East
Fireplace, Labouré home,
Fain-lès-Moutiers
The region of Burgundy (Bourgogne), famous for its rich foods and wine, was well known to Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac. Both of them traveled and worked in this area. Vincent’s pioneering work, the Confraternities of Charity, and his emphasis on general confessions during missions, were refined in Burgundy. Catherine Labouré, the visionary of the Miraculous Medal, was born here and felt the influence of the work of the two founders.
ALISE-SAINTE-REINE

The name Alise is a later form of Alesia, the site of a battle between the Romans and Vercingetorix, a Gaul known from Julius Caesar's *Gallic Wars*. According to Christian tradition, a young virgin, Reine, suffered martyrdom in the town in the third century, whereupon a miraculous fountain sprang up. Even in the seventeenth century, the cult of this local saint drew many pilgrims, who used the waters for curative purposes. The water from this fountain was so appreciated that it was bottled and sent as far as Paris. Vincent, probably in 1658, agreed to found a pilgrims' hospice here. He did so with the help of Queen Anne, various Ladies of Charity, and the Company of the Blessed Sacrament. One letter to Vincent from Jean Desnoyers, the head of the hospice and one of its two founders, remains. (Letter 3157)

Opened in 1659, this was Vincent’s last foundation, but he did not live to see its completion.

The town itself, numbering about 650 people, is on the side of the great strategic plateau where the Romans built a fortress and town. A good museum displays the items uncovered in archaeological excavations. The hospice (or hospital) follows the standard model of small medieval hospitals, such as the one in Moutiers-Saint-Jean. That is, a chapel stands in the center, with the men's ward on one side, and that for women on the other. Large doors could open to allow the patients to assist at mass. *Jeanne Antide Thouret* spent a year here, 1788-1789. It is said that the Daughters of Charity took the civic oath at the Revolution and so were able to remain in service. Statues and relics of Saints Vincent de Paul, Louise de Marillac, Catherine Labouré and John Gabriel Perboyre have been placed in the chapel, still used for worship. Although part of the hospital is set aside for small exhibitions, the rest remains in service. In addition, the first rules of the hospital still exist, as well as a great store of archival materials. The Daughters served here until 1968, a tenure of 302 years.

On a lighter note, the renowned Canon Félix Kir (1876-1968) was born here. He became mayor of Dijon and bequeathed to French people a special...
aperitif modestly called the Kir. It is made of local white wine and crème de cassis from Dijon. This priest regularly served it to his guests.

**JOIGNY**

Philippe Emmanuel de Gondi (1581-1662) became count of Joigny on the death of his uncle Cardinal Pierre de Gondi (1533-1616). Vincent in his capacity as tutor and chaplain for the Gondis often stayed in this important family home. The church of Saint John, adjacent to the Gondi castle, was probably located on the site of a former monastery chapel dating from the tenth century. Stout walls later fortified the site, whose strategic value is clear from its location above the valley of the river Yonne. The church was dedicated on 28 May 1504 but was ruined by the great fire of 1530. It was then rebuilt, and its magnificent barrel vault ceiling dates from between 1557 and 1597. An arcade of bays supports this vault on each side and above the columns stand the apostles. During the Revolution, the church was given over to the worship of the goddess Reason. Some original stained glass windows remain, but aerial bombing destroyed the majority on 15 June 1940. The town has revived and today
Joigny has about 5000 inhabitants.

In a chapel on the right side is a noteworthy sculpture of the entombment of Christ, the work of Mathieu Laignel, a sixteenth-century artist. This piece had been in the parish church at Folleville, where Vincent would have seen it. It was located there behind the main altar. Pierre de Gondi (1606-1676), son of Philippe Emmanuel, had it removed in 1634 and brought to Joigny when he sold his parents' Folleville property. He placed it in the family castle where it remained to 1723, when it was moved to the church. The marble carvings recall those in Folleville. For example, the front of the sarcophagus depicts the profiles of Raoul de Lannoy and his wife. These statuary groups became popular in northern Europe after the
scourge of the Black Death in the late fourteenth century, which prompted new reflections on the sufferings and death of Jesus. Besides the main group, there are also three small statues of kneeling angels, holding armorial shields of the ancestral families of Madame de Gondi. Because of their size, they are not exhibited.

Near this sculpture is another of Adelais, countess of Joigny, dating from the thirteenth century. Her tomb, too, like the entombment sculpture, was transferred here centuries later, around 1892.

An altar honors Saint Vincent. The modern windows above it depict the chapel at the Berceau and his silver cof-fin at the motherhouse in Paris.

A castle has stood on this spot since 996; the monks who had previously lived here were removed at that time. Over the centuries the castle grew and the town with it. Together with the church, an earlier chateau burned down in 1530. The present chateau began in 1569 and became habitable after 1603, when Philippe Emmanuel’s brother Henri, Cardinal de Retz (1572-1622) bought it. Intricate Renaissance details give the building a sense of great dignity. The building, however, has remained unfinished. Once restored, the Gondi chateau will be open for visitors. Philippe Emmanuel de Gondi died in this castle after 35 years of priesthood but was
buried in Paris at the Oratorian church of Saint Magloire, now demolished.

A staircase behind the castle leads to the street below. A house identified as that where Vincent stayed is now a private home, not open to the public. (10, rue Dominique Grenet) A plaque identifies it: “Saint Vincent de Paul lived in this house.” His visits here can be precisely dated up to 1618. He made others in 1628 and 1629 and gave a mission lasting four months in 1638-1639. His confreres also gave missions in Joigny and throughout the region, as they were required to do in virtue of the foundation that the Gondis established. This work continued at least until the early 18th century.

Outside the gate in front of the
church is the bailiff's house, the most impressive timbered house in Joigny. It was built after the fire of 1530, with many Renaissance details. Unfortunately, the bomb that destroyed the stained glass in the church also destroyed the façade of this house. It has been rebuilt, but the side on Ruelle haute Saint Jean is original. Vincent would have passed it often and possibly entered since the bailiff in the founder's time signed the document establishing the confraternity of Joigny.

Joigny also features the important church of Saint Thibault. Begun about 1450, it was completed in 1529, the year before the great fire. The tower was finished in the seventeenth century. The building contains important statuary and other works of art. A window recalls Vincent's presence: "In memory of the Confraternity of the Ladies of Charity of Joigny, 1613." This confraternity, the third that he founded, covered the whole town and included as members the pastors of Saint Thibault and the two other parishes. The window is dated 1927.

The church is also important as the baptismal church of Madeleine Sophie Barat (1779-1865). She was born in Joigny—her birthplace is preserved and may be visited—and was baptized the following day, 12 December 1779. She made her first communion in this same church in 1789. Stained glass and marble plaques record these events. Her brother Louis studied at the Saint Firmin seminary in Paris, the former Bons Enfants. Madeleine Sophie went on to found the Society of the Sacred Heart. One of the sisters of the Society, Philippine Duchesne (1769-1852), founded the first house of the community in the diocese of Saint Louis, Missouri, in the United States. Philippine Duchesne knew and
esteemed Felix De Andreis, the first Vincentian superior in America. She was canonized in 1988. Mother Barat, as she was called, was canonized in 1925. (11, rue Davier)

The third parish of Joigny was Saint André, now no longer used. (Place de la Republique) Its pastor was one of the three who, under the guidance of Vincent de Paul, founded the confraternity of women (1618) and then the mixed confraternity of men and women (1621).

The headquarters of the confraternity was the chapel of the Saint Antoine Hospital, a foundation dating from the twelfth century. This was part of a larger building, some of whose walls are still standing. After the Revolution, hospital services were transferred to another old establishment, still in use across the Yonne (avenue Gambetta), and the Saint Antoine buildings became first a secondary school (1848-1968), and later a music school. The old chapel is now the city’s school of dance. (24, rue saint Jacques). Vincent also received two houses from members of the confraternity for various charitable uses. (Maison de Charité, 2 bis and adjoining house, rue du Four Banal) This charitable work lasted from 1620 to 1661.

The city also has a church of Saint Vincent de Paul. Begun in 1960 to serve a new housing development, it recalls Vincent’s presence among and care for the people of Joigny.

Vincent also went at least once to the Carthusian monastery, Valprofonde, located near Joigny, on the south side of the Yonne. Some seven kilometers from the river is Béon and, two kilometers farther south on D943, a small access road leads to the farm, still called Les Chartreux (the Carthusians). The present buildings, while old, probably are not the original Carthusian foundation,
which would normally have a distinct architecture allowing for a semi-eremitic life for the monks. Vincent recalled the advice given him during his retreat, which helped him overcome temptations he suffered while hearing confessions. (Letter 477)

The small town of Villecien is a short distance west of Joigny. A pastor, Jean Maurice, was the first moderator of the Confraternity of Charity of Joigny. The name of the town also appears once in Vincent's correspondence. (Letter 23, February 1628) He was here after giving a mission on one of the estates of Antoine Hennequin, Sieur of Vincy (d. 1645). His father had built the family castle, still standing, and it is likely that Vincent stayed in the castle. Monsieur de Vincy, as he was called, continued to befriend and support the saint. Indeed, on his deathbed he received permission to join the Congregation of the Mission, and was buried in the Saint Lazare chapel. His sister, Isabelle Du Fay (also Du Fey or Fays, d. 1635) lived here as well. Both were close confidants of Louise and Vincent, perhaps because they were related to her through Michel de Marillac, her uncle. The parish church generally preserves the appearance it had in Vincent's day. Its elaborate presidential chair and baptismal fonts were there in his time. Members of the Hennequin family were also the lords of Clichy when Vincent was pastor there.

Local tradition also associates Vincent with Paroy-sur-Tholon, a small town south of Joigny on D955, probably one of several depending on the Confraternity of Charity in Joigny.

Nothing exists in the town or in the parish church to recall his ministry.

South of Joigny is Saint-Fargeau. Daughters of Charity came here to work in the hospital and opened a small school. They arrived in 1657 at the initiative of the duchess of Montpensier, Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans (1627-1693). She had been a rebel leader in the Fronde and is known for opening the gates of Paris to the prince of Condé's army. This act was ultimately fruitless, as the Parisians rejected the rebels and welcomed the king, his mother and Cardinal Mazarin back in their midst. The life of the Daughters in Saint-Fargeau was attractive enough to draw several others to join their Company. Their house, already old when they arrived, is still standing and serves as a retirement home. The town today numbers fewer than 2000 persons. (Maison de retraite, rue du Moulin de l'Arche, and rue de l'Hôpital)

Mâcon*

It was probably on a visit to Châtillon in 1619 or 1620 that Vincent passed by Mâcon. By that date he was already chaplain general of the galleys and thus a person of some importance. He came across many poor people on the streets, probably because they had heard that the Aumône, the local charitable confraternity, was dispensing help. Since the confraternity no longer could manage to do so, and perhaps with the support of the Oratorians, with whom he had been associated previously in Paris, Vincent spent a week reorganizing it. He returned and helped it further by
Vincent serving the poor,
Saint Pierre church, Mâcon

joining his Confraternity of Charity with
the Aumône. Afterwards, the new group
was called the Association of Saint
Charles of Christian Charity. During this
latter visit, which lasted three weeks or a
month, he stayed with the Oratorians in
the new seminary, near the Cathedral.
These details come from Father
Guillaume Desmoulins, the Oratorian
superior. He likewise described how the
poor were also to go to confession
monthly and fulfill other religious obli-
gations.

Vincent, too, described it to Louise.
When I set up the Charity in Mâcon,
everyone made fun of me and would point
at me in the streets, but when the deed was
accomplished, everyone wept for joy. The
town magistrates paid me so much honor
on my departure that not being able to
stand it, I was compelled to leave in secret
to avoid the applause. (Letter 198c) The
Charity of Mâcon was one of the oldest
in France and became a model cited by
the French clergy at their 1670 assembly
in Pontoise. It is unknown whether
Vincent ever returned to Mâcon after
this time.

To honor Vincent, a side chapel of
the church of Saint Pierre recalls his
activity with a large mural painting of
him as well as two stained glass win-
dows. The left window quotes from the
rules: “The purpose of this assembly is to
be able to help the poor.” The right win-
dow reads “St. Vincent de Paul began
this charity on 16 September 1621 in the
church of St. Nizier.” More historically
important is the original painting by
Jean François de Troy of Vincent preach-
ing. This was one of the series painted
for his canonization that hung in the
original Saint Lazare. It is found in the
left apse. This church, however, was built
only in 1865, in neo-Romanesque style.
(Place Saint Pierre)

The patron of the cathedral, Saint
Vincent, is not Vincent de Paul but
rather the patron of winegrowers, since Mâcon is in an important wine-growing area. This Saint Vincent Cathedral, opened in 1816, was built under Napoleon I, and was originally called Saint Napoleon, an ancient martyr (Neopolus of Alexandria) whose feast was joined to that of the Assumption, 15 August, beginning in 1806. It was later altered to Saint Louis when Louis XVIII came to power, and then to Saint Vincent, the title it keeps. The Old Saint Vincent has kept some of the parts of a medieval church but has largely been rebuilt.

The church of Saint Nizier, mentioned in the foundation records of the confraternity, no longer exists, having been demolished shortly after the Revolution. It was probably located where the Musée Lamartine now stands. It was an annex of the church of Saint Pierre le Vieux, and a chapel of the Penitents in the seventeenth century. The Ladies of Charity too assembled there for their spiritual nourishment.

The old Hospital of the Charity also recalls Vincent’s work in Mâcon. Its famous “turn” is visible from inside and outside the building. Originally a feature of cloistered convents, it came to be used for those who were abandoning children. They placed them in it, pivoted the “turn” toward the inside and then notified the hospital personnel by ringing a bell. Abandoning children here offered a better future than leaving them outside a church in the cold, where someone might steal them or the children might die of exposure. (249, rue Carnot)

At the Revolution the hospital became a prison for elderly priests who had refused to take the constitutional oath. The Revolutionary cult, Theophilaanthropism, was moved to the hospital chapel here in 1796, but the chapel reverted quickly to the parish, which used it beginning in 1802. The Sisters of Charity of Nevers directed the hospital from 1804 to 1973. The building itself was built from 1752 to 1762. The structure replaced an earlier one set up in 1680 in memory of the original Charity Vincent founded in 1620. Although the intriguing “turn” does not date from Vincent’s period, it is nevertheless one of the rare specimens still in existence and illustrates a dark chapter of history. Modern Mâcon has around 40,000 inhabitants.

Vincent’s fame had preceded him to Mâcon, as we read in a document dated September 1621. The town officials knew that “a pious priest of the general of the galleys” had acted as he had previously done in “Trévoux and in other surrounding towns.” (Doc. 134) A confraternity at Trévoux, a few kilometers southwest of Châtillon, may show that Vincent’s work extended farther...
than just his parish. In any case, nothing is known about his activities here or elsewhere in the district apart from this enigmatic reference.

The great abbey church of Tournus, mentioned above as the titular abbey of Louis de Chandenier (d. 1660), is still standing, a few kilometers north of Mâcon. Vincent likely came to visit as he passed through the region of Mâcon. The institution ceased to be a monastery in 1627, and thereafter a series of secular priests became its titular abbots. Louis III de Rochechouard, as he is listed in the abbey church, held the post only from 1645 to 1647. After this time, he apparently had some rights to a pension and so continued to be called the abbot of Tournus. This priest was so attached to the Congregation of the Mission that he asked and received permission on his deathbed to join the community. Daughters of Charity served the poor in the hospital here from 1764 until the Revolution, and then again from 1853 until about 1900. The tenth-century abbey church and its grounds still dominate this town of about 7000 people.

MOUTIERS-SAINT-JEAN*

The village of Moutiers-Saint-Jean is the site of a former monastery (or moutiers). A local saint, John of Rhéaume (or Réôme) began a monastic life nearby. After his death about the year 540, his followers moved his body to Moutiers, a more suitable location. One of the monks of this ancient abbey, Aurelian, wrote the first treatise applying the rules of Greek and Latin composers to the music of the Church. This happened about the year 850. Another date of great importance was about the year 1020, when the liturgical feast of the Blessed Trinity was inaugurated here. This monastery was partly destroyed at the time of the Revolution, and historic pieces of it, particularly from the chapel, were sold at public auction. Some of them reached museums in the United States. What remains has been turned over for housing. The Jardins du Coeur du Roy, the elegant abbey garden, a Renaissance design, can still be seen outside the walls of the monastic enclosure.

Claude Charles de Rochechouart de Chandenier (d. 1710), formerly abbot of l'Aumône, in the commune of La Colombe, in 1655 became the abbot of
Moutiers-Saint-Jean. His life from 1650 to 1660 is frequently and easily confused with that of his brother Louis, the (titular) abbot of Tournus. Their mutual love and affection was such they did not wish to be separated, although each one was offered a bishopric. Both of them named Vincent, for whom they had a great respect, as their vicar general. He thus had responsibilities toward the abbeys that the brothers governed, here at Moutiers and at Tournus, which would have let him name pastors for the parishes dependent on Moutiers. Unfortunately, no documents to this effect survive. Vincent held these offices from October 1650 to June 1652. Claude died 18 May 1710, and Collet, Vincent's second biographer, quotes the text of his long epitaph. (Vol. 1, pp. 584-88) In the chapel of the former hospital hangs a rare early portrait of Saint Vincent. The work of Simon François, it portrays Vincent in choir dress and was probably made for Claude de Chandenier. It may likewise have been painted for him by one of the monks of the monastery. Claude de Chandenier is buried in this chapel.

It is believed that, on missionary journeys, Vincent might have visited the abbey. Even so, this would have been before Claude de Chandenier became its titular abbot. Perhaps because of his visit, a Confraternity of Charity existed here beginning 4 June 1656. Daughters of Charity apparently worked for the Charity beginning in 1660. On 4 March 1681, the bishop of Langres authorized the opening of a hospital (now a retirement home), with the help of the Mesdames Vernot. The Daughters of Charity took up this work around 1710.
During the Revolution, they remained, sometimes attending mass secretly in an attic. When the sisters withdrew from this house in the 1980s, they also left behind the famous portrait. In the former hospital, the pharmacy, with its antique containers for medicines, contains a porcelain pitcher and basin said to have belonged to Vincent, as well as a plate with an egg-cup and salt cellar attached, useful for serving the sick.

As a young girl, Catherine Labouré (1806-1876) used to attend mass in the hospital chapel. The young Catherine did not see the portrait of Vincent, since the sisters kept it in their common room. The circular relief of him on the façade of the chapel, however, was presented only in 1868. In addition, a small statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary is still to be seen. This statue, similar to the painting in Catherine’s parish church, before which she probably prayed as a child, was kept in the hospital chapel. Both the painting of Mary and the statue are based on a design by the popular sculptor Edme Bouchardon, the model that the archbishop of Paris chose for the Miraculous Medal.

In the parish church a series of modern windows depicts events in the lives of local saints. These windows show Saints Benedict, Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac, and Catherine Labouré. She attended Sunday mass here and made her first communion in this
The town has fewer than 300 inhabitants.

A short distance away, up the D103 and astride an old crossroads, is Fain-lès-Moutiers. This was Catherine's home village. The Daughters of Charity have acquired her birthplace and some of the property and now welcome retreatants and other guests.

The home of the Labourés, one of the leading families of Fain, can be visited. The main room today was originally two rooms: the girls' room on one side and the other containing the kitchen and eating area, the center of the home. At one side is the original area where cheese was prepared; this has been left nearly as it was when the house was last pur-
chased. After the death of Catherine's mother and the departure of her older sister to enter the Daughters of Charity, Catherine took over the management of the family estate and was also a surrogate mother to her siblings. She was only twelve years old. Her parents' bedroom preserves pictures and items of furniture either from the family itself (the original cradle, a wardrobe) or from the period. The boys lived upstairs. In the farmyard is the large dovecote, Catherine's responsibility. The family raised the doves to sell in the market for their eggs and meat.

Across the road from the house is the Romanesque parish church. At various times the Labouré family cared for it. The infant Catherine was baptized here. A well-known and evocative painting of the Blessed Virgin (as the Immaculate Conception) is to be seen in the body of the church, where it has hung since before Catherine was born. It closely resembles the design on the Miraculous Medal. A side chapel was the special responsibility of her family. Stained glass windows in this chapel depict her and Saint Vincent de Paul. During his brief term as vicar of the abbot of Moutiers, Vincent was responsible for naming the pastor here. Records are lacking to show whether he ever named anyone.

Catherine often walked along the road leading from Fain to Moutiers-Saint-Jean to attend daily mass since in her days no resident priest lived in the village. Fain today has about 150 inhabitants.

A short distance north of Fain is Saint-Remy, home of Catherine's aunt and uncle, the Jeanrots. After the latter's death, and after the death of her own mother, Catherine lived with Aunt Marguerite (d. 1853) from the autumn of 1815 to early 1818. Because other relatives resided near by, Catherine has also been associated with visits to other villages: Vassy, Cormarin, and perhaps
Senailly, her mother’s birthplace.

When Catherine decided to enter the Daughters of Charity, she made her postulancy at the house in Châtillon-sur-Seine, at the source of the Seine some forty kilometers north of Fain. She had also stayed here from 1824 to 1826 with a cousin (7, rue Saint Vorel) before moving to Paris to help her brother as a waitress in his pub. She then returned to join the Sisters, but nothing remains of the house she entered on Rue de la Juiverie, except that its wrought-iron grilles are at the municipal library. After three months, in early 1830, she moved from here to Paris where she entered the novitiate at the Rue du Bac in mid-April.

SENS

The city of Sens has a long history. Its archbishop held the important title of Primate of the Gauls and Germany. The diocese of Paris too was subject to him until 1622, at which time Paris became an archdiocese in its own right. Nevertheless, Sens did not figure much in Vincent’s history. He did have some dealings with the archdiocese early in his career, since Joigny, the seat of the Gondis, was in its territory. In 1616 Vincent was giving missions on their lands and heard general confessions. When he met with cases reserved to the bishop, he wrote to ask general permission to grant absolution. All of this may appear overly legalistic, but it shows that he had already begun to preach missions and hear general confessions even before the foundation of the Congregation of the Mission (1625). Perhaps his experience at Gannes and Folleville (1617) urged him in this direction.

The date of Vincent’s visit to Sens is 20 June 1616, when he wrote for permission to absolve reserved cases. Since the vicar general wrote his reply on the same day, it appears likely that Vincent had delivered the petition in person. Otherwise, we know of no other time when he was in Sens.

Vincent’s congregation ran the seminary in Sens from 1675 to the Revolution and, in 1839, returned to the same seminary until the expulsion of 1903. Among its other responsibilities, in pre-Revolutionary times the seminary served as a clerical penitentiary. Another of its obligations was to serve the parish of Notre Dame de Sens. Daughters of Charity had an orphanage and various primary schools here beginning in 1854.

There is little if any reminder of Vincent in the great Gothic cathedral of Sens. For English speakers, the presence of the exiled archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Becket (1118-1170) at Sens is important. His memory remains alive here, and among the relics is Becket’s chasuble, famous for being part of the oldest complete medieval vestments in existence.
Shrine church, Épine
Although the Thirty Years War ended officially in 1648, it continued in various forms in northern France, particularly in Champagne and Picardy, for some years. Marauding armies from the Spanish Netherlands competed with those of the French in brutalizing the population. Church institutions were not spared, since the devastation took on the character of a religious war. Vincent de Paul, Louise de Marillac and many others energized the Ladies of Charity to undertake works of relief. Daughters of Charity served the sick poor, among whom were sick soldiers. Vincentians fanned out throughout the provinces to bring spiritual and financial aid, collected mostly in Paris. One of the most important methods of raising funds was the Relations, a publication of letters describing the horrors that the missionaries and others were encountering. The grateful magistrates of Rethel, one of the towns in Champagne, wrote in a similar vein, but added their thanks for the help received. The very words they used are still horrifying: cheating, starvation, barbarous and cruel acts, unbearable licentiousness, malice, generalized brigandage, desolation, horrible necessity. (Letter 1381, 17 July 1651)
CHÂLONS-EN-CHAMPAGNE, ÉPINE

Vincent sent his missionaries to preach in the diocese of Châlons (also called Châlons-sur-Marne). One reason for doing so was his friendship with Félix Vialart (1613-1680). This man was the son of Michel Vialart and Charlotte de Ligny, another of Vincent’s many influential women supporters. Félix was, in addition, the cousin of Jean Jacques Olier. Vialart became bishop of Châlons in 1640. These complex personal relations illuminate the basis of much of Vincent’s work. Louise visited the Charities of the diocese, and the Daughters of Charity came here in 1653 to serve war victims in the city hospital. They served in various schools and the hospital from 1692 and then after the Revolution until 1907.

Vincentian service in the seminary began, however, only in 1681, lasting until the Revolution. Vincentians returned in 1833. The superior at the time was Jean Baptiste Nozo, who remained until his election as superior general in 1835. The seminary was suppressed from 1866 to 1883, when the Vincentians again returned and remained until 1903. The city today has about 50,000 people.

Possibly the seminary’s most noteworthy professor Buenaventura Codina (1785-1857). A Spanish Vincentian, he had come to France when the Congregation was suppressed in his country. He would return home as provincial superior and director of the Daughters of Charity. His saintly reputation led him to be named bishop of the diocese of the Canary Islands, with residence at Las Palmas (1848). He was distanced but not expelled from the Congregation for accepting the episcopacy without the superior general’s permission. The bishop’s cause for canonization has been introduced in Rome.

The basilica of Notre Dame de l’Épine dominates the plateau above Châlons. This pilgrimage church began, as often happened, with the report of a miraculous statue of the Virgin Mary that appeared in a thorn bush (épine) in flames. The present church, of cathedral size, began in the fifteenth century. It is one of the few churches in the country to have kept its altar-screen, or jubé, under which is kept the pilgrimage statue.
Vincentians became part of its long history because they served in the seminary at Châlons. The bishop united this shrine parish to the seminary in 1725, and two priests arrived to care for it. The reason for this was undoubtedly to secure a source of income to support the seminary. A separate Vincentian house existed here from 1732 until 1758, when it was turned over to diocesan clergy. Épine has a population of fewer than 700.

**CHAUMONT**

Daughters of Charity came to staff the hospital of this city, also called Chaumont-en-Bassigny, in 1672. The interest in Chaumont lies in that one of the oldest, if not the oldest, statues of Saint Vincent is in the chapel of their former work. The sculptor Jean Baptiste Bouchardon, a Chaumont native, carved it in 1730 and placed it with two others on the chapel altarpiece. This small gilded statue depicts Vincent in a pose that was scarcely copied after this time: holding a book in his left hand and a heart surmounted with flames in his right. This heart, a feature of charitable saints, and perhaps derived from the iconography associated with Saint Augustine, is among the earliest symbols associated with Vincent de Paul. He is joined here by a similar statue of Mary, in the center, and Mary Magdalene on the right, the patroness of the hospital. The Daughters returned to the hospital after the Revolution, and remained until about 1903. In keeping with their long service here, other statues of Vincent and Louise have been placed in the hospital chapel. Chaumont today has a population of about 28,000. (Centre Hospitalier, 66, avenue Carnot)

**LANGRES**

The city of Langres, whose medieval walls still stand, numbers about 10,000 inhabitants today. There is no indication that Vincent ever came here, but he had some contact with its powerful bishop, Sébastien Zamet (1588-1655). Vincent appreciated his
opposition to Jansenism. His name and coat of arms appear in several places in the cathedral, although there is nothing recalling Vincent here.

In February 1624, while Vincent was still pastor of Clichy, he took possession of the small priory of Saint-Nicolas-de-Grosse-Sauve, formerly in the hands of his Oratorian friends. As was typical in his day, a priory served as a source of income, like a modern real estate investment, rather than a religious house. There is nothing to show that Vincent ever came here, and records are lacking to show that he gave up the priory. He probably did so around the time of the founding of the Congregation of the Mission, in 1625 or 1626. That we know this much is due to a fragment of parchment used to bind an old missal. It was discovered and deciphered in 1897. How many more discoveries might be made is anyone’s guess. Subsequent discoveries have confirmed the original document.

The former priory and hospital is now a farm, southeast of Langres, on D136, a Roman road. The only early
Building is part of the old chapel, now a garage and barn. As its name indicates (saute, from Latin silva, or woods), it is in wooded country.

The Vincentian community had planned a house in Langres (1672), but it did not open. The Daughters of Charity, however, worked in two hospitals and two parishes from 1690 until the Revolution, and again afterwards. Jeanne Antide Thouret, the future saint, spent her postulancy at the city hospital and returned in 1789 to serve for a few months in the military hospital, Saint Laurent, also run by the Daughters.

**Montmirail**

Vincent lived in Montmirail with the Gondi family, since Philip Emmanuel, the general of the galleys, was baron of Montmirail-en-Brie and had a chateau here. Vincent, of course, was the family tutor, with responsibilities for the education of the children. The household where he worked numbered between 20 and 25 attending Madame alone, not counting others who worked for the general. One of the sons, Jean François Paul de Gondi, became the notorious Cardinal de Retz, later the first archbishop of Paris. He was born in the chateau of Montmirail in the fall of 1613, probably when Vincent first
Vincent de Paul in Montmirail, parish church, Montmirail

arrived here. Vincent's conference to his confreres on the duties of a chaplain in a noble family (Conference 14) undoubtedly reflects his own experiences here. Brother Robineau, his secretary, recounts how Vincent accompanied the pious Madame de Gondi in her rounds to feed the sick poor.

Montmirail (a name meaning “hill of surveillance”) was important, even in Roman times. The church of Saint Étienne itself may have been built over a pre-Christian building. The present church began in 1122. It has been expanded and renovated several times, particularly because of the town’s exposed location on main roads. The last great change in the church took place at the Revolution, when the ancient funeral monuments of the lords of Montmirail were destroyed. Montmirail, with about 4000 inhabitants today, was also on the escape route of Louis XVI and his family, attempting to flee in 1791 to the safety of France's Austrian enemies. He was recognized here and arrested at Varennes, farther along the highway. This sealed his fate and led him and the queen to the guillotine.

Of particular interest in the church is Vincent's pulpit. This wooden pulpit bears an indication that the saint used it in 1613. In his time, it also had individual statues of the twelve apostles, but they were removed at the time of the Revolution. Located in the body of the church, the pulpit faces a large crucifix, below which were the seats for the parish trustees. Perhaps Madame de Gondi and her family also sat here. In the fashion of the eighteenth century, the seats are enclosed and face the pulpit directly. Brother Louis Robineau, the saint's secretary, recalled that Vincent had begun a weekly service in the parish church on Saturday evenings to honor the Blessed Virgin. It continued for many decades. Vincent also founded his fourth Confraternity of Charity here (1618) even before the beginning of the Congregation of the Mission, and he visited it at least in May of 1629. (Letter 39) Louise also came to visit in 1630, and Daughters of Charity arrived, probably in 1650.

The stained glass is not old. In the 1880s, the pastor had planned to install a
series of windows depicting the life of Saint Vincent. Only two of these are extant. The first, in the body of the church, depicts the Montmirail church. In this window, Saint Vincent is shown preaching, cross in hand, with a bell at his feet to summon the people. He stands on a raised platform. Below him are gathered the Gondi family members, clergy and the people of the area, both rich and poor. The second, in the left transept, depicts the saint encouraging the Ladies of Charity in Paris not to abandon their support for the foundlings. Below is an extract from the text of his address to the Ladies: “If you abandon them, they will all die.”

One modern statue depicts Saint Vincent bending down to recover an abandoned infant. Based on the Stouf model, it dates from 1897. Other much older and more important statues decorate the walls: an ancient Pietà and a relief of Saint Martin on horseback.

The various memorials of Blessed Jean de Montmirail (1165-1217) are noteworthy. He had been the local baron and a close friend of King Philip Augustus, with whom he was raised. At age 45 and after a life of soldiering, he became a monk. Vincent mentioned this local saint in a conference he gave to the Daughters of Charity. (Conference 28, 22 October 1646) He noted that Jean had had a problem that he confided to the prior of his monastery: he could not bear to clean his own shoes. The prior himself eventually did this for him. Jean later admitted his fault and took to cleaning them himself—an incident Vincent offered to the sisters of the power of
good example, the prior’s, in bringing order to a community house. In 1208 this same Jean founded the hospital that the Vincentians and later the Daughters of Charity were to run.

The church also preserves an important relic of Saint Vincent: a bone from his foot. Also important was a miraculous cure, associated with this relic, of a Benedictine nun from Montmirail. The Holy See accepted it as an element of Vincent’s canonization process.

An old side chapel, with traces of older painted decoration, has been transformed into a Blessed Sacrament chapel where daily mass is celebrated. The Blessed Sacrament is preserved in a modern tabernacle set into the niche formerly used to keep it in medieval times. Also in this chapel is the entry into the adjoining chateau, and above the chapel is a room whose windows look out onto the sanctuary. The family used it to attend mass in noble privacy. It was probably in this chapel, named after Saint Nicholas, that Vincent founded the Confraternity of Charity. He probably prayed in this chapel as well.

A large Vincentian house, used for many years, also exists in the town. This eighteenth-century building, at the end of Rue St. Vincent de Paul, has been transformed into a public building, the Centre Social La Rochefoucauld, and it may be visited. The large relic of Saint Vincent displayed in the parish church was formerly kept in this Community house. From here, the Vincentians went out to give missions and also helped to organize the relief of the province of Champagne, devastated by wars during the founder’s lifetime. They also directed the Confraternity of Charity, which had important work among prisoners.

Adjoining the church is the chateau. Formerly the property of the...
have been to Montmirail have seen a tree trunk changed into stone. But how did this happen? I do not know by what power wood came to be changed into stone. The one changed into the other such that what was wood appears to be stone. The wood that is there is wood. Your eyes tell you that it is wood. The moss that envelops it, its visible features and seams tell you that it is wood. But touch it, and you know it is stone. This is an illusion, my brothers. (Conference 214) He used this example in a conference to his confreres on truth and illusions. The whereabouts of this fossilized tree are unknown today.

Leading east out of town is a section of road called the Little Saint Lazare, a name given to a small hospice for lepers and contagious cases. Before the Congregation lived in town, it had a country home at Fontaine-Essart, a hamlet just east of Montmirail. The per-

Gondi family, it passed into the hands of the Rochefoucauld family, which recently sold it. Tradition assigns Vincent a particular room, located directly over the entrance. In front of the chateau stretches a broad avenue of trees. In 1620, Madame de Gondi invited three Huguenots to this chateau for Vincent to instruct in the Catholic faith. Two of them renounced their Calvinist beliefs, but the third did not. His caustic remarks about the Catholic clergy so struck Vincent that they became, in some way, a turning point in his life.

The supervisor of the Gondi property, its intendant, was Martin Husson (1623-1695), a Montmirail native. Vincent admired his abilities and got this young man to accept the office of French consul in Tunis, where he went in 1653. As a layperson, he had fewer problems than the Vincentians did in that office. Nevertheless, the Tunisian authorities expelled him in 1657 and, on his return to France, he became the intendant of the duchess of Aiguillon.

It was perhaps in the chateau that a natural wonder was kept, one which excited Vincent’s interest. Those who
sonnel stationed in Montmirail lived here from 1644 before moving into town in 1678. Vincent addressed several letters to his confrères here (e.g., Letter 2678, in 1658). Nothing remains today to distinguish one set of old farm buildings from another, or to point out the Vincentian site. In any case, the old house burned down early on. The missionaries at Fontaine-Essart had much to suffer in the Fronde because of marauding armies. After moving into town, the Vincentians kept this country property until the Revolution, a pattern repeated elsewhere.

Another local Vincentian farm was that of Vieux-Moulin (Old Mill), located on D43, below the Montmirail hill, where a mill still operates. Both of these farms, Fontaine-Essart and Vieux-Moulin, were in the parish of Courbetaux. Louis Toublanc, secretary of the duke of Retz, willed these two properties to the Congregation in a document dated 14 July 1644.

In keeping with the methods of the time, the missionaries in Montmirail and the Daughters of Charity received income from the old pilgrim shelter at La Chaussée, in the floodplain below Montmirail. As it happened, all three of these properties, Fontaine-Essart, Vieux-Moulin and La Chaussée, were in the diocese of Troyes, whereas Montmirail itself was in Soissons. This caused complications in securing title and finances. The Daughters lived at La Chaussée from 1648 or 1650, until the hospital and the sisters transferred into town. They took up the hospital in Montmirail again after the Revolution, remaining until about 1900.

As part of their mission work, three Vincentians at Fontaine-Essart founded a Confraternity of Charity in nearby Sézanne in 1657. The members of the confraternity received the chapel of the martyrs in the parish church of Saint Denis to use for their prayers. Daughters of Charity were present here from 1681, in the Hôtel Dieu, until the Revolution and returned in 1802. There is nothing in the parish church, however, to evoke the work of the Vincentians or the Daughters.

At a short distance west of Montmirail is Marchais-en-Brie, where
an old village church still stands. In 1621, Vincent and some other priests and religious were preaching a mission here. Vincent encountered again the recalcitrant Huguenot whom he had met in Montmirail and gradually won him over. To prove what Catholics believed about the honor given to statues, Vincent called on a child from the congregation. The child's wise answer was the man's deciding moment, and he remained faithful to Catholicism throughout life. The statue of Mary in the church, the subject of the discussion, thereupon became famous. During the Revolution, some "madmen," as Coste calls them, removed the statue and mutilated it. One of the townspeople saved the head, and it is now in the Vincentian museum of the motherhouse in Paris. The church itself is in a poor state and has nothing reflecting the presence of Vincent or of his confreres who came here later to give missions.

Although the next few sites fall within the boundaries of modern Picardy, they are included here because of their connection with Montmirail. North of the city, toward Château-Thierry, is Montlevon. Vincent gave a mission here with other clergy while in residence at Montmirail. The pastor recalled the young priest's humility. Further to the north is Courboin, one of the fiefs belonging to Madame de Gondi. According to a contemporary document, she and Vincent were present here on 19 June 1622 for the establishment of a Confraternity of Charity. A side chapel, renamed the Chapel of Jesus or of the Charity, was set aside at the time for the members. The village church of Courboin has kept many of its old features (pews and benches, the old flooring), but the chapel in question did not continue. The same document names Chamblon and other villages belonging to Madame, probably including Montlevon. Chamblon is today's La Ville-Chamblon, southwest of Courboin. This Chamblon had a farm depending on the Vincentian house of Montmirail, as well as a Confraternity of Charity, but there is nothing to distinguish it today. (Vincent mentioned it, for example, in Letter 733, written in 1644.) One further fief of Madame de Gondi was Trosnay,
today's Thoul-Trosoy (Le) a few kilometers east of Montmirail. Since Vincent identified her in Letter 26 as baroness of Trosny, the implication is that he must have given missions also in this parish, since he was obliged to preach on her lands.

The pilgrimage site of Liesse-Notre-Dame, some distance north of Château-Thierry and east of Laon, has a long history. The earliest records date the building to the twelfth century. The structure has been rebuilt and improved several times since then. Our Lady of Joy attracted the royal family of France as well as Vincentians and Daughters of Charity, although it is unknown if Vincent or Louise ever visited here. The pilgrimage statue (replaced after the Revolution) is one of many black virgins in Europe. The church has kept its *jubé* (altar screen), one of the few left in France. In the town, now with about 1200 people, is a well reputed to be miraculous.

**SEDAN**

At the beginning of his final illness, Louis XIII personally asked Vincent to send his missionaries to Sedan, with the
express purpose of working for the conversion of the Calvinists. Sedan had been an independent principality until 1642, when Frédéric Maurice, the last prince, ceded it unwillingly to Louis as reparation for his part in a conspiracy. The prince had been raised a Protestant, and his family furthered the development of Reform by sponsoring a Protestant theology faculty in Sedan. He became a Catholic, however, in 1637.

The Vincentians left for Sedan on 14 May 1643, a week before the king’s death. They assumed the pastorate of the town’s only parish, Saint Laurent. From here, they went out on mission. This church suffered from age and was mostly demolished in 1692, except for the choir, which was finally taken down in 1792-1799. The site of the church is now an open area between houses facing on the Place de la Halle, Rue de Mulhouse and Rue des Voyards. There are some vaults underneath which had been used for burials, even until recent times. The whole section is now called Place Saint Laurent and is used mainly as a car park.

The house across the street, opposite the entrance to the yard, formerly called the Hôtel des Trois Ecus, was the Vincentian house after 1666. It is not known where they lived previously. In the same house, the missionaries received priesthood students for their philosophical training. In keeping with the Vincentian mission, they also held regular conferences for the clergy and gave parish missions. (43, rue du Menil)

With the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), which dispossessed Protestants of their principal rights in France, their “temple” in Sedan became available for Catholic worship. The Vincentians saw to its expansion and decoration. Both Saint Charles (Place d’Armes) and Saint Laurent remained in use until the latter’s closure. One of its most active Vincentian pastors was
**Nicolas Philbert** (1724-1797). At the time of the Revolution, Philbert decided to take the constitutional oath to help reform the clergy, and he was soon elected bishop of the Ardennes, the new designation for the diocese centered at Sedan. Saint Charles, where he had been pastor from 1762 to 1791, became his cathedral. This situation lasted only three years, when he was arrested (but escaped), and the church was sacked. Saint Charles then changed successively into a temple dedicated to the goddess of reason and to the Supreme Being. When it returned to Catholic worship in 1802, the revolutionary diocese ceased to exist. Philbert's pulpit, pipe organ and extensive woodwork remain. In the rear of the church is a traditional statue, marked "Saint Vincent de Paul, Pastor of Sedan 1643." This is stretching history somewhat, particularly since Vincent never came here.

A huge fortress, suitable for a frontier, dominates the city. Sedan, on the river Meuse, is just a few kilometers from the Belgian border today. To care for troops and civilians, a hospital was begun in Sedan as early as 1521. Daughters of Charity came here for the hospital in 1639 (or perhaps 1641) and later added a school; this was their first house outside the Paris area. They remained during the Revolution, staying at least until the 1920s. The present old hospital buildings, however, date from the period 1757-1760 and have been expanded in recent years. Philbert, mentioned above, is remembered as one of the many benefactors of this hospital. Its chapel, still in use, commemorates Saint Vincent with a statue at the pinnacle of the façade. Over the door is the inscription HIC PAUPERES EVANGELIZANTUR ("Here the poor are evangelized"). Further, the area by the current main entrance of the hospital has been named Place Saint Vincent de Paul. One event that clearly garnered the support of the local population was the extensive aid arranged by Vincent during the Fronde in 1650. To help the poor of Sedan, a Vincentian founded a small diocesan women's community here in 1695. The Sisters of the Holy Family of Sedan did not continue after the Revolution.

A further reference to the presence of Vincentians is the name of the street and shaded promenade in front of the fortress, the Promenoir des Prêtres, the "Priests' Walk," meaning the Priests of the Mission. Their house was just a few steps away from the fortress and their garden was private. Vincentians remained here until the Revolution.

Sedan suffered greatly at various periods. The French endured a humiliating defeat near here in 1870, losing the emperor Napoleon III and some 80,000 soldiers to capture by the Prussians. This defeat marked the end of the empire, and a new republic was proclaimed in Paris. In both World Wars Sedan was badly damaged, as the many pockmarked buildings, ruins and abandoned properties still testify. Sedan, partly reconstructed, has a current population of some 21,000.

Vincent had several things to say to the Daughters (Conference 61, 23 July 1654) and to the missionaries about their work here. Above all, he encour-
aged them not to dispute with heretics, neither from the pulpit nor in private. [The king, Louis XIII] knows that this does little good and often produces more noise than fruit. (Abelly, Book 2, p. 26)

TROYES

In 1637, Vincent opened a house in Troyes to give missions and to train seminarians. He was able to do so with the help of his friend and patron, Noël Brûlart, Commander de Sillery. Of the buildings from Vincent’s time, only the transept of the church remains, since another major seminary was built on the same site. A large bell that Vincent donated to this house has been moved to the bishop’s residence. This bell dates from 1644 and bears copies of the seal of the Congregation. Vincent came here with the Commander in July of 1639, and on that occasion wrote to Jane Frances de Chantal, outlining for the first time what constitutes our humble way of life. (Letter 383)

Because of the presence of Irish regiments here in Vincent’s time, he sent an Irish confre, John McEnery (regularly called Ennery) to minister to them. Louis Joseph François had been superior here until summoned to be secretary general in Paris in 1784. He was later martyred as the superior of the Bons Enfants (then called the Saint Firmin seminary) in Paris. After the Revolution, Vincentians returned to the seminary from 1876 until their expulsion in 1903, and again from 1921 to 1970. Troyes today has a population of about 60,000.

The Vincentians lived for two years near by in the village of Sancey, now called Saint-Julien-les-Villas. Sébastien Gouault, a citizen of Troyes, had lent them the house. The saint addressed several letters here in the years 1639-1641.

In the Daughters of Charity school in Troyes, where the Sisters had been since 1718, Sister Apolline Andriveau
In the Footsteps of Vincent de Paul

(1810-1895) began to have her experiences concerning the Scapular of the Passion. She was noted for her intense prayer life and her regularity. Beginning in 1846, she experienced visions concerning the Passion of Jesus and saw him handing her a red scapular. Eventually this scapular was approved for devotional use, and it spread through the work of the Daughters of Charity and the Vincentians. Father Jean Baptiste Étienne, superior general, had a chapel dedicated to the Passion built in the Vincentian motherhouse in Paris. He also called for Vincentian chapels and churches to have similar altars. Because of the similarity of this devotion to that of the Holy Agony in the garden of Gethsemane, propagated by Father Antoine Nicolle, the chapel today serves also as the headquarters for the Holy Agony devotion. This house of the Daughters began in 1682 and reopened in 1802.

Various Confraternities of Charity, some with paintings of the Lord of Charity, existed in the area around Troyes. These paintings take their origin in a plan by Louise and Vincent to link the confraternities. They sent large paintings, or models for them, to the Charities, depicting the resurrected, charitable Jesus, arms outstretched downwards, presiding over the work of the confraternities. Generally, works of spiritual and corporal charity were also...
depicted. They are or were found in the following locations, listed in alphabetical order. At Arcis-sur-Aube, the Confraternity began 27 September 1662. Nicolas Des Guerrois, canon of the cathedral of Troyes, donated funds for missions to be given in Arcis, his home parish, every five years. Bouilanges has one of the paintings, mistakenly titled "Sacred Heart." The missionaries came here in 1653 and again in 1658. Bouilly also had a painting, but no Confraternity of Charity is known to have existed there. Perhaps records are lacking. In Brienne-le-Château, the confraternity began 24 September 1655. The confraternity was probably located at the hospital of Brienne, where the Daughters of Charity served. Local tradition has it that in 1653 Vincent himself came here to inaugurate the work of the sisters for war victims. Sister Barbe Angiboust, at least, was here the previous year for that same work. A famous student at the military school of Brienne, who made his first communion in the school chapel, perhaps under the gaze of the Daughters, was Napoleon Bonaparte. Chavanges has a painting dated 1642. It is remarkable in that one of the vignettes depicts Vincent as a younger man with light brown hair, giving communion to a sick person. If it is Vincent, it is the earliest known depiction of him. Chennegey had a Confraternity founded 10 March 1647. Lhuître has a painting, dated 1650, with a good likeness of an elderly Vincent giving communion to a sick person. Farther afield is Loisy-en-Brie, in the champagne-raising area. Vincent came here in 1626, and Louise followed in 1631. The present church building is in poor condition. Mailly-le-Camp was reported to have had a Lord of Charity painting, but it is no longer in either of the churches in this little town. Although both Nogent-sur-Seine and Rilly-Sainte-Syre had missions in 1657, Vincent probably did not give them. He is said to have founded the confraternity at Soulaines-Dhuys in 1658. However, because of his health and age, it is not likely that he came here.

Besides these towns, some others are known through references to visits that Louise made. Vincent himself suggested that she go to several small towns located near each other: Bergères(-lès-Vertus), Le Mesnil(-sur-Oger), Soudron, Soulières, and Villeseneux. Her purpose was to encourage the work of the Confraternities of Charity in these places on Gondi lands. (Letter 77, 1631)

Lastly, Marguerite de Silly, Madame de Gondi, was also baroness of Dampierre. One of her ancestors, Pierre de Lannoy (d. 1523), probably a great-uncle, was buried in the parish church. Only his sarcophagus remains. There is nothing in the church to recall her presence here or that of Vincentians perhaps obligated by the foundation contract of the Congregation to give missions on her lands here. Adjoining the church property is the chateau, a later construction. Its imposing tower and gates, however, date from the fifteenth century.
Vincent de Paul in Montmirail, parish church, Montmirail
The works of Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac did not extend during their lifetimes to the east of France. Nevertheless, Blessed Jean Henri Gruyer, a martyr of the Revolution, was born here. Saint Jeanne Antide Thouret was also born here and founded her community in Besançon.
BESANÇON*

Besançon, a major city of about 125,000 persons, is an ancient fortified site dominated even today by its fortress. It had a bishop as early as the third century, and one of them was Saint Antide, whose name was given to a daughter of a poor country family. Jeanne Antide Thouret (1765-1826) sought an active vocation in favor of the poor and so entered the Daughters of Charity in Paris. She remained a Daughter of Charity for eight years until the sisters were dispersed because of the Revolution. After a time of flight and discernment, she began a school, pharmacy and kitchen for the poor of Besançon in 1799. The young women she attracted eventually formed the Sisters of Charity. Their motherhouse, purchased after her time, offers an exhibit about her life and her foundations, as well as a couple of items belonging to Vincent de Paul. (131, Grande Rue) Many other places in the city where she opened works for the poor still exist. She died in Naples and is buried there. She was canonized in 1924.

SANCEY-LE-LONG*

Hidden in one of the many valleys of the Jura mountains is Sancey-le-Long, birthplace of Jeanne Antide Thouret.
The Sisters of Charity have developed a center for pilgrims and guests around the Thouret home, where the future saint may have been born. This sixteenth-century farm has preserved many of the features she knew as a child and later as a refugee from the Revolution. A large “basilica,” completed in 1934, is dedicated to her. The parish church where she was baptized venerates a statue of Mary on the Bouchardon model, before which Jeanne Antide prayed and made her vow of chastity following the death of her father. Several other places in the vicinity are also associated with her, such as the grottoes (La Baume) where she hid priests during the Revolution. The village today has a population of about 400.
Eighteenth-century statue, Saint-Saturnin (Puy-de-Dôme)
For centuries Lorraine was independent of France. This is because in 843, Charlemagne, king of the Franks, divided his empire among his three grandsons. Lothar received the center section, and his name, in many different forms, was attached to the area, Lorraine. This important territory was often fought over. In 1552, Henry II of France occupied the “Three Dioceses,” that is the ancient cities of Metz, Toul and Verdun, and from that time on Lorraine gradually became integrated into France. Nancy, by contrast, is younger than Metz, Toul and Verdun, but had a more glorious history as the capital of the dukes of Lorraine.
For Vincentian purposes, Lorraine can be treated as a unit, since all parts of it suffered. Wars and a subsequent plague ravaged Lorraine beginning in 1635. Although he was not present himself, Vincent sent many of his confreres, both priests and brothers, to undertake the relief of Lorraine in those plague years. He wrote in 1639 (Letter 376): “With the help of Our Lord, we have undertaken the assistance of the poor people in Lorraine and have sent Messieurs Bécu and Rondet, and Brothers Guillard, Aulent, Baptiste, and Bourdet there, two to each town: Toul, Metz, Verdun, and Nancy. I hope to provide them with two thousand livres a month.” He updated this information the following year. (Letter 433) “Brother Mathieu returned from there [Bar-le-Duc] yesterday evening as well as from Metz, Toul, and Verdun, after having sent Nancy its share of the alms. We are continuing to assist those poor people to the amount of five hundred livres per month in each of the above-mentioned towns. But indeed, Monsieur, I greatly fear that we will not be able to keep it up much longer. It is so hard to find twenty-five hundred livres every month.” In general, the relief lasted until 1649, with the Vincentians stationed in temporary centers, such as Saint-Mihiel, Bar-le-Duc and Pont-à-Mousson in addition to larger cities.

His charity and good organization were not restricted solely to the province of Lorraine itself. With the help of many others in Paris, he undertook the care of refugees from Lorraine in the capital. Several monuments in Paris recall this aspect of his work.

**METZ**

The ancient city of Metz played an important role in Vincent’s various ministries. In its earliest phase (1639-1641), he cared for the poor and refugees from the Thirty Years War. A letter from the town magistrates shows how much they appreciated his aid. **You have placed us under so great an obligation by relieving, as you have, the poverty and extreme need of our poor and our beggars, who are uncomplaining and sick, and especially the poor monasteries of nuns in this city, that we would be ungrateful people were we to remain any longer without expressing to you our sentiments about it.** (Letter 492, October 1640) Vincent’s help, as they requested, continued for some time.

Anne of Austria spent some weeks in Metz in 1657 and saw with her own eyes the religious and social disorder that reigned here. One of the causes was that for forty years (1612-1652) the “bishop” of Metz was Henri de Bourbon Verneuil (1601-1682), a layman, and the bastard son of Henry IV. This boy never intended to become a priest, let alone a bishop. He received income from the diocese and committed its governance to his auxiliary bishops. When the queen returned to Paris, she asked Vincent to found a house in Metz, but he could not. She suggested that the members of the Tuesday Conferences undertake a major mission there, beginning Ash Wednesday of 1658. Vincent proposed this to the members, and sixteen or seventeen went at first, followed by a larger group later. They stayed for two and a half months. At least one Vincentian priest was among them, and two lay brothers
Church door, Basilique Saint Epvre, Nancy

helped care for the missionaries. The renowned Jacques Benigne Bossuet (1627-1704), then a priest of the diocese of Metz, also preached but mainly took care of the details of lodging the missionaries. His correspondence with Vincent offers insight into their work.

One of the positive results of the Metz mission was that the queen paid for the foundation of a house for Vincentians. They came here to open a mission house and then a seminary in 1662, a development Vincent had foreseen. The seminary, named Saint Anne in the queen's honor, continued until the Revolution. Only a few remains from Saint Anne are visible. (19-21, rue de la Fontaine)

A new major seminary was built in 1745 and still stands near the railway station, between Rue Jean XXIII and Rue Asfeld. The former Jesuit seminary, Saint Simon, was joined administratively to Saint Anne in 1762, at the time of the Jesuit suppression. Formerly a minor seminary, it continued as a major seminary until the Revolution. This house has been in Vincentian hands since 1921 and is a pilgrimage shrine to Saint Jude, since the two apostles Simon and Jude are the parish patrons. (6, place de France)

Daughters of Charity, as well, served in the city of Metz in this period, arriving in 1653 to work in the Holy Cross parish. Vincent sent them off with some pointed remarks about the kind of people they would be serving: To tell the truth, the people [of Metz] are not bad, but the poor souls have a certain grossness of mind in regard to divine things which they have contracted from associating with the Huguenots and Jews who dwell in that city. You are going, therefore, to make known to all, to Catholics, to heretics, and even to Jews, the goodness of God. (Conference 101) The Sisters also assumed the care of two hospitals (1687, 1699). The Daughters of Charity returned in 1800 and continue their long service here. The city of Metz today numbers some 120,000 persons.

In the suburbs is the town Longeville-lès-Metz. This was the birthplace of the redoubtable Jean Baptiste Étienne (1801-1874), Vincentian superior general and regarded by many as its “second” founder, that is, after the Revolution.
Vincentians ran the diocesan seminary from 1779 until their expulsion about 1792. This seminary had been the seminary of the Royal Missions, under the care of the Jesuits. It closed in 1768. The Vincentians then took charge of a new seminary in the old buildings and likewise had charge of the parish of Saint Peter (from 1784). Daughters of Charity came here in 1701 to teach school and continued their works after the Revolution, from about 1803. As in many other cities, there is a Saint Vincent de Paul church with fine stained glass windows, and an adjoining street named after him. Prosperous Nancy is today a city of about 100,000 people.

TOUL

Vincent sent his confreres to the diocese of Toul in 1635. In coming, they succeeded three members of the Order of the Holy Spirit who had a hospice for orphans and the sick. Vincent sent them to give missions and care for ordinands but, since they were succeeding the pre-
vious occupants, the missionaries had to accept a parish, the first in the history of the Congregation, together with the hospice. They soon realized how time-consuming the hospice service was and engaged others to staff it for them. It was large enough to accommodate some 60 poor and sick soldiers during the wars. Today it is difficult to locate the Vincentian house, the former Hôpital du Saint Esprit, but it could have been on the Rue Saint Amand, in what is now a cultural center. Toul suffered terribly in two world wars. Many old buildings have disappeared, but much of its original defensive walls remain. One of the buildings that disappeared was the parish of Saint Amand. Only the street name recalls its presence. Vincent and his confreres had much to suffer from other clergy and their friends in the city administration, but the problems were eventually resolved. Daughters of Charity also worked in Toul, beginning in 1707, and they continue their pastoral work here. Today, Toul is a city of some 17,000 inhabitants.

The Vincentians also had care of the church in Écouves, a short distance northwest of Toul. This parish, together with Saint Amand in Toul, distracted the priests from their main work. Vincent wrote to the superior: But, Monsieur, what shall we do about those two parishes that are such a great hindrance to you in your work in the rural areas? Can you not find some good vicars? The one in the town could support its man. For the parish in Écouves, I prefer that Saint-Lazare give one hundred livres for a few years rather than see you in your present predicament. Please think it over. Do not fail to go there to preach sermons sometimes and visit the sick. (Letter 1808, 28 November 1654) This old pilgrimage church dominates the town of about 3800 below. There is no souvenir of Vincent or the Vincentians in the church today.

In the parish church of Crézilles, a small town south of Toul, are hung four large paintings, originally from the Toul seminary. These are copies of some of the paintings prepared for Vincent's canonization: Vincent at the deathbed of Louis XIII, Vincent preaching, Vincent with the Tuesday Conferences (not the usual depiction), and Vincent preaching to the Ladies of Charity (modeled on the painting of Vincent with the priests and bishops of the Tuesday Conferences, also not the usual depiction). The originals hung in the old Saint Lazare chapel.

**VERDUN**

As with Nancy, Verdun had no Vincentian house from the time of the founder. Daughters of Charity worked here from 1693 to the Revolution and afterwards from 1819. They have continued their pastoral work here. The Congregation of the Mission had charge of the *diocesan seminary* from 1928 to 1970. A nineteenth-century altar in the cathedral recalls Saint Vincent as a great benefactor of Lorraine. The city and the surrounding areas suffered greatly during many wars, especially during the two world wars. Verdun today has a population of about 20,000.
Statue by Cabuchet,
Châtillon-sur-Chalaronne
The beautiful countryside of the Rhône river valley and the foothills of the Alps was the area of several Vincentian works: the first Vincentian seminary (Annecy) and the first Confraternity of Charity (Châtillon). It is also the birthplace of figures important in the Vincentian mission: Sister Rosalie Rendu, and the martyr, Saint Francis Regis Clet. Blessed Frédéric Ozanam spent his early years here.
ANNECY*

The main religious interest in Annecy, a city of 50,000 persons, is the presence of Saints Francis de Sales (1567-1622) and Jane Frances de Chantal (1572-1641). The cathedral of Saint Peter, built only in 1535, records many of their exploits in this mountainous region with its lakes and rivers. Francis de Sales was ordained here, 18 December 1593, and officiated as bishop from 1602 to 1622. Just in front of the cathedral, is the Hôtel Lambert. (15, rue Jean Jacques Rousseau) Francis de Sales resided here from 1602 to 1610. He also lived for a while at 18, rue Sainte Claire. Plaques at both addresses recall these details.

The two saints were buried at the church of Saint Francis de Sales. This Baroque church, built in 1618, now serves as a church for Italians. The body of Francis de Sales remained in the church from 1623 until 1793. A plaque marks the site, as well as a green ceremonial bishop's hat, hung after the manner of cardinals' red hats. The hat may have belonged to Francis de Sales. The tomb of Jane Frances de Chantal was also in this church from 1641 to 1793. A gilded wooden statue of her over the spot is one of the few to have escaped the iconoclasm of the revolutionaries.

The founders are both buried now at the prominent chapel of the Visitation convent on a hill overlooking the city. It was built after 1911. Their modern shrines are in the main chapel, while earlier effigies, with wax face and hands, are on display in a small museum to the side of the church. Saint Vincent de Paul appears in one modern window which depicts the activities of Saint Francis de Sales.

The Congregation of the Mission began its mission in Annecy with a mission house. After some time, the Vincentians began a seminary. The major seminary of the diocese was built in the 1680s and served as such (interrupted during the Revolution) until 1970. Francis Regis Clet, the future martyr, was a professor here. The present building now houses a library and the local archives. The disused chapel has been converted into an exhibition hall. A plaque in the main corridor commemorates the presence of the seminary. The earlier seminary, the first one directed by the Congregation of the Mission, began
in 1642. It is no longer standing.

In the Place aux Bois is a seated statue of Saint Francis de Sales, here remembered for his literary work. It was erected in 1924 and stands just in front of the chapel of the second Visitation monastery, erected in 1636 by Jane Frances, and which continued until the Revolution.

CHÂTILLON-SUR-CHALARONNE***

The town of Châtillon dates from 1273, but the area was inhabited for centuries before. The name Châtillon, meaning “little castle,” refers to the one built on the Roman site called *pagus dumbarum*. The remains of the fourteenth-century castle are still visible on the hill above the town. The name of the town in Vincent’s day was Châtillon-les-Dombes, that is, the Châtillon at the Dombes, the Dombes being the small ponds left in the region after the glacial period. Most of these ponds lie south and east of the town. The name of the town today means “Châtillon on the Chalaronne,” referring to the small river flowing through the town north to the Saône River. The town numbers about 4000 inhabitants, twice the size it was in his time.

Before the town existed there were two parishes in the region, Fleurieux to the west and Buénans to the east. These gradually lost their importance as Châtillon grew. Although Vincent was pastor of Buénans and Châtillon, which depended on Buénans, and was also prior of Fleurieux, he lived in the “newer” town. The distinction between his two churches had little meaning. The Buénans church disappeared in the eighteenth century, and that of Fleurieux at the time of the Revolution. In Vincent’s time in Châtillon, formerly part of Bresse, and French only since 1601, its inhabitants mainly spoke Bressan, a franco-provençal dialect that their pastor had to learn.

The chronology of Vincent’s few months in Châtillon is spelled out below. All authors agree that his reasons for leaving the Gondi household to come here are unclear, but they point to Madame de Gondi as one of the reasons. It seems very likely that rich, beautiful, powerful, pious, and emotionally needy as she was, Marguerite came to occupy
too much of Vincent's time and emotional energy. In addition, he and his two employers were practically of the same age. He wrote, however: *I used to hold it as a maxim to consider the General in God and God in him, and to obey him as God, and his late wife as the Virgin.* (Letter 244) He also noted that one of the qualities that a chaplain in a noble house should have is that "he should be most chaste." (Conference 14) In this dangerous emotional and spiritual mix, the 36-year old priest undoubtedly had to break free to make his own way. He was still nominally the pastor of Clichy, but he undertook to become the pastor of Châtillon as well. Why he came to Châtillon and not somewhere else is probably a question of circumstance: the town needed a pastor and Vincent was available. The intermediary for getting this information to him was very likely the Oratorian François Bourgoing, who had preceded Vincent at Clichy.

In Châtillon, Vincent founded the Confraternity of Charity. This, the first of his major works, began as a response to a pressing need. He later recounted for the Daughters of Charity what happened here, but the accounts differ in several details. Abelly, his first biographer, adding some details, made the resulting account less clear but more coherent. In any case, Vincent found it necessary to organize the response of the ladies of the parish to similar needs in the future. Besides the confraternity, he also did much good in strengthening priestly life, religious instruction, the proper celebration of the sacraments and generally gave good example of a Christian life.

The most important Vincentian sites in Châtillon are:

(1) **The church of Saint André.** This building dates from the fifteenth cen-
Façade, Church of Saint André, Châtillon-sur-Chalaronne

tury but succeeds one or more earlier churches dating from 1272. It is colorful, with its brick façade, clock, rose window, and red tile roof, and it is exceptionally high for a church in this region. A curious octagonal tower (from 1736) encloses the bells. Inside, it is in Flamboyant Gothic style, but the furnishings (such as the main altar, statues, and organ) represent later styles, after Vincent’s time. On either side of the sanctuary and the nave are fourteen chapels, a surprisingly large number, built and decorated by the rich families of the area or by various guilds. Some of

Church floor plan, Châtillon-sur-Chalaronne
these chapels now have other uses, but their existence points to the large number of clergy associated at various times with this church. These clergy were responsible for celebrating weekly or monthly masses for specific intentions, and they lived from the endowments of these chapels. In Vincent’s day, about five of these priests lived in Châtillon.

The stained-glass windows in the sanctuary were done in 1890-1892 to commemorate the foundation, in Châtillon, of the first Confraternity of Charity. Other windows recall Vincent’s career. During a renovation of the church undertaken in 1966, some coats-of-arms were brought to light that had not been completely effaced at the time of the Revolution. These show the date 1615, that is, before Vincent’s brief pastorate, and designate the La Chassaigne and Bachet de Mizériac families. Collet, Vincent’s second biographer, identified Madame de La Chassaigne as the one who urged him to speak about the needs of the sick poor in his homily. She was one of the first members of the Confraternity of Charity in Châtillon, and her family castle can be seen between Châtillon and the nearby town of Neuville-Les-Dames. The present castle, however, dates only from the nineteenth century.

In a space under the roof above the nave, accessible through a stairway opening in the body of the church, is an area used in times past by the many prêtres sociétaires. These were the priests whose principal responsibility was to celebrate the canonical hours in church with the pastor, and to say mass occasionally for the departed in one or other of the fourteen side chapels. Mentioned as early as 1433, these clergy were forbidden to exercise certain pastoral min-
istries—those belonged to the official pastor—and they consequently passed their time in some idleness. They used to meet in the upper area, probably for companionship. The windows of this area, however, can be seen from outside the church, on the market side, particularly at night. Tongues wagged in the town, and it was widely, though probably incorrectly, assumed that the priests were engaged in immoral or at least idle pursuits in their upper meeting room, commonly called the Kingdom.

One open question is the use of the rite of Lyons in Châtillon. For centuries, the primatial see of Lyons had its own distinctive usages of the Roman Rite. Whether Vincent followed this usage is unknown. He never referred to it. An old inventory of one of the chapels, however, lists liturgical items proper to this rite, leading to the conclusion that it had been followed here.

(2) The market. This seventeenth-century market adjoining the parish church is built mainly of wood. The previous market burned in the town fire of 1670 that also destroyed most of the houses. Its vast roof rests on 32 pillars made from trunks of individual oak trees from a nearby forest. Old houses surround the marketplace.

(3) The former Hospital, with its antique pharmacy. A hospital (more correctly, a hospice for impoverished pilgrims and beggars) existed here from before 1273. It was restored in 1432, was nearly in ruins in 1614, and was completely rebuilt in 1727. The main stairway is noteworthy. Materials for the rebuilding, including the church bell, were taken from the old church of Buénans, among other places.

Either in the (previous) chapel of this hospital, or in another one, the Chapelle des Pénitents (located just behind the hospital and taken down in 1900), the first Confraternity of Charity was founded on 8 December 1617. Its original membership, in August, consisted of nine women but grew to thirteen by the date of its December founding. Jean Beynier was appointed the treasurer. Besides Vincent, three priests attended, all inhabitants of Châtillon and attached to the parish church. The present chapel was opened in 1732. Inside is a painting of Blessed Vincent de Paul, also dating from 1732. Although not a wonderful work, it testifies to the veneration for him in the town.
Above the main altar is another painting of Vincent bringing the eucharist to a person sick in bed. This rare depiction may have been taken from one of the many copies of the “Lord of Charity,” a canvas prepared for the Confraternities of Charity during his lifetime. The antique pharmacy is maintained as a reminder of how old pharmacies worked. A triptych, painted in 1527, is also on view. It represents, among other things, the burial of Christ, and it was probably in the church in Vincent’s day.

A large seated statue of the saint, dating from 1855, is located in the Place St. Vincent de Paul in front of the hospital. The statue, a gift of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, bears several inscriptions: “Good people of Châtillon: wherever I go, you will always be present to me before God.” “Saint Vincent de Paul, pastor of Châtillon in 1617.” “Erected 29 September 185[5].” Inscriptions on the statue itself mention that it was designed by Emilien Cabuchet in 1854; and cast poured by the foundry of Eck and Durand in 1855. It was erected with solemn ceremonies 27-29 September 1856. (A marble statue of the same design, dated 1857, is found in the church of Saint Sulpice in Paris.) Behind this square is the former Ursuline convent, founded here in 1639.

(4) The home of Vincent de Paul. By the side of the marketplace stands the house where Vincent lived. This was originally two houses, now joined into one. That on the right was used by the pastor and the sociétaires, and that on the left belonged to Jean Beynier, Vincent’s host. The priests’ residence had been leased to a layman, but Vincent was able to get it back. The effective date of this seems
to have been 11 November 1617, about a month before he left. His room in Beynier’s house has been enlarged and turned into the chapel for the Daughters of Charity. They bought the house and the old adjoining presbytery in 1878 at the urging of the bishop and local pastor. The staircase and certain doors date from Vincent’s time. In the chapel are shown facsimiles of the original rule of the Confraternity, signed by him in 1617, and other documents. The large painting on the back wall, completed in 1883, furnished the subject for the main stained glass window in the parish church, depicting the foundation of the Confraternity of Charity. A large painting of the traditional subject of Vincent and the foundlings in the snow, a gift from Napoleon III in 1868, was moved from the church and is now located in the sisters’ home. The original of this painting, completed by Nicolas-André Monsiau (1754-1837) about 1817, popularized the pre-revolutionary statue by Stouf and is the source of the common images of Vincent and the children in the snow.

(5) The castle. Only the walls and small gates remain of the old brick and stone castle, dating from the 1270s at earliest. Its prominent location above the town looking down onto the valleys of the Relevant and the Chalaronne point to the strategic importance of the town in ages past. Formerly attached to Savoy, this area became part of France in 1601. The castle had been destroyed definitively on 10 May 1595 in the battles leading to a change of government.

Below the castle is an interesting
restored building, formerly the old salt stores. It had been a part of the ancient village clustered around the foot of the castle before its charter as a town in 1273.

(6) The Villars gate. This ancient gate leads out of the town toward the east and to the city of Villars. Traces of the mechanism for the old drawbridge are visible. The present gate is the best-preserved piece of military architecture in this region.

(7) The bridges. Five small bridges and one covered passageway span the Chalaronne. These have been beautifully decorated with flowers in recent summers, and small boats filled with flowers have also been placed in the stream. Châtillon’s energies earned it the highest awards in a Europe-wide contest for floral decoration. One new bridge, on the Avenue Clément Desormes, is called the Buénans bridge, inasmuch as it leads to that old settlement.

Only a few houses remain in Buénans, the principal town where Vincent had been appointed pastor. In his day, the main parish was Saint Martin of Buénans, and its chapel was the Châtillon church. A small plaque on highway D2 recalls Vincent’s pastorate, but nothing remains of the church. Its stones were removed in the eighteenth century for other uses. A small farm is confidently pointed out as the residence of their saintly pastor, but no evidence for this exists apart from local tradition. He may have lived here before taking possession of the pastor’s house in Châtillon, 11 November 1617. The town of Buénans has ceased to exist.
Outside of Châtillon, on D17 to the south, is Maladières. In the Middle Ages this was a hospice for lepers, cared for by the Fleurieux parish. It is believed that it was at this small farm that the poor people lived whose sad condition was reported to Vincent. His response, and that of his parishioners, led to the Confraternity of Charity, an organization that still exists in the parish. The present house dates only from the nineteenth century.

Some distance to the east is Pérouges, named by Celtic refugees from the Romans homesick for their native Perugia in Italy. In the nineteenth century, the use of home looms declined, the former weavers' houses were unsuitable for farm workers, and the railroads bypassed Pérouges, set on a hill above Meximieux. Consequently, the population of Pérouges departed, and the town was left as it had been in medieval times. Its rough cobblestone streets and open spaces offered authentic locations for the film Monsieur Vincent, for one of the many Three Musketeers films, and for others. The Place du Tilleul and the Rue des Rondes in particular are worth visiting. Because of its medieval appearance, the town has decided against allowing many modern elements, such as electric lights and wires, on the fronts of buildings. The parish church of Sainte Marie Madeleine was built at the beginning of the fifteenth century and contains several fine examples of religious sculpture. Despite its museum-like character, Pérouges numbers about 900 people.

Count Balthazar de Rougemont was one of Vincent's notable successes in Châtillon. This aggressive duelist was
Vincent de Paul in Châtillon

1614
5-7 May: Pastoral visit by the archbishop of Lyons, who finds the church and the priests’ residences in good repair, although the hospital was in poor condition. There are some 900 parishioners at this time.

1616
18 October: The archbishop of Lyons writes to Pierre de Bérulle, suggesting that Châtillon be given to the Oratorians. Bérulle, their founder, must have suggested Jean Lourdelot, who became pastor 7 January 1617.

1617
19 April: Lourdelot resigns his pastorate of Saint Martin of Buénans and its dependency, Saint André of Châtillon. He does not resign the parish to anyone in particular, but leaves the space blank in the document for inserting the name of his successor.

26 May: Inventory of the furnishings of the chapel of the Ladies of the Holy Rosary, perhaps the nucleus of the Confraternity of Charity. The furnishings of this chapel in the Châtillon church were abundant and in good condition.

May-June: The canon-counts of Lyons, temporal lords of Châtillon, again ask the Oratorians to propose a successor. Bérulle suggests Vincent.

July: Vincent visits Lyons, asking for information on Châtillon.

29 July: Vincent de Paul, “a priest, bachelor in theology, of the diocese of Dax,” is named pastor. He remains pastor of Clichy.

1 August: Vincent de Paul takes possession of Buénans and Châtillon on a Tuesday afternoon, in the company of two priests associated with the parish, Jean Besson and Pierre Genoud.

August: The town council agrees to pay Vincent and the sociétaires a regular salary.

16 August: Louis Giraud (or Girard, his spelling), doctor in theology, joins Vincent as his assistant. On the same day, Vincent signs the baptismal register as “curé” for the first time.

20 August: Exhortation at Sunday mass in favor of the sick at Maladières. [Probable date]

23 August: Charter meeting of the Confraternity of Charity.

September: Monsieur de Gondi writes his wife with the news of Vincent’s intention not to return to their household.

October: Monsieur Du Fresne, secretary of Monsieur de Gondi and a friend of Vincent’s, comes to ask him to return to Paris. Vincent then goes to Lyons to consult with Monsieur Jean Bence, superior of the Oratorians, as to whether he
should leave Châtillon.

13 October: Monsieur de Gondi receives a letter from Vincent, written in Lyons, announcing a brief trip to Paris to help him discern his future.

24 November: The archbishop of Lyons approves the rules of the Confraternity of Charity (a name taken in imitation of the hospital of Charity in Rome).

3 December: Vincent celebrates his last baptism in his parish. (He celebrated only four baptisms during this period; his associate, Girard, did the majority of them.)

8 December: Formal establishment of the Confraternity, consisting of twelve noble or bourgeois women, one servant. Election of officers, done in the presence of three priests: Jean Besson, Jean Benonier, and Hugues Rey, sociétaires of the church in Châtillon.


15 December: Vincent gives Charlotte de Brie, the treasurer, an account book still in existence. It records the first meeting of the Confraternity.

18 December: Vincent leaves the parish to return to Paris.

23 December: Vincent reaches Paris, after about five months in Châtillon.

1618

5 January: Second meeting of the Confraternity of Charity in Châtillon.

31 January: Vincent formally resigns as pastor of Châtillon.

18 July: Louis Giraud, Vincent’s associate, succeeds him as pastor of Buënnans and Châtillon.

converted to religion, lived a very pious life, and sold his Rougemont property for the sake of the poor. He had a castle at Chandée, north of Vandeins, now a town of 1000 people. Vincent visited him there, where the nobleman recounted the dramatic story of his act of detachment when he smashed his sword against a rock. The ancient castle no longer exists.

East of Vandeins is Bourg-en-Bresse, an important city of some 40,000 inhabitants. The Congregation of the Mission had a house here from 1701 to 1791. Its purpose was originally to give retreats for clergy and laity, as well as missions. The founder of the house, a diocesan priest, had been touched by the original inspiration of Vincent, and he sought to bring the advantages of that charism to his region. The house concentrated, in fact, on missions.

Southeast of Châtillon is Ars-sur-Formans, the renowned pastorate of Jean Baptiste Marie Vianney (1786-1859), known familiarly as the Curé of
Ars. His parish church and residence have been preserved. Although Vincent had nothing to do with Ars, he is venerated here, and Vianney kept engravings of his fellow pastor in his home, where they remain. Today, Ars, like Lourdes, lives off pilgrimages. It has a population of about 900.

CONFORT, GEX, TOUGIN

Rosalie Rendu (1786-1856) was born at Confort, at the time a hamlet in the parish of Lancrans. This Daughter of Charity was to have a profound influence on the exercise of charity toward the poor, particularly in relation to Blessed Frédéric Ozanam. Only a single room remains of her family home, now part of the chapel of the retirement home founded under her inspiration in 1860, and which bears her name (Maison de Retraite Soeur Rosalie). During the revolutionary period, her fervent parents risked their lives to shelter priests on the run from the authorities. One of these was the bishop of Annecy who celebrated the eucharist in the basement of a nearby house, at which Rosalie received her first communion. Today, Confort is a hamlet of fewer than 500 people.

Her mother brought her to the hospital of Gex, staffed at the time by the Daughters of Charity. Louis XIV founded this hospital for the sick in 1660. The
hospital has since been closed, but its buildings remain. The oldest section was in existence in Rosalie's day.

One of the natives of Gex was Jacques André Emery (1732-1811), superior general of the Society of Saint Sulpice from 1782 until his death. His position helped him to be one of the leaders of French Catholics in the immediate post-Revolutionary period. In Paris, he counseled the young Rosalie in her choice of vocation.

Outside Gex is the hospice of Tougin, now a small community hospital. Daughters of Charity worked here in Rosalie's time, continuing a service that began in 1742 or 1743. One of its treasures is a remarkable painting of Saint Vincent. Probably painted before the Revolution, the portrait depicts him grasping the flaming heart of charity—an element borrowed from the iconography associated with Saint Augustine and one of the earliest symbols for Vincent. During the revolution, the sisters put their lives in jeopardy by hiding a priest in their house. He was never discovered. Gex is a small city of about 7000 people, overlooking Geneva.

Vincentians also served alongside Daughters of Charity in the hospital for the aged in Musinens (1869-1903), a hamlet near Confort. The government forced them both out following the anti-clerical laws at the beginning of the century.

GRENOBLE

This episcopal city of 150,000 was home to Francis Regis Clet (1748-1820). He was baptized in the church of Saint Louis. This is a building in classical style, built between 1689 and 1701. On the baptistery floor is a memorial plaque: "Here was baptized on 20 August 1748, the Blessed Francis Regis Clet, martyred in China in 1820." His family home is still standing. (Corner of Grande Rue and Rue Diodore Rahout)

Among many art works in the cathedral is a nineteenth-century painting by François Rayneri of Vincent taking the chains of a galley convict. Other saints recalled in the same cathedral are Bruno and the first Carthusian hermits, who received the habit here in 1084, and Jean Baptiste Marie Vianney, ordained at
the major seminary in Grenoble, 13 August 1815.

LYONS**

Lyons, France's second largest city in urban population (420,000), and its third, after Marseilles, in area, has for centuries played a leading role in French life, including its ecclesiastical life. For example, its archbishop, styled the Primate of Gaul, enjoys precedence over all French bishops.

Vincent came here on various occasions. Two certain visits were in July and October 1617, concerning his acceptance and then his resignation of the parish of Châtillon-les-Dombes. He consulted the Oratorian superior. He also certainly passed through Lyons during one or more trips to Marseilles to visit the galleys.

A Vincentian house, however, did not exist in Lyons until after Vincent's death, although he had planned to open one. The congregation opened its Lyons foundation in 1668, and it remained until 1791. At approximately the same time as the opening of the house, the province of Lyons began. The Vincentians used the Lyons foundation as a residence for missionaries, a novitiate and scholasticate, as well as for the visitor (provincial superior) of Lyons. Many pre-Revolutionary conferees made their vows here, in particular, Saint Francis Regis Clet, 18 March 1771. He may have celebrated his first mass in the large chapel, but another traditions says it was at Valfeury. At the Revolution, of course, the Vincentians were expelled, and eventually the Brothers of the Christian Schools received the property.

They began their work here in 1839 and remained until their expulsion about 1905. The property, once called the Pensionnat des Frères des Écoles Chrétienes, keeps its original name on the exterior: Pensionnat des Lazaristes. (24, montée St. Barthélémy) Presently, this has become part of the “Centre Scolaire aux Lazaristes,” a name which also appears on another part of the institution facing the cathedral. (3, place Saint Jean) Regrettably, all references to Saint Vincent de Paul have been removed from the chapel.

One result of the arrival of the Vincentians was that the priests of the diocesan community of Saint Michael planned to join the Congregation of the Mission, 12 November 1669. The reason being that both groups were giving missions in the diocese, and it seemed better to unite in a common effort. Ultimately

Church of Saint Louis, Grenoble, nineteenth century engraving.
only one member, the founder, took vows as a Vincentian. His confrères nevertheless agreed to live as a group among the Vincentians and to follow their rules.

At the Revolution, various confrères were executed in Lyons. The city rose against the Convention in Paris and raised a self-defense force of some 20,000. Paris reacted and besieged the doomed city, which fell 9 October 1793. The Paris Committee of Public Safety decreed revenge against Lyons. One among the 2000 citizens killed was Jean Baptiste Nantas, the maternal uncle of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam.

Two Vincentians were also executed here in the aftermath. Louis Guinand, a professor at the Le Mans seminary, was guillotined on 16 January 1794, and Claude Leclerc, age 75, suffered the same fate on 24 February 1794. Other members of the house also suffered for their faith: Louis Verne, Antoine Imbert, Jean Antoine Martin, and André Chambovet. Another figure is the celebrated Antoine Adrien Lamourette (1742-1794). He had left the Congregation in 1785 and returned to his diocese. He took the constitutional oath and became the bishop of Rhône et Loire, that is, of Lyons, in 1791. As the deputy of Lyons, he gave a sensational address to the National Assembly (7 July 1792), in which he tried to reconcile its various factions who should have been united against foreign invaders. They agreed but quickly fell back into factions. Their reconciliation was called a “Lamourette kiss,” that is, a hypocritical one. Unwittingly, the Congregation of the Mission has given a by-word to the French language. Lamourette protested against the September massacres, retracted his oath, suffered public humiliation in Lyons, and then was guillotined in Paris, 11
January 1794.

The cathedral of Lyons possessed the relic of the heart of Saint Vincent for 155 years. At the time of the Revolution, in 1792, some Vincentians and Daughters of Charity left France for Turin. Among their baggage was a collection of Vincent’s correspondence, personal clothing and other relics. Hidden in a cavity in a large volume of the lives of the saints was the reliquary of the saint’s heart. The Vincentians in Turin kept this relic until 1805. At that date, Cardinal Joseph Fesch (1763-1839), Napoleon’s uncle and archbishop of Lyons, demanded that this relic be returned to France. With great solemnity it was returned that same year, and kept in the Saint Vincent de Paul chapel (now reserved for the Blessed Sacrament). In this chapel, a large painting by Charles Meynier (1768-1832) depicts Saint Vincent preaching to the Ladies of Charity on the care of the orphans. In 1953, Cardinal Gerlier returned the relic to the Daughters of Charity at the Rue du Bac, Paris, where it now remains. The original reliquary, however, is in the treasury of the cathedral. Another item of Vincent’s is a set of heavily embroidered vestments, nineteenth century, with embroidery coming from another set that he used. It is occasionally displayed in the treasury.

After the Revolution, another Vincentian house began. Although used for some years, it was purchased only in 1873. It principally served as an apostolic school, but other works were carried out as well. This continued until the universal expulsion of congregations in 1903. (49, montée du Chemin Neuf) The Daughters of Charity began their ministries with works of charity in 1679. Although one sister was imprisoned and others were mistreated during the Revolution, the sisters later returned and opened houses in many of the parishes of the city.

Another Vincentian figure in Lyons is Blessed Frédéric Ozanam (1813-1853). Although he was born in Milan, his family brought him back to their native home while he was still a child. At first, they lived in a hotel directly behind the
church of Saint Nizier but, after the death of his sister, the Ozanams moved to the third floor of an apartment building. (5, rue Pizay) His parish church, Saint Pierre, is now a part of the Fine Arts museum. (Place des Terreaux) He made his First Communion here, and one of his funerals would be held here as well. He received his early education at the Collège Royal, now the Lycée Ampère. (Rue de la Bourse) In the church of Saint Bonaventure (Place des Cordeliers) at age seventeen, Ozanam consecrated his life to the service of God and others. He often wrote about the old chapel of Notre Dame de Fourvière. Today, a monster church of the same name, begun after the war of 1870, dominates the upper city. Since the seventeenth century both the old and new churches have been a place of pilgrimage and prayer, particularly during various epidemics. In 1836, he was enrolled in the bar at the Palace of Justice, clearly visible from Fourvière. Also visible is the large Hôtel Dieu, the hospita where his father practiced medicine. Both his parents are buried at the cemetery of Loyasse, just west of Fourvière. He married Marie Joséphine Amélie Soulacroix in the church of Saint Nizier, as a commemorative plaque there recalls. He moved to Paris for study and work, and there founded, with several others, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. Daughters of Charity taught school in this parish in the nineteenth century.

A person of importance, and close to Ozanam, was Pauline Marie Jaricot (1799-1862). This laywoman founded the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, the Living Rosary and many other works. She was also a prime mover in the new Fourvière basilica. She lived between the top of Fourvière and Old Lyons below. (42, montée Saint Barthélémy) A small chapel here was founded in 1839. She was buried in the transept of Saint Nizier church. Her cause for canonization has been introduced.

**VALFLEURY**

This ancient pilgrimage site at the head of a quiet valley south of Lyons traces its legendary beginnings to about the year 800. According to typical traditions, some children or shepherds discovered a statue of the Virgin Mary and the Child Jesus near a broom shrub (genêt) blooming on Christmas Eve. At some point Benedictine monks came here and gave the name Val Fleury ("flowery valley") to this area. They left the statue where it was and built a shrine over a miraculous spring that still runs. The hardwood statue is of Romanesque design, dating to the beginning of the twelfth century. This is a Black Virgin, one of many in France and elsewhere, particularly in Europe. The statue has been cleaned and some of its original polychrome has been discovered.

Notre Dame de Valfleury is first mentioned, however, in 1052, as attached to the monastery of La Chaise Dieu (for Casa Dei, "the house of God" in contorted French). Secular clergy replaced the Benedictines in 1485, although they continued to be responsible for pilgrimages until 1687, the date on a plaque in the church.
Vincentians came here in 1687 to staff the shrine and to give missions in the district. When they were expelled during the Revolution, the statue was hidden. Some of the priests attached to the shrine at that time suffered death for their faith. After 1802 the church was restored to Catholic worship and, through the diligence of Brother Antoine Pierron (1757-1833), the statue was recovered and placed in the church. Brother Pierron was responsible as well for the renewal of the pilgrimage. Only a few carved stones remain from the earlier church. The present church building was begun in 1853 and consecrated in 1866. It was built thanks to the munificence of the Vincentian Jean Baptiste Lugan (1800-1884), pastor from 1840 to 1856, and finished under the pastorate of Father Nicolle (pastor, 1856-1871). Lugan willed his heart to the shrine and this donation has been memorialized in a marble plaque at the Blessed Sacrament altar.

In modern times Our Lady of Valfleury is connected chiefly with the work of the same Antoine Hippolyte Nicolle (1817-1890). After his seminary studies and ordination to the diaconate, Nicolle applied to join the Congregation of the Mission. He entered in 1840, was
ordained a priest the same year and took his vows in 1842. As part of the devotional life of the time (marked by devotion to the Passion of Jesus expressed in prayerful meditation on his human body, such as the Holy Face, the wounds, the suffering hearts of Jesus and Mary depicted on the Miraculous Medal, and the devotion of the Scapular of the Passion, 1846), Nicolle became attracted to the Holy Agony of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. He had been in Tours, and there participated in the nightly adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, something he easily connected with the night vigil of Jesus in Gethsemane.

In his new role he energetically developed the pilgrimages and in 1860 presided over the solemn coronation of the ancient pilgrimage statue. He also encouraged prayers for the Church in its agony at the time (particularly for Pius IX), as well as for the dying. A prayer group was begun, and the devotion to the Holy Agony spread rapidly. Nicolle later founded a congregation of sisters of the Holy Agony, now called the Sisters of Christ at Gethsemane. They began officially in 1864 when he clothed the first religious. Their work concentrates on care of the sick and dying. Nicolle remained as their ecclesiastical superior, but the sisters are independent of the Daughters of Charity, the Congregation of the Mission, and the Holy Agony devotion. The central house for the Archconfraternity of the Holy Agony is the Vincentian motherhouse in Paris, and its director is the Vincentian superior general.

Father Nicolle began the new community of sisters in the crypt chapel of the shrine. The crypt has various plaques concerning the erection of the Archconfraternity of the Holy Agony and of the sisters. The seventeenth-century statue of Notre Dame de Cry, noted for her black face, has recently been restored and replaced here.

Nicolle built a large way of the cross on the property, together with a Calvary grotto. Following the fourteenth station, a chapel memorializes the dead of the two world wars. There are also some curious grotto-like structures flanking the property, probably intended as stopping places for pilgrims. High on a hillside overlooking the valley is another series of structures, the mysteries of the rosary laid out like the way of the cross.

Since Vincentians have been here, with some gaps, since 1687, Valfleury can claim the title of being the oldest Vincentian house in France, although
the buildings are much newer. Daughters of Charity worked in the hospital, still standing, from 1872. The present town numbers about 500 people.

In the nearby city of Saint-Étienne Daughters of Charity began multiple works of charity and education in the 1830s. Although there was no Vincentian house, Jean Félix Cayla de la Garde, superior general at the time of the Revolution, was forced to hide here. He eventually escaped to the Palatinate and then to Rome, where he died in 1800.