
Spiritual Writings

Correspondence, Meditations, Advice

1991

Letters: 1650

Follow this and additional works at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/l dm>

Recommended Citation

Letters: 1650.

<https://via.library.depaul.edu/l dm/14>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Correspondence, Meditations, Advice at Via Sapientiae. It has been accepted for inclusion in Spiritual Writings by an authorized administrator of Via Sapientiae. For more information, please contact digitalservices@depaul.edu.

and others who appreciate your work with the poor know about this. However, to look for an all-out battle, to complain about it openly, to murmur about it among yourselves must be avoided because, except for your sister assistants, the other sisters must hear nothing which will disturb them. I would have already received orders from Monsieur Vincent concerning all your troubles, but he has been confined to his room for a week. I will not fail to do so as soon as I am able.

Poor Madame Marchais¹ asks for your prayers in her affliction. She was taken from her country-house and brought to Châteaudun by a man who had a relative at the Longue-Ville town hall and who married her there. However, she says that it was by force, and now there is a major lawsuit over the matter.

Your parents are well, thank God. Extend my greetings to your administrators, Mademoiselle de La Carisière and the other good Ladies we know. Believe me to be in the love of Our Lord Incarnate, my dear Sister, your very humble and very loving sister and servant.

1650

Establishment of the Daughters of Charity at Hennebont and Montmirail.

January 18: *Marriage of Michel Le Gras.*

October: *Birth of his daughter, Louise-Renée.*

L.275 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor of the Hospital at Nantes

January 13, 1650

My very dear Sister,

I truly share the pain that you and we are feeling at the loss of our good Sister Marie Arnou.² God, in His goodness, found her worthy and so He called her to be with Him in paradise. I assure you, my dear Sister, that this news surprised us greatly. I would truly like to know how Sister Marie Noret³ is coming along in her illness. We will do all we can to send

1. See Letter 275.

2. Marie Arnou, a native of Ennery, arrived in Nantes in November 1648 and died in the beginning of January 1650.

3. Marie Noret, arrived at the Hospital of Nantes in June 1649 and died towards the month

you help; we have lost so many sisters that the number of them suitable to send has dropped quite a bit. Then we are being asked to send sisters to so many locations that we have no idea of how we will furnish them.

The guidance of God concerning good Madame Jeanne Marchais¹ was admirable. All her business has been cleared up to her advantage and with her honor undamaged. She then was set to marry someone else, but that was not the plan of God. All her relatives have matters to straighten out because she did not have the time to clarify what was going on. During her illness, she was almost always delirious or asleep. Nonetheless, she was very happy to receive the holy sacraments of the Church while she was staying with Madame Boulonnois.

I beg you to let me know all that happened to our poor dear deceased Sister.² Last week I wrote a long letter to Monsieur d'Annemont³ about the difficulties that you mentioned to me.

I am troubled that you are not sending me any news about Sister Renée.⁴ I would ask you to tell her that Sister Jeanne Delacroix⁵ sends her greetings. Please remember me to all the sisters, particularly Sister Henriette,⁶ whom I strongly urge to persevere and to embrace the virtue of stability. How blessed I consider her because God has given her the grace to be so useful in the service of the poor! It is quite necessary for her to humble herself and to do her utmost to be faithful to this grace and grateful to the goodness of God. Her sister, her nephew and her nieces are all doing well.

I beg all our sisters to use profitably the grace which God has given you by providing you, in your need, with the help of Monsieur d'Annemont. I am sure that He does this in order to help calm you after the storms of the past and to renew you in the spirit of unity and cordiality that the Daughters of Charity must possess through the practice of this same charity which is accompanied by all the Christian virtues, particularly mutual support which is our dearest virtue. I recommend this to you, as much as I can, as something which is absolutely necessary since it leads us never to see the faults of another with bitterness but rather always to excuse them while humbling ourselves. I beg you, my dear Sister, to ask for this spirit, which is the spirit of Our Lord, for our entire Company, and to believe me in His holy love, your very humble and very loving sister and servant.

of April 1650.

1. Madame Marchais, see Letter 365.

2. Marie Arnou.

3. Monsieur d'Annemont, the sisters' director, see Letter 173.

4. Renée Delacroix, a native of Le Mans, entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity in 1646. She arrived in Nantes in June 1649 and lived there until 1655. She then went to the parish of Saint Barthélemy in Paris.

5. Jeanne Delacroix, her older sister, see Letter 297.

6. Henriette Gesseume, see Letter 76.

P.S. I beg you and all our sisters to receive Holy Communion for the intention of my son, who, I believe, will receive the sacrament of matrimony soon. God has chosen for him someone who seems to be a most virtuous young woman¹ who is not from Paris.

**L.276 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTERS CLAUDE BRIGIDE² AND
GENEVIÈVE DOINEL³**

Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Sick Poor at Chantilly

(January 1650)

My very dear Sisters,

I praise God with all my heart for the grace His goodness has granted you to be a source of edification where He has seen fit to place you. However, be sure to thank Him for it through the practice of the virtues He asks of you, especially great cordiality and mutual understanding among you.

Am I not wrong in recommending this virtue to you, my dear Sisters, because without it you would be unable to be not only good Daughters of Charity, but even good Christians? I also believe that you are as exact as possible in the observance of your little Rules without detriment to the poor since their service must always come first. However, it must be carried out properly and not according to your own will.

We sent you your New Year's holy cards which are like all of ours. This is the saint who must show us our work since she was fortunate enough to serve the poor in the person of Our Lord, just as we serve Our Lord in the person of the poor.

Sister Geneviève, do not be troubled by the news of your sister. She is doing quite well, thank God, and is in very good health. If you have an opportunity to write to her, send your letter to the sisters at Saint-Germain; she is in the parish there. Please pray for our deceased Sister Marie Arnou from Ennery⁴ and for me. I am, my very dear Sisters, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. You can keep the woman whom the Bishop of Senlis requested be confided to your care. Be very humble. Do not send us any more girls unless you are certain that their coming has been approved.

1. Gabrielle Le Clerc from Champlan. The marriage was celebrated on January 18, 1650.

2. Claude Brigide, see Letter 114.

3. Geneviève Doinel, see Letter 352.

4. Marie Arnou, see Letter 275.

L.278 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX¹
Vicar General of the Bishop of Angers, at Angers

January 29 (1650)

Monsieur,

I am very concerned about our sisters of the Hôtel-Dieu because I have not had news of them for a long time. What worries me most is that Monsieur Vincent told me that you have been busy with important matters. In the name of God, Monsieur, remember that Divine Providence made use of you in the establishment of this work and has confided its direction to you. If the sisters have abused the graces that God has given them and the efforts which you have made for them, I beg your Charity to pardon them and to continue to direct them, either personally or through Monsieur Ratier.² Also, please see to it that they have no regular confessor, unless you have appointed him. They need this assistance so much that I fear that, without it, it would be impossible for them to go on. This is what leads me to be so insistent and to beg you most humbly to take the trouble to have news sent to me of Sister Marguerite Moreau,³ and to let us know what you judge we should do for the well-being of this little Company so that God's plan for it may be carried out.

Permit me, Monsieur, to beg your Charity to remember my needs at the holy altar and to continue to honor me by believing that I am in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your very humble and most obedient daughter and servant.

L.279 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

[February 1650]

My Most Honored Father,

I believe that the bailiff⁴ informed you yesterday of the state of the

1. Monsieur l'abbé de Vaux, see Letter 12.
2. Monsieur Ratier, see Letter 71.
3. Marguerite Moreau had arrived in Angers in June 1647. Because of her assertive personality, she had a few difficulties in her relationship with Cécile Angiboust, the Sister Servant in Angers. However, she was chosen for Poland and left with Madeleine Drugeon and Françoise Douelle in September 1652. In Warsaw, she refused to stay near the Queen while her two companions went to serve the poor in Cracow. She died in Poland in 1660.
4. Michel Le Gras.

unpleasant business,¹ which seems to depend entirely on the way in which Monsieur Lesguier informs Monsieur d'Émery² of the Queen's will in the matter, in keeping with the new orders that he has received from Her Majesty. I beg your Charity very humbly to be so good as to let me know if someone should be sent to speak to him and if so, who. However, this matter must be taken care of today. What obliges me to neglect nothing is that it will be a matter of at least 12 to 15 pounds plus, I am told, a 2,000-pound tax for the cost of his reception.³

In the name of God, my Most Reverend Father, consider whether we should persuade these Ladies not to accept new foundlings so that we can pay our debts and bring back the weaned children from the country. I assure you that, in conscience, we can no longer stifle the pity aroused in us by these poor people who beg us for what we justly owe them. Not only do we owe them for their services but we also owe them for the personal money that they have spent. Because of this, they are afraid of dying of hunger and are forced to come from quite a distance, three or four times, without receiving any money. We are in debt for quite an amount: for food, for the nurses, and often for seven or eight weaned infants, as well as for the money we have borrowed. However, it is not self-interest that causes us to speak in this way, although, if matters continue as they are, we will be obliged to liquidate whatever we have because we cannot refuse to pay them from the little we do have.

Please excuse my constant insistence and honor me always with the belief that I am, my Most Honored Father, your very humble and most obedient daughter and servant.

L.390 - (TO THE SISTERS OF THE HOSPITAL OF ANGERS)⁴

(c. 1650)

My very dear Sisters,

The virtues that Sister⁵ . . . told you that she had remarked in our sisters⁶ must have consoled you and encouraged you to desire to acquire

1. See Letters 267 and 272.
2. Monsieur d'Émery, General Auditor of Finances.
3. Monsieur de la Rochemaillet, uncle of Michel Le Gras' wife, left him the office of deputy in the currency court. The act was signed on June 13, 1650.
4. This letter was part of a series of letters from Angers recopied by Marguerite Chétif.
5. Marguerite, see Letter 290b, who arrived in Paris.
6. Allusion to the conference on the virtues of the deceased sisters (Coste IX, 535).

them. Above all, my dear Sisters, reflect that as servants of the poor you owe those whom you serve great gentleness, support and cordiality. I beg you to be careful to be very accommodating in your words and to be respectful toward those who visit the poor because it is you who must attract benefactors by your graciousness. I am not saying that any sister who may be present should stop and converse with these people; however, if these persons come up to you in passing, stop and listen to what they have to say. If they say something to which you should not respond, refer them to the Sister Servant, who will give them a satisfactory response.

L.283 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

General of the Venerable Priests of the Mission

Friday [April 1650]

My Most Honored Father,

Yesterday I had the honor of seeing Madame de Lamoignon;¹ her daughter asked me what the Ladies had done at Bicêtre.² She is aware of their resolution to move the boys to an annex in an effort to effect the necessary separation, but she tells me that this is not the solution that your Charity had ordered. She clearly sees the problems for the boys, as well as for the nurses, of leaving the girls there. Although we try to employ good women, the majority of them are forced to leave because of bad conduct rather than on account of the necessities of the times. Moreover, these women, who have been gathered from all over and who are of all types, use coarse language and exhibit licentious conduct. This good young lady told me that you must stand firm so that the proposal that your Charity so strongly supported will be carried out. She also asked that it be put into effect for this Jubilee year and not be put off until a later date. I added that these delays give rise to second thoughts, and Mademoiselle de Lamoignon said that there will be no way to come back to the matter if you miss your opportunity now.

However, I also believe, my Most Honored Father, that you should be firm about taking one or two of your houses, at most, in order to save rent; otherwise, if they make the choice that I think they will, the direction of them will be entirely and permanently given to others, and in this event their plans will come entirely to light. It occurred to me that they believe that we cannot abandon the service of the children, and that we are

1. Madame de Lamoignon, see Letter 77.

2. Bicêtre, where the foundlings were.

committed to it because of the 1000 pounds we were given. You know how we have been wronged. Originally, it was the intention of the benefactors that half the donation come to us purely and simply for the support of the Company and that it not oblige us to the service of the children anymore than we are now committed to the service of the poor and of the galley slaves. If they have any intention of disputing it with us one day, it would be better now than later.

Yesterday I had an opportunity to see the Procurator General. He did me the honor of receiving me most courteously. He immediately asked me if I was there concerning some business he had at hand. I told him that I had come to refresh his memory on the matter. He asked me if we considered ourselves regular or secular. I told him that we aspired only to the latter. He told me that such a thing was without precedent. I cited for him Madame de Villeneuve's¹ Daughters and pointed out to him that they go everywhere. He said many good things about the Company and added that he did not disapprove of our plan. However, he said that something of such importance merited much thought. I expressed my joy that he felt as he did about the matter, and I begged him, if he thought that the Company was unworthy to be, or for some reason should not be continued, to destroy it entirely. But if he considered it good, I said that we begged him to establish it on a solid foundation. I explained that it was this thought that had motivated us to give it a trial for at least 12 or 15 years, and that during this period, by the grace of God, no insurmountable obstacles have appeared. He replied, "Let me reflect on this, I do not say for months, but at least for a few weeks." He took the trouble to escort us to our carriage and showed us great cordiality in the courtyard. He asked us to extend his very humble greetings to you. He added that he would consider himself a usurer if he accepted the very humble gratitude that we offered him for the honor he shows to all our sisters when they dare to approach him with their needs for the poor galley slaves or for the little children.

The Marquise de Maignelay² gave me only a verbal response yesterday. She sent our sister to see the Pastor of Saint-Roch. He and the said Lady assured her that there was no fault to be found in the sisters he had sent away. It was simply a question of the fact that one of the girls who was serving the poor there did not seem suited for the Company, and so he sent the other along to look after her. She is now married and those who have replaced her continue to follow her example.

The said Madame la Marquise is asking for two sisters for tomorrow. There are two obstacles standing in the way of this. Firstly, we must

1. Madame de Villeneuve, foundress of the Daughters of the Cross, see Letter 33.
2. The Marquise de Maignelay was Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi's sister, see Letter 85. Married in 1588, she was widowed in 1591. A very devout Lady of Charity, she participated in Monsieur Vincent's different works of charity.

propose to you the names of the sisters to be sent, allow you to become acquainted with them, and give them the opportunity to make a retreat before leaving. Secondly, the girl who remained and is now married is living in the house where our sisters are supposed to live. Moreover, this is a dangerous neighborhood for us.

I beg you very humbly to take the trouble to let me know how I should act in this matter so as not to displease Madame la Marquise or prejudice our interests. Please give me your blessing for all of our needs and do me the honor of believing me . . .

L.284 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at the Hospital of Saint-René
at Nantes*

Paris, May 4, 1650

My very dear Sister,

I am more astonished than anyone that you are still complaining about not receiving news of us for as long as you say. I believe that Sister Hellot¹ and I have written to you more than six times. It is true that a few weeks passed in which I did not write and did not have someone write to you, but it was at a time when I knew that Monsieur Vincent was writing to you. It is also true, my dear Sister, that I did not respond to all the points in your letters, especially in one I received recently in which you suggest that some of our sisters would like to begin a perpetual rosary. Let me tell you, my dear Sister, that this proposal was sent to Monsieur Vincent a long time ago, and we are still unable to obtain a response. However, since I know that like the Superiors of the other Companies, he does not allow us to enroll in a lot of confraternities, I am led to believe that in this matter we will have to be satisfied with simply saying the rosary.

We received some letters from Monsieur Truchart² which differ quite a bit. The first urges us to send you some help; the other asks us to put off doing so. In this matter, as in all things, my dear Sister, we must adore the guidance of Divine Providence. I wrote to you quite fully on this subject last week. I hope that you received the letters. I sent them to Monsieur d'Annemont.³

I beg you to greet all our sisters for me. I pray with all my heart that God will grant them the great courage they need to be faithful to Him,

1. Élisabeth Hellot, Louise de Marillac's secretary; it was she who wrote the letter.

2. Monsieur Truchart, the sisters' confessor in Nantes.

3. Monsieur d'Annemont, see Letter 173.

as He asks them to be, in this situation that is so painful to nature. Moreover, I hope that aided by His grace, it will prove advantageous for us. I desire this for the glory of God and the edification of our neighbor. My dear Sister, your great trials and mental turmoil, in all this confusion, do not arise so much from the uncertainty of events, opposition and conflicting reports, as from the fact that you have no one reliable to comfort you and give you advice. But, please believe me, my dear Sister, if I were in your place, I would ask God to grant me a great spirit of indifference and the realization that it is not up to us to act in this situation; rather I would ask Him to put us in the disposition to listen and to endure all that is said for or against us so that none of it troubles us. O my dear Sister, if we acted in this way, how consoled we would be to see ourselves, like the Son of God, subject to the accusations and judgments of men and entirely deprived of the comfort of creatures. Henceforth, this is the state in which I will see you before God, whom I beg to be your strength. I would ask you, Sister, if anyone pushes you to speak about all these changes and disagreements, to respond very simply, "We have nothing to say about that. We are awaiting the orders of our superiors so that we may know and carry out the will of God." Tell our sisters to do the same. If you can all act accordingly, you will be the bravest women in the world and I truly believe that you will be doing what God is asking of you. Believe me more than ever in His holy love, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

L.284B - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER CÉCILE AGNÈS¹

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Angers

May 4, 1650

My very dear Sister,

If Monsieur l'abbé de Vaux² had not recently given me news of your dear self, I would be very worried because you have not written to us for some time. I hope that our good God will keep you healthy amidst the illnesses that have threatened you lately. I was quite consoled to learn of the return of Monsieur Ratier.³ In the name of God, my dear Sisters, be faithful in following his advice; and above all, be very gentle and courteous toward your poor. You know that they are our masters and that we must love them tenderly and respect them deeply. It is not enough

1. Cécile Angiboust, see Letter 108.

2. Monsieur l'abbé de Vaux, see Letter 12.

3. Monsieur Ratier, see Letter 71.

for these maxims to be in our minds; we must bear witness to them by our gentle and charitable care. Also, remember always to show great respect to the Fathers of the Poor.¹ Greet them very humbly for me. Continue to welcome warmly the ladies and gentlemen who visit the hospital. We are indebted to all of them. We must also be on our guard against two extremes: one is affectation in speaking with outsiders; this is often harmful to those who serve the poor and who thus must act only as poor persons; the second is that the idea we may have of not seeking to please anyone may lead us to make no effort to be pleasant with outsiders. Now, this is not how we should act, my dear Sister, because we must welcome cordially those who come to visit the poor, without seeking our own interests. We must greet them simply because that is the way we must act and because it can be beneficial for the poor.

I send heartfelt and affectionate greetings to all our sisters, and I am in the love of our dear Master, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. Our dear Sister Marie Noret² passed away in Nantes. I recommend to you all our dear sisters from there. They have much to endure. It seems that God has chosen them to gain merit for the entire Company.

L.270 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTERS TOUSSAINTE³ AND JEANNE⁴

Daughters of Charity at Valpuiseaux

(c. 1650)

My very dear Sisters,

I praise God with all my heart for restoring Sister Toussainte to health. I hope that He has given her new strength and new courage so that she may devote herself to the service of the poor for His holy love. For this reason, Monsieur Vincent has ordered you to remain there while Sister Barbe makes a trip here.

O my dear Sisters, it seems to me that you will be living in great union and cordiality because the guidance of Divine Providence has placed you together. If your natural temperaments are not alike, in the name of God, my dear Sisters, let His holy love appear in your hearts. Remember, Sister

1. The Fathers of the Poor, the hospital administrators.
2. Marie Noret, see Letter 275.
3. Toussainte David was at Saint-Séverin in 1644, then in Valpuiseaux in 1650. In 1655, she was in Paris. She signed an "x" on the Act of Establishment of the Company. She was afterwards sent to Sedan.
4. Jeanne Fouré, see Letter 173b.

Jeanne, to preserve in your heart the holy affections which produced such generous resolutions during your retreat. Remember also the fidelity you owe to God as a result of His grace, without which we must greatly fear His judgments. Sister Toussainte, Monsieur Vincent asks that you provide Sister Barbe with a few good peasant men to take her to Étampes. Tell her to leave all her bleeding knives behind. Keep them for a while.

Remember, my dear Sisters, that if there is a place where the Daughters of Charity are obliged to give good example by their gentleness and charity, it is where you are because, after God, we are indebted to Monsieur Vincent, our Most Honored Father, who would most certainly be displeased if you acted otherwise.

I was truly astonished that you sent a messenger just for this, as you did another time recently. I beg you, Sisters, not to do this again unless there is an urgent need. I pray that God will watch over you, and I am in His most holy love, my very dear Sisters, your very humble sister and loving servant.

L.286 - TO SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE¹

at Nantes

May 25, 1650

My very dear Sister,

Only yesterday, I received three letters from you at the same time. One was dated May 3, another May 10, and the third was undated. You must have written them some time ago because in them you told me that Monsieur Truchart² was to come. I cannot tell you how consoled I am to learn from you of the disposition in which you and all our sisters are. This, my dear Sister, is how we must be with God.

I will not fail to pass on to Monsieur Vincent your two letters concerning the proposal that was made to provide you with a cook and a steward. As for the steward, I have already let Monsieur Truchart know that we would benefit and would like to have one on the condition, nonetheless, that his wife not interfere in the service of the poor. However, I see many problems where the cook is concerned. Nevertheless, all this must be left to the gentlemen of the administration whom I would ask you to greet most humbly for me. I am surprised that Monsieur Truchart is not satisfied because I thought that I had told him all that I could. We

1. Jeanne Lepintre, see Letter 64.

2. Monsieur Truchart, see Letter 289.

are greatly indebted to him for the charity he shows us.

As for your return, my dear Sisters, it will not be so precipitous that you cannot let us know in advance, so that you may have Monsieur Vincent's directives on what you should do, in addition to what I have already told you. I beg all our sisters to remain firmly attached to the guidance of Divine Providence, to love it and to abandon themselves to it anew, being certain that if we are faithful to God to this degree, His goodness will not abandon us, and all that now causes us suffering will be transformed into great consolation, and God willing, contribute to His glory. I am in His holy love, my very dear Sisters, your very humble sister and servant.

L.277 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTERS CHARLOTTE¹ AND FRANÇOISE²

Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Sick Poor at Richelieu

(June 1650)

My very dear Sisters,

I am completely flabbergasted that I have gone so long without writing to you. I would never have thought it possible, if someone had not assured me that I had not thanked you for your beautiful lace. Our altar thanks you for it but our debts demand acknowledgement. It seems to me, Sisters, that you are worried about your families. I would say, Sister Carcireux, that we received news of your father some time ago. He really wanted to go to see you but we dissuaded him from doing so. He was in Beauvais with his relatives. One of them, who is a judge, has employed him and has assured us that he would willingly keep him on and give him all the help he can. As for Sister Charlotte's mother and father and her entire family, I believe that they are still in good health. We had news from Liancourt just a short while ago.

All that remains for you to do, my dear Sisters, is to thank God for the graces He has bestowed upon you and to work toward your own perfection. You must do this by observing your Rules as faithfully as possible because you owe this to God as well as to the poor whom you serve and to the schoolchildren. One of the very important things that I recommend to you, Sister Charlotte, is not to weep or at least not so often, because it is much better to rejoice. Moreover, what can we desire, wherever we are, since we have God with us? I am in His love and in the

1. Charlotte Royer, see Letter 254.

2. Françoise Carcireux, see Letter 254.

love of His Son, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. I beg you to greet the Superior¹ very humbly for me and to ask him to assure Messieurs Manceau² that their sister³ is well. Tell them that we were sending them a letter from her just as theirs arrived. She is at the hospital in Chars. Since I started this letter, Sister Florence has become ill and is dying. We have held no hope for her for a few days now. I believe that you have heard that Sister Marie Arnou⁴ and Sister Marie Noret⁵ died in Nantes. Please pray for all.

L.280 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE PANGOY⁶

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at the Hospital of the Holy Spirit at Liancourt

(c. June 1650)

My very dear Sister,

I am distressed about Sister Mathurine,⁷ who, you tell me, is ill with a severe attack of tertian fever. In the name of God, take very good care of her, and send me news of her as often as possible. Please assure the building superintendent that we will withhold the money due him from the pay of the nurse. Send us news of the child, please.

I am certain, my dear Sister, that the news of so many deaths is a powerful means to help you to renew your resolutions to be good to all, because life is so short and we die but once, yet the judgment passed

1. Bernard Codoing entered the Congregation of the Mission in 1636. He had been Superior in Richelieu since 1649.
2. Nicolas and Simon Manceau, Priests of the Mission.
3. Françoise Manceau, a native of Laumesfeld (Moselle) entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity in approximately 1643. She was in Chars. In June 1658, she was sent to Calais where she died, a victim of her devotion, in September.
4. Marie Arnou, see Letter 275.
5. Marie Noret, see Letter 275.
6. Jeanne Pangoy, see Letter 195b.
7. Mathurine Guérin, born on April 16, 1631 in Montcontour in Brittany, entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity on September 12, 1648. After a period of formation she went to the parish of Saint-Jean-de-Grèves and then to Liancourt. Called back to the Motherhouse in March 1652, she became Louise de Marillac's secretary and the Directress of the Seminary. In 1655, she was named Treasurer. In October 1659, she was sent to La Fère. In the month of May 1660, Monsieur Vincent called her back to the Belle Isle Hospital. She was named Superioress General in 1667. At the end of her first six years, she went to Angers. She was once again Superioress General from 1676 to 1682, from 1685 to 1691 and from 1694 to 1697. She died at the Motherhouse on October 18, 1704. A long biographical note on her life and virtues was compiled.

upon us at the hour of death lasts for all eternity. Saturday, we put to rest one of our sisters. Her name was Florence. She had been in the Company only two years. She was a very good girl, and we must be truly grateful to our good God that all those He is taking from us seem to be in a good state. Let us strive to live in such a way that the same will be true of us.

Please remember me to your dear sick sister and to Sister Geneviève.¹ All our sisters ask to be remembered to all of you. As for me, I am, with all my heart, in the love of Jesus Crucified, my dear Sisters, your very humble sister and servant.

L.288 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX

July 1, 1650

Monsieur,

Please excuse the liberty I am taking in sending you this little package for our sisters. I will be sure to remind Monsieur Vincent about Monsieur Ratier's business although I do not think that he could have forgotten about it, since he spoke to me of the matter a while ago.

I have learned, Monsieur, that the administrators of the Hôtel-Dieu have obtained a second house to lodge the sick and that our sisters are expected to care for them. I beg you most humbly to take the trouble to look into the matter. It is greatly to be feared that, if the sisters are overburdened, they will fail in the order and cleanliness so necessary in hospitals and that people, not realizing how few of them there are, will consider them blameworthy. Most importantly, however, the sick will run the risk of suffering the consequences. I very humbly beg your Charity to take all this into consideration and to give an order concerning this situation. I also very humbly beseech you to continue to honor me by remembering, at the holy altar, the needs of our poor Company and of my soul so that the divine goodness may have mercy upon it at the hour of separation from this life, at which time I will truly be in the love of Jesus Crucified, Monsieur, your very humble and most obedient . . .

1. Perhaps Geneviève Caillou, see Letter 19.

L.287 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER CÉCILE AGNÈS¹

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor of the Hôtel-Dieu at Angers

July 1 (1650)

My very dear Sister,

I realize that it is truly very difficult for you to have to serve the poor in two houses. With the small number of sisters there, I see it as completely impossible. Speak to Monsieur l'abbé about it. He is still as willing to assist you as when God first inspired him with charity toward you.

I beg you, my dear Sister, to console our dear Sister Perrette² in her illness and to lead her to understand that bodily ailments are advantageous for us when we bear them for the love of God and try to love His most holy will. If we act in this way, then the noblest part of our being, our soul, is perfectly healthy.

Enclosed are two crosses like the ones we are now using for our sisters. They may be used as reliquaries as well since relics can be placed in them. We are not having any more of them made because they break and damage quickly. The medals certainly came from Rome. Monsieur Portail³ brought them back with him. Distribute them as you see fit. Let me know if there are not enough for all those who requested them, and I will try to obtain more. Monsieur Portail sends greetings to all of you and urges you to be faithful and exact in the observance of your Rules, especially those concerning cordiality and union among ourselves. Our sisters join me in begging you to ask our good God for these virtues for us. Believe me in the love of Jesus Crucified, my dear Sisters, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. I wrote to Monsieur Ratier last week. Greet him as well as the good administrators very humbly for me.

1. Cécile Angiboust, see Letter 108.

2. Perrette had arrived in Angers at the end of 1648. Monsieur Lambert called her "Perrine" in his report of the visitation in 1651. She left for Richelieu in 1658.

3. Monsieur Portail returned from Rome in September 1649.

L.289 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE¹

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at the Hospital of Saint-René
at Nantes*

July 13, 1650

My very dear Sister,

I think that you and Sister Henriette² must have received responses to the letters that you wrote to Monsieur Vincent. It worried me that we had not received news of you, and I continued to hope that God would give you a little rest. It is true, my dear Sister, that you would hardly be able to get much since there are only six of you. It grieves me to see you so few in number for all the work you have because of the kitchen and the pharmacy.

It was a great joy for me to hear that Monsieur de Grenville³ has been elected Father of the Poor. Please let me know, Sister, if he is the same one who was there at the time of our establishment. Let us hope that since he knows everything, even the length of time it took to request our sisters, he will make it clear that self-interest did not bring us there and that, with the help of God, it will never keep us there.

I sincerely hope, my dear Sisters, that together you have renewed your resolutions to be perfectly united among yourselves, so that you may faithfully practice your Rule not so much in external matters as interiorly by accepting every event and contradiction as coming from the hand of Divine Providence and by showing great support and complete understanding for one another. In this way, my dear Sisters, you will give good example to those who come to the hospital.

Since it has pleased God to give you a steward who, I believe, is one we would want, I urge you, Sisters, not to go out any longer. Even Sister Henriette should have her medical herbs brought to her. For a long time I have wished that your poor could be treated with remedies like those used in the parishes of Paris. If this were so, the sisters employed in the pharmacy⁴ would have more time and energy to serve the poor.

Please assure Sister Jeanne de Saint-Albin⁵ that her return trip has been delayed because we are uncertain as to whether or not all of you

1. Jeanne Lepintre, see Letter 64.

2. Henriette Gesseume, see Letter 76.

3. Jeanne Lepintre answered Louise de Marillac in her letter of August 5 concerning Monsieur de Grenville: "It is the same, and he has as much or more kindness and affection for us than he had at that time."

4. Henriette Gesseume and Claude Carré.

5. Jeanne de Saint-Albin, see Letter 201. Louise de Marillac must not have counted her when she reported that there were six sisters in Nantes.

might be returning and because we are expecting the gentlemen of the administration to request other sisters. Moreover, such long journeys are not easily undertaken alone. However, we intend to recall her at the first opportunity.

You did not tell me whether or not you had received my letters of the first of the month. I am worried about them. As for what I said about your not going out, that is to be understood as meaning without necessity. Although I am certain that you do not make social visits or visits simply for your personal satisfaction, I can assure you that it is this custom that has preserved the sisters of Angers. I sent you news of them in my last letter and explained how edified the entire Company is by their manner of acting, as it is by the patience which God has given you in all your tribulations. I beg the divine goodness to be your eternal reward and I am in His most holy love, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. We have many sick sisters in various places. Two are in danger of death. Please remember me to all the sisters and express my humble greetings to the administrators, to Mademoiselle de La Carisière and to all our friends. I ask you, Sister, to offer my apologies to Monsieur Truchart¹ for not writing to him in this mail. I have taken some medication. Please extend my very humble greetings to him.

L.130C - TO SISTER JEANNE-CHRISTINE²

at Liancourt

(c. 1650)

My very dear Sister,

I shared your letter with Monsieur Vincent who agrees with you that you should be relieved of the responsibility of managing the money and that you should entrust this duty to Sister Mathurine.³ She should accept it willingly since Divine Providence is ordering her to do so. Sister Jeanne Pangoy⁴ will continue to nurse the sick poor along with you, Sister Jeanne, in the manner in which you saw her care for Sister Élisabeth. And you, Sister Jeanne-Christine, holy obedience makes you the Sister Servant. Thus, may the three of you be of one heart and one will.

Since we have had sisters at Liancourt, I have never, by the grace of

1. Monsieur Truchart, the sisters' confessor.
2. Jeanne-Christine Prévost, see Letter 344.
3. Mathurine Guérin, see Letter 280.
4. Jeanne Pangoy, see Letter 195b.

God, seen discord among them. I hope that His infinite goodness will continue to grant us this grace. When I say that Sister Jeanne Pangoy will take care of the sick of the villages, I mean she will do so with you, Sister Jeanne. However, she will show you how they must be served. Sister Mathurine will be careful to inscribe each day whatever there may be by way of receipts and expenditures. Thus everything will be very easy.

O my dear Sisters, how the desire to love God and the practice of that love make all things marvelously sweet! Oh, what a great consolation it is for good souls to have the opportunity to prove the love they bear Him, as you do, by the service that you render to the poor.

Remember the interior trials you endured, Sister Jeanne-Christine, when you lived in places where you had little work. I beg Our Lord, with all my heart, to bless your work and to make you realize how favored you must consider yourself because of the grace which He has given you. Oh, those who have lost this grace because they did not appreciate it are already filled with regret! We must be very humble and mistrust ourselves because we have no greater enemy than self-love. Let us ask Our Lord for this grace. Believe me in His love, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. I do not know if I told you about the death of our good Sister Louise Proust.¹ She was sick for only six days. Pray to God for her.²

L.290B - (TO SISTER CÉCILE ANGIBOUST)³

at Angers

September 20, 1650

My very dear Sister,

I am sure that you are doing all you can to assist our Sister . . . ⁴ and that you look upon her as a young plant from which you may hope to gather good fruit to be presented, one day, at the eternal table of our good God. How happy you will be, my very dear Sister, if by your gentleness and cordiality in the way that you lovingly correct her, you

1. Louise Proust, a native of Parthenay, entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity in approximately 1646-1647. After a short stay in Liancourt in 1649, she returned to Paris and died in 1650.
2. The copy of this letter is contained in the collection of documents relating to the Daughters of Charity.
3. This letter was part of the series of letters of Angers recopied by Marguerite Chétif.
4. Marguerite, called "Little Marguerite" by Monsieur Lambert in his report of the visitation of 1651.

are able to cooperate with grace in her efforts to sanctify herself. With all my heart, I beg you to do so.

I do not know if you regularly wash the hands of the poor. If you do not, I would ask you to begin this practice. I also urge you to correct the sisters in private; to be a good example of gentleness and submission for them; and to be a consolation for them in their little trials by your cordiality and support. Be very patient in giving them their little remedies, the greatest of which is to comfort them in their suffering and to show them the importance of never deviating from the accomplishment of the will of God who never changes His plans. Sometimes you must also take care to change a sister's duty when you see that she has become weary of it, without waiting for her to ask.

Finally, you must condescend in many things, such as foreseeing their needs without appearing to notice them. You must realize that authority is not to be wielded absolutely but charitably and that we are Sister Servants which means that we must bear the greatest burdens of body and mind. In so far as we are able, we must console our dear sisters who will always have sufficient difficulty in putting up with us, sometimes because of our moods and at other times because nature or the evil spirit makes us repugnant to them. I beg Our Lord to be your strength and consolation and I remain in His most holy love . . .

L.130B - (TO THE SISTERS OF LIANCOURT)¹

(c. 1650)

My dear Sisters,

I am troubled about the difficulties you tell me you are encountering in accomplishing such a holy work. This house was opened, I believe, about ten years ago, by a few of our sisters who were much less gifted intellectually than you are. Moreover, when they blazed the trail for you, matters were very much more difficult than they are now. I must believe that God is sending me this little trial in punishment for my sins which would merit far worse if He willed to exercise His justice strictly.

I exhort you, as strongly as I possibly can, to reflect upon the obligations you have to God because of the gift of your vocation and because of the many graces that you have received from His generous hand. I also urge you to have great affection for the employments which He has confided to you.

1. This letter is a copy contained in the collection of documents relating to the Daughters of Charity, which is kept in the Motherhouse archives.

I do not know, Sister . . . ¹, if I clearly understood the suggestion that you were making to me in your letter, namely that you come to Paris so as to escape from your difficulties and receive some relief. For the love of God, be a daughter filled with trust and fidelity to God as you have always been. Practice a little patience so that the holy will of God may be known in this matter.

I promise you that I will speak to Monsieur Vincent about it. I would have already done so had I not been sick in bed. I will not let this week go by without sending you some news.

As for you, my dear Sister Mathurine,² fear nothing. Our Lord will suffice for you because, although you do not know how to add or subtract, no harm will be caused by that, and you will soon learn. As you have seen, the custodian of the church is kind enough to do what is necessary when you are unable to, even to inscribing the accounts in the book. Please remember me to him, to Madame de la Chambre, if she is still there, and also to Madame Thibousche. I received a letter from Monsieur Thibault³ who sends you his greetings. I hope that he will soon write to you and to Sister Anne de la Thalonnère.⁴ By way of news, let me tell you that poor Sister Marie, whom we had sent to Saint-Méen, is on her way back here without our having sent for her.

All our Sisters greet you cordially and I beg God to grant you His peace and His love in which I am your humble sister and servant.

L.291 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER CÉCILE AGNÈS

(at Angers)

(October 1650)

My very dear Sister,

Five of our sisters left today for Nantes⁵ and for another place even farther away.⁶ They will be stopping in Angers. I am sending along with them some blessed medals which Monsieur Portail is sending to those sisters who do not have them. They have special indulgences. The sisters

-
1. Jeanne-Christine Prévost, see Letter 344.
 2. Mathurine Guérin, a native of Montcontour in Brittany, see Letter 280.
 3. Monsieur Thibault, see Letter 175, was in Saint-Méen (Brittany).
 4. Anne de la Thalonnère, a native of Saintonge, died in November 1650.
 5. Arrival of Louise Michel, Marthe Dautueil and Françoise Ménage in Nantes (Coste IX, 531).
 6. The two sisters who left for Hennebont were Anne Hardemont and Geneviève Doinel (Coste IX, 531).

are also bringing you three crosses. I wrote you a long letter which I sent with them but I forgot to give this package to Sister Anne Hardemont. Please give it to her as soon as she arrives.

Please find out from the Fathers of the Poor¹ if they are willing to allow the sisters to stay at the hospital and at the same time greet them very humbly for me. If it is not appropriate for them to stay with you, I would prefer that they be lodged with some good woman rather than at an inn.

Remember me to all our dear sisters and believe me in the love of Our Lord, my very dear Sister, your very humble and very loving sister and servant.

P.S. I beg all our sisters of Angers strongly to encourage our sisters going to Nantes.

L.295 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Nantes

Feast of Saint Andrew (1650)

My very dear Sister,

This is just a note to let you know that our dear sister² arrived in good health, thanks be to God. O my very dear Sister, how welcome she was, coming as she did in the name of obedience. Certainly the entire company loves her dearly.

I only had time to glance at your letter since we were absorbed with grief over the impending death of your good Sister Anne de la Thalonnère who came from Saintonge. She died the day after the arrival of our sister — Tuesday, after dinner — and she was buried today, the feast of Saint Andrew. That is why, my dear Sister, I do not have time to answer your dear letter which makes me love your good heart more than ever. I can only tell you that I think that some letters have been lost because, in addition to the letters that I sent you by our sisters of Hennebont,³ I also wrote to you by the first mail after their departure to inform you that we were sending them to you. Moreover, it seems to me that Monsieur Vincent told me that he had also written to you since that time. I can assure you, my dear Sister, that his charity for your soul never diminishes and that mine is as great or greater than ever. I am in the love of Our Lord, my very dear Sister, your very humble servant and very loving sister.

1. The Fathers of the Poor, the hospital administrators.

2. Jeanne de Saint-Albin, see Letter 201.

3. See the preceding letter, Letter 291.

P.S. Please greet the administrators for me and all our sisters whom I embrace most affectionately.

L.296 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE¹

Servant of the Sick Poor of the Hôtel-Dieu at Nantes in Brittany

December 10 (1650)

My very dear Sister,

I wrote to you in the last mail to assure you of the arrival, in good health, of our dear Sister Jeanne de Saint-Albin.² By the grace of God, she continues that way. I showed your letter to Monsieur Vincent and I believe that he has since written to you. We have great reason to praise God, my dear Sister, that he devotes himself continuously for the good of the Company so that it might be able to accomplish the most holy will of God. One of his particular concerns is to contribute all that he can to the welfare of the hospital of Nantes. Because of this, you may be certain, my dear Sister, that when you wait a long time for an answer to letters that you have written to him asking for his advice concerning your difficulties, it is either because the letters have been lost or because it has been impossible for him to write to you. Be assured of this because I know the heart of this father for his daughter.

Moreover, my dear Sister, I can assure you that I have often refrained from offering advice because I know that he is giving you all the necessary answers. Several times I have also respected the wish expressed in your letters knowing, thereby, that you wanted this charity from him and were awaiting his answer. Of course you realize that one word of advice from him is worth a hundred from anyone else. Besides, there is reason to fear that diversity of advice might cause confusion or, at the very least, a waste of precious time. This does not mean, my dear Sister, that by the grace of God, I have ever failed to answer you when you have asked something of me.

I wish that you could see my heart and know that the distance which separates us has strengthened rather than weakened the close bond by which it pleased the goodness of God to unite our souls long ago. As proof of this, my dear Sister, let me tell you that when there are differences with the good sister³ who is a little difficult, these must never appear in

1. Jeanne Lepintre, see Letter 64.

2. Jeanne de Saint-Albin, see Letter 201.

3. Henriette Gesseume. After the visitation in April 1649, Monsieur Vincent had written

public, not even to the Fathers of the Poor or to the administrator with whom you must discuss whatever concerns the poor and the welfare of the hospital. The details of the little disagreements which occur within your community are for you alone. You may be certain that God will bless your trust and your dependence on His guidance. In order to do this, you must practice great cordiality, mutual support and cheerfulness.

Please send me news of yourself and of all our sisters as soon as possible. I greet all of you affectionately and I remain in the love of Our Lord, my dear Sister, your very humble and most obedient sister and servant.

P.S. I am in a very great hurry. I believe that Monsieur Vincent answered your question about confession.

BEFORE 1650

Letters for which no precise date can be determined.

L.10 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

(Between 1639 and 1647)

Monsieur,

I do not know what to tell you about my health, but I assure you that, before thinking about anything else, I urgently need to speak to you about serious matters concerning several of our sisters. Sister Charlotte is here and has been seriously ill for some time. She is the sister of Sister Geneviève¹ of the Hôtel-Dieu who also served food to the sick there. I am afraid that she may be like our deceased Sister Bécu² for whom several blood-lettings in the foot had been ordered, but no one was able to draw blood. If your Charity would be so kind as to send good Brother Alexander,³ perhaps he could get some. Usually her temperature is higher in the evening than in the morning.

Our sisters in retreat are ready to go to confession at your convenience. Neither of them will make a general confession. The woman from

about her: "she is not very respectful, not very or not at all submissive to the Sister Servant" (Coste III, 432).

1. Geneviève Poisson left the Hôtel-Dieu in 1647, see Letter 28.
2. Marie Bécu, see Letter 228, was still living in 1639.
3. Brother Alexander Véronne, see Letter 173b.

Lorraine who spoke to you Saturday at the Hôtel-Dieu has not yet found work. That is why she has been at the Hôtel-Dieu for a good two weeks now. What are we going to do with her? Please do not give her any money. I have told Sister Geneviève to supply her needs. She would like nothing better than to live there with nothing to do and money to spend.

I see such disorder everywhere that I seem to be overwhelmed by it. Nevertheless I continue to hope and, with Saints Martha and Mary, I strive to place my trust in Divine Providence. It is in the love of our good Jesus that I am, Monsieur, your very humble daughter and grateful servant.

L.3 - (TO A SISTER)

(Between 1640 and 1646)

My very dear Sister,

I would like to go myself to see you in your new home. If you have not yet gone to ask for the Pastor's blessing, it would be well to ask Madame de Romilly¹ to take both of you to see him. As for a confessor, if he mentions it to you, tell him to wait until you have had a little more time to get acquainted. In the meantime, go to the first one available.

I am enclosing pictures for you. One is a Lord of Charity² to put in the room where you receive the poor. The other is for your room.

I beg you, Sister, in the little disturbances that you will encounter, to practice the peace that Our Lord gave to His Apostles. Reflect more than you speak. Tell no one what you hear from the Ladies of the good girl who was there before you. You must respect the zeal she always demonstrated for the service of the poor. I say the same thing to Sister Jacqueline³ and ask you to watch over her actions.

With all my heart, my dear Sister, I remain in the love of Jesus Crucified, your very loving servant.

P.S. After I had written this letter, Monsieur Vincent told me that you should take Monsieur du Mesnil as your confessor.

-
1. Madame de Romilly (born Louise Goulas), a very active Lady of Charity. She particularly took care of the work of the foundlings.
 2. Monsieur Vincent sent the first picture of the Lord of Charity to Louise de Marillac in January 1640 (Coste II, 10).
 3. Jacqueline, one of the very first Daughters of Charity. She served the poor at the Hôtel-Dieu and at the parish of Saint-Leu. Her very bad temper and inconsiderate words forced Monsieur Vincent to think about her dismissal (Coste XIII, 592).

L.417 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

Tuesday (Between 1642 and 1649)¹

Monsieur,

I humbly ask you to be kind enough to let me know if tomorrow, Wednesday, is the day set for the convening of our sisters so that I may notify them as well as the sisters of Issy and Fontenay.

Mademoiselle de Lamoignon² asked me yesterday to find out from you when she may come to open her heart entirely to you. However, she does not want her family to know about it. I will let her know if you will do me the honor of informing me of your decision. She would like it to be as soon as possible.³ Please give me your blessing, Monsieur, since I am your very humble daughter and most grateful servant.

L.129B - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

(Between 1645 and 1649)⁴

Monsieur,

The fear that no one remembered to tell you that I am assembling the sisters tomorrow, Monday, for the conference that your Charity did us the honor of promising us, prompts me to importune you with these few lines lest some other appointment deprive us of this happiness.

Providence has brought our sisters from Maule, Saint-Denis and Issy here to share this joy along with all the others. Please God, it will not one day be a cause of humiliation for us because, in his goodness, He has bestowed so many graces upon us and upon me in particular by permitting me to be, Monsieur, your most grateful daughter and very humble servant.

1. Period during which the Daughters of Charity were at Issy.

2. Madame de Lamoignon, see Letter 77.

3. See Monsieur Vincent's reply in Coste III, 169.

4. 1645: date of the establishment of the Daughters of Charity in Saint-Denis; 1649: date of their withdrawal from Issy.

L.24 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

Thursday (Before 1650)¹

Monsieur,

I most humbly beseech you, for the love of God, to accord me the honor of speaking with you this morning about the answer that I must give my son who is to come to see me today. I did not want to give him a reply yesterday.

If your responsibilities oblige you to go out before I am able to get there, I would ask your Charity to be good enough to stop here. I take the liberty of making this very humble plea because I greatly need this favor and I am in the love of Jesus Crucified, Monsieur, your very humble and most grateful daughter and servant.

L.42 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

Feast of Saint Vincent (Before 1650)

Monsieur,

I most humbly beseech you, for the love of God, to accord me the honor of speaking with you today for as brief a time as you may wish. If you have not yet taken the trouble to sign our accounts, please put it off until I have added the expenses of the sisters of the Hôtel-Dieu which I forgot to do yesterday. I make many mistakes because of my excessive haste without speaking of those committed through ill-will. I beg your Charity to obtain forgiveness for me.

All your poor daughters greet you very humbly, and I ask you to remember them and me, the least of all, who am, Monsieur, your very humble and most grateful daughter and servant.

1. Before 1650, Louise de Marillac began her letters to Monsieur Vincent by "Monsieur." After 1650, she wrote: "My Most Honored Father."

L.54 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

(Before 1650)

Monsieur,

My poor memory caused me to forget to tell you yesterday that the little du Pont girl wanted to go to confession to you during her little retreat. I think that she also wanted to talk to you about the wishes of her parents. This led me to believe, Monsieur, that if your Charity could speak with her, she might express her thoughts more freely, and you would have greater influence over her than her brother, as I had suggested to you. He lives four or five leagues from here.

I very humbly beg your Charity to offer to God the novena which we are beginning today. Our good God knows that, by His mercy, I desire nothing but His holy will and that I implore His omnipotence to remove all obstacles to the perfect accomplishment of this most holy will by which I am, Monsieur, your most grateful servant and humble daughter.

P.S. Please be good enough to let me know what time the little du Pont girl can go to see you.

L.79 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

(Before 1650)

Monsieur,

I think that some problem must have arisen because Madame de Lamoignon did not send me her carriage. Therefore, I beg you most humbly, Monsieur, not to mention my doubts concerning how much money I gave the sisters when they left because I still believe that I gave them only 50 écus and all I can think of is their feeling of insecurity because of this. I most humbly urge you to consider only this amount. I had intended to tell you this in the presence of the Ladies, as I am obliged, and to acknowledge, Monsieur, that I am your very humble and most unworthy daughter and servant.

L.90 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

(Before 1650)

Monsieur,

Our good God has willed to add to the consolation that His goodness has brought to me by your Charity by showing me on another occasion that His Providence does not despise sinners. He sent Madame de Marillac¹ to me to tell me that she thought that I was in financial straits. She urged me to speak freely to her so that she could give me the support that her mother had offered to me in the form of an annuity. I explained my difficulty to her quite simply and told her that I would need nothing if my son were employed.

She wanted to see you about this matter but you had gone out. She wanted to find out from you, Monsieur, how the Bishop of Beauvais,² had received her proposal and what his feelings on the matter were. Because she is uncertain how she should present it to him and also because he is to leave either tomorrow or the next day, both she and I beg you very humbly to take the trouble to send her a note on this subject. I will inform Madame de Marillac, if you consider it appropriate. She wanted this because she was afraid that you would have to tell me something that would sadden me. I do not know whether or not it is my pride which causes me to suffer because of the trials with which I burden others. I should certainly be better than I am since I have the honor to be, Monsieur, your very humble daughter and most grateful servant.

L.118B - (TO MONSIEUR VINCENT)³

(Before 1650)

Monsieur,

It is true that I have a special affection for the feast of Pentecost and this time of preparation for it is very dear to me. I recall that some time ago I was greatly consoled to hear a preacher say that it was on Pentecost that God gave His written law to Moses and that, under the law of grace, it was on the same day that He gave to His church His law of love which

1. Madame de Marillac, the younger, wife of Michel, a deputy of Parliament.
2. Augustin Potier, Bishop of Beauvais, died on June 20, 1650.
3. Unaddressed, unsigned letter.

contains within it the power to effect this love. Since on this same day, God in His goodness placed in my heart a law which has never left it, despite my wickedness, I would sincerely hope that, if possible, on this day His goodness would reveal to me the means for observing that law according to His holy will.

Perhaps that is why I thought of asking your permission to prepare ourselves for this feast by depriving ourselves of Holy Communion during the preceding 11 days, the time which the Blessed Virgin, the Apostles, and the holy women were separated from their dear Master. We could also profit from this occasion to reflect upon the poor use we have made of our communions during the year so as to stir up within us a renewed desire to communicate more fervently and more profitably for the glory of God. In this way we might also participate with the Apostles in the baptism of love and zeal for the service of others which they received.

I beg you very humbly, Monsieur, not to let the delicate sensibilities which I have revealed to you lead your Charity, in a spirit of condescension, to think that I want you to defer to my ideas. That is very far from my desire. I am never happier than when I am reasonably contradicted. God almost always gives me the grace to acknowledge and appreciate the opinions of others even when they are completely contrary to my own. This applies particularly to the advice of your Charity in which I am certain to see the truth clearly even in matters which are hidden from me for a while.

L.134B - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT¹

Monsieur,

I have been asked to urge you very humbly, for the love of God (as I am now doing), to show your charity to a poor woman, who greatly needs to be committed, by asking Monsieur Gillot, a merchant from the Place aux Chats,² to help her to obtain a place at the Pitié.³ The need that has been represented to me is most worthy of compassion and assistance to provide for the salvation of her soul and for her personal well-being. That is why, Monsieur, I resolved to importune you and to assure you by this note that I am in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your very humble and most obedient servant.

-
1. Letter published in the Annals of the Congregation of the Mission, 1961.
 2. Square in Paris, situated near the Cimetière des Innocents.
 3. Hospital of Paris, constructed not far from the Jardin des Plantes.

L.136B - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT¹

Monsieur,

I forgot to ask you yesterday if Sister Renée should remain at this time to make her retreat. It is about the time that your Charity had indicated for her. If she stays, do you think it would be well if our Sister Claude from Chinon went during this period to take her place? She has taught school here fairly frequently and does well.

I beg you very humbly to remember the need we have of a conference. If it could be this week so as to place us in a better disposition for the Feast of the Blessed Virgin, please be so kind as to let us know the day. All our sisters greatly desire one. Our sisters, who hope that they will no longer be delayed in giving themselves entirely to God, beg you to approve their desire as do I who call myself, Monsieur, your very humble and most grateful daughter and servant.

L.369 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

August 24 (Before 1650)

Monsieur,

My heart is still overflowing with joy on account of the understanding which, I believe, our good God has given me of the words, "God is my God," and the awareness I had of the glory which the blessed render to Him as a consequence of this truth. Therefore, I cannot help communicating with you this evening to ask you to assist me to profit from this excess of joy and to suggest some practice for me tomorrow which is the feast of the saint whose name I have the honor to bear. It is also the day for the renovation of my vows. I hope, because of this double anniversary, to assist at your holy Mass. I beg your Charity most humbly to please let me know the time. I hope, my Most Honored Father, that you realize that all that I am is in your hands to be offered to this good God whose love has made me, by His great mercy, your very humble and most grateful daughter and servant.

Evening, Feast of Saint Bartholomew

1. Letter published in the Annals of the Congregation of the Mission, 1931.

RESPONSE OF SAINT VINCENT

Written in the margin of the above letter

Blessed be God, Mademoiselle, for the tenderness with which His Divine Majesty honors you! You must receive it respectfully and devoutly and in view of some cross which He is preparing for you. His goodness generally prepares those He loves in this way when He wishes to crucify them. Oh, what a happiness to have such a paternal Providence watching over you! How that should increase your faith and your confidence in God and lead you to love Him more than ever!

So carry out, Mademoiselle, the action you are to perform. Today will tell you a great deal about it. I will share in your consolation as I intend to share in your cross by the Holy Sacrifice I hope to offer to Him today between eight and nine o'clock. Good day, Mademoiselle, I am your servant.

L.257 - FOR SISTER HELLOT¹

My very dear Sister,

I am sending the transcript back to you. Please send the child back to the same commissioner and be careful that he is not given the transcript before he has taken the child so that we can use this to show his guilt. Please look over the unsigned letter, correct the mistakes, and seal it because I am sending it to him without reading it.

Go to see Madame Lendormy, as a good friend of the girl, in order to let her know adroitly the fault she has committed, how her salvation is in jeopardy regardless of what has been said to her, and that she can expect nothing from us until she speaks with me. Tell her that if we acted according to the norms of justice, we could have had her arrested and accused of presumed larceny or another serious crime because she left without giving notice, like a wicked servant.

Enclosed is a letter to be sent immediately to Madame de Borne. Please return this evening. Believe me always in the love of Jesus Crucified, my dear Sister, your very loving sister and servant.

1. Élisabeth Hellot died at the end of the year 1650.