
Spiritual Writings

Correspondence, Meditations, Advice

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you to recommend us and the entire Company to our good God.

Monsieur Portail received your letter, and I think he answered you. Monsieur Vincent, our Most Honored Father, is apparently still in good health. We have great reason to ask God to keep him for many years, and I am sure you will do so. All our sisters are well, thank God. I do not know if we informed you of the death of our dear Sister Marie-Marguerite, who was at the Hôtel-Dieu. Her patience in her illness and her submission to the will of God were a great example to us.

I rejoice that Providence has chosen you to serve so many souls and so many sick poor. I beg God to watch over you so that you may continue this holy employment for a long time. I beg you, my dear Sister, to have this letter given to the parents of Sister Barbe,¹ and to remember us to Sister Jeanne.² Her great work, I am sure, increases her zeal for her vocation. Send some news of her, I beg of you, and believe me in the love of Jesus Crucified, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. Our dear Sister Cécile³ wrote to us a short while ago. She asks for your prayers and rejoices that God has given you the grace of using you so profitably in His holy service. A short while ago, one of your relatives, or a man from your region, came into this city to learn news of you and to assure you that all your relatives are well.

1653

January 31: *Death of Monsieur Lambert in Warsaw.*

February: *Monsieur du Chesne's visit to Angers.*

September-October: *Monsieur Alméras' visits to Angers and Nantes.*

Aid to the regions devastated by the war: Châlons, Sainte-Menehould.

Foundation of the Hospice of the Saint-Nom-de-Jésus.

1. Barbe Bailly, born on June 1, 1628 in Vitry-le-François, entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity on October 8, 1645. After having served the foundlings, she went to the Motherhouse as infirmarian and as Louise de Marillac's secretary. After Louise's death, Barbe was sent to Poland (1660-1668). Upon returning to France, she was named Superior at the Invalides. She then went to Alençon where she died on August 21, 1699.

2. Jeanne Hénault, see Letter 353.

3. Cécile Angiboust, see Letter 108.

L.358 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JULIENNE (LORET)¹

Daughter of Charity at Chars

January 4, 1653

My very dear Sister,

I certainly fulfilled your wish for Christmas day when I had the happiness of assisting at Monsieur Vincent's Mass, after having told him of your intention.

Enclosed are the pictures of your Holy Protectors, along with 25 yards of burial cloth which costs seven sols a yard. Please let the Pastor's father know that you received it, along with the two pounds of pathol, with the pots. Everything together comes to six pounds, nine sols, six deniers. I beg you to return, Sister, at the first opportunity. While waiting, please teach Sister Jeanne Bonvilliers² what you can about bloodletting and remember us sincerely to her. I am pressed to finish and to say that I am in the love of Our Lord, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and affectionate servant.

L.389 - COPY OF THE TEXT GIVEN TO MONSIEUR BERTHE³

Who was leaving for Rome

(January 1653)

Louise de Marillac, a widow for 27 years,⁴ servant of Jesus Christ and His members, the poor, more by will than effect, very attached by obedience to the Holy Father by her quality, although unworthy, of being a Roman Catholic, and through her longtime desire to receive once in her life, the holy, apostolic blessing, does humbly beg Monsieur Berthe, Priest of the Mission, to place her in spirit at the feet of the Most Holy Father, presently reigning, true Vicar of Jesus Christ through the zeal that his Holiness has for His Church, so that she may receive from our good God by this means the grace to do His most holy will for the

1. Julienne Loret, see Letter 220.

2. Jeanne Bonvilliers, born in Clermont in 1630, entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity in January 1652. She was sent to Chantilly after Chars and a brief stay in Paris. She died at the parish of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont in 1691.

3. Monsieur Berthe, see Letter 245, was in Rome in April 1653.

4. Antoine Le Gras died in December 1625.

remainder of her days. She will be obliged to pray for him in gratitude for this charity.¹

L.236 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE²

Daughter of Charity at Nantes, Brittany

(January 1653)

My very dear Sister,

A good two weeks ago I allowed myself the consolation of writing to you and of sending you the pictures of the Holy Protectors of the year for all our dear sisters. I pray to God that they have reached you. What makes me doubt that they did is that I have not received any news from you since. I do not know, my dear Sister, if you will receive any letters from our Most Honored Father by this mail. However, I can assure you that I saw him this morning, and that he was greatly troubled by the state he knows you are in. He is absolutely resolved to rectify the situation as soon as possible. In the name of God, my dear Sister, put your mind at rest with the assurance I am giving you on the matter. If your trials were not excessive, I would tell you that you should experience joy in this painful situation, with the conviction that you should have that God will certainly draw His glory from it. Moreover, my dear Sister, the consolation you will derive from it will not be inconsiderable. The absence of our poor sister³ should not sadden you. We have seen similar things and we thus have reason to believe that Divine Providence is at work.

Three women of rank are taking the pen from me. It only remains for me to assure you that I am in the love of our good, dear, little Jesus, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. All our sisters greet you and recommend themselves to your prayers.

1. The grace requested was granted by Pope Innocent X in 1655.

2. Jeanne Lepintre, see Letter 64.

3. A sister left the community (Coste V, 3).

L.359 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JULIENNE LORET
Daughter of Charity at Chars

January 31 (1653)

My very dear Sister,

I no longer remember what kind of blankets you are asking for, nor the number. Tell us when you return. We await your arrival in order to receive the money for the last things we sent you. It seems to me that you could accustom yourself to travelling on a horse or donkey because it is impossible to undertake a long trip on foot. Also, it would be a while, if you were to await dry roads. When you have a mount, you ride for a while and then you get off and walk from time to time. Perhaps you had not thought of this. Nonetheless, see what will be appropriate for you. You cannot delay the person who will be leaving at the same time as you. However, it does not matter provided you are accompanied by someone else.

Bring along your recipe for preparing lozenges, and let the Pastor know if the drugs are the same as theirs, as I believe they are, because I know some of them are truly expensive.

I will have someone look for the linen, as the Pastor wishes; it is very difficult to find any that is wider. However, when you wrap the body in cloth, place it crosswise and have any excess at the feet and the head so that it is straight at the stomach.

You do not say whether Sister Jeanne¹ is learning bloodletting or if she already knows quite well how to do it. We are sending back your basket, along with another big "thank you" for your fine apples, and the assurance of our affection which makes me in the love of Jesus Crucified, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

L.360B - (TO SISTER CÉCILE ANGIBOUST)
at Angers²

February 8, 1653

My very dear Sister,

I sympathize with your sorrow in having had so little time to speak

1. Jeanne Bonvilliers, see Letter 358.
2. In the copies of letters, Marguerite Chétif omitted all that could damage anonymity: the names of people and here, the announcement of the death of Monsieur Angiboust, see

with M . . .¹ It is necessary to be submissive to the guidance of Divine Providence, and to attach oneself firmly to God in order to suffer the privation of the consolation of creatures. Our good God knows your needs, and He could have stopped this good M . . . if it had been necessary for His glory and your good. Remain, then, at peace, in the trust you must have in Our Lord's love. We have so many reasons to do so, my Sisters, because of the assurances He gave His disciples while He was on earth, when He wanted to draw their love to Himself, urging them not to be preoccupied with themselves or their needs. Go then courageously, advancing moment by moment on the path on which God has placed you in order to reach Him.

In the name of God, my dear Sisters, do your utmost to help the souls of your sick poor to make the acts of faith, hope and charity necessary for salvation. Make them hate sin and love virtue so that they may resolve to live well, if they recover, or to prepare well for death. In order to assist them well in this, lead them to desire to make a good confession in order to appease God's anger with them because of their sins. Then be at peace and help them with your prayers. I am well aware that you cannot spend a great deal of time at this task. However, in coming and going, you can make many interior acts which can help them. Urge your sisters to do the same.

I am sending you your Holy Protectors of the year, begging Our Lord to give you the blessings that Monsieur Vincent, our Most Honored Father, wished the entire Company to receive with the distribution of these pictures. He also bestowed upon them a most devout blessing in order to implore the help of these good saints for you, and to sanctify all of you.

I beg our sisters who suggested their return, in the name of Our Lord, not to be disturbed, and to believe that the goodness of God will never fail to provide for their need. Oh, how dangerous it is, my dear Sisters, to desire something before God wills it! I truly believe that it is always with submission of mind that your desires appear, and for that I do not blame you. However, believe me when I say that a change in placement is always to be feared, at least when it is by your own choice. Some have requested a change, and it has cost them their vocation. What are we looking for, my dear Sisters? Is it not to please our Sovereign Lord? Let us wait in peace for His wishes to be shown us by our superiors. It is our practice, my very dear Sisters, to remain submissive to Divine Providence. In the name of God, love It with all your heart, and believe me in His holy love . . .

the following letter.

1. Monsieur du Chesne who was making visitations in the West of France.

L.360 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER BARBE ANGIBOUST

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Brienne.

February 8, 1653

My very dear Sister,

I believe you received my last letter in which I told you I was sending you three gold coins and the pictures of your Holy Protectors of the year. However, the Countess¹ did not want us to send money, and she assured our sisters that she will have you provided with some promptly. I believe she has carried through on this.

I heard news of you and our sister from the Dean. He is filled with benevolence toward you, and we are most grateful to him for it. From what I learned, our poor sister's vision is quite bad, and she is in danger of losing the other eye. I beg you, my dear Sister, to do all you think necessary to take care of her. Our mildly fortified water—but not too much—is excellent for her. However, I believe the fire from the oven is very dangerous for her; that is why I urge you to have the firing and baking done by another woman. Purge her often with a hot drink containing a laxative, although the best remedy is a cauterization at the back of the head. I beg you to compel her to do what is necessary for her well-being.

Your good cousin came here to learn news of you, and told me that your dear father had passed away. I do not know if you already know of it. Your brother died also. The rest of the family is quite well, thank God. My dear Sister, we must be submissive to all that God wishes of us and our loved ones. For that reason give yourself once again to Him in order to be entirely, along with all that belongs to you, under the guidance of Divine Providence. I believe, my dear Sister, that you have followed this practice for a long time.

I recommend to your prayers our sisters in Poland, who are working in the service of the poor of a city where there is much pestilence. I beg you also to remember in your prayers our sisters in Nantes, who are still being persecuted. Such is not the case with our sisters in Angers, who are protected by the Bishop and dearly loved by the Fathers of the Poor. Sister Cécile² is doing better than she has in a long time. Pray fervently for the entire Company in order to obtain for it the spirit and fidelity it is obliged to manifest toward God. That was the subject of our last conference, which you will see someday. Monsieur Vincent continues his

1. Madame, the Countess de Brienne, see Letter 86.

2. Cécile Angiboust, see Letter 108.

usual charity, as does Monsieur Portail, as much toward those absent as toward those present.

I would ask you, Sister, to let me know when is a good time to renew our supply of flax. It can be spun or raw, but preferably spun. Four or five hundred pounds would be needed if it could be bought and transported inexpensively. We also need good quality stuffing, which is all sold by the pound with no bargaining.

Good evening, my dear Sisters. I am pressed to finish and to declare myself in the love of Our Lord Crucified, my dear Sisters, your very humble sister and very loving servant.

P.S. I had just finished my letter when I received your package. I thank you and Sister for it. The messenger is in a hurry. I will let you know at another time if you can keep this little boy. Good day, my dear Sisters. I would like it if you could let me know how many times you have received money from the Queen for Fontainebleau.¹ We have been unable to receive anything for more than two years.

All our sisters greet you affectionately. The house is starting to fill up a bit with new sisters. However, sisters are being requested in so many places that we do not have any older ones to send.

L.76B - (TO MONSIEUR VINCENT)

[March 1, 1653]

The little family² did not fail to assemble, except for one from each side who still had not come. However, I believe, Monsieur, that it is necessary for your Charity to take the trouble to bring them together tomorrow morning to have them make some devotion, like the adoration of the Holy Cross, and then to give them an exhortation on the Passion. I am very bold to suggest that.

Would your Charity please give an order as well, either this evening or early tomorrow morning, on whether they should be given the clothing prepared for them.

Your blessing, please, on the entire Company.

1. Barbe Angiboust was in Fontainebleu from 1646 to 1648.

2. The little family of the Hospice of the Saint-Nom-de-Jésus. This work, due to a bourgeois from Paris who wished to remain anonymous, brought together 40 poor artisans: 20 men and 20 women.

L.516 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

General of the Venerable Priests of the Mission

March 20 [1653]

My Most Honored Father,

It truly seems that Our Lord is the sole proprietor general of the Congregation of the Mission, since He disposes of the good subjects He has given it in this way.¹ He had to do this in light of the excellent mission of the one He took from us. What can we say? Nothing, unless it is that I believe that this new arrival in heaven will draw great graces from God upon the rest of the Company, and that this universal sorrow will produce effects of great holiness in many souls. Am I not truly bold, my Most Honored Father, to dare to mix my tears with your usual submission to the guidance of Divine Providence, my weaknesses with the strength God has given you in order to bear the great share in His sufferings that Our Lord so often gives you? For love of Him, give nature what it needs for its relief, and what you need for your health.

My Most Honored Father, I do not know how to hide the depth of my sorrow, but your Charity taught me to love the will of God who is so just and so merciful and whose goodness makes me, my Most Honored Father, your very humble and most grateful daughter and servant.

L.363 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE

March 26, 1653

My very dear Sister,

I was filled with profound joy by your last dear letter. It is true that you always seemed to me to be in a state of interior and exterior pain and affliction; however, it also appeared that you were making excellent use of this trial.

I cannot help but believe that all your afflictions are a marvelous advantage to you. It is true, my dear Sister, that it is very difficult to keep one's mind from forming rebellious thoughts. Nevertheless, it is wise not to heed them. However, this is just what you do when you assume that certain encounters are possibly the reason you are not receiving the

1. It was a question of Monsieur Lambert's death, which had occurred on January 31, 1653 in Poland; the news did not reach Monsieur Vincent until March 20, see Letter 363.

advice you would like, as often as you would like. My dear Sister, this is not something that concerns you personally, but rather the entire body of the Company; and it is perhaps for that reason, my dear Sister, that Our Lord inspires you to remain at peace at the foot of His cross, completely submissive to the guidance of His Divine Providence. It seems to me, my very dear Sister, that you have found the philosopher's stone of devotion when the firm resolution to do His will calms your anxieties.

It is in the love of this most holy will of God that we must be submissive to His orders concerning the fate which His goodness decreed for the good Monsieur Lambert, whom He took from this world at the beginning of this year. You know that he was in Poland, where he was loved by the King, the Queen and everyone so much that he is missed as a saint. Was not his life also a saintly one? The Queen herself wrote to (Monsieur Vincent) to express to him her grief, and the loss she feels she has (experienced) in his passing. I am certain that you are praying a great deal for the repose of his soul, in the event he should need prayers. Please tell our sisters that I would ask them to receive Holy Communion for his intention, as well as that of another,¹ the Superior of Annecy, who has also since died. He was similarly esteemed in his region. The loss of both is beyond words.

I ask you also to pray for the soul of our deceased Sister Perrine, who was from the region of Le Maine. I assure you, my dear Sisters, that the recitation of her virtues and the affection that all our sisters had for her made the entire Company weep. Our poor sisters in Poland also have great need of prayers. Their affliction is great, as you can imagine. Although the Queen showed them great kindness, and His Majesty himself took them under his care and employed them in works of charity, their grief must be profound after the loss of such a priest! The Queen sent word to Monsieur Vincent that she had sent one of the three sisters to a city about 80 leagues from her, and that this sister is teaching several girls, some of whom already desire to be Daughters of Charity.² Such is their desire that I believe that with God's blessing a large establishment will develop there. We must humble ourselves greatly and pray much. Please relay this news to our very dear sisters, whom I greet with all my affection. Please tell Sister Françoise³ that her father, mother and sisters are well, thank God. Sister Louise's⁴ mother, sister and former employer are well also.

1. Monsieur Jean Guérin (1594-1653) died on March 6. He entered the Congregation of the Mission in 1639 and was in Annecy from 1642 onward.

2. A seminary was opened in Poland in 1659.

3. Françoise Ménage arrived in Nantes in September 1650. Two of her sisters, Marguerite and Madeleine, were already Daughters of Charity. In 1658, Catherine also came to join them in the community.

4. Louise Michel, see Letter 210.

Enclosed is a letter for the Fathers of the Poor. Our Most Honored Father told me to send it. Finally, my dear Sister, I can assure you that he resolved to do his utmost to put you at ease. I truly recommend him to your prayers; you know he is quite old,¹ and that his heavy workload does not keep him from rising at four o'clock and fasting every day. I believe you will truly excuse him if he does not write to you as often as you would like, and as he would like to be able to. All our sisters greet you and are reasonably well. Sister Jeanne Delacroix begs her dear sister² to pray for her and to be most faithful in the observance of her Rules. I beg you all also, my dear Sisters, to ask Our Lord for mercy for me at the hour of my death, through the merits of His most precious death. In His love I am, my dear Sisters, your very humble sister and very loving servant.

L.364 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

April 3, 1653

My Most Honored Father,

I forgot to tell you that the deceased Monsieur Lambert³ did me the honor of informing me, two days before his illness, that our Sister Françoise,⁴ who is in Poland, was acting as the bond between the other two who were not getting along well.

I also want to remind your Charity to think of the Pastor of Saint-Laurent when you obtain permission to have holy Mass celebrated at the house of the Poor Workers,⁵ so that there will be no reason for complaints.

Yesterday I took the liberty of telling Monsieur Le Gros⁶ that I did not think he should have a door from the outside into the chapel so soon. Do me the honor of letting me know when you would like to speak to outsiders about the house. Also, should not more women than men be admitted in order to increase the number?

I beg God to accomplish His holy will through it and I am, my Most Honored Father, your poor daughter and very humble servant.

1. Monsieur Vincent was 72 years old.

2. Renée Delacroix, see Letter 275.

3. Monsieur Lambert, see Letter 18.

4. Françoise Douelle arrived in Poland in 1652.

5. Hospice of the Saint-Nom-de-Jésus, see Letter 76b.

6. Monsieur Le Gros, Superior of the Petit Saint-Lazare since 1652.

L.365B - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER CÉCILE ANGIBOUST

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

May 23 (1653)

My very dear Sister,

You gave me great pleasure by sending news of yourself. I was anxious for it because Monsieur du Chesne¹ had informed me that you were ill. I praise God that you, and Sister Michelle² as well, are better. I greet her along with all our other sisters. Concerning the girls you say presented themselves to Monsieur du Chesne, if he finds them suitable, you have but to send them. However, be aware, I beg of you, that there is one who has a bad arm which should prevent her from coming. This would be a good occasion to send the sister that you suggested be sent to Richelieu.

Concerning Sister Barbe,³ I think she must be joking to dream of returning before obedience calls her. Tell her, my dear Sister, that I have trouble believing what you wrote, and that souls that seek only God will never be better off than in the house in Angers. If they knew what it was like to be elsewhere, oh, how they would fear being withdrawn from there!

I informed Monsieur Vincent of all our sisters' desire for their Jubilee confessor. He told me they were free to do as they wanted. Let me know if I have to write to Monsieur du Chesne concerning that. I beg the goodness of God to give all of you the dispositions needed so that His mercy may spill over abundantly upon your souls for the expiation of the guilt and pain of sin. I also beg Him to grant you the grace of strength to persevere in His holy love, in such a way that all your thoughts, words and actions may be pleasing to Our Lord.

I owe much to Monsieur l'abbé⁴ and to Monsieur Ratier⁵ who honored me by thinking of me. I thank them most humbly for this and for the charity they continue to show you. Be most grateful to them for it, my dear Sisters, and make good use of their advice.

I am very worried about our two sisters⁶ in Richelieu who are said to be dangerously ill. Please pray for them and for our sisters in Poland who are, as you know, suffering because of the death of Monsieur Lambert.⁷ I am quite upset that my letters were lost. If you have not

1. Monsieur du Chesne, see Letter 154.

2. Michelle arrived in Angers in October 1651.

3. Barbe, a native of Troyes, arrived at the end of the year 1648.

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

5. Monsieur Ratier, see Letter 71.

6. Françoise Carcireux, see Letter 254, and Charlotte Royer, see Letter 254.

7. Monsieur Lambert, see Letter 18.

received any since the time you indicate to me, then there were at least two rather long ones which never reached you. I deeply regret this. Sister Barbe Angiboust often asks about you. She is still in Brienne and doing well, thank God. Please tell Sister Élisabeth¹ that her cousin Brocard passed away in a most Christian manner. Monsieur Vincent saw him two or three times during his illness because we had placed him in a hospital for workers² which opened in this quarter. Please pray to our good God for this fine work so that His most holy will may be accomplished there.

I believe you have remembered to pray for the preservation of our Most Honored Father. He is working as much as ever, and presently he is giving a mission although he is still somewhat ill. His fine example is a living Rule in the House. You know that we are obliged to pray for the perfection of the Company in general and for that of each member, especially for all those whom we know to be involved in difficult and dangerous work so that it may please our good God to draw His glory from everything. Likewise, please do the same for the Company of the Daughters of Charity so that Our Lord may grant the sisters the grace of perseverance. Please believe me in His most holy love, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and very loving servant.

P.S. All our sisters greet you and your Company. We ask all to pray for us for the love of God.

L.310 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTERS

Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Sick Poor of the Hospital at Angers

June 18 (1653)

My very dear Sisters,

You were truly saddened by the illness of our dear Sister Cécile,³ whom I beg our good God to keep for you. I ask the same for our dear Sisters Claude⁴ and Marie⁵ who are also ill. I believe, my dear Sisters, that you accepted this affliction from the hand of our shared Father who knows what we need, and who afflicts and consoles us when He pleases. What am I saying, Sisters? If we truly loved His holy will, nothing would afflict us since we know that He loves us and desires our good in all things. You have already experienced some painful mortification when you lost

1. Élisabeth Brocard, see Letter 237.

2. The Hospice of the Saint-Nom-de-Jésus, see Letter 76b.

3. Cécile Angiboust, see Letter 108.

4. Claude Chantereau, see Letter 421.

5. Marie Donion, see Letter 382.

hope of having Monsieur du Chesne¹ for your Jubilee. O my Sisters, do as good housekeepers do, and profit from everything. Remember that we must not look for the consolation and satisfaction of creatures and of ourselves. We must seek God alone and must go to Him by way of His Son, whose example teaches us interior and exterior mortification. I have reason (to believe) that those who are in charge have given you practice in this. If that is the case, Sisters, then beg Our Lord for the spirit of lowliness and of submission to His guidance. Be on your guard to offend no one, and especially, be very straightforward and disinterested. Oh, how good it is, my dear Sisters, to suffer for the sake of justice! However, let us be very careful not willingly to be the cause of any accusations against us. That is, let us not give reason for them by our misconduct, and especially by our curiosity and gossip in matters in which we should not be involved. I have no doubt, my dear Sisters, that you take excellent care of our good sick sisters, whom I greet with all my heart. Undoubtedly you realize, Sisters, that it was holy love that placed them in their present state because they have been faithful in their vocation. That being so, we must not judge but accept all the trials and demands that their illnesses can cause. We must show them that we are serving them willingly and with the desire to bring them relief. I beg Our Lord to grant you the grace of His Spirit so that you may support and assist them in a spirit of charity and gentleness, for His holy love, in which I am, my very dear Sisters, your very humble sister and servant.

L.367 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE²

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Étampes

June 19 (1653)

My very dear Sister,

You truly have great reason to be upset, since you have been alone for so long and have not received news from us as often as I should have sent it. I ask your forgiveness for this. I am still expecting you to return soon, but I hope to send you one of our dear sisters if you do not do so promptly. While you are waiting, my good Sister, I am sure that you will pray earnestly to your guardian angel to accompany you most particularly and that, as far as you are able, you will be careful to practice your little

1. Monsieur du Chesne passed through quickly at the beginning of February, see Letter 360b.
2. Jeanne-Françoise, see Letter 371. An orphanage was opened in Étampes after the troubles of the Fronde.

Rules, especially those which enjoin us to serve the poor with cordiality and gentleness. I am also certain that you will find great pleasure in teaching, as best you can, these little creatures, redeemed by the blood of the Son of God, so that they may praise and glorify Him forever.

I will not recommend modesty and reserve to you, nor mention that you should not associate with persons of the world more than you have to, because I am sure that you practice this most important advice. Always rest assured of our very special affection, and know that our sisters and I speak often of you, with joy for the service you render Our Lord, and with sorrow in the thought that you are all alone. I beg His goodness to be your strength and consolation, and I am in His most holy love, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

L.361 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE-FRANÇOISE¹

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor and Orphans at Étampes

(June 1653)

My very dear Sister,

It is true that I have received several of your letters, but I have likewise answered some of them because I can assure you that it is a great consolation for me to reflect upon the graces our good God has bestowed upon you. I hope that He continues to be your strength and consolation, and that your guardian angel will be your companion although you remain alone. May your angel often point out to you that a good Daughter of Charity must be faithful to her vocation and must practice her Rules insofar as she is able, especially in her modesty and reserve. She must act in the same way whether she is alone or in the presence of her superiors and not become familiar with the world. O my dear Sister, how joyful I am in believing you to be in this state which gladdens God and the angels, and which makes me hope that we will see each other in Eternity! Please continue to serve our dear masters with great gentleness, respect and cordiality, always seeing God in them.

I thank you for the information you gave me concerning our dear Sisters. I have not since received any news from them. All our sisters greet you and have compassion for you in your solitary state. I hope that Our Lord will finally give you some consolation since you love His most holy will. In this will I am, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

1. Jeanne-Françoise, see Letter 371.

L.368 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTERS ANDRÉE¹ AND FRANÇOISE²

*Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Sick Poor at Varize*³

June 23 (1653)

My very dear Sisters,

I praise God with all my heart for the blessings His goodness bestows upon your holy works. I beg you to be most thankful to Him for them because you must not believe that these graces are merited. How many persons like you are there who remained in the world and who suffer greatly, or who work only for their bodily existence? But since all your actions are performed for the love of God, you are completely oriented toward eternal life. That is why, my dear Sisters, you must see to it that the enemy of our salvation does not sow the weeds of materialism which might hinder you from pleasing God. Also, beware of allowing these weeds to choke the merit Our Lord would like to give to your holy works.

Let me know all about yourselves. Do you not still love your little Rules? When you are interrupted in practicing them by the service of your neighbor, do you not once again set about following them better? I am sure that both of you practice mutual charity, and that your dearest conversation, after that which you owe the poor, is between you, whether you speak of God, of the practices of the Company into which He has called you, or whether you recall the virtues recognized in our sisters.

I also believe, my dear Sisters, that you are very conscientious in helping your sick poor to make good confessions before they die, and in advising those who recover to live a better life than they ever have in the past. Likewise, I believe that you are teaching the little girls well, not only about matters of faith, but also about how to live as good Christians. That is what God asks of you, and for that reason He granted you the grace to withdraw from the world. Be most faithful to Him then.

All our sisters are well, thank God, and recommend themselves to your prayers, as I do also, assuring you that I am in the love of Jesus Crucified, my dear Sisters, your very humble and very loving sister and servant.

1. Andrée Maréchal, returned to Paris at the end of the year. On August 8, 1655, she signed the Act of Establishment of the Company. In 1656, she was sent to Nantes. She went to Liancourt upon her return in 1658.

2. No doubt, Françoise Claire, see Letter 70b.

3. The letter was sent to Madame de Varize. On the back of the address, Louise de Marillac wrote: "Would you be so kind, Madame, as to send this letter to our sisters who are very worried about us."

L.338 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor of the Hotel-Dieu at Nantes
in Brittany*

(August 1653)

My very dear Sister,

I was very consoled to receive your letter which I showed to Monsieur Vincent. I left it so that his Charity might have the opportunity to read it all. He finds your suggestion quite reasonable. Be patient for a little longer, please, so that everything can be done properly.

It is true, my dear Sister, that one of the Fathers of the Poor¹ wrote to me. I believe he did so with the consent of the others, at least that is how it seems to me.

However, before I answer or put into effect the proposals that I made, I believe that it is necessary for me to find out from you if what they told us is true. They claim that the hospital is overburdened with sisters because there are so many of you.² This would certainly be contrary to our wishes since I can assure you that we are unable to supply sisters for the places requesting them. They complain also that, despite your large number, you do not hesitate to employ women from outside to do your work such as carrying, changing and washing linen and, I believe, even for cleaning the bowls. Needless to say, I was humiliated to hear these reproaches.

In the name of God, my dear Sister, let me know if this is true. If it is, we must acknowledge our fault. I would very much like to know if we can write with confidence to Monsieur de la Pinsonnière or to one of the other administrators who was there when I accompanied our sisters to Nantes.

I received news from our sisters at Hennebont who told me that Sister Marthe³ was there and had been there since leaving Nantes. It would be wise to make this known so as to allay suspicions.

Please extend my greetings to all our sisters. Assure them of our sincere affection and that our sisters think of them often.

Sister Louise's⁴ mother and sister are well but Sister Françoise's⁵ grandmother and mother died six or eight weeks apart. Her father is very well, thank God, He, too, had been quite ill. Her two sisters in the Company are also in excellent health. They bore their affliction with great

1. The Fathers of the Poor, the hospital administrators.
2. Nine sisters were at the Nantes hospital.
3. Marthe Dauteuil, see Letter 165, left for Hennebont on August 12.
4. Louise Michel, see Letter 210.
5. Françoise Ménage, see Letter 363.

virtue and in a Christian manner. I beg her most earnestly to do the same; to give herself to God for the accomplishment of His most holy will, and to see her suffering in light of this admirable will and the guidance of Divine Providence. What more could she desire for the well-being of her relatives than to see them die as good Christians while she practices the same abandonment that these mothers showed? The virtue and submission manifested by their good father during this trial is incredible. I urge you to help our sister to carry this cross.

I am not answering your letter in detail because, as I mentioned above, I do not have it. I long for the consolation of seeing you. Confide this matter to God. I imagine that you will find many things changed. I hope for the better. Believe me always in the love of our dear and divine Jesus Crucified, my dear Sister, your very humble and very loving sister and servant.

L.372 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Nantes

(September 1653)

My very dear Sister,

At last it has pleased our good God to make use of Monsieur Alméras¹ to bring you some relief from the trials you have all endured for so long and especially you, my dear Sister, whom Our Lord has chosen to bear this heavy yoke. However, since it was His yoke, I am sure that His goodness has greatly assisted you. May His holy name be forever blessed! I also hope that His grace will continue to give you strength and courage so that His goodness may bring this work to perfection.

I had promised myself the joy of seeing you here soon; however, since this is not the will of God and since you are still needed where you are for a while longer, you know that our happiness consists entirely in giving ourselves up to His guidance.

I am writing to Sister Anne,² at Monsieur Vincent's direction, to tell her to go to Richelieu without delay by the first available means.

I cannot write to Sister Louise.³ Just tell her what day she is to leave to accompany Sister Anne to Richelieu. Add that the directive is from our Most Honored Father. The two of them will not be together there very long. However, they will remain until they are told what they are to do.

1. Monsieur Alméras, see Letter 179.

2. Anne Hardemont, see Letter 110.

3. Louise Michel, see Letter 210.

Please tell Sister Henriette¹ that I am sorry for not writing to her. Tell all the sisters that I was greatly consoled by Monsieur Alméras' visit and that I hope that, by means of it, Our Lord has bestowed many blessings on the entire family in general and on each individual. I desire this with all my heart and beg you not to worry if you do not immediately find complete rest and consolation in firmly established tranquillity. You are aware that good is accomplished little by little. I am expecting news from you since I have not had any for a long time. I hope to write you a longer letter.

I think that Sister Anne has some money but if she does not have enough to pay both fares, I beg you, my dear Sister, to give them some and to let me know how much you have borrowed in that city. I will refund it if those persons have an address there.

Sister Toussainte has received Extreme Unction. Pray for her and the entire community which sends greetings to your family. I greet you also and I am, with all my heart, in the love of Jesus Crucified, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. I forgot to tell you, my dear Sister, that, God willing, we are sending you two sisters² at the beginning of the week. If the administrators have to be informed of the departure of our sisters, it must be taken care of by someone from the city who can do so gently, not by one of you.

L.378 - (TO SISTER ANNE HARDEMONT AT NANTES)³

(September 1653)

My dear Sister,

Our good God has permitted you to endure both great and small trials and sufferings. May His holy name be blessed for the grace He granted you of remaining attached to the desire of accomplishing His most holy will. This is a powerful means for obtaining His grace even if, on other occasions, we are subject to many faults and infidelities because of our weakness and infirmities. Thus it is for the accomplishment of the most holy will of God that I ask you, my very dear Sister, in the name of Monsieur Vincent, our Most Honored Father, to leave for Richelieu, taking Sister (Louise)⁴ with you, just as soon as you receive this letter. Wait there for further directives.

1. Henriette Gesseume, see Letter 76.

2. Nicole Haran, see Letter 495, and Geneviève.

3. Anne Hardemont, see Letter 110. This letter was in the notebook of Marguerite Chétif's copies, the Anne Hardemont Series.

4. Louise Michel, see Letter 210.

You have had the happiness in Nantes of being called upon only to obey. You have had many opportunities to practice great gentleness, docility and submission of your own will. If any opportunities still remain to practice these virtues, look upon these occasions as precious, I beg of you, because they will be a source of great consolation for you once they are over.

L.373 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

(September 1653)

I was mistaken when I said that one of the Fathers of the Poor had offered to accompany Monsieur Alméras¹ on his visit to the Bishop of Nantes. The administrator had only advised him to go to see the Bishop.

However, toward the end of this last letter, Monsieur Alméras said that he had just conferred with Monsieur de Beaupréau,² and they had decided to proceed without consulting the Bishop for reasons which he went on to explain. He is aware that the Bishop will probably be somewhat upset about this when he gets back. He said that Monsieur de Beaupréau knows that he will bear the brunt for this displeasure but that he is firmly resolved to act and knows what he must reply. These are his own words.

As for the article concerning the assignment of duties, Monsieur Alméras believes that this remains the responsibility of the Sister Servant. I consider this absolutely essential in order to maintain peace and to place the Sister Servant in a position which makes it clear that she, effectively, is the one who directs the others albeit in the spiritual more than in the temporal domain of obedience. Until now, the administrators had no interest in interfering except in the matter of the wine or when some disagreement arose. If this right were accorded them, little by little they would gain control of everything. A Sister Servant will be well able to justify what she is doing to any administrator³ who is inclined to criticize her direction by acting prudently and respectfully in all other areas of her office.

Will Monsieur Alméras not be there for the departure of our sisters?⁴ It would be essential.

Is nothing to be said about Hennebont?⁵

1. Monsieur Alméras, see Letter 179, made the visitation at Nantes.

2. Monsieur de Beaupréau, administrator of the Nantes hospital.

3. The Fathers of the Poor, the administrators.

4. Anne Hardemont and Louise Michel left Nantes and returned to Paris.

5. Marthe Dauteuil left for Hennebont. The administrators of the Nantes and Hennebont hospitals quarrelled over her.

L.370 - TO SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE¹

September 16 (1653)

My very dear Sister,

I hope that the visit of Monsieur Alméras² has clarified the matters which have been troubling you and that the simplicity of his sincere words has enabled you to realize that the behavior of those involved is of no consequence.

How fortunate you are, my dear Sister, to know yourself so well and to be so deeply devoted to the most holy will of God which is our sole good if it is accomplished in us. With all my heart, I pray that it will be revealed to your heart and teach you how you must bear with yourself especially in two areas. One concerns things about which you feel you do not have enough information. The second is the suffering you experience because of your reluctance to open your heart and because of your belief that no one is suited to direct you.

Recall, my dear Sister, the great Saint Teresa who was much busier than we and charged with affairs of much greater importance and who often needed advice. Although the advisors she wanted were absent, she was so simple and humble that she freely sought advice from those whom Providence sent her as directors. She listened to them as if God were speaking to her. She was satisfied with the essential and calmly abandoned the rest to the guidance of God. I am sure that you know from experience, my dear Sister, that when human beings fail us, God reveals Himself more abundantly to us. This is for our greater good, if we offer to Him all the satisfaction we would have received had we revealed our tiniest thoughts which is a gigantic mental game of no benefit whatsoever for us.

I believe you have received the letters we sent the first of last week in which Monsieur Vincent told you to arrange for the departure of Sister Anne³ and Sister Louise.⁴ I am sure that you have not failed to do so. We are sending you two of our best sisters.⁵ I hope, Sister, that you are very careful not to show more affection for some than for others. If some are more faithful to you than others, do not give them any reason to believe that you want them to report the faults of their sisters to you. Just listen without reacting and without commenting on the failings of the others.

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1. Jeanne Lepintre, see Letter 64.
 2. Monsieur Alméras, see Letter 179.
 3. Anne Hardemont, see Letter 110.
 4. Louise Michel, see Letter 210.
 5. Geneviève and Nicole Haran, see Letter 495.

Finally, my dear Sister, I am certain that Our Lord will grant you all the graces you need in order to restore union in your community so that God may be glorified there. I remain in His most holy love, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant, burdened with many affairs.

P.S. Extend my greetings to all our dear sisters.

L.371 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE¹
Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Poor at Étampes

September 23 (1653)

My very dear Sister,

You have every right to complain about me. For a long time I have been satisfied to receive news from you without sending any of us. True, I was always convinced that you would be returning here because you have been away from this house for so long. This has not harmed you, my dear Sister, because I know that God has given you the grace to love His service and that of the poor. May this redound to His eternal glory!

You will find many new faces among our sisters here. Our Lord has taken a good number to Himself. This causes me to urge you not to delay your departure² once you have received word from Monsieur Vincent. You will not fail to do so since it is obedience that adds merit to all our actions and makes them agreeable to Our Lord in whose love I am, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

-
1. Jeanne-Françoise: in 1651, she was at Saint-Étienne in Arnes in Picardy. She was then sent to Étampes to serve the orphan children after the war.
 2. Jeanne-Françoise was going to entrust the children to Mademoiselle Ricard (Coste V, 15 and 18). After her retreat she returned to Étampes. She was still serving the children in June 1654.

L.379 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

Monday [October 1653]

My Most Honored Father,

Our good Lady has asked me to go to see her tomorrow at one o'clock in the afternoon. She perhaps wants to know how to go about drawing up a contract. If she wishes to do so without being named, I beg your Charity to be so kind as to suggest some alternative that I can propose to her if we cannot ask someone to serve as a proxy for her.

I received another letter from the Pastor at Nanteuil. He tells me that Sister Judith is now in the parish of Monsieur Gallais¹ in Toquain-en-Brie. She already regrets the step and says that she is ready to return to Nanteuil if the Pastor can assure her that she will be there for life. What shall I tell this good priest?²

I do not know if Brother Ducourneau has spoken to you about a proposal to reach a settlement with the workers without prejudice to the house. The suggestion is, my Most Honored Father, to ask the person responsible for making the fabric to let you know how much the workers in his district are paid for shaping a bolt of serge; what yardage it contains; how much is paid for carding and combing the wool per hundred fleeces; and what it costs to spin it on the large as well as the small wheel. This would simplify reimbursement for the workmen because the price in Paris is too high, and rightly so, because everything is much more expensive here.³

Forgive my insistence and do me the honor of always believing me to be, my Most Honored Father, your very humble daughter and servant.

L.374 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER CÉCILE⁴

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

October 18 (1653)

My very dear Sister,

I praise God for the graces His goodness bestowed upon our sisters

1. Monsieur Gallais, see Letter 107c, had just left the Congregation of the Mission.
2. Monsieur Vincent proposed Judith's dismissal in his reply (Coste V, 35).
3. It was a question of the work done at the Hospice of the Saint-Nom-de-Jésus.
4. Cécile Angiboust, see Letter 108.

during their retreat, and I beg Him with all my heart to grant them those they need in order to remain faithful to Him. As for the advice you asked of me concerning a public fault, I cannot possibly offer you any unless you tell me what it is without naming the sister or stating what penance you imposed on her.

Last week I wrote to your administrators. I rather suspect that some of our sisters¹ returning from Nantes are traveling by way of Angers. We never told them to take this detour but they were perhaps motivated by the desire to see you. If such is the case, my dear Sister, please do not offer them hospitality without first asking permission of your administrators. This is a matter of justice and you must not fail on this point.

Please extend my very humble greetings to Monsieur l'abbé, to Monsieur Ratier and to anyone else you know I should remember. Do not forget our dear sisters whom I greet very lovingly. I am in the love of Jesus Crucified, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

L.390 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

Friday, Eve of All Saints [1653]

My Most Honored Father,

The memorandum² I sent your Charity, of which I did not keep a copy, is only a proposal made by that good lady who is asking for your advice and who wishes to remain anonymous. She is pressing me to tell her the best way to carry out this business properly. All of this leads me, my Most Honored Father, to beg you most humbly to be so kind as to write the response by each article adding whether or not it should be in a contract and, if so, what form the contract should take. I ask this because I am convinced that she accepts advice from no one else.

Because of my customary negligence, vacillation and indecision, I have not yet sent a sister to Varize. Should we completely exclude Sister Andrée³ who returned from there three months ago? We have no one suitable who knows how to read and write. The sister who remained in Varize knows only how to let blood. If your Charity judges it appropriate, we will attend to the latter need only, and someone can leave as early as Monday. When the sisters from Nantes⁴ are rested, we can send one of them there to teach the youth.

1. Jeanne Lepintre, Catherine Baucher and Jacqueline, in turn, left Nantes. (Coste XIII, 680).

2. See Letter 379.

3. Andrée Maréchal, see Letter 368.

4. Jeanne Lepintre, Catherine Baucher and Jacqueline.

At your convenience we will have three sisters¹ leave for Nantes, but it is essential for us to discuss it beforehand. It is even necessary for your Charity to instruct them on how they should act there.

My Most Honored Father, what answer shall I give the Pastor of Nanteuil who wants to complain to the Bishop of Nantes about the wrong he has suffered at the hands of Monsieur Gallais? I think that another sister is soon going to follow the same path as Sister Judith.² I am convinced that my sins and my lack of leadership are the cause of all these disorders.

Reflect on this before God, my Most Honored Father, and for His holy love apply to the situation whatever remedy His holy will inspires. Please give me your holy blessing, as to your poorest daughter who, in the love of Jesus Crucified, declares herself as she is, my Most Honored Father, your very humble . . .

P.S. I believe that your Charity must have been informed of the death of Sister Madeleine which occurred at nine or nine-thirty this morning.

L.292 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE DELACROIX³

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Poor at Serqueux

November 5 (1653)

My very dear Sister,

Oh, what consolation I experienced in the desolation expressed in your letter! Oh, how true it is that souls who seek God will find Him everywhere but especially in the poor! How I cherish your thoughts on this subject! They gave me great cause to praise God.

How is being deprived of the sacraments affecting our sister? You say that this is because of the curate. Is there no new Pastor? If his deafness prevents you from going to confession, you can, by being strict in your behavior and by relying on God's grace, go less often. If you can go to Forges,⁴ either to the parish church or to the Capuchin monastery, feel free to do so. If this is not possible because of the good example you owe the parishioners on Sundays and feast days, you should nonetheless

1. Marie-Marthe Trumeau, Anne de Vaux and Madeleine Miquel were leaving on November 12, 1653 (Coste IX, 658).

2. See Letter 379.

3. Jeanne Delacroix, see Letter 297.

4. Forges-les-Eaux, named for its curative waters; it is four kilometers from Serqueux.

receive Holy Communion on these days. I believe, my dear Sister, that a coach for Forges goes through Serqueux. Please look into it.

Pray to Our Lord for us and believe me in His holy love, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. Four of our sisters left last week to go to serve the poor wounded and sick at Châlons.¹ The sisters send greetings to you and to Sister Renée.² I also greet you most affectionately.

L.400 -(TO SISTER ANNE HARDEMONT³

at Châlons-sur-Marne)

(c. 1653)

My very dear Sister,

I am greatly consoled by all we have been told about you and for the graces that God has bestowed upon you in the duty of directing this work which His goodness has confided to you. May He be forever blessed! I beg the divine mercy to grant you the grace of being thankful to Him for all that He has done.

I am certain, my dear Sister, that our three sisters⁴ profit greatly from the good example and the advice which, in your charity, you give them. However, since you cannot always be with them, I beg the sisters, for the love of our Lord, not to allow themselves to be too distracted by the things they hear around them. They are dealing with all kinds of people. While it is true that some of them lead us to recollection and the awareness of human frailty, others can give rise to quite different thoughts because of the habits they have contracted by living as they do. The sisters must often renew their purity of intention which causes them to perform all their actions for the love of God. This will enable them to preserve the spirit which true Daughters of Charity must possess. Finally, I beg all of you not to allow the distance which separates you from us to cause you to forget the care with which you must observe your Rules and the virtues which the Daughters of Charity must possess.

I wish Sister⁵ would let me know if she is truly practicing the humble

1. Barbe Angiboust, Anne Hardemont, Perrette Chefdeville and Marie Poulet left at the end of October (Coste V, 56) to aid the wounded in Châlons. Two other sisters would go to join them.

2. Renée Delacroix in Nantes, see Letter 275.

3. Anne Hardemont, see Letter 110.

4. Barbe Angiboust, Perrette Chefdeville and Marie Poulet.

5. Barbe Angiboust, see Letter 43.

submission, forbearance and reserve that a Sister Servant relieved of her duties should demonstrate, because it is a maxim that those who no longer have authority over others should be the most humble and obedient in the house. Always bear in mind the advice given you by Monsieur Vincent, our Most Honored Father, regarding the older sisters whom you should love and honor as your mothers.

Here at the Motherhouse we are continuing to recite the prayers for peace that we started during the war. They are the antiphon and prayer to Saint Michael, said in the morning after the *Sacro-sanctae*, and the same to Saint Geneviève after the *Angelus*. For nearly three months now, we have had two sisters at prayer continuously, day and night, to try to avert the wrath of God from us. We know that we have justly drawn it down upon ourselves by our sins and that we truly deserve to feel its weight. If we have been preserved, it is because God in His mercy has had pity on us and has not punished us as we deserve; but I am very much afraid that we have been ungrateful. Ask the divine goodness to preserve us and believe me in His holy love . . .

L.382 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX

November 12 (1653)

Monsieur,

Good Mademoiselle Chevalier¹ has arrived with our sister.² Their journey was uneventful, thank God. I thank you very humbly, Monsieur, for the advice which your Charity gave us concerning her. This will help us to further test her vocation. She seems very willing to work with humility and submission. She is still divided between her fear and her hope of being received into the Company. Despite the uncertainty of her situation, she is bearing up very well during her retreat which she entered with a great desire to make it well. It is true, Monsieur, that she has already entered two religious orders. She was in one of them for more than six months; however, she received the habit in neither of them. She claims to have left only because she had no dowry. Her father had refused to give her anything, even enough to become a lay sister. I recommend her to your good prayers.

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1. Mademoiselle Chevalier, a postulant from Angers, would have trouble adapting. She did not stay very long in the Company of the Daughters of Charity. She joined Mademoiselle de Lestang, see Letter 52.
 2. Marie Donion arrived in Angers in November 1651. She returned to Paris in 1653. She was then sent to Brienne.

The Fathers,¹ while thanking us for leaving Sister Cécile² for a longer time, asked that we place her there permanently. This is something that we cannot and must not promise. I very humbly beg you, Monsieur, when the opportunity arises, to be so charitable as to let them know that this is something they must not request; otherwise, I am afraid that they will begin to expect it.

I sent a note to Sister Cécile about Sister Marie's departure from Angers, but this is only for herself because whatever you decide concerning our sisters there will always be acceptable.

I thank you very humbly, Monsieur, for continuing your charitable direction of our sisters. You see how much they need it.

I beg you most humbly to be kind enough to inquire about Monsieur Maillard. I am afraid that he is a little too hasty in determining the need for sisters to leave the Company for their salvation. I do not, Monsieur, entirely trust this judgment which is based solely on conclusions drawn from Sister Marie's words. However, since this is an important matter, as you know, I felt that I should give you my opinion. I humbly ask your pardon for taking this liberty and I remain, with all the respect I owe you, Monsieur, your very humble and most obedient servant.

L.383 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER ANNE HARDEMONT³

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Poor

November 13 (1653)

My very dear Sister,

I praise God with all my heart for the guidance of His Providence in all things, especially in the duty which His goodness has confided to you. I hope that your gratitude will place you in the disposition necessary to receive the graces you need to serve your sick poor in a spirit of gentleness and great compassion, in imitation of Our Lord who acted this way with the most unfortunate. It is apparent, my dear Sister, that His goodness wants to make use of you and that He reserves to Himself the right to guide you. Turn to Him often with your spiritual and temporal needs.

With the limited time you have for reading, I urge you to read your Rules once a month and also the *Imitation of Christ* and *Philotée*. These are the books necessary for the Daughters of Charity.

In the name of God, my dear Sister, reflect often that it is not enough

1. The Fathers of the Poor, the administrators.
2. Cécile Angiboust, see Letter 108.
3. Anne Hardemont, see Letter 110.

to have good intentions or for our wills to be inclined to do good solely for the love of God because, when we received the commandment to love God with all our heart, we also received a second commandment which is to love our neighbor. In order to do this we must give good example as you do by the grace of God.

I showed your letter to Monsieur Vincent. He urges you to submit entirely to the Bishop of Châlons to whom we are very indebted. With the Bishop's consent Monsieur Vincent wants you to go to Sainte-Menehould; Sister Barbe¹ is to remain at Châlons with Sister Perrette² if she is still there. As for the rest, the number and choice of the other sisters,³ that is for you, Sister Barbe and Sister Perrette to decide together.

I greet all our dear sisters very affectionately and beg Our Lord to give them His spirit so that they may serve Him for the glory of His Father and the sanctification of their neighbor. I am in His most holy love, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

L.399 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX

(December 1653)

Monsieur,

I received your letter only a long time after the date it bore. I am speaking of the one in which you honored me by writing to me in the name of the Bishop of Angers. This would be a great consolation for me if we were able to respond to his wishes and to contribute at the present time to the carrying out of his plans. However, I must tell you quite plainly, since you honor me by allowing me to speak this way, Monsieur, that whenever we discuss anything, the need to change five sisters at Nantes and two at Hennebont and to provide the six sisters requested by the Queen for Sainte-Menehould⁴ has placed us in a position where this would be absolutely impossible before we have sent sisters to four places where, at the present time, there is only one sister and filled the request from four other places to which we committed ourselves more than six months ago. We will settle all this as soon as possible. I will then let you know without fail, Monsieur, before we make any commitments elsewhere. In the meantime I hope that God will give us the grace to see the

1. Barbe Angiboust, see Letter 43.

2. Perrette Chefdeville, see Letter 526.

3. The Queen requested six sisters, see Letter 399.

4. These sisters went to Châlons and Sainte-Menehould at the Queen's request to aid the war victims.

newly arrived sisters make progress in their new way of life.

I would be very pleased if Mademoiselle Chevalier¹ were so fortunate as to be suited for such a life but I do not think that she can adapt to the air of Paris or of the surrounding areas. I am distressed that we did not have your appraisal of her. Your Charity could have formed a judgment on her, if you had been able to speak to her longer. She will find it very difficult to accept, if as I fear, we have to send her home. I praise God, Monsieur, and thank Him for the good that is apparent in our most recent sister from Angers. I hope that the divine goodness will continue to bestow His graces on her. May He continue also to bless your charitable direction, for which I thank you most humbly, and the concern with which, in your goodness, you permitted our sisters to go to confession to the three persons you named for them. Allow me to ask you, Monsieur, if you have heard that more than one confessor comes each day and if one is the confessor of some of the sisters while the others are for the rest of them. If this is the arrangement, might it not be the cause of little partialities and jealousy? I do not mean to imply, Monsieur, that I do not believe that your Charity has foreseen all this; however, I need this as a model for another place.

Monsieur Moreau² took the trouble to come here but he never mentioned the Religious of Saint-Geneviève. I pray that the holy will of God may be accomplished in this matter and that He may be the eternal recompense for all your efforts on our behalf. I am in His most holy love, Monsieur, your very humble and most obedient servant.

L.385 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER BARBE (ANGIBOUST)

at Châlons

December 13 (1653)

My very dear Sister,

I cannot tell you what consolation I experienced upon receiving your dear letter. I beg Our Lord always to be your strength and your wisdom. Monsieur Vincent agrees that Sister Perrette³ should remain with you at Châlons and that you should send Sister Jeanne⁴ to Brienne. He says that if she has already left for Brienne, as he had directed, you are to keep Sister Marie Poulet⁵ with you. I think that this will take care of everything

1. Mademoiselle Chevalier, see Letter 382.
2. Monsieur Moreau, hospital administrator in Angers.
3. Perrette Chefdeville, see Letter 526.
4. Jeanne Hénault, who came from Brienne, see Letter 353.
5. Marie Poulet left for Châlons in October 1653 and returned to Paris the following year. In 1657, she was in Chars. In 1658, she was chosen for the mission of Calais.

quite nicely. You and the other sisters can settle all this among yourselves but always with the consent and approval of the Bishop of Châlons.

I believe that there will be a Priest of the Mission at Châlons and another at Sainte-Menehould. I think that it is all right for you to have them as confessors but let us hear from you first.

I hope, my dear Sister, that you thought to give Sister Jeanne enough funds to live on as the second sister in Brienne. If not, you will have to let her know how much to keep. Did you give her an address so that we can have what you left for her held there?

Let us know a bit about how you left Brienne.¹ Did you speak with Madame de Brienne about all the things you mentioned to me? Did she say anything at all to you about the message I sent to her by our sisters?

Please tell Sister Perrette that I am sorry for not being able to answer her letter. It is almost two o'clock and I have not yet had dinner. Tell her that my heart is as she would want it to be concerning the matter she spoke of in her letter. Tell her, also, that she knows that I love her and want to see her become a great saint by the fidelity she owes to God through the practice of mortification and detachment from all things. It is thus that she will attain the pure love that He desires of her and in which I am, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. Sister Cécile² sends you her love. She is loved ever more and more. All our sisters wish to be remembered to your whole family.

L.375 - TO SISTER BARBE ANGIBOUST

(at Châlons)

December 19 (1653)

My very dear Sister,

I never averted to the fact that Sister Jeanne³ does not know how to read. I hope that Sister Perrette⁴ will be suitable. Please bring her up-to-date on everything. I am annoyed that you did not keep your savings with you. We must have great trust in our sisters; however, we have had a couple of incidents lately, which I will tell you about, that

1. Barbe Angiboust left Brienne to go to Châlons.

2. Cécile Angiboust in Angers.

3. Jeanne Hénault, see Letter 353.

4. Perrette Chefdeville, see Letter 526.

served as a warning that we must always exercise caution. What will they do with so much money?

Please let me know if Sister Jeanne still has a deep affection for her vocation and for the Company. Also please advise us if you think that, as is done in some places, one sister should be the Sister Servant and the other the bursar who would render her accounts to the Sister Servant so that all would be done cordially and with the knowledge of the other sister.

I praise God with all my heart for what the Dean is asking of you. I am keeping his letter to show it to Monsieur Vincent, our Most Honored Father, who continues to have deep affection for Sister Barbe.

I will also tell him what you have said about those good girls. His Charity wants you to be very submissive to the Bishop of Châlons and approves of your going to confession to the confessor he gave you. His directions concerning the administrators are for cases of necessity and when they are able to hear your confessions. Ordinarily in hospitals or in parishes, the priests there are not the confessors for our sisters. On the contrary it is not allowed; the exception was at Saint-Denis when Monsieur Domilly was in residence. I will propose this to our Most Honored Father for Châlons. I will not forget to extend your greetings to him and to Monsieur Portail.

I presume that Sister Anne¹ told you the family news especially about our wall that collapsed. It will be very expensive for us to build another. Later, God willing, we will make some necessary additions but, little by little, so as not to borrow too much at once. Pray to Our Lord for the entire family. Remember me to Sister Anne, Sister Perrette and all the others.

As for those two good girls, test them well considering both their physical and their mental attitudes because you know that a girl who shows delicacy in one or the other is not suitable for us. Let us know their background and look carefully, I beg of you, into the manner of life they have led. Then if they are judged suitable, we will ask you to send them.

Pray for us and believe that I am for you in the love of Jesus Crucified, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. Sister Cécile² knows that you are in Châlons and sends you her love. All our sisters greet you and your dear community.

1. Anne Thibault arrived from Paris. She was sent to Sedan in 1654.

2. Cécile Angiboust, see Letter 108.

L.386 - TO MONSIEUR PORTAIL

Feast of Saint Stephen [1653]

Monsieur,

You are aware of the necessity of sending sisters to Nantes and to the four places where there is only one sister. Every Monday there is a coach for Varize. This led me to ask Monsieur Vincent if, during his absence, we would have a conference just for the sisters of Paris. I would hesitate to request it, but I ask you to look into what should be done. His Charity left it entirely up to you.

Enclosed is an even more urgent letter for Monsieur Alméras.¹ I would be distressed to see our sisters leave without an instruction and a blessing from our Most Honored Father. I am incapable of giving instructions all the time and especially when I have allowed myself to become irresolute.

Please give us a prompt reply and be so charitable as to pray for me who am in the love of Jesus Crucified, Monsieur, your most obedient . . .

1654

Establishment of the Daughters of Charity at Châteaudun, Bernay and La Roche-Guyon.

Aid to areas devastated by the war: Sedan

L.391 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER CÉCILE ANGIBOUST

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor (at Angers)

Epiphany (1654)

My very dear Sister,

I believe that you must have been ill since the departure of Sister Jeanne Lepintre² because we had no news of you from that time until the end of last week when Monsieur Moreau³ took the trouble to bring me one of your letters. I would have been delighted to render him some

1. Monsieur Alméras, see Letter 179.

2. Jeanne Lepintre returned to Paris in November 1653.

3. Monsieur Moreau, hospital administrator.