forges instead. This same pastor, however, sent little boys who had misbehaved in school to the sisters for whippings. Vincent was not amused. (Letter 1546)
Nevertheless, the work of the Daughters for the sick and in the school was significant enough to attract four girls from the same family to the Daughters of Charity: Françoise, Madeleine, Marguerite and Catherine Ménage. Françoise was assigned for many years to the hospital of Nantes. The Daughters left about 1705. The town suffered in various wars because of its strategic railway yards. Consequently, little remains of the pre-Revolutionary town. Even the parish church was rebuilt after the second World War. Serqueux has a population today approaching 900.

**GAMACHES-EN-VEXIN**

The parish church of Gamaches, in the diocese of Evreux, conceals a secret unknown even to Pierre Coste. It is that on 28 February 1614, Vincent was named pastor here. Because of the death of its previous occupant, the post was vacant. Philippe Emmanuel de Gondi, baron of Plessis, had the right of presentation and did so on Vincent's behalf. A note accompanying the original document may suggest that Vincent never took up this new benefice. Further, no proof exists that he ever came here in person, exercised any responsibility for the parish, or received any revenue from it.

Gamaches today has about 300 inhabitants.

**NEUFCHÂTEL-EN-BRAY**

The parish church, Our Lady of the Assumption, had a Confraternity of Charity, founded 12 November 1634 by Vincent himself. This Confraternity was called locally “La Miséricorde.” Since this name was also used in Rouen, it might be concluded that the Confraternity was based upon theirs. It differed from the others that Vincent founded in that it was a work of the Company of the Blessed Sacrament. Adrien Le Bon, the prior of Saint Lazare who with his monks gave the property to Vincent, was a native of Neufchâtel. It has been suggested that he traveled here with Vincent to open the Confraternity. After living the rest of his years at Saint Lazare and gaining the high esteem of Vincent and his conferees despite his difficult character, he died in Paris, 9 April 1651. According to his wish, he was buried in Saint Lazare. A lengthy epitaph decorated his gravestone.

The parish church is Gothic in style, plain but quite large for a town of its size, today about 5500 persons. Louis IX, Saint Louis, came here in 1257, and windows in the church portray that visit. That church burned down in 1472. During the period of the early reformation, its successor was a Huguenot church (1562-1591). Like many other contemporary churches, this one has a fine Entombment of Christ (Mise au tombeau), with five figures instead of the usual seven. It dates from the sixteenth century. The church suffered grave damage during the second World War but has been largely repaired. There is nothing to recall the presence of Vincent or of Adrien Le Bon here. Daughters of Charity, however, had a house here in the nineteenth century.

Not far from Neufchâtel-en-Bray is Eu, birthplace of Blessed Marie
Françoise Lanel, Daughter of Charity, one of the martyrs of Arras. This important town, the seat of counts, commemorates this Sister with a statue in the collegiate church, where she was baptized. William the Conqueror was married here in 1050, Laurence O'Toole, exiled archbishop of Dublin, died in Eu in 1180. The city today numbers some 8000 inhabitants.

ROUEN

Vincent was vicar general of the commendatory abbot of Saint Ouen in Rouen from 1642 or 1643 to, in all likelihood, the last years of his life. Its two abbots, for whom the saint worked, were either too young or were prevented by the government from exercising their responsibilities. The first was Amador Jean Baptiste de Vigneron, a child of about ten at his appointment in 1642. His brother Emmanuel de Vigneron was not yet fourteen when his turn came in 1652. He took over from his brother, who decided he had no vocation to this state.

Vincent’s connection with these two stems from Cardinal Richelieu’s sister, Françoise Du Plessis, who married René de Vigneron, lord of Pontcourlay. Their daughter, Marie Magdalene de Vigneron (who also wrote her name with the letter W), married Antoine de Roure, lord of Combalet. On his death, she sought to enter the Carmelites, but her uncle the cardinal circumvented it, pushed her fortunes and persuaded the king to erect her lands at Aiguillon into a duchy. The marquis of Combalet, now the duchess of Aiguillon, became one of Vincent’s most steadfast supporters. In addition, she also took care of the five children of her wayward brother, François de Vigneron. Two of these were the Vigneron boys who acceded to the abbey of Saint Ouen.

There is no clear explanation for why the saint became involved here, apart from his obligations to the duchess. He had work enough to do as superior general of two communities,
the Vincentians and the Daughters of Charity. As vicar, he was responsible for selecting and presenting clergy for 80 pastorates and chapels depending on the old abbey. That he did so is clear from the many documents remaining in local archives. There is no monument to Vincent in the church, and it is unclear whether he ever came here, either in connection with his office of vicar general or otherwise. His care also extended to Marmoutiers, near Tours, and to the abbey of Saint Martin des Champs in Paris, both of which also had the Vignerod boys as commendatory abbots.

This might explain a problem in Vincent's information about the Rouen seminary. He believed that this institution, under Jesuit direction from 1617 to their suppression in 1762, produced few priests. It was, in fact, more successful. (Letter 2019)

The present church of Saint Ouen in Rouen dates from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and is noteworthy for its elegant style. Its lofty interior is filled with light, helped by the absence of many stained glass windows. The remaining old glass has been reset into modern settings after the devastation caused during the second World War. In the former cemetery behind the church, a monument recalls the public abjuration of errors that Joan of Arc made here. She was executed elsewhere in Rouen in 1431.

The great cathedral of Rouen, as well, was badly damaged and nearly
destroyed by aerial bombardment. Its Vincentian connection is that it was the site of the consecration of the third Vincentian bishop at the time of the Revolution. Jean Baptiste Gratien (1747-1799) had been the superior of the seminary in Chartres. He supported the Revolution and was elected the constitutional bishop of Seine Inférieure, the new designation for the archdiocese of Rouen. He was ordained bishop 18 March 1792.

Daughters of Charity began their works of charity and education here in 1844, and they continue their pastoral works here. Modern Rouen is a city of more than 100,000 people.
Vincent de Paul and confreres, Folleville
Picardy, north of the Paris region, was the site of many of the earliest efforts of Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac. Vincent saw the beginning of the Mission at Folleville and gave his first ordination retreats at Beauvais. Louise crisscrossed the area visiting and encouraging the Charities, and sending her Daughters here to serve the poor. Vincentians and Daughters of Charity continue these early works.
AMIENS**

Amiens, now a city of some 150,000 people and the capital of the ancient province of Picardy, stands at an important communications crossroads on the banks of the Somme. For this reason, it suffered ferocious destruction in the first and second World Wars. The many new buildings, particularly around the railway station, recall the terrible bombardments of the past.

The city has existed from ancient times, but the most important site is, naturally, the Cathedral of Our Lady, Notre Dame. It is the largest gothic building in France, built between 1220 and 1280. Since most of its windows were destroyed, it has none of the somberness of Our Lady of Paris (Notre Dame de Paris) or Our Lady of Chartres. Its premier relic is the head (actually, part of the head) of John the Baptist. Of Vincentian interest is the large statue of Saint Vincent de Paul, the work of Aimé and Louis Duthoit, on the left side of the choir stalls. Much of Vincent’s early work took place in this diocese, since the Folleville parish falls within its boundaries. It should be recalled, as well, that Vincent requested help from the Jesuits, newly founded at Amiens, to hear confessions at Folleville. The Jesuit college (College Saint Nicolas) that he contacted has been taken over by various groups, including a school, but some of the old buildings remain behind the Gendarmerie Nationale. (Rue des Jacobins, Rue Émile Zola) As a resident of Amiens early in her life, Françoise Marguerite de Silly, Madame de Gondi took as a spiritual director one of the priests of the order of Minims. She sent Vincent to see him to get a copy of the formula of absolution at the end of 1616. A few traces of their convent are still evident, and their name is preserved in one of the university campuses. (Îlot des Minimes)

Except for Antoine Portail, all of Vincent’s first companions in the Congregation came from Picardy. Just why this happened is not clear. It appears, however, that the saint’s mission work, taken up by the earliest members, attracted many others from the region to join their fellow Picards. Vincent himself understood the Picard dialect and tried to use it (Letter 560), perhaps even for his important sermon at Folleville. During Vincent’s life, a Confraternity of Charity was established in Amiens, and he oversaw, at least from a distance, the life of the Visitation convent in Amiens.

In 1662, two years after the saint’s death, Vincentians began to work in the major seminary of Amiens. Before Vincentian times, first the Oratorians and then the Sulpicians used the buildings, formerly belonging to the abbey of Saint Martin aux Jumeaux, as a semi-
nary. Besides teaching in the seminary, the Vincentians also gave missions from this house in Amiens. The seminary training was, typically for the time, very short. It simply prepared candidates, already armed with degrees in philosophy and theology, with the basics of the pastoral life: liturgy, music, preaching, hearing confession, besides some practices of piety for their own spiritual life. In 1693, the Vincentians began to offer special retreats for the clergy of the area. The buildings are no longer standing, their place having been taken by the Palais de Justice. (Place d'Aguissette) A plaque on a side street recalls that, according to ancient tradition, the monastery was built where Martin of Tours (d. 397), at the time a soldier, removed the lining of his cloak to clothe a poor man. A subsequent vision of Jesus moved him to be baptized and to embrace religious life. It is likely that the widespread use of the name Martin in one form or another (Martino, Martini, etc.) comes from popular devotion to this saint. Further, the term “chapel” comes from “cappa,” a temporary shrine where the kings of France placed Saint Martin’s cloak during their campaigns. Every “chapel” recalls his act of charity done here. (Place d'Aguissette)

Beginning in the eighteenth century, the Congregation began to acquire land to build a seminary in what became...
the normative style. It followed as much as possible the layout of Saint Lazare. This work began in 1736 and the community was able to move in during 1741. At the time of the Revolution, the community had to leave because its members refused to take the constitutionally prescribed oath supporting the state. Three of the priests of the seminary died in prison in 1793, Fathers Julienne, Bailly and Brochois. The buildings became in turn a military hospital and a home for beggars. The Vincentians were able to secure the buildings again in 1816 when the State agreed to restore some former Church property. The superior, Amable Ferdinand Joseph Bailly (1786-1864), a relative of the other Bailly who had died in prison, was the first to take vows in France after the Revolution. Since he did so during a period without approved leadership in the Congregation, his vows were deemed to be invalid. Jean Baptiste Nozo, superior general, instructed Bailly to petition to renew his vows or to leave. He refused. Their mutual enmity embroiled them in lengthy and public law suits and was one of the reasons for Nozo’s resignation as superior general and for Bailly’s estrangement from the Congregation. His brother and a former Vincentian seminarian, Emmanuel Joseph Bailly, worked with Frédéric Ozanam to found the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in Paris.

During the first days of the Revolution, the superior general, Jean Félix Cayla de la Garde hid in the buildings. He was discovered and arrested but was able to escape, whereupon he fled the country. In the revolutionary period after 1830, his successor as superior general, Dominique Salhorgne, fled from Paris to Picardy and spent the year of
Perboyre family at prayer, Saint Anne, Amiens

Perboyre family at prayer, Saint Anne, Amiens

Perboyre family hearing catechism, Saint Anne, Amiens

John Gabriel Perboyre teaching catechism, Saint Anne, Amiens
1831 at this same institution. The Vincentians returned after the Revolution, in 1806, to resume their care for the seminary. They remained at their post until expelled in 1903. When the diocese closed the seminary, the army took over the buildings. The main chapel became a reading room, while an auxiliary chapel for the people (la chapelle basse) was for several years a military recruiting office. Hidden behind the modern ceiling, however, are some paintings honoring Saints Vincent and Louise, as well as other members of the two congregations. Figuring prominently among them is Jean Baptiste Étienne. The buildings themselves resemble in many details the former Saint Lazare and in turn provided a model for the present Vincentian motherhouse. (Rue Jules Barni)

When the Vincentians returned after the Revolution, they served the small chapel of an orphanage. From these beginnings developed the parish of Saint Anne. The present Gothic revival church dates from 1886, and it contains several works of art specifically
The side chapel dedicated to the memory of John Gabriel Perboyre has interesting and unique windows depicting him. These take their origin in the devotion of the Vincentian priest Pierre Charles Marie Aubert (1812-1887), a former student of Perboyre's in Paris, later the pastor and builder of the present church. The altar in Perboyre's honor was placed there in 1890 to mark the triduum celebrated for his beatification. The central statue depicts him after his execution.

The stained glass windows, were made in 1891 but installed only in 1931. Moving left to right, the first window deals with prayer. The main section depicts an event narrated by Aubert: the levitation of John Gabriel during the celebration of mass. The shadows of his feet appear on the carpet below, and the server is Aubert himself. The lower section shows the Perboyre family at prayer. John Gabriel is depicted with a halo. The text reads: "Martyrdom is all I wish for." The family table shown here still exists. The upper section shows a room furnished in Chinese style, with Perboyre at prayer.

The central window deals with his
death. The center portion portrays the moment after his passing. Artistic license has him clothed in his red prisoner’s tunic and raised quite high off the ground. In fact, he was clothed merely in some ragged shorts and was tied only a few inches above the ground. A crowd is depicted, and perhaps includes the one Chinese Christian known to be present for his execution. A large luminous cross is shown in the sky above. The lower portion shows his trial, at the moment when the mandarin demands that he trample the crucifix placed on the ground in front of him. The text gives his answer: “But I will not renounce the faith of Jesus Christ.” The guard at the far left carries a stout bamboo pole to beat him after his refusal. For this he was stretched on the floor face down and beaten in the lower back and kidney area. The top section recalls the vision received by the Chinese scholar, Liu Jiu Ling, who had compassion on John Gabriel as he was being brought to another town for interrogation. In his vision, he saw the martyr holding two ladders, one white and the other red, leading up to heaven. Liu eventually became a Christian.

The third window depicts John Gabriel teaching. The center portion has him teaching his novices in Paris and showing them the blue Chinese robe of the martyr Francis Regis Clet and the cord used to strangle him. He is in a wood-paneled room, recalling the Salle Saint Augustin of the Vincentian moth-
erhouse. The lower portion shows the young John Gabriel teaching catechism in front of his home, Le Puech, near Montgesty, whose church appears in the background. The text reads: "To go to heaven, you must make sacrifices." In the upper portion he is shown teaching catechism to the Chinese people seated before him. Across all three windows runs the text: "Blessed John Gabriel Perboyre, martyred in China, 11 September 1840, born at Le Puech, France, 6 January 1802."

By the side of the altar is a lengthy inscription recalling the life and works of Father Aubert, buried under the floor. He died in 1887 and, as the founder of the church, was given the honor of burial in a side chapel. He himself chose one that had not yet been dedicated in the hopes that one day it would be dedicated to Perboyre. His intuition was correct.

In the right transept is a series of five large paintings of Saint Vincent, the work of Charles-Alexandre Crauk (1819-1905), about 1882. They portray Francis de Sales and Jane Frances de Chantal; foundlings; Vincent glorified; Vincent singing to the Moslem woman in the fields during his supposed captivity; and Vincent as a child, accompanied by his dog, giving alms to a poor man. This latter canvas shows the old tower of the church in Pouy, now destroyed. Below these paintings are several fine wood carvings: Vincent giving the rules to the Daughters; his first mass; taking the chains of a galley convict; giving the rules to his confreres. The main altar has a traditional statue of Vincent with two children. Below is a carving of Vincent as he was dying.

The Daughters of Charity arrived in Amiens in 1647 to work in the hospital of Saint Charles. Their services developed and they have had several houses in Amiens before and after the Revolution. They remained at the hospital until 1905. When they had to leave because of the anti-religious laws of the time, the people of Amiens presented them with an elaborate bust reliquary of Saint Vincent. This can be seen in the museum at the Vincentian motherhouse. The sisters have returned and continue their pastoral work.

**BEAUVAIS**

One of the great sights of France is Beauvais' cathedral of Saint Peter. Had it been completed, it would have been the tallest of all the Gothic cathedrals, and its tower would have surpassed that of Strasbourg. Various problems kept it from being completed, however, such as fire and wars, but the worst was that the engineers and architects lacked proper skills. The nave suffered a partial collapse in 1284, and only part of the transept remains. It is still astonishing for its daring size. Vincent saw it approximately in its present incomplete state.

Besides conducting various missions and other works in the diocese, Vincent himself began the practice of ordination retreats here. Bishop Augustin Potier of Beauvais (d. 1650) suggested a retreat for his ordinands "to instruct them in what they should know and the virtues they should practice in their calling," as Abelly summarizes it. Vincent and two secular priests held
these retreats in late August and September of 1628 at the bishop’s palace. Today this is the departmental museum, located next to the cathedral. More exactly, these retreats were held in the chapel of the residence, but this has now been demolished. All the subsequent seminary work of the Vincentians can be traced from this first undertaking. Bishop Potier continued to support and encourage Vincent and served with him as a member of the Council of Conscience during the regency of Anne of Austria. Vincent also came here on other occasions. He paid at least three official visits to the Ursuline nuns of Beauvais, for example. One of his letters (number 631) was written in Bresles, a small town a few kilometers east. In this, he mentions yet another visit to Beauvais, but it is unclear whether he was preaching missions, although it seems likely.

Vincentians gave missions in the diocese, and they served in its major seminary from 1679 to the Revolution. Its superior, the elderly Jean François Henri Grillet (1725-1802), administered the diocese as best he could during the absence of the bishop at the time of the Revolution.

Louise also came here and lodged with Madame de Villegoubelin, a Lady of Charity. It had been decided to have only one Confraternity of Charity for the city of Beauvais, but this led to several problems of organization, since several hundred women belonged. Vincent recalled this later in a conference to the Daughters of Charity: I saw this myself at Beauvais where at first the people wished to adopt the former method and established one Confraternity for the whole city. It lasted for some time but was not a success, so a branch was established in every parish and this turned out to be much more successful. (Conference 77) One of these Confraternities served the area around the cathedral. The credit for the success of these Confraternities was due in large measure to Louise’s attention and care for them.

In his lifetime, the Daughters of Charity were also established in Beauvais, where they continue in service. The city today numbers some 55,000 people.

**FOLLEVILLE,*** **GANNES***

Although the village of Folleville dates from the fifth century A.D., some traces of a large Roman camp, dating from the first Christian century, are visible to the south. The name Folleville probably comes from a Latin word for a leaf (folium), referring to its rural setting. The town had been strategically placed on a hill to observe those passing by on the Roman road leading from Lyons to Senlis, Amiens, Boulogne and Britain beyond. This road was located in the valley of the Noye below. Barbarian tribes devastated the area from the third to the fifth centuries. In the seventh century, the king designated the area as a fief of the great abbey of Corbie, located not far away. In the ninth or tenth century, the lords of Folleville began to fortify the area against the Normans.

The most famous lord was Raoul de Lannoy, born of a Flemish family. He was chamberlain and counselor of three
kings: Louis XI, who decorated him with a golden chain for his warlike valor, then of Charles VIII and Louis XII. Louis XI spent the night in the castle amid great splendor in 1477, Charles VIII visited here in 1492, as did Francis I in 1546. Henri II arrived for the baptism of Henri, son of Louis de Lannoy, his godson. The eldest daughter of this same Louis de Lannoy, Marie, wed Antoine de Silly in 1572, and he thus became the lord of Folleville. His daughter Françoise Marguerite de Silly married Philippe Emmanuel de Gondi, general of the galleys, in 1610. She spent part of her childhood here, and eventually the property came into her possession. She exercised responsibility for the peasants on her lands, with the customary right of proposing priests to the bishop as pastors.

In 1615 and 1617 Vincent resided at Folleville as the tutor of the children of the Gondi family. Antoine Portail, his earliest follower, perhaps joined him, although he was ordained a priest only in 1622. One of the children, Jean François Paul, became the notorious and worldly Cardinal de Retz, known for his part in a rebellion against Cardinal Mazarin. During a period totaling about eighteen months (divided into three periods: 1615, 1617, 1620), Vincent preached and gave missions in the surrounding parishes. The names of two of these are known, Sérévillers and Paillart, where he established Confraternities of Charity in 1620. Vincent also began to experience sickness here, the ailments of his legs which he suffered throughout his adult life. After 1655 the Community celebrated the events of the “first sermon of the Mission” on 25 January, and the saint’s recollections (although he is not recorded as mentioning the name
Folleville) are preserved in a repetition of prayer on 25 January of that year, as well as in a conference of 17 May 1658.

This sermon, delivered on a Wednesday probably in the course of a longer mission, remained in his mind as a founding moment of his life's work. He had previously been giving missions, and already had the practice of urging general confessions, as is known from his petition to the archbishop of Sens on the subject, dated 1616. He probably took up the recommendation of Francis de Sales, who in the Introduction to the Devout Life (1609) urged the practice. In addition, the experience of Madame de Gondi was crucial. She went to confession to the local pastor, a resident of Folleville for at least the previous fifteen years. He, however, did not know the formula for absolution, and the thought that so many people might die without having made a good confession horrified her. She had Vincent obtain a copy of the formula from her spiritual director in Amiens and had the priest read it when she made her confession. Having outsiders like Vincent and others hear general confessions would right these wrongs.

At various times in Folleville's history, Vincentians came to visit. One group gave a mission in 1770 and, on concluding this mission, presented a reliquary and dedicated a side altar to Saint Vincent. During the nineteenth century,
many Vincentians and Daughters of Charity came on pilgrimage. Many of these people also contributed to the restoration of the church.

Bishop Jacques Boudinet of Amiens asked Father Étienne to send some Vincentians to take over the parish, which they did in late 1869. The bishop had other plans as well. A large piece of property was bought in 1874. Like the Berceau, to which it was compared, the bishop believed that Folleville too should have some Vincentian presence. His first plan was to receive orphaned boys. Daughters of Charity came for this purpose in 1875. Further, he negotiated the building of a train station at La Faloise, and it in turn began to attract pilgrims to Folleville. Meanwhile, because of the deaths of superior generals and bishops and, because of both anti-clerical laws in France and the first World War, the orphanage closed and the Daughters left in 1904. Another work then developed: a training school for Vincentian brothers, beginning in earnest in 1926. The Vincentians purchased the castle and worked to main-
tain it. Other buildings were gradually restored and new ones added. This work was later closed and sold. A large statue of Saint Vincent is still to be seen over the main entrance of the school, located across the road from the castle. Today, the town consists of a few houses and numbers perhaps 70 people.

The present stone church, in Gothic style, replaces a church dating from about 1360. It is divided into two parts: the nave, built in the fifteenth century, for the use of the people, and the sanctuary, begun in 1510 and consecrated in 1524, for the family. The nave, built first, was dedicated to the apostle Saint James the Greater. His statue is in the niche behind and to the left of the pulpit. This church was one of the many on the medieval pilgrimage route, the "Route of Paris," to Compostela, Spain. A modern sign by the door of the church as well as an old statue of Santiago above and to the left of the door recall this. Several elements make it clear that the family spent more funds on decorating their part of the church than the people did. The vaulting of the nave is of oak and has eight beautifully carved figures at the base of the ceiling. The vaulting of the sanctuary, however, is carved stone. The windows in the nave are plain, those in the sanctuary more elegant. The floor of the sanctuary is marble, while that of the nave is stone and brick. In both parts of the building there are traces of paint on the columns, and painted crosses recall the bishop's consecration of the church.
Virgin and child, floral rosary, Folleville

The sanctuary area, the "choir," was added to the church to serve as the mortuary chapel of the lords of Folleville. It is dedicated to Saint John the Baptist. In earlier years, it was separated from the nave by a wooden altar screen, a jubé, taken down at the Revolution. The items that follow describe the parts of the sanctuary, beginning on the left.

(1) The family niche, easily heated, used by the seigniorial family to attend mass. Old gate closings on its front are still visible. From it, they could look through the small opening directly onto the tomb of their ancestors.

(2) An elegant white marble sarcophagus of Raoul de Lannoy (d. 1513) and Jeanne de Poix (d. 1524). This is an excellent example of Renaissance work, carved in Genoa in 1507 by Antonio della Porta at the time when Raoul was governor of that city, and where he died. Among the elements to be noticed are the letters R and J intertwined, a Pietà, Saints Anthony, Sebastian and Adrian, and the representation of the beheading of John the Baptist (patron of Jeanne). Above is the coronation of the Virgin; she is depicted as surrounded with a floral rosary. This rosary, in medieval fashion, is made of wild roses, with five petals each, the only kind of rose in France before hybridizing. Below are four children weeping, holding the epitaph and the coats-of-arms of the families. Representations of skulls are numerous. The tombs were emptied during the seventeenth-century wars of religion. Raoul and Jeanne were the great-great-grandparents of the Lannoy family sarcophagus, Folleville.
of Marguerite de Silly, Madame de Gondi.

(3) The tomb of François de Lannoy (d. 1548), son of Raoul, and Marie de Hangest, pictured kneeling, carved from local stone. Above the figures on the wall behind are carved heads. Below on the lowest register are the four cardinal virtues. This tomb is surrounded with a fine marble frame in Renaissance style. Both tombs have the figures facing the niche that used to hold the sepulcher of Jesus. This couple were the great-grandparents of Madame de Gondi.

(4) Above the funerary niche and under the central window are angels bearing the instruments of
the Passion. In the center is the risen Christ appearing as a gardener to Saint Mary Magdalene. He holds a shovel, symbolic of his nourishment of the tree of life. This shovel is typical of the time and the region: although stone, it depicts a handle and blade of oak, with a small crescent of wrought iron on its lower edge. The carved sepulcher of Jesus that used to repose here was removed in 1634 to the parish church of Joigny, the main seat of the Gondi family, when Pierre, Marguerite’s son, sold the Folleville castle. It follows the same style as the marble sarcophagus mentioned above.

(5) The main window, the crucifixion, dates from the sixteenth century. On the right hand is a mounted soldier—a portrait of François de Lannoy, shown wearing his golden chain of office. In its upper registers angels appear with the instruments of the Passion. The ceiling vaults are richly decorated, recalling the sculptures of the tomb of Lannoy and Poix. The artist responsible for the window also did those in the neighboring village of Paillart.

(6) The niche used for the wine and water for mass is a sixteenth-century work, adorned with the initials of Raoul de Lannoy and his wife.

(7) Next to the niche and high in the wall is a small iron door, the remainder of a sixteenth-century tabernacle for holy oils. The interior was finished in wood and still has traces of cloth glued to it.

(8) The present sacristy has some of the oldest paving stones in the church.

(9) A side chapel, containing a shrine of Saint Vincent de Paul, in imitation Gothic, bears the date 1899, with another representation of angels with the instruments of the Passion on the upper wall of the sanctuary. Inside the chapel are figures of saints representing the four cardinal virtues. To one side is an old door leading to a tower; it also gave access to the jubé. This area was formerly the sacristy, and the remains of an outer door, now blocked up, can be seen in the left-hand wall. It gave the family access to their part of the church.

(10) Above is a modern window,
dated 1869, the design of Charles Bazin. Its upper section features several words written on scrolls: Meekness, Simplicity, Humility, Zeal, Mortification, Religion; and then two titles of Saint Vincent in Latin: Cleri Pares, Pater Pauperum (Parent of the Clergy, Father of the Poor). There are four figured sections: (a) Vincent hearing the confession of the dying peasant at Gannes; with the text in French: "25 January, day of the Conversion of Saint Paul;" (b) the conversion of Saint Paul, the feast day with the first sermon of the Mission; the text reads: "The conversion of a notable inhabitant of Gannes;" (c) Vincent preaching at Folleville; with the text: "Saint Vincent de Paul preaches the sermon of his first mission at Folleville," which also pictures the jubé; and (d) Vincent teaching the three Gondi children, with the text: "Tutor of the three sons of Monsieur Philip Emmanuel de Gondi, lord of the area." It should be noted, however, that this responsibility lasted only until Vincent's return from Châtillon and, that, furthermore, only Pierre, the oldest son, born in 1606, was of an age to profit from the saint's teaching. The others,Henri (b. 1612) and Jean François Paul (b. 1613), were probably too young for him and would have been in the care of others.

Below these pictures are the emblem and motto of the Congregation of the Mission (text: "On 25 January 1617, Saint Vincent de Paul projects the establishment of the priests of the Mission"); Cardinal de Retz archbishop of Paris (text: "The Cardinal archbishop of Paris approves the Congregation of the Mission"); the Daughters of Charity (text: "In 1633 the institution of the Daughters of Charity took place"); and Urban VIII (text: "On 15 March 1655, Pope Urban VIII approves the institution of the Priests of the Mission"). (The windows are not in the right order to correspond with the texts below them, since they were taken down and repaired and put back incorrectly—[a] and [b] being inverted.)

(11) Across the sanctuary, on the wall, is a tablet commemorating
donors from the Congregation of the Mission and others to this Vincentian shrine, together with a statue of John Gabriel Perboyre, who visited here while he was teaching at Montdidier before his ordination.

(12) The *high altar* dates only from 1874. On it, however, is displayed a small wooden statue of Vincent, dating from the eighteenth century. The style and gestures of this piece are unusual, and its provenance is unknown.

In the nave are the following elements, from left to right beginning at the door of the church.

(13) The *confessional*, apparently dating from the early seventeenth century, in earlier days faced the pulpit. Vincent may have gestured toward it during his mission sermon of 1617. It more probably dates, however, from his second mission in 1620.

(14) The marble *baptismal font*, carved in 1547 for the baptism of Louis de Lannoy. It is mounted on a pedestal of local stone. On the exterior of the basin are four coats-of-arms and the Lannoy chain of office.

(15) The *paintings* on the walls are copies of those prepared for Vincent's canonization. They hung
previously in the Vincentian house at Montdidier until their transfer here in 1913.

(16) An old crucifix was removed from the jubé and placed on the wall facing the pulpit. It was painted (again?) in the seventeenth century. Two statutes accompanying it were stolen in 1970.

(17) The stone statue of Saint James the Greater replaced, in the sixteenth century, the original one brought from Spain by one of the lords, Jean de Folleville, who had made a pilgrimage there. The present statue has often been repainted but keeps its original colors. It sits in a niche, the remains of an old staircase that led to the jubé. With the decline of the use of this altar screen, it began to fall into disrepair, and all that remains of it are some pieces of vaulting visible on the walls. It was replaced by the next item.

(18) The oak pulpit was carved in Montdidier. Recent research has shown that this in all likelihood is not the pulpit where Vincent preached what he later recalled as the first sermon of the Mission, since it appears to date from 1620. Philippe Emmanuel de Gondi and his wife gave this pulpit to the church after their chaplain returned from his brief pastorate in Châtillon, perhaps as a way of locally implementing the decrees of the Council of Trent. This old pulpit, with a seat inside, was restored in 1868. It stands on a small carved leg in the Louis XIII style. Six panels, sculpted with various designs, constitute the body of the pulpit. The back board was replaced in the eighteenth century, and a carved inscription dates from 1868: “On January 25, Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, 1617, Saint Vincent de Paul preached his first sermon of the Mission in this pulpit. It was repaired with the help of the Congregation of the Mission in 1868.” An iron grille was added at that time to protect the pulpit from the pious pilgrims who had, over the centuries, removed parts of it for their own devotion. At the foot of the pulpit are two carved stone portraits. The head facing right is that of Raoul de Lannoy.

(19) The pews probably date from 1620, ordered at the same time as the pulpit. Before Vincent’s time, men and women were separated in the body of the church, each group with its own altar. The men remained on the right, and their altar was dedicated to James. This altar also served as the main altar for the parishioners. The women were on the left, and their altar had Mary as patron. A niche (piscine) in the wall by the pulpit, used for holding wine and water, gives an idea where one altar was placed. These two altars blocked the view of the high altar, but it should be remembered that the church building was divided into two sections:
Outside the church, the differing rooflines demonstrate the various ages of the buildings. Also the statue of Mary, fourteenth century, probably comes from the previous church building. She holds the child Jesus on her right arm, but his figure has been partially removed. The small round section held the staircase leading to the altar screen. Below the statue of Santiago by the main entrance is an old sundial, useful in times when clocks were rare.

The De Lannoy family may take its name from the river, La Noye, which runs in the region. In any case, one branch of the family is named Delano, associated with Franklin Delano Roosevelt (d. 1945), president of the United States. His widow Eleanor came to visit this ancestral area in 1952.

By the front door of the church

(20) The graffito scratched into the wall to the right of the pulpit. This is barely legible but recalls the gift of an ex-voto, placed here by a parishioner after a pilgrimage to Compostela.

(21) The stone statue of Saint Sebastian over the back door, now unused, is very old.

(22) The carved figures at the lower end of the ceiling vault, mentioned above, are difficult to identify. One is clearly Santiago, known from the scallop shell on his cap. Others are grimacing, bearded, nude, etc., but their meaning is not known.

Aerial view, Castle, Folleville

The more elaborate (closed off with a gate in the jubé) belonged to the lords, who had their own chaplain, and the older and more common part belonged to the people, who had their own pastor—doubtless a cause of confusion.
Votive chapel, Folleville

stand the remains of an old gate, leading into the castle. Directly on the left is a modern building replacing an ancient pilgrim hospice. Originally a wooden structure situated on a mound, a stone castle gradually took shape. The major work dates from the eleventh or twelfth century. Jean de Folleville, at one time ambassador to Spain, restored the castle in the late fourteenth century. At its greatest extent, twice the present size, the castle was surrounded by a dry moat, with access guaranteed by a drawbridge. It was well decorated inside, plastered and hung with tapestries, a luxurious setting, although this is difficult to perceive today. The inner section of the castle, the donjon (the “keep”), is most of what is visible today and dates from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. At various times it held prisoners, and some of the graffiti they left became visible during archaeological excavations carried out in the 1930s. Large fireplaces are still in evidence, proof of the need to warm the main rooms in the winter. The family had rooms on the upper floors around a central hall. The large circular tower room on the right was that traditionally used by the priest, and therefore by Vincent. The large tower on the left enclosed the kitchen, and below it are storage rooms, restored in 1996. The castle did not fall into ruins but was intentionally demolished by the count of Mailly, one of its owners, to acquire materials for the Château of Mailly-Raineval, a process that began in 1777. The Vincentians, who purchased the castle in the early twentieth century, sold it in 1965. Since 1988, a local association has worked to preserve and improve it.

To one side in the garden is the Pavillon, a former residence for the caretakers of the castle, dating from before the time of the Gondis. Recent archaeological work has shown that some ceiling beams from the castle were reused in this house. Some are decorated and bear the
painted initials AM, probably for Antoine de Silly and his wife Marie de Lannoy, the parents of Madame de Gondi. The building now houses a small museum.

To the southwest of the town can be seen, when weather permits, the outlines of the Roman camp. This large camp had much to do with the eventual development of the hillside town now called Folleville. Along an old Roman road (the chemin de la Chapelle) lying below the town is a tiny votive chapel, originally dedicated to Saint Vincent de Paul. It is dated, in its present condition, to 1880.

One of the villages belonging to Madame de Gondi was Gannes, a few kilometers south of Folleville and which today, with 300 inhabitants, is larger than Folleville. Abelly tells us that it was there that she learned of an elderly man wishing to go to confession. Vincent heard his confession. The dying man was so grateful that he announced widely that he would have been condemned to eternal punishment had it not been for this general confession. Vincent took the occasion on the following feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, 25 January 1617, probably during a mission, to preach to the parishioners of Folleville on the subject. This led, at least in the founder's mind, to the founding of the Congregation of the Mission. Vincent had, however, promoted and heard general confessions during the missions that he gave before this time. His most important achievement, therefore, was ultimately to move the Gondis to endow a congregation to continue this work,

something they did in 1625.

Local tradition makes the dying man the miller, and the ruins of the old mill can still be seen. There was also a chateau here, but few traces remain of it.

The church in Gannes, set on a small hill, is a Gothic building, with well-carved hanging keystones in the arches of the sanctuary. The building has been much restored and added to. On the outside is a sundial dated 1660. Inside the church are the following:

(1) Statue of Saint Vincent de Paul and a plaque installed in the 1940s by the pastor of Folleville to com-
memorate Vincent’s ministry in Gannes. The date of December 1616 appears, but it could as easily have been January 1617. Another statue of him is in the sanctuary.

(2) The heart of François de Lannoy, lord of Gannes. He was the great-grandfather of Madame de Gondi, and his heart was entrusted to this church, while his body was buried at the Folleville church. A long inscription on a marble plaque near the statue of Saint Vincent commemorates the event. It names, among other things, his lands, including Folleville, Paillart and Sérévillers.

(3) The jubé was a grille surmounted with a crucifix. The grille has been removed, but traces of it can be seen on the choir stalls in the sanctuary. The old crucifix remains, probably dating from the seventeenth century.

(4) The pews, from the seventeenth century, accommodate about 200.

(5) The baptismal font, in carved local stone, which might well be seventeenth century.

A short distance east from the church is the little chapel of Our Lady of Bon Secours (traditionally translated as Prompt Succor). This wayside shrine dates from the Middle Ages. In 1689, the chapel was repaired to commemorate an event in the village. Two men bringing their goods from Beauvais had threatened a young village girl with abuse. She was able to escape through the help of the Blessed Virgin, who caused villagers to come to her aid. The criminals left their horses and cart behind; these were sold and provided the funds for the shrine. A pilgrimage grew up which continues to this day. Inside the chapel are old statues of Mary, and Saints Joachim and Anne, along with various offerings to the shrine. On the front of the chapel are the Latin inscriptions: Regina Angelorum and Salus Infirmorum, “Queen of Angels” and “Health of the Sick.” This old chapel has no real connection with Vincent, although he probably passed by it and prayed here on his travels.
HEILLY

During the years of Vincent's stay with the Gondis at Folleville, a cousin of Monsieur de Gondi, Marie, lived at the chateau of Heilly with her husband, Louis de Pisseleu. Heilly is a few kilometers northeast of Amiens. An old tradition has it that Vincent came here with the Gondi boys in his charge to visit their cousin Marie. During these visits, he probably strolled their property and prayed at the chapel of an old priory located here, Saint Laurent des Bois.

One day he heard the sound of clashing swords coming from a clearing and discovered two noble guests of the chateau fighting a duel. Managing to calm the duellers Vincent effected a reconciliation. Marie de Gondi had a cross erected there in 1617 to recall the event.

Some time later, again according to documents whose present whereabouts are unknown, Vincent blessed the chapel of the cemetery at the chateau. This took place in 1625 and might have happened in connection with a mission that he preached in the area. This little chapel has disappeared, as has most of the chateau. Some remains of the chapel were to be seen up until the end of the nineteenth century. In 1897, following a mission that Vincentians preached in the town, the local inhabitants undertook the erection of a new monument, the Calvaire de Saint Vincent, near where the previous one had stood. Vincent's presence here was celebrated in the course of the tercentenary of his death in 1960.

The monument consists of a large crucifix rising out of a grotto. Inside the grotto is a Pietà. Flanking the grotto are two statues: Saint Anne with the Virgin Mary, and Saint Vincent de Paul. This is located beside the parish church. (Rue de Grande Carrière) No signs in the town mention it, however, nor is there anything to explain the meaning of this unusual grouping of rocks and stairs, grotto and crucifix, and two somewhat dilapidated statues. The town itself has fewer than 500 people.

A purely local tradition connects Vincent with Albert, a larger town a few kilometers east. Daughters of Charity came here to staff a hospital and school beginning in 1697 and lasting until the Revolution. Like most of the town, it was destroyed or replaced after two world wars. (Rue Tien-Tsin) The site of the shrine of Sainte Marie de Brebières, its parish church, dedicated in 1896, preserves the memory of yet another miraculous statue discovered by a shepherd. A side altar in Vincent's honor recalls his presence here. The bust of him over the altar follows a possible, but disputed, portrait of him said to be the work of Philippe de Champaigne.
A few kilometers south of Albert is **Bray-sur-Somme**. The Daughters of Charity came here to staff a hospital in 1700, located probably on the site of the Maison de Retraite near the parish church. One of the women who entered the Company from Bray was **Marie Antoinette Deleau**, the last superior general before the Revolution. When she had to leave Paris after dispersing the Sisters, she returned here. When the hospital was reopened on the last day of 1795, she was able to encourage the Sisters to resume their work in the hospital, but in lay clothes. **Jeanne Antide Thouret** had also served in the hospital for several months from 1791 to 1793, when she too left for her home. A large portrait of her adorns the parish church.

**LIANCOURT**

Although Vincent came here at least once, Louise came here often. Her purpose was to visit and help the Confraternity of Charity, established here in 1635, and the Daughters of Charity. The duchess of Liancourt, **Jeanne de Schomberg (1600-1674)**, endowed the Charity, a seminary, and other good works. Their family chateau has been demolished. Today, the town has a population of about 6500.

One intriguing document mentions Vincent's presence on 10 or 11 June 1635, when Vincent was asked to help resolve a legal matter, probably as an external mediator. Two men, perhaps brothers, shared parts of the same building. One wanted to block up a window that allowed the other man look into his brother's private family courtyard. The case was resolved, and a formal document was signed and duly witnessed before the local notary. Many such documents must have existed at one time. Vincent, as the prior of Saint Lazare, had responsibility for the execution of justice.
on his property, and perhaps he was invited to take part in this case for that reason.

Daughters of Charity arrived in 1636. Their years here were difficult, in particular because of some calumny spread about the sisters. Coste reports that their confessor accepted the evil said about them and told them to find another: "You come here and accuse yourself of little faults and conceal enormous sins; look for some other confessor, for I have no absolution to give you or your two companions." (Life, I, 416-17) Their mission here terminated after 1652.

The rules for the Liancourt Charity are in existence but have apparently not been published. The parish church, dedicated to Saint Martin, does not, however, have the traditional painting of the "Lord of Charity," sent to some, if not all the Charities in Vincent's lifetime.

Eventually, the duchess and her husband took the side of the Jansenist party, probably out of their religious devotion. This turned them away from Vincent. He undoubtedly had them in mind when he spoke to his conferees of two persons, who had once lived holy and self-sacrificing lives, but who had allowed themselves to be carried away by Jansenist opinions. It reminded him simply of hell: that is, they had rejected the supernatural order of things (submission to the pope) to cling to the human order (trusting their own thinking). (Conference of 27 April 1657)

Also, Vincent mentioned that Louise should "take the waters" here at Liancourt. (Letter 616) However, since Liancourt is not known for its thermal springs, this strange expression probably refers to her traveling upstream by a water taxi on the waters of the Oise, a common mode of transport.

MONTDIDIER

The town of Montdidier, some 100 kilometers north of Paris, with a current population of about 6000, lies in the department of the Somme. The Congregation of the Mission presided over the direction of the Ecole Saint Vincent, a collège or boarding high school, from the year 1818 until 1903. In that year, the French government dismissed all religious communities from their teaching positions. During those 85 years, the Congregation worked with devotion at the task of educating young men.

The town takes its name from Didier, king of the Lombards, imprisoned here by the Normans. For centuries, the Benedictine priory of Saint Pierre, founded from Cluny, assured education for boys. This ceased at the Revolution. The new foundation dates from 1804, when the buildings again received students. In 1806, the Fathers of the Faith (Pères de la Foi) took the school over, but they remained only until 1814. In 1818, at the initiative of Pierre De Wailly, at the time Vincentian superior of the major seminary at Amiens, the Congregation reopened the school. (De Wailly was the first superior general after the Revolution but remained in office only 22 months, from January 1827 until his death in October 1828.) Over the years, the Vincentians undertook large construction projects to accommodate
the needs of a school: classrooms, dormitories, dining room and kitchen, chapel, etc.

Of greater interest is the presence of John Gabriel Perboyre in this school. He was sent here in the autumn of 1824 as a subdeacon and after having completed his theological studies in Paris. He lived in a little room over the chapel. While here, he had charge of the younger students. To nourish their piety, he directed a little sodality, the Congregation of the Holy Angels. Working through it, he was able to care for his students' spiritual development. In his second year, he was assigned to teach a course in philosophy for the oldest class, a task he performed well. He found himself quite busy, from 4:00 in the morning to 9:00 or 10:00 at night. At the conclusion of this second year, John Gabriel returned to Paris to prepare for his ordination. Bishop Louis William Dubourg, who had earlier invited the first Vincentians to the United States, ordained him a priest. In his last years, this Sulpician bishop had returned to France. Dubourg ordained John Gabriel in the chapel of the motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, on 23 September 1826. Besides Saint John Gabriel Perboyre, the college also numbered among its alumni many other important personages, including bishops and generals.

The town suffered greatly during the first World War and was left nearly in ruins in 1918. Consequently, nothing remains today of the old school buildings, except the pre-existing ramparts and gardens used by the Benedictines. The tax office, dating from the twelfth century, faces the school, now renamed the Ecole du Prieuré.

The parish church of Saint Peter, named after the monastery, was rebuilt after the first World War but faithfully copies the fourteenth-century church. Inside is a side altar in honor of Saint Vincent. The modern statue of him, carved in 1952, matches others in the church. In the same side chapel is a plaque recalling the history of the college. At the bottom are two brass plaques inset into marble, with the heads of Saint Vincent and John Gabriel Perboyre. Each also has a small embedded relic.

Other noteworthy items are the tomb of Raoul of Crepy (d. 1074), the polychrome stone Entombment of Christ (about 1550), a fine Romanesque figure of Christ in the sanctuary, and the ancient baptismal font (eleventh century).

The Daughters of Charity also had works in Montdidier. A school for the poor opened in 1777, and resumed in 1818, the year the Vincentians arrived. The Sisters also ran the town hospital,
beginning in 1824, probably lasting until about 1905.

Because of the success of the school here, the authorities in nearby Roye invited the Vincentians to take charge of a boys school. They began in 1826 on the promise of funds from the town to help with the expenses. When these did not arrive, the priests left, 1 September 1834. A notable event was that the body of Saint Vincent was moved in great secrecy to Roye from Paris during the 1830 revolution. The Vincentian community purchased a small house next to the school, built an oven, inserted the relics and then walled up the supposed oven. Here the relics remained until about April 1834, when conditions allowed their return to the Paris motherhouse chapel.

Local tradition associates Vincent himself with the pastor of Roye, Pierre Guérin. He had begun a small community of sisters, the Daughters of the Cross, to teach in his parish school. Vincent took a hand in the examination of their founder, accused of spreading false doctrine. He acquitted Guérin, remained his friend and confidant and aided the sisters.

MOUY

According to his biographer Pierre Collet, Vincent came here in 1647, in his mid-sixties, to give a mission and found a Confraternity of Charity. The church of Saint Léger, in this town of the diocese of Beauvais, dates to the thirteenth century. It suffered much during the wars of religion as well as during the Revolution. The lord of Mouy, Louis de Vaudrey, became one of the Calvinist leaders but was assassinated in 1569. The sanctuary of the church was given to Protestants during that period, while the body of the church served as a stable. Catholics had to build a small chapel elsewhere. In Collet's time, about a century after its foundation, the Confraternity was still flourishing. During the Revolution, the parish church was used for political meetings and also for some small manufacturing. Perhaps because of these difficult events, there is no memorial of Vincent's passage here. The town today numbers some 5000 inhabitants.

NOYON*

Noyon, an Ancient Roman city of strategic importance, has alternated between glory and suffering over the centuries. On 9 October 768 Charles-magne was crowned in the Noyon cathedral as king of Neustria, the western part of the Frankish dominions. Hugh Capet, the first king of France, was also crowned here. John Calvin, the reformer, was born here in 1509 and, although not a priest, held a canonry here until 1534.
During the Revolution, the great cathedral saw its sanctuary turned into a dance hall and the nave into grain stores. The porch suffered as well. Vandals systematically removed every trace of the ancient carvings over the doors and the small statues that surrounded them. The exterior of the cathedral clearly shows the impact of the bombing during the first World War that virtually destroyed the building.

Vincentians first came here to help the clergy. The priests of the diocese had founded a clergy conference in 1637 on the model of the Tuesday Conferences in Paris. In 1643, some priests came from Saint Lazare to preach retreats. Vincentians returned in 1650, however, because of tragedy. Vincent sent his confreres throughout the regions of Picardy and Champagne to provide relief to the war-ravaged area. Beginning in 1655, the bishop of Noyon began to ask Vincent to send his confreres to staff the diocesan seminary. The founder deferred his response, and in the meantime the bishop died. His successor, after Vincent's death, received a positive response from René Alméra, the second superior general. The work of the seminary began in 1662, therefore, and continued until 1791.

The **seminary** was located on a piece of ground behind the cathedral, bounded by Rues Saint Pierre, Saint Jean and Charles de Gaulle. The parish church of Saint Pierre was on the same lot. At the time of the Revolution, the
Vincentians took in refractory priests, allowing them to live at the seminary and celebrate mass in the chapel. After the expulsion of the Vincentians, the buildings became a prison. The buildings were later sold and demolished. Nothing remains of what was regarded as a beautiful brick building, except for a few pieces of the wall and some foundations in brick and stone of a large building incorporated into another construction. The last superior was Simon Bruno Fontaine. When he had to leave, he fled the country for Italy and fled again when Napoleon arrived. Fontaine then moved to Ljubljana in modern Slovenia, where in 1805 he died of disease after his hospital ministry, a martyr of charity. Only one Vincentian at Noyon took the oath of Liberty and Equality. The other priests and brothers were deported or otherwise dispersed.

A pioneer Vincentian from the diocese of Noyon was Adrien Gambart (1600-1668). He was received at Saint Lazare in 1634, probably before his ordination. He left at some point but continued to enjoy good relations with Vincent, whom he admired greatly. Coste, mistakenly, identified Gambart as one of the first companions of Vincent and Antoine Portail, whom they paid a salary to for going with them on the missions. Gambart wrote a series of mission sermons regarded as typical of the simple style that Vincent espoused. These were published beginning in 1668. Vincent entrusted him with various responsibilities, such as being confessor of the Visitation nuns in Paris.

The Daughters of Charity also served in Noyon at the Hôtel Dieu, the local hospital. This institution, founded in 1178, remained in use until 1918. Its 740 years of service must be a record of some sort. The hospital has been taken down, but part of the cloister walk was restored in 1984-1987. (Rue de l'Hôtel Dieu) The sisters remained until the Revolution. Their house was located near the seminary. (6, rue Saint Pierre) Next door was the residence of Jean Louis Guyard de Saint Clair. This priest, a canon of the cathedral, was in Paris during the Revolution. He was among the number of those massacred on 2 September 1792 at the abbey of Saint Germain des Prés. Along with the Vincentian martyrs of Saint Firmin, and many others, he was beatified in 1926. A plaque outside his residence recalls his memory. Modern Noyon is a city of some 15,000 inhabitants.

South of Noyon is Attichy, today a town of about 1700 people. Its importance is twofold. First, it was the family seat of Louise's wealthy in-laws. The names of several of them figure in her correspondence, as they do in letters to and from Vincent. Louise's husband, with her approval, took charge of the minor children of two of their Attichy relatives, a charity which cost them considerable time and money, and which was not reciprocated. Second, the Daughters of Charity had a small community here beginning in 1656, where they served the sick poor and cared for the children, and probably remained until the Revolution. Louise may have visited Attichy and prayed in the local parish church, but there is no record of
this, nor anything in the church to commemorate the presence of the Sisters.

East of Noyon is La Fère, with 3000 inhabitants. Here the Daughters of Charity served in the hospital beginning in 1656. One of its outstanding superiors was Mathurine Guérin (1631-1704). Four times superior general, she had served in several houses of the Company, was Louise’s secretary, the directress of the seminary (or novice directress), and treasurer. Her term at La Fère, however, lasted only a few months in 1659 and 1660. This town, with its major military facilities, was nearly obliterated during the first World War. It has been largely rebuilt.

PAILLART, SÉRÉVILLERS

These two towns in Picardy, located on the estates of Madame de Gondi, are mentioned together, since Vincent founded early Confraternities of Charity here. The Confraternity was founded simultaneously for Folleville, Paillart and Sérévillers at the Paillart church. The first one was for women (11 October 1620) and, some two weeks later (23 October) another one for men. These foundations, it should be noted, took place before the foundation of the Congregation of the Mission (1625).

In Paillart, the Gothic parish church still stands. Its pews are old, probably contemporary with Vincent. The remains of its altar screen, the jubé, are visible, and now a wrought-iron screen marks its place. In 1867, Bazin, the same restorer who worked in Folleville, restored the late-medieval windows, dating from 1544. The windows in the two churches are consequently similar in artistic treatment. Despite Vincent’s presence here, there is nothing in the church to commemorate him. Paillart has about 600 inhabitants.

In Sérévillers, nothing commemorates Vincent’s ministry. The village numbers less than 100 people.

Old documents concerning Madame de Gondi mention the town of Saint Martin as her estate. Vincent probably would have visited there on his mission rounds. This parish, no longer existing, is today a part of Conty, a town of some 1500 persons.

SENLIS

Senlis, a city of some 15,000 people, received the Christian faith, it is said, as far back as the third century. Walls from that period are still visible. Its Gothic cathedral and quiet old streets give it a special character.

Vincent came to Senlis in 1636 to see Louis XIII, present with his troops. The king received him and asked for chaplains, whom Vincent had offered. The place of their meeting cannot be easily determined, since the king was
encamped. The occasion was an invasion of Spanish troops at the beginning of the French period of the Thirty Years War. Vincent sent some fifteen priests and brothers and wrote a short rule of conduct for them. He looked on the work of the chaplains as a sort of mission and had them conduct several others both at Saint Lazare and in the surrounding areas.

In 1641, an attempt was made at a foundation of the Congregation of the Mission in Senlis, but it did not take place. Daughters of Charity worked in a parish from 1682 and served in the hospital from 1696 to the Revolution. One of them was able to remain to care for the sick during that period, but only in lay clothes.

They had another foundation, beginning in 1641, at Nanteuil-le-Haudoin. The sisters here served in the hospital and kept a small school. They came at the invitation of Marie de Hautefort, duchess of Schomberg (1616-1691), sister-in-law of Madame de Liancourt, both Ladies of Charity. These great ladies, however, could provide them lodging only in the hospice alongside the beggars. The Rue de l'Hôtel-Dieu still exists, but its buildings are long gone.

SOISSONS

The city of Soissons, today with some 30,000 inhabitants, took its name from the Sequiones, a tribe of the Gauls. It later became a capital of the Frankish kingdom. Its splendid Gothic cathedral testifies to its continuing importance.

According to his biographer Collet, in 1621 Vincent made an important retreat here, perhaps in one of the abbeys in the city. Although nothing is known of either the exact date or the place, the retreat at Soissons helped him to master his temper. *I addressed myself to God to beg him earnestly to change this curt and forbidding disposition of mine for a meek and benign one. By the grace of our Lord and with some effort on my part to repress the outbursts of passion, I was able to get rid of my black disposition.* (Abelly 3, 163) In a letter written some years later, Vincent mentioned another benefit of this retreat. He had found himself too eager and too pleased with the idea of starting the Mission. During the retreat, he became more balanced in his approach. Consequently, his resolve to found a congregation, conceived at Montmirail, became more focused. His time in Soissons marked a starting point for his later works. (Letter 580)

Vincent sent his missionaries to help in the region of Soissons when it had been devastated by war. The Congregation of the Mission then had a house here from 1772 to 1791. This was the major and minor *seminary of Saint Léger*, founded in the old abbey of the same name. The work was begun again after the Revolution, and the Vincentians cared for it from 1859 to 1886, when it finally closed. The municipal museum occupies the buildings today.

Daughters of Charity had many houses in the diocese, both before and after the Revolution and continue their service here.