

---

Spiritual Writings

Correspondence, Meditations, Advice

---

1991

**Letters: 1656**

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

---

**Recommended Citation**

Letters: 1656.

<https://via.library.depaul.edu/ldm/27>

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](mailto:digitalservices@depaul.edu).

restored to perfect health which I ask of Our Lord for the glory of His holy love which has made me your daughter.

P.S. Allow me to ask your Charity for news of our sisters in Poland.

### L.452 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX

(c. December 1655)

Monsieur,

I have put off, for a very long time, affording myself the honor of writing to you. I wanted to be able to do so personally as is my duty. However, since I am still prevented from doing so by the prolongation of my little indisposition, I am taking the liberty, Monsieur, of using another hand<sup>1</sup> to express my regret that, for so long, we have been unable to supply the sisters we are obliged to send to relieve our sisters and to restore the necessary order, in keeping with the needs that your Charity foresaw long ago. Permit me, Monsieur, to beg you very humbly to allow me to ask your advice on the expediency of transferring Sister Cécile<sup>2</sup> and of having her return here to steep herself in the maxims of the Company at its source. If this is appropriate, I think that we will have some difficulty in making the idea acceptable unless your Charity grants us the powerful assistance we have always received.

About a month ago, I had the honor of writing to Monsieur Ratier. I had not fulfilled this obligation to him since just before Sister Élisabeth<sup>3</sup> returned here. I am very anxious to know if he received my letter. We have good reason to praise God and to consider the return of this good sister a happy event. She is doing very well, thank God, and strongly desires to persevere. We are greatly indebted to you for this, Monsieur, because we can attribute all her good fortune to the charity you showed her as you do all the other sisters. Our Lord Himself will be your eternal recompense. I am in His most holy love, Monsieur, your very humble and most obedient servant.

1656

*Establishment of the Daughters of Charity at Arras and at La Fère.  
Serious illness of Louise de Marillac.*

- 
1. Letter written by Mathurine Guérin.
  2. Cécile Angiboust, see Letter 108.
  3. Élisabeth Brocard, see Letter 237.

**L.464 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER FRANÇOISE MÉNAGE<sup>1</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity at Nantes*

January 19, 1656

My very dear Sister,

I praise God with all my heart for the grace which, in His goodness, He has bestowed upon you by fulfilling the desire you have had for such a long time. I blame you for the pain you told me you endured in this matter. In the name of God, my dear Sister, put your mind at rest and be assured that I was consoled to learn what you told me. You have reason to admire Divine Providence for sending you Monsieur Berthe<sup>2</sup> at just the right moment. By the grace of God I hope to send you what you want, provided you promise me that you will desire nothing other than to please Our Lord.

Both Sisters Ménage<sup>3</sup> are fine, thank God. Thank Him also for preserving your father's house from fire. He and the family are well. So are our sisters from there and all those of the Motherhouse. They all send you their greetings. Good day, my dear Sister. Let us love God tenderly. Believe me in this same love, your very humble sister and servant.

**L.465 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER CHARLOTTE ROYER<sup>4</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Richelieu*

February 9, 1656

My very dear Sister,

You gave me great pleasure by sending me news of your dear self although Sister Françoise<sup>5</sup> has always taken care to send me word of you and to tell me of your continual illness which has often taken the place of your holy occupations for the service of the poor. Your sufferings are just as meritorious because God wills them.

As for your reading and writing, you know, my dear Sister, that I fought with you about this from the time of your arrival at Saint-Jean.

1. Françoise Ménage, see Letter 363.

2. Monsieur Berthe, see Letter 245, made the visitation of the house of Nantes in November 1655.

3. Marguerite and Madeleine who are at the Motherhouse.

4. Charlotte Royer, see Letter 254.

5. Françoise Carcireux, see Letter 254.

I am rather curious to know how you treat yourself in your ailments with regard to food and medicine and especially if you are considered as one of the sick of the parish. If you are, then the matter needs to be examined because of your continuing fragile health. I urge you, my dear Sister, to let me know what the situation is and I will offer some suggestions. I have not the slightest doubt but that you are making good use of your illness and that the more your body is struck down by sickness, the more your spirit soars by your submission to and acceptance of the good pleasure of God and by the practice of interior virtues.

I praise God for what you tell me about Sister Françoise. The graces of God are not all the same because, in His goodness, He knows our weaknesses and needs. I began a letter to her some time ago. I hope to finish it and to send it with this one. Oh, how united your hearts seem to be! This is evident from the news we receive about you. I beg Our Lord to continue to grant you His graces and I am in His most holy love, my dear Sister, your very humble . . .

P.S. I forgot to tell you that your mother and brother are well, thank God. Please write to them.

#### L.467 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

Saturday [February 1656]

My Most Honored Father,

Your Charity knows that I would rather die than disobey you. I believe you would want me to inform you that by the grace of God I am not sick. The tea I am drinking prevents the inflammation from which I am suffering from spreading to my chest. It does not interfere with my appetite for Lenten food or for meat. I had had such a strong aversion for meat that I could tolerate it only with difficulty. If you are willing to dispense me once again from eating it for a while, you will make me very happy. If I am permitted to eat eggs, I will do so and I think that will be sufficient. I promise that just as soon as I feel the need for meat, I will ask for it because your Charity allows me to do so. I have the grace to be, my Most Honored Father, your very humble, obedient and grateful daughter and servant.

**L.466 - TO MADAME JOSSE**

February 26, 1656

Madame,

If I were well enough and strong enough, I would afford myself the honor of seeing you so as to suggest a very charitable undertaking to you. Our sister will explain the matter to you in detail if you will do her the honor of listening to her. However, I will point out to you, Madame, that the person in question is very prone to evil and very dangerous to place in anyone else's hands. The food she was given until the age of eight or nine may have contributed to the situation.

The education she has since received, however, leads me to hope that if your Charity is so kind as to have her placed at the house which Providence has confided to your special care, the example of persons who have had the happiness of living there and the guidance of the Spirit of God in the lives of persons of this kind will completely win her over and bring about her total conversion.

It was in the parish of Saint-Eustache, Madame, that she fell into sin. We can assure you that she was removed from there only so that she could be put in a safe place. For more than three months she has been a prisoner in the house she had left.

I beg Our Lord to reveal His holy will to you and I am in His most holy love, Madame, your very humble and obedient servant.

**L.467B - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT**

Monday [March 1656]

My Most Honored Father,

Would your Charity be so kind as to remember his daughter who hoped to go to confession this morning because, by the grace of God, nothing prevented her from preparing for it. What appeared to be sickness is really nothing but a precaution against illness and too much concern for my health. It is true also that I wanted to allow myself the opportunity to take as much time as possible.

As I write, I am conscious of this poor note and of the liberty I take in writing to you. I ask your pardon for this. Please grant me your blessing, my Most Honored Father, as I await the blessing of God's mercy

through your charity. I am, my Most Honored Father, your very poor and unworthy daughter and servant.

**L.504 - (TO MONSIEUR VINCENT)**

(c. March 1656)

Madame de Herse, the President, asked the Pastor of Saint-Nicholas to name the churches where our sisters from Saint-Martin and, I believe, Saint-Médard could make the stations for the Jubilee. They have not as yet made it.

Would it be possible for all our sisters of the parishes and even from the Motherhouse (except those who are with the foundlings) to go to Notre-Dame, the Hôtel-Dieu and two other churches near their part of the city, even if they have not been named for the week? It would be very convenient. Could they go together at the time that is best for the poor? This would be about five o'clock in the evening. I am speaking of the sisters of the parishes.

Is there any obligation to say the prayers that are in the booklets being sold for the purpose?

Some of the sisters would like to go to confession here. Should we not inform them all that, for this one occasion, they are to chose the confessor they wish?

**L.471 - TO SISTER BARBE ANGIBOUST**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Bernay*

March 29 (1656)

My very dear Sister,

You have every right to complain about me although you may be certain that you and our dear Sister Laurence<sup>1</sup> are never out of my mind. I beg her to continue to love holy poverty, not only abstractly and in her words, but by practicing its many aspects. I am enclosing the chemisettes that I am sending you for her. I urge her to accept them graciously. I am also sending you a letter from Sister Cécile.<sup>2</sup> I would ask you to write to

---

1. Laurence Dubois, see Letter 419.

2. Cécile Angiboust, see Letter 108.

her, and when you can, to our sisters<sup>1</sup> at Sainte-Marie-du-Mont. I am very worried about them. The last news we had of them led us to believe that both of them are ill. I am distressed at having no safe way to send them a letter.

I do not know if Monsieur Portail<sup>2</sup> was able to write to you. He has not been well for the past eight to ten days. I am certain that you do not forget to pray for his health and for the well-being of Monsieur Vincent who has not yet fully recovered from his latest illness.

I think that some of my letters have gotten lost. I had thanked you for the cloth that you told us about. I pointed out that it was a bit too elegant and too expensive because of the narrow width. However, this in no way diminishes our debt of gratitude to you. Your heart always shows its deep affection for the Company which also loves you tenderly.

We have had sick sisters: Sister Antoinette<sup>3</sup> from the parish of Saint-Étienne, who is gravely ill, and Sister Jeanne Bonvilliers.<sup>4</sup> I do not as yet know what will happen to the two of them.

If Sister Laurence has not written to her family, please have her do so.

We had the Jubilee in Paris. You will probably have it soon. All you have to do, my dear Sisters, is to read the decree and follow the directives exactly, especially with regard to the intentions for which you are to pray. For everything else, follow the instructions of the confessor whom you will choose with the approval of your regular confessor. Our Most Honored Father extended this permission to all our sisters. They all send you their affectionate greetings.

I urge you to beg Our Lord to send laborers to do His work. You would not believe how many places are asking for our sisters and how few we have to send.

Our sister from Bernay<sup>5</sup> is very well. She is still at the Motherhouse. We must be careful to ascertain that those we accept have truly been called. We have reason to expect much from her, but she still needs more time for her formation. We all ask for your prayers. I am, with all my heart, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

---

1. Claude Chantreau and Élisabeth Jousteau, see Letter 421.

2. Monsieur Portail, see Letter 107c.

3. Antoinette Richevillain (1631-1684) entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity in 1654.

4. Jeanne Bonvilliers, see Letter 358, was at Chantilly.

5. Marie Papillon, see Letter 440.

L.472 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

Saturday [April 1656]

My Most Honored Father,

Allow me to remind your Charity of the note I gave you the last time I had the honor of speaking with you. Also permit me to ask you to remember the poor woman that Monsieur de Croissy recommended to you for a place at the Nom-de-Jésus.<sup>1</sup> I just heard that a woman is leaving there.

We have a sister who last year lived in the home of an employer who has gone bankrupt. A man, who is owed 13,000 pounds, wants her to make a statement before a commissioner concerning what she knows of the matter. He is to come to find out if your Charity will allow her to do so. I am supposed to give him an answer today. Since he will be bringing an authorization from an ecclesiastical judge to the rectory, would it not suffice, when he publishes it, for her to tell the Pastor what she knows about the matter?

I have been informed that the General Assembly of the Ladies is to take place today. Would you consider it appropriate, my Most Honored Father, to point out to them the spiritual good that could be accomplished if they visited the poor galley slaves at the same time as our sisters bring them their dinner. This would be at ten o'clock in the morning, which is a rather convenient time for them since it would allow them to return home early and thus cause no inconvenience for their household.

I would also ask your Charity to keep in mind our need for a little assembly. Could it be tomorrow, Palm Sunday? I will ask then, as I always do, for your blessing. I remain, my Most Honored Father, your very humble and most obedient servant and your most grateful daughter.

L.495 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER NICOLE HARAN<sup>2</sup>

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

(April 1656)

My very dear Sister,

---

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

2. Nicole Haran, born in 1627, entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity on July 28, 1649. In 1650 she was sent to Montmirail. Arriving in Nantes in September 1653, she

I am concerned about whether or not Monsieur Truchart<sup>1</sup> received the letter I had the honor of writing to him about two weeks ago. I also had the consolation of writing to you in the same mail. I am waiting to hear from both of you so that I can send you one of our sisters.<sup>2</sup> I send greetings to all the sisters and ask them not to become weary of waiting.

Please find out from Sister Madeleine<sup>3</sup> how much money she left when she came to Paris and with whom she left it. When she tells you how many pounds are involved, ask her if they are in French francs, that is, worth 20 francs each. Please let me know what you learn.

It will be a great consolation for me to hear from you of the union and cordiality which exist among you. If God continues to grant you this grace, as I hope His goodness causes Him to do, you have nothing to fear, neither the judgments and suspicions of the world, nor rude reproofs, calumnies and complaints. Nothing need upset you; God sees and knows the state of your conscience. Your sole preoccupation must be to please Him by your fidelity in His service manifested by the strict observance of your Rules and especially by respect for your spiritual superiors, the clergy, whatever their rank. Also obey, for the love of God, the gentlemen of the administration in everything that pertains to the service of the poor.

I am in the love of God and of all my dear sisters, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

**L.473 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER BARBE ANGIBOUST**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poot at Bernay*

April 24, 1656

My very dear Sister,

Monsieur Portail happened to be here in the House while I had your dear letters in my hand. He read them and both of us were greatly edified by them. I praise God with all my heart for the graces He has bestowed on many sisters of the Company during this holy time of the Jubilee. I received accounts very similar to yours from sisters from several different places.

---

was proposed by the administrators for the office of Sister Servant in May 1655. Her life would not be without difficulties. She was still in Nantes at the time of the death of Louise de Marillac. In 1673, she was elected Superioress General for a three-year term. Afterwards, she served the foundlings in the Saint-Antoine area of Paris. She died there on June 5, 1679.

1. Monsieur Truchart, the sisters' confessor.
2. The Council of February 27, 1656 decided to send Madeleine Raporteble but her departure was delayed. Andrée Maréchal would go instead to Nantes in June 1656.
3. Madeleine Micquel arrived in Nantes in November 1653 (Coste XIII, 680).

I urge you to be careful not to be the one who is pushing to have a house. I believe that Madame de Brou<sup>1</sup> is no longer in a position to handle the matter and I am afraid the whole thing would fall upon you. Let others persuade you to consent to it, or better still, do nothing at all in this matter. What God wants will be done in His good time.

By the grace of God, I will not fail to explain matters to your relatives in the way you wish. I have no doubt, my dear Sister, that the good thoughts that God has given you and dear Sister Laurence<sup>2</sup> have led to good strong resolutions for the future. If so, they will, with the help of God's grace, enable you to become great saints.

Monsieur Portail has been ill for the past month; this, added to all the work he has to do, has prevented him from writing to you. However, I will urge him to do so for your consolation. I will not fail to convey your very humble greetings to our Most Honored Father. He is fairly well, thank God. It is not necessary to ask you or Sister Laurence, to whom I send my loving greetings, to pray that Our Lord will leave him with us. I beg you to believe that I am in His love, my dear Sisters, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. God willing, I will speak to Monsieur Vincent about your little establishment.<sup>3</sup> Sister Cécile<sup>4</sup> sends her love; she is well.

### L.392 - TO MONSIEUR (THE ARCHITECT)<sup>5</sup>

(c. April 1656)

Monsieur,

The implicit trust I have that you will be so good to me as to take into consideration the request I made to you concerning our modest design causes me to remind you that it is absolutely essential that the final structure appear rustic and as unostentatious as possible.<sup>6</sup> I know that you cannot accept these constraints without difficulty because you are accustomed to making everything a large and lofty structure. However, when you have reflected on what I explained to you and on the need the

---

1. Madame de Brou, Lady of Charity.

2. Laurence Dubois, see Letter 419.

3. The establishment of a hospital.

4. Cécile Angiboust, see Letter 108.

5. This letter is no doubt a copy of the letter sent to the architect.

6. See the Council of April 27, 1656 (Coste XIII, 716) and the response of the architect (autograph 1038).

Company has, if it is to endure, to appear poor and humble in everything, you will see clearly, Monsieur, that it is Our Lord's work, and perhaps you will be willing to contribute the talents God has given you to its firm foundation. This is the very humble request that I once more make to you. I also wish to add that the areas we refer to as parlor and kitchen of Saint-Laurent will be adequate for us for a school and a place to treat and bleed the poor.

**L.474 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER NICOLE HARAN<sup>1</sup>**

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

April 29, 1656

My very dear Sister,

I had the consolation of writing to you about three weeks ago, but I planned to send any future letters only by a sister. However, since I have been forced to put off sending one so as to send a companion to Angers, I am writing to beg you, for the love of God, not to be upset and to believe that I am more distressed than you are at knowing you are enduring the trials of which I am aware.

I would ask you to find out from Monsieur Truchart<sup>2</sup> if he received the letter I had the honor of writing to him at the same time that I wrote to you. I am concerned about his health. We have been taught a remedy that we are to try out. Once we have done so, I will recommend it to you more confidently for his treatment. Please greet him for me very humbly and with all the respect I owe him. Express my humble gratitude to Monsieur Humey for all the charity I know he exercises toward our dear sisters.

All our sisters join me in assuring you of our deepest affection. I am in the love of Our Lord, my dear Sisters, your very humble and very loving sister and servant.

---

1. Nicole Haran, see Letter 495.

2. Monsieur Truchart, the sisters' confessor.

**L.475 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX**

*at Angers*

April 29, 1656

Monsieur,

There are so many things to consider when selecting a Sister Servant for Angers that I am at a loss to suggest one to Monsieur Vincent. I see no one who does not appear to be essential in the place where she now is and this makes us a bit reluctant to withdraw anyone. Nevertheless, Monsieur, after pondering the advice your Charity gave us, we have found no sister more suitable than Sister Marie-Marthe.<sup>1</sup> You are aware that she has already been in Angers, and I believe that the administrators were pleased with her. We could not make a final decision without asking your opinion. I urge you to let us know it as soon as possible so that, once we have received it, we can send the sisters without delay. Please understand, Monsieur, that we will withdraw Sister Cécile<sup>2</sup> at the same time. We should have less difficulty in doing this because Sister Marie-Marthe is well trained for the service of the sick and knows how to satisfy the administrators.

If I had had the honor of meeting with your nephew, I would have urged him to assure you that our sisters will bring you the text of the customs that you requested from Monsieur Vincent. As soon as he learned that you wanted them, he had them written up immediately. You realize of course, Monsieur, that he is delighted to render you this little service and that he is most grateful for the charity you exercise toward our dear sisters. Our Lord alone can repay you. We are obliged to beg Him to continue to bestow His holy graces on your blessed works that they may promote His glory and the fulfillment of His holy plan for your dear person. I am in His most holy love, Monsieur, your very humble and most obedient daughter and servant.

P.S. If I had more time, I would write to Monsieur Ratier to express my very humble gratitude to him.

---

1. Marie-Marthe Trumeau who returned from Nantes in November 1655.

2. Cécile Angiboust was the Sister Servant at the time.

**L.468 - (TO THE SISTERS OF ANGERS)**

(c. May 1656)

My very dear Sisters,

Your recent letters, which were brought to me today by Monsieur . . .<sup>1</sup> gave me great joy. They arrived just in time to cure me completely of a serious illness that I have had for the past month. You must believe, my dear Sisters, that nothing gives me greater joy than to learn about each one of you, about your health and about your interior dispositions. I will write to you about this when I have regained my strength. In the meantime, I exhort you with all my heart to be faithful; you owe this to God in the practice of the virtues required by your vocation.

How fortunate you are, my dear Sisters, to have so many sick to serve! Oh, how evident it is that God loves you since He provides you with so many opportunities to serve Him! Continue to do so, I beg of you, for love of Him with all the gentleness, concern and charity required of you.

**L.478 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER FRANÇOISE MÉNAGE**

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

Paris, June 10, 1656

My very dear Sister,

I beg Our Lord to be your eternal recompense for the charity you showed me during my illness. It did not please the divine goodness to remove me from the face of the earth, although I have deserved it for a long time. We must await submissively the order of Divine Providence. We must always be in that state, open to accept the death of a loved one, our own death or any other painful event so that God, in the exercise of His divine will, will never have reason to complain that we have not followed His orders.

I believe, my dear Sister, that you will realize that God has permitted and willed that a close member of your family<sup>2</sup> be called to Him. I have asked Monsieur Truchart<sup>3</sup> to be so good as to tell you about it himself but, in the meantime, renew the gift that you have made to God of all

1. This letter was recopied by Marguerite Chétif. The name has been omitted to preserve anonymity.
2. Her father had just died.
3. Monsieur Truchart, the sisters' confessor.

that you are. This gift obliges you to be completely detached from all earthly things. I beg Our Lord to be your strength, your courage and your consolation. I am in His most holy love, my dear Sister, your humble sister and servant.

**L.479 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX**

*at Angers*

June 14, 1656

Monsieur,

For a long time I was afraid that you had not received the letter in which I spoke to you about Sister Marie-Marthe.<sup>1</sup> I thank you very humbly, Monsieur, for the advice your Charity gives me in this matter. I am a bit surprised by the aversion of our sisters; this makes it impossible for us at present to send another sister who is capable of replacing Sister Cécile.<sup>2</sup> I find this distressing. It is delaying the departure of our sisters until the beginning of next week when, God willing, they will leave.

I am truly astonished, Monsieur, at the proposal of the hospital administrators to buy the fish market. I am equally surprised that they are considering employing our sisters in it. I can make no decision concerning such a work. Because I do not know what would be expected of the sisters, I cannot even present the matter to Monsieur Vincent. Besides, Monsieur, do you not think that we have reason to fear considerable trouble because of this additional work? The administrators began by asking the sisters to do the washing; other requests could be forthcoming. Moreover, what I personally fear is communication with the officers and the anger of those who are normally employed for this task. You know the rest so I beg you most humbly, Monsieur, to take the trouble to clarify the whole matter for me.

A good ecclesiastic came here to see me. He introduced himself, I believe, as the Vicar General of the Bishop of Angers. He spoke with me in the name of the Bishop about the hospital for shut-ins. I believe he is one of the chief administrators. I am distressed, Monsieur, at not being able to give him what he wanted. I tried to convince him that only the shortage of sisters caused our refusal because I am absolutely certain that Monsieur Vincent does not want to go back on his word to the Bishop

---

1. Marie-Marthe Trumeau, see Letter 102.

2. Cécile Angiboust, see Letter 108.

of Angers and that some one will be sent just as soon as he finds sisters suitable for this work.

It is true, Monsieur, that Sister Cécile has spoken to me several times about a good servant<sup>1</sup> who wants to enter the Company. However, she does not know much about the girl. The girls we have accepted here make us realize the importance of knowing the background from early childhood of any girl we receive. One thing that makes me fear that this girl may be a bit flighty is the fact that she is unable to put anything aside from her wages or any other little source of income to pay for a habit. One can deduce from this either that she is a spendthrift or that she was never in a position for any length of time. In either case, she would be far from possessing the qualities necessary to persevere in the life of the Daughters of Charity. Given enough time, Sister Cécile can find out all about this.

It pleased Our Lord to bring me back from the threshold of death so as to give me a little time yet to reflect more seriously on His judgments. In the name of God, Monsieur, help me with your holy prayers, so that this experience may not be a source of humiliation for me, and honor me by believing that I am in His most holy love, Monsieur, your very humble and most obedient daughter and servant.

**L.480 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER BARBE ANGIBOUST**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Bernay*

June 19 (1656)

My very dear Sister,

I have only just now read your letter dated the third of this month in which you inform me that Providence finally supplied a hospital for the poor of your area. May Our Lord be forever blessed! In His goodness He continues to give me new strength. Help me, my dear Sister, to make better use of it for His glory and for the service He wills me to render to the Company.

I am very worried about our sisters at Sainte-Marie-du-Mont. Some time ago I heard that Sister Claude<sup>2</sup> was seriously ill. I thought you had already told me that you had forwarded the letters that I had sent you for them. I have had no answers from them.

Be very careful, my dear Sister, that there is nothing in the hospital contrary to the humility and simplicity of the Daughters of Charity or

---

1. Jacqueline, see Letter 543.

2. Claude Chantereau, see Letter 421.

that might interfere with the strict observance of your Rules. Should anyone want to have you accept responsibilities which you recognize as out of the ordinary, such as managing the finances or purchasing provisions, please inform Monsieur Vincent.

You were right to ask advice about accepting the girl suggested to you. I can tell you, my dear Sister, that Monsieur Vincent is opposed to the sisters' employing anyone; however, in this case, we must take into consideration the fact that she is the daughter of a former hospital employee. If she is already with you, you can tell her that it is temporary until you hear his decision.

My dear Sister, I would be very pleased if you told me a bit about your spiritual welfare; if your Rules are strictly observed; if sometime during the day you make repetition of prayer together; if you hold the Friday conference; and if you take time for your other little exercises. For the rest, I have no doubt but that your dear hearts beat in close union and that you share with one another what you are doing. If this were not so, my dear Sister, you would not experience the consolation that Our Lord promises to those who come together in His name, and in whose midst He is present. I believe, my dear Sister, that your mutual support causes you to feel the effects of divine consolation. I beg Our Lord to continue to bestow His holy graces upon you and I am in His most holy love, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

**L.439 - TO SISTER LAURENCE<sup>1</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor (at Bernay)*

June 20 (1656)

My very dear Sister,

I have received at least two letters from you and I thank you for them with all my heart. I can recall at this moment only what you told me in the most recent one. It was a great source of consolation for me because I saw how steadfast you are to observe your Rules faithfully. I believe that Sister Barbe shares this desire with you and that is why I beg you, my dear Sister, if you are not always punctual for all your exercises or even if you have to leave one of them in case of necessity, to believe that, if Sister Barbe<sup>2</sup> tells you to do so, she is more disturbed by it than you are, although she is well aware that we are leaving God for God if we

---

1. Laurence Dubois, see Letter 419.

2. Barbe Angiboust, see Letter 43.

leave one of our spiritual exercises for the service of the poor.

I beg her, my dear Sister, to let me know that among all your spiritual exercises repetition of prayer and the little Friday conference are not omitted. I assure you, my dear Sister, that I know of no exercises that are more efficacious in keeping us faithful to God and cordially united in His holy love.

I must tell you about another practice which our Most Honored Father strongly recommended to us at the last conference his Charity gave us. He told us that, as soon as we see that we have offended one or several of our sisters, we should immediately kneel and ask pardon of them. Oh, what a beautiful practice! I strongly recommend it to you for the love of Our Lord in which I am, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

#### L.482 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

Eve of the Feast of Saint Peter [1656]

My Most Honored Father,

If the direct intervention of Divine Providence had not stopped me by arousing in me some minor doubts, Sister Claude would have returned more than a month ago. Moreover, what happened today makes it evident that the Company is guided more by this same Divine Providence than by any other means. However, if we must still take some action concerning her, I think that there must be a clearer understanding with . . . because the good girl expected his Charity to have explained her trial to me.

I believe, my Most Honored Father, that Madame Guergret has not told your Charity that she intends to remain in retreat only until Saturday since she must be at Saint-Sauveur for Vespers because of their Company of Charity. She would like to go to confession either this evening or tomorrow. These few days would be a very short time for a retreat for her were it not for the fact that you consider the good life she has led since her youth a substitute for a longer retreat.

**L.483 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX**

*at Angers*

July 8 (1656)

Monsieur,

I could not allow myself the honor of writing to you before I had shown Monsieur Vincent the letter you were good enough to send me. He greets you very humbly, and he told me to beg you to take the trouble to test that good girl's<sup>1</sup> vocation very thoroughly. He is certain that your choice and discernment in the matter will be excellent.

As for the confessors, it is to be hoped, Monsieur, that there will be just one to serve as the regular confessor for the little community. Experience has shown that having several can be a source of division among the sisters. As for the need of Sister Cécile,<sup>2</sup> the first Priest of the Mission<sup>3</sup> who goes to Angers will be instructed to go to receive orders from you, Monsieur, so as to make this change which I consider very necessary.

I am no longer surprised by the disorders in Nantes because they have had no one to guide them in the way they should act. This always serves to underscore the strict debt of gratitude we owe you and which God alone can discharge. With all my heart I beg Him to be your recompense, and with the same fervor I ask for the assistance of your holy prayers so that I may experience the mercy of God and have the honor of having you believe that I am in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your very humble and most obedient servant.

**L.485 - (TO THE SISTERS OF ANGERS)<sup>4</sup>**

July 10, 1656

My very dear Sisters,

In the hope that this letter will reach you, I am speaking to you from the depths of my heart to assure you of my enduring affection. My love for you causes me to share in the happiness of your perseverance in the

1. Jacqueline, see Letter 543.
2. Cécile Angiboust, see Letter 108.
3. Monsieur Berthe, see Letter 245, will go there in May 1657.
4. Letter recopied by Marguerite Chétif, Angers series.

service of God in your holy vocation despite the trials which the enemy of our salvation may place on our path. Do you know why he behaves in this way, my dear Sisters? He does so to prevent us, if he can, from persevering because he derives a great deal of perverse glory in causing us to abandon a good work which we began long ago. Were he able to do so, he would have no qualms about leading us to set aside our good resolutions the day before we die. Let us be on our guard, my dear Sisters, never to give him the upper hand.

In order to do this we must be faithful in the smallest details and have a great desire to please God in all things by walking in His holy presence. Believe me, our chief preoccupation is also to practice great mortification, not by exterior penance but by submission based on true and solid humility: being content to be despised; waging war against our senses and passions; being strictly attached to obedience and to all the virtues; practicing cordiality among ourselves, without showing any preferences, for in this way grumbling, favoritism, and exclusive friendships are avoided. Above all, always have affection and esteem for your dear Sister Servant and any other whom God may give you when it pleases Him to take pity on Sister . . . ,<sup>1</sup> because I can assure you, my dear Sisters, that the direction of others is a heavy burden. Believe me always in His holy love . . .

**L.486 - (TO MADAME, THE GREAT PRINCESS)<sup>2</sup>**

July 17, 1656

Madame,

I praise God with all my heart for your continued zeal. It is true, Madame, that we are unable to supply sisters for the places that have requested them for some time to come. As for the proposal your goodness leads you to make to us of receiving some of them, I would say, Madame, that you would be doing a great act of charity by furnishing the means for some good girls who wish to serve<sup>3</sup> to withdraw from the world. But permit me, Madame, to point out two reasons that would prevent you from having your desire fulfilled soon. Firstly, it takes a long time to form the girls and to furnish them with what they need personally as well as with all they must know in order to serve the poor. Secondly, Madame, we do not accept anyone who does not intend to live and die in the

1. Cécile Angiboust whose departure is planned.

2. Claire Clémence de Maillé-Brézé, wife of Louis de Bourbon, called the Great Condé.

3. To serve the poor.

Company. Moreover, even if they enter by the charitable support of persons who have assisted them, nevertheless we do not send them to their native place.

This is all I can tell you on this subject. I assure you of my very humble respect and that I am in the love of Our Lord, Madame, your very humble and most obedient servant.

To Monsieur Vincent

My Most Honored Father, I ask your Charity to correct this letter<sup>1</sup> and to have it rewritten, if necessary. It is for Madame, the Great Princess.

### L.531B - TO SISTER CARCIREUX<sup>2</sup>

July 18 (1656)

My very dear Sister,

It is true that I am greatly at fault for not having written to you for so long. Believe me, my dear Sister, it is not because I did not want to, since I take singular pleasure in thinking of both of you and of the union, harmony, and cordiality that exist between you. I believe that you work with one another to grow in perfection in keeping with the divine plan. All the actions of your lives can serve this purpose even those which might appear destined to withdraw you from that intimate union with God which you so ardently desire. Very often this union is established in us through no action of our own, in a manner known only to God and not as we would wish to imagine it.

In my opinion this is what we can do to help to bring this about: we must not allow our will to oppose the will of God in any way; we must give ourselves to Him to put into effect all the practices that have been suggested to us, so that we may be detached from our own judgment and strive to mortify our inclinations even in matters which appear to be good. For example, how many times can we desire things for a goal which, if we follow our own will, would actually lead us away from it.

You are very indebted to your Reverend Director<sup>3</sup> for having spoken to you in this way. I am sure, my dear Sister, that you felt that you were listening to the voice of God and that you truly believe that He was speaking to you in the words of this good gentleman. Nothing is more

1. Monsieur Vincent read the letter and found it satisfactory.

2. Françoise Carcireux, see Letter 254.

3. Monsieur Pierre de Beaumont, born in 1617, entered the Congregation of the Mission in February 1641. After a stay at Saint-Méen, he went to Richelieu as Director of the Seminary. He was named Superior in 1656.

blind than the eye for seeing itself, although it can see everything else.

Do not be surprised by these little recurring thoughts and complaints. I believe, my dear Sister, that our principal preoccupation, yours and mine, is to humble ourselves greatly, to a depth equal to the height to which our minds want to raise us under the specious pretext of uniting us to God by our own efforts. We certainly must simplify our intentions by abandoning ourselves to the guidance of His Divine Providence and to the direction of our superiors. Your letter seems to express your desire to act in this way.

I am writing a note to the Pastor at Troyes to whom we are greatly indebted. However, my dear Sister, you ought not to have allowed these good girls to travel here at the expense of the Priests of the Mission. I am sure that they could have obtained assistance from some other charitable source. You must see to this especially when you meet with the Duchess.<sup>1</sup>

I will not fail, my dear Sisters, to ask Monsieur Vincent to send you a brief reply. He is so overburdened with business that I never interrupt him without experiencing a twinge of remorse. When you allow yourself the honor of writing to him, be as concise as possible and make your letter as easy as possible to read; not that he has ever said anything at all to me about this.

Accept my very humble thanks, my dear Sisters, for your charity to us. I am also most grateful to whoever told you both that I needed a habit. I do not badly need one unless, of course, you listen to our sisters.

I am grateful to Sister Charlotte<sup>2</sup> for having succeeded in making you speak as she does. Oh, what joy you give me by overcoming yourself so well! You probably practiced one of the greatest acts of virtue on that day. Keep it up, my dear Sisters. As long as we are a part of the Church Militant, we must continue to fight. If God, in His goodness, shows us His mercy and admits us into the Church Triumphant, we shall then enjoy that intimate union with Him which we can never completely attain here on earth. Let us then, my dear Sisters, apply ourselves diligently to the corporal and spiritual service of the sick poor for the love of Jesus Crucified in whom I am, your very humble and devoted servant.

---

1. The Duchess d'Aiguillon, Richelieu's niece.

2. Charlotte Royer, see Letter 254.

**L.477 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX**  
*at Angers*

(July 1656)

Monsieur,

I thank you most humbly for the trouble your Charity has taken to gather information about the good sister<sup>1</sup> you consider suitable for us. She will be very welcome.

We did our best to choose two sisters<sup>2</sup> we thought suitable for Angers. I beg you very humbly, Monsieur, to be so kind as to inform Sister Cécile so that she may welcome them properly, and to warn the other sisters to refrain from speaking to the newcomers of the little difficulties they experience among themselves, lest they create an unfavorable impression.

We must soon send three more sisters to Brittany. I beg you most humbly, Monsieur, to be so charitable as to send us your opinion of Sister Marie<sup>3</sup> and to let us know if you judge it necessary for us to recall Sister Cécile<sup>4</sup> for the reason which your Charity has already advanced.

Pardon me, Monsieur, for the liberty I take in giving you so much trouble and continue to honor me by the belief that I am in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your very humble and obedient servant.

P.S. Monsieur Vincent is sending what you requested of him.

**L.489B - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER BARBE ANGIBOUST**  
*at Bernay*

July 31 (1656)

My very dear Sister,

I beg Our Lord to grant you the grace to make good use of all the blessings He has showered on your work. If you believe me, and I have no doubt that you do, you will be careful not to make things too magnificent, because you still do not know how many patients you will have. To have too many things and too much furniture would show a lack of confidence for which you might be criticized. As you know, the

1. Jacqueline, see Letter 543.
2. Marie Gaudoin, see Letter 294 and Claude Carré, see Letter 505.
3. Marie Gaudoin: Louise de Marillac thought that she could replace the Sister Servant.
4. Cécile Angiboust, the Sister Servant at the time.

Son of God wanted no ostentation in the establishment of His Church. If we are imbued with His spirit, we will want to imitate Him. Things are accumulated easily and laudably, but when they have to be taken away, those who amassed them are blameworthy.

To fulfill her obligations as a good Daughter of Charity, a sister must do all in her power to persuade the Ladies of Charity to undertake the task of visiting the sick. That is why Monsieur Vincent, our Most Honored Father, seldom recommends the opening of a hospital in areas where a Confraternity of Charity has been established except in the larger towns.

You are right, my dear Sister, to let me know what you are doing with your beautiful thread. Use it as you see fit; it will always be fine.

Sister Marthe from Nantes<sup>1</sup> and Sister Élisabeth<sup>2</sup> left Sunday to go to serve the soldiers.<sup>3</sup> Pray to God for the entire Company. Remember me to Sister Laurence<sup>4</sup> and believe me in the love of Jesus Crucified, my dear Sisters, your very humble sister and servant.

**L.489 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER LOUISE-CHRISTINE<sup>5</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Montmirail*

The last day of July (1656)

My very dear Sister,

I wish I had more time to speak to you heart to heart on this happy occasion, but it is already after 10 p.m. I praise God with all my heart for the sincere affection His goodness has given you for one another. This is what maintains the union and support which the Daughters of Charity must have among themselves. This also prevents you from speaking ill of one another when you give an account of each other's conduct because, if some little difference occurs, the whole thing should be forgotten once forgiveness has been asked. This should be the case unless they are matters which are important for the glory of God.

I do not remember, my dear Sister, if I answered a question you asked me some time ago about whether or not you should count any small profit you make. I would say, my dear Sister, that whatever you receive from the house of the good gentlemen of the administration must be rigorously accounted for and you must take from it only what is

1. Marie-Marthe Trumeau returned from Nantes in November 1655, see Letter 102.
2. Élisabeth Brocard, see Letter 237.
3. They left for La Fère on July 29, 1656 (Coste X, 197).
4. Laurence Dubois, see Letter 419.
5. Louise-Christine Rideau, see Letter 149.

necessary. However, whatever does not come from them, but belongs to your little household, you may use as do the sisters of the parishes. If you have some savings, use them for your current needs because I know that, by the grace of God, you are not trying to accumulate funds. You have too great a love of holy poverty and too much confidence in God to do that. These are the two pillars of the Company of the Daughters of Charity.

All our sisters send their greetings. Had we known sooner that a messenger would be leaving, some of them would have written to you. I thank you with all my heart for the affection you show my son's little family.<sup>1</sup> A good part of his hearing has returned, thank God. His wife is well. So is his little daughter. She was very seriously ill but God, in His goodness, has given her back to us. They are in the country,<sup>2</sup> at the present time. I beg you to pray for all their needs, especially for their salvation. Do not forget to include our Most Honored Father, Monsieur Portail, and the whole Company in your prayers.

Good night, my dear Sisters. Believe me always in the love of Our Lord, your very humble sister and servant.

#### L.490 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

August 8 [1656]

My Most Honored Father,

Monsieur de Marillac<sup>3</sup> is quite ill with a cold, and his mother<sup>4</sup> would like me to come to see about it. Since her daughter-in-law<sup>5</sup> is not in Paris, she is somewhat worried. If your Charity would allow me to go to visit them, she will send a carriage for me. I do not know exactly when.

Madame de Herse<sup>6</sup> expects you to take the trouble to visit Saint-Martin.<sup>7</sup> She asked me to go there a few days later. I think that she wants to break up Sister Jeanne's household. That is fine with me since I have wanted to do this for a long time. This ought to convince me of the advantages of awaiting the action of Divine Providence.

- 
1. Michel Le Gras, who married in 1650, had a daughter, Louise-Renée, who was almost six years old.
  2. At Champlan, at the home of the parents of Gabrielle, the wife of Michel Le Gras.
  3. Monsieur Michel de Marillac, the Councilor of Parliament, see Letter 272b.
  4. Marie de Marillac, Carmelite, wife of René, see Letter 77.
  5. Jeanne, wife of Michel, is on their estates in Ollainville.
  6. Madame de Herse, see Letter 196.
  7. Parish of Paris.

We have no news of the good girl from Arras.<sup>1</sup> I am afraid that the sluggishness of my unenlightened mind has caused me to do little to provide for that place as well as for Chars.

May God be praised, my Most Honored Father, for the safe trip of our sisters to La Fère.<sup>2</sup> Since Monsieur de Saint-Jean is pleased about their arrival, there is reason to believe that his charity will take care of them.

I do not know if I am mistaken, but I believe that Our Lord always desires more confidence than prudence in order to maintain the Company, and that this very confidence will imperceptibly give rise to prudence when the need arises. It seems to me that experience has often shown this in the many occasions on which the laziness of my mind made it necessary. If I am mistaken, I hope that your Charity will enlighten me, since I am, my Most Honored Father, your very poor daughter and most obedient servant.

**L.492 - TO BE GIVEN TO MONSIEUR VINCENT**

*before he says Mass*

Eve of the Assumption [1656]

My Most Honored Father,

Your holy blessing, please, for all your poor Daughters of Charity, three of whom beg your Charity to offer the renewal of their vows to Our Lord tomorrow, the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. There is a fourth sister making this request. She was crippled in the service of the poor soldiers. Only a life of great pain remains for her but she is bearing her affliction well, thank God. I believe that Monsieur Portail has spoken to you about them since they are presenting themselves with his approval.

I long for an hour of your Charity's time for all my needs because I am too negligent to know them well. I hope to obtain from your assistance what our good God wants to grant me because it is through His goodness that I am, my Most Honored Father, your very poor and most obedient daughter.

---

1. The sisters will leave for Arras on August 30.

2. Marie-Marthe Trumeau and Élisabeth Brocard left on July 29.

**L.484 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER MARIE GAUDOIN<sup>1</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Angers*

(August 1656)

My very dear Sister,

I thank Our Lord for your safe trip. I was certain that you would be well received both by the administrators and by our sisters. Please send me news of yourself often. Sister Cécile<sup>2</sup> will not be annoyed.

Please let me know what sister was with you when Madame de Bouillon<sup>3</sup> told you to accept 400 pounds from one of the farm women. I believe that it happened in 1654. Also let me know if you had had her request this sum.

Also tell me especially about your health. Believe me in the love of Our Lord, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

**L.557B - TO SISTER CARCIREUX<sup>4</sup>**

(c. 1656)

I received one of your letters, dated some time back. Since I am inclined to believe that you are no longer suffering from the little trials you mentioned to me, I am not going to respond concerning them. I believe that they are the same ones I spoke about previously. Only allow me, my very dear Sister, to say that I praised God many times for the graces He has granted you. I begged Him to help you to forget yourself and to mortify your desire for self-satisfaction which, in you, hides under the beautiful appearance of striving for great perfection. We are greatly deceiving ourselves if we think that we are capable of it, and even more so if we believe that we can attain this perfection by our own efforts and by constantly and closely watching over all the movements and dispositions of our souls. It is a good thing, once a year, to apply ourselves seriously to this kind of examination while being duly distrustful of ourselves and recognizing our weaknesses. But to put ourselves through a continual purgatory to analyze our souls and to give an account of all

1. Marie Gaudoin, see Letter 294, had just arrived in Angers with Claude Carré, see Letter 505.

2. Cécile Angiboust, see Letter 108.

3. In 1654, Marie Gaudoin was in Les Alluets, on the estates of Madame de Bouillon.

4. Françoise Carcireux, see Letter 254.

our thoughts is useless, even dangerous. I am repeating to you what I was told long ago.

I beg you, my dear Sister, to help me by your prayers, as I will help you by mine, so that we may obtain from God the grace to walk simply and confidently along the path of His holy love, without too much introspection, lest we resemble those persons who, instead of growing rich, become bankrupt while striving to find the philosopher's stone.

Believe your Revered Director,<sup>1</sup> although you speak with him only once a month, and very briefly even then. Rest assured that that is sufficient for you. Succinct confessions are always the best. What are we looking for in this sacrament? Grace alone, and we can be certain that the divine goodness will not withhold it from us if we approach the sacrament with the necessary dispositions of simplicity, heartfelt sorrow and submission. I beg Our Lord to grant us these dispositions and I am in His holy love, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

**L.493 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER BARBE ANGIBOUST**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Bernay*

Paris, August 22, 1656

My very dear Sister,

I received your letter in which, as always, you express your most dear and tender affection for us. I thank you with all my heart, assuring you of the same from us, although we can reveal it to you only before God.

I am still quite worried about our sisters of Sainte-Marie-du-Mont because of Sister Claude's<sup>2</sup> persistent illness. If you have learned anything about them, I beg you, my dear Sister, to let me know. Also give me news of Sister Laurence<sup>3</sup> whom I cordially greet. I can assure you of the good health of Sister Cécile<sup>4</sup> who wrote to me not long ago. We have given some thought to having her come here. If that happens, you can be certain, my dear Sister, that we will see you shortly thereafter.

You say that you are sending us some thread but you did not tell us how much or where it was to arrive. Perhaps it has not come yet.

All our sisters wish to be remembered to you and to Sister Laurence. So do I with all my heart. I am in the love of Our Lord, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

---

1. Pierre de Beaumont, Superior of the Priests of the Mission, see Letter 531b.

2. Claude Chantereau, see Letter 421.

3. Laurence Dubois, see Letter 419.

4. Cécile Angiboust at Angers, see Letter 108.

**L.491 - TO MONSIEUR BÉGUIN**

*An Administrator of the Petites Maisons and other places*

(c. 1656)

Monsieur,

Monsieur Vincent has directed me to write to you. He has learned that Sister Anne,<sup>1</sup> who is at the Hospital of the Petites Maisons, has had a disagreement with the Pastor concerning the patients and wishes to be allowed to change confessor lest the same thing happen again and they be hindered, even in the slightest way, from fulfilling their duty. Our Most Honored Superior, having duly reflected on the matter and on the importance of such encounters, has granted her this permission, after having her humbly apologize and trying to prevent this change. His Charity went to the trouble of placing the matter before the said Revered Pastor who very graciously agreed. However, Monsieur, since that time, during the meeting where our sister was to offer her apology, do you know what has happened? Some of your administrators have also been told of this by someone other than us and it is now said that there will be a display of resentment toward him when these gentlemen hold their next administrative meeting. In the name of God, Monsieur, I beg you very humbly to prevent that because of the respect we owe his priestly character and his virtue which was often a good example for our sister, as she has frequently told us.

I most humbly ask your pardon, Monsieur, for taking this liberty. While writing, I realize that you know him better than I and that all the administrators recognize the need to maintain his authority for the glory of God and the welfare of souls entrusted to his care. Moreover, if the slightest affront were offered to this person whom we are bound to honor, we would be forced to withdraw our sisters for many reasons. However, I hope that, by the goodness of God, the spirit of Charity which He has given to your Company will restore calm by supporting the weak, among whom our sisters are to be found.

---

1. Anne Hardemont was at the Petites Maisons from October 1655 until November 1657.

**L.290 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX**

September 9, 1656

Monsieur,

I believe that you are caught between hope and fear as you await news of the good girl<sup>1</sup> whom your Charity has sent us. I would say, Monsieur, that I was waiting to get to know her better so that I might better reassure you about her. All that we have observed until now gives us good reason to hope for the best. That is why I beg you most humbly, Monsieur, to allow me to let Sister Cécile<sup>2</sup> present to you the girls to whom God may give the desire to serve Him in our Company.

I am very anxious to know if His Excellency<sup>3</sup> received a letter which I had the honor of writing to him at the time of the departure of our sisters<sup>4</sup> for Angers. The fear of importuning him prevented me from answering the last letter he did me the honor of sending me.

Be so good, Monsieur, as to point out my duty to me and believe me always in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your very humble and most obedient daughter and grateful servant.

P.S. I had hoped to respond to Monsieur Ratier's very kind letter. Allow me, Monsieur, to ask his pardon for not doing so. I am too pressed for time just now.

**L.497 - TO SISTER BARBE ANGIBOUST**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Bernay*

October 13, 1656

My very dear Sister,

I saw your last dear letter only today because of the infirmities caused by a fall which I had almost five weeks ago. I had not yet learned of the situation at the house of the poor. But my God, my dear Sister, who is going to live there and what will happen to the work of the Ladies of Charity, if their patients are obliged to go to the hospital? You will see that the bashful poor will be deprived of the help they receive from cooked

1. Jacqueline, see Letter 543.
2. Cécile Angiboust, see Letter 108.
3. Monseigneur Henri Arnauld, Bishop of Angers, see Letter 521.
4. Marie Gaudoin and Claude Carré.

food and medicines. The small sum of money they will be given will not be used for their needs. We must do all in our power to prevent this from happening by very humble and charitable remonstrances.

What shall I say to you about the beautiful house in which you live? Does not your profession of lowliness and poverty at times give you a twinge of fear? If so, I hope that you make heroic acts of virtue, both interiorly and exteriorly, so that you are ashamed to attract attention because you look upon yourself as the last and the least in that place, since you have only the food and clothing that God allows to be provided for you gratuitously.

I am very edified to see the lights that Our Lord gives Sisters Cécile<sup>1</sup> concerning these truths. As always, she sends her love and recommends herself to your prayers as do all our other sisters. Sister Marguerite Chétif<sup>2</sup> and Sister Radegonde<sup>3</sup> arrived at Arras to establish the Charity. I hope that God will bestow His blessing upon it.

Redouble your prayers, I beg of you, for poor Poland, and consequently, for the Catholic religion. Believe me in the love of Jesus Crucified, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. Our Most Honored Father still seems to be in his usual health; nevertheless, his age and little infirmities should keep us always close to God so that we may ask Him to preserve him for us, because we need him more than ever. I am sure that you do pray for him and also for Monsieur Portail. He is also well, thank God, and continues to work for the Company. You are not feasting us with your good cider and fine fruit, but I am willing to believe that the abundant share you give to the poor prevents you from considering them yours.

#### L.498 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

The last day of October [Tuesday, October 31, 1656]

My Most Honored Father,

Three of our sisters very humbly beg your Charity to allow them to renew their vows tomorrow, namely: Sister Jeanne Henault,<sup>4</sup> for the third

1. Cécile Angiboust, see Letter 108.
2. Marguerite Chétif, see Letter 302.
3. Radegonde Lenfantin, sent to Arras on April 30, 1656. In September 1660, after the departure of Marguerite Chétif, who had been named Superioress General, she went through a period of depression and left Arras. However, she returned and died as a Daughter of Charity (Coste VIII, 446).
4. Jeanne Henault, see Letter 353.

time; Sister Mathurine from Richelieu, for the second time; and Sister Avoie,<sup>1</sup> for the third or fourth time. Monsieur Portail has given his approval. They are good girls.

I am retiring this evening uncertain of what would be pleasing to God. I went to Mass Sunday. I will try to go to Holy Communion, provided I am helped before God by your Charity. I ask for your holy blessing since I am, my Most Honored Father, you very humble and most grateful daughter and servant.

P.S. Without inconveniencing you, can we not look forward to your conference on one of these feast days?

**L.499 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER BARBE ANGIBOUST**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Bernay*

November 17, 1656

My very dear Sister,

Your dear and lengthy letter about yourself and your holy works gave me great pleasure. I beg Our Lord to shower His blessings upon them. So you are now regular hospital sisters. Provided this does not interfere with the work of the Confraternity of Charity, I hope that everything will turn out well. If such is not the case, it is to be feared that, as in other places, neither work will prosper. I am sure that you will see to it that this does not occur.

The good Pastor took the trouble to come to see us. I was very pleased with his visit. I advised him to go to see Monsieur Vincent but I do not know if they met. With the help of God, when he is returning, I will not fail to send Sister Laurence<sup>2</sup> the cross she asked for and to include also the one you requested.

I wrote to you after the linen arrived but, since I was not certain that it was from you, I did not thank you for taking the trouble to buy it for us. I do so now with all my heart. I beg you, if you need any of our goods or money, do not hesitate to use them because you know that all our possessions are in common, and that I am entirely at your disposition and Sister Laurence's, being in the love of Our Lord, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

---

1. Avoie Vignerou, see Letter 578.

2. Laurence Dubois, see Letter 419.

**L.547B - TO SISTER CARCIREUX<sup>1</sup>**

(c. 1656)

My very dear Sister,

I beg Our Lord to continue to bestow His holy graces and blessings upon you. I thank both of you with all my heart for the care which your charity has caused you to take to preserve the life of this wretched body which offends God so much here on earth. It seems that, in His mercy, He wants to prolong its life for a short while, but it cannot be for much longer. That is why I beg you, my dear Sisters, to show your affection for me by begging Our Lord to grant me salvation, which I can hope for, if I fulfill His holy will for the rest of my days. Ask God for this grace for me. I promise to do the same for you in the hope that your fidelity in observing your Rules—which we hope to send you very soon—will draw down upon you the fruit of our poor prayers. I could not otherwise hope for this because of my wretchedness.

Your confidence in speaking so affectionately to us brought me more consolation than I can ever express. Those whom Our Lord has united by His holy love should act in this way, my dear Sister. I beg you to believe that I return your affection.

I see, from your dear letter, that our good Sister Charlotte<sup>2</sup> is still suffering from her ailments. I have no doubt, my dear Sister, that you are giving her a great deal of help to bear them in a Christian manner so that, by the good use she will make of them, Our Lord may use them to sanctify her by the merits of His holy life and His precious death for us upon the Cross. Since her illness did not start in Richelieu, there is no reason to believe that she should be moved. Is it not true, my dear Sister, that it is sometimes a joy for you to serve her needs, and that you look upon her as the first among your patients and as the dear companion God has given you to help you to grow in holiness? Do not scruple to omit one or other of your exercises either to assist your sister or for the service of the poor. You do this for the love of God and this is what He asks of you. Remember that the thing that we must have most at heart, and the greatest honor that we can receive, is to satisfy the wishes of our Divine Master.

I am distressed that you found reason to consider us ungrateful. You had not yet received our letters in which we expressed our gratitude for what you sent us. It is in our interest to receive your acts of kindness but I have even greater satisfaction in seeing the advantage they are to you.

---

1. Françoise Carcireux, see Letter 254.

2. Charlotte Royer, see Letter 254.

In this one action, my very dear Sister, I find several acts of virtue deserving great merit, such as your charity in forming several girls and rendering them capable of serving God and His poor. Moreover, in this you evince great detachment and abandonment to Divine Providence. You have reason, my dear Sister, to beg Our Lord to purify all your intentions. I am certain that, for your part, you will cooperate with His grace in this matter.

In my previous letters, I had given both you and your companion reason to believe that we would have each of you in turn come here; however, we will have to await God's good time. As for your Rules, we will try to send them to you when the first safe means presents itself. In good faith, continue to practice what you know of them and believe me in the love of Jesus Crucified, my two dear and good Sisters . . .

P.S. Our sisters send their cordial greetings and our two co-officers are doing their best to send you news of us. If our good God continues to bestow His blessings on the Company, we will never have enough good sisters to send to all the places requesting our services from our Most Honored Father. The Queen sent two sisters to La Fère<sup>1</sup> and Her Majesty wants them to remain there. Two others have left for Arras.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, my dear Sisters, we are forced to refuse some establishments, for which we must truly humble ourselves. Implore this grace from Our Lord for me and for the entire Company.

**L.500 - TO SISTER CHARLOTTE ROYER**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Richelieu*

November 20 (1656)

My very dear Sister,

I learned from our dear Sister Françoise<sup>3</sup> that Our Lord still continues to bestow His graces upon you by permitting your infirmities to persist; and that sometimes you suffer more than at other times, as I believe to be the case just now. You are well aware, my dear Sister, that the path by which God wants you to go to Him is the royal road of the Cross. I have no doubt that willingly and cheerfully you allow yourself to be led along this way so as to accomplish His holy will, as I hope you did when his Divine Providence charged you with the care of your little family. Perhaps, my dear Sister, your mind was a bit troubled by this, as was the

1. Marie-Marthe Trumeau and Élisabeth Brocard left for La Fère on July 29, 1656.

2. Marguerite Chétif and Radegonde Lenfantin left for Arras on August 30, 1656.

3. Françoise Carcireux, see Letter 254.

case with one of our sisters who recently shed bitter tears for the same reason. That seems virtuous, but we must admit that we are deceiving ourselves, and acknowledge that it is our ignorance which makes us consider this duty an honor and a pleasure. If only we understood the duty of the Sister Servant! Oh, how we would humble ourselves when this responsibility was given us, considering ourselves to be the burden of the house, the one whom everyone must support; we would also realize that we are obliged, by our solicitude, to serve in all the duties of the house, and to give good example in all things. Moreover, if we carried out our responsibilities well, we would have a right only to the refuse of others and we would hold each of our sisters in our heart.

Let us try, my dear Sister, to observe these holy practices. Let us prefer the will of our sisters to our own, when their desires are not contrary to the holy will of God in which I am, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. I beg you, my dear Sister, to extend my very humble apology to Sister Françoise for not writing to her. I have misplaced her letter and I am too pressed for time. I greet her most cordially.

**L.501 - TO SISTER GENEVIÈVE DOINEL<sup>1</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Chantilly*

November 22, 1656

My very dear Sister,

The Reverend Chaplain<sup>2</sup> and Almoner of the château honored us with a visit during which his charity greatly edified me. I praise God that I was not mistaken in the trust I always placed in him. We are greatly indebted to him. I trust, Sister, that you do not fail to show your deep gratitude to him by being submissive to his orders for your work.

If you see Madame, the Marquise de Saint-Simon,<sup>3</sup> assure her of my very humble respect and obedience. Greet Sister Jeanne<sup>4</sup> for me. I urge both of you to learn to write and to write to me yourselves and tell me about yourselves, as I have already explained to each of you, because I am not comfortable unless I have news from you personally. I am in the love of Our Lord, my very dear Sisters, your very humble sister and servant.

---

1. Geneviève Doinel, see Letter 352.

2. Monsieur de la Hode.

3. Madame de Saint-Simon, whose husband was the overseer of the Château of Chantilly.

4. Jeanne Bonvilliers, see Letter 358.

P.S. The chaplain told me that you were to change residence but not neighborhood. The assurance he gave me that he would not advise you to do anything contrary to the wishes of the Queen leads me to tell you not to raise any difficulty in the matter and to be careful to be very accommodating, both for the sick and for the schoolgirls, whom you are obliged to assist and to teach.

**L.638 - TO MONSIEUR PORTAIL**

*in his solitude*<sup>1</sup>

November 29 (1656)

Monsieur,

You continue your goodness and I continue to take the liberty of increasing your difficulties by asking you to be so kind as to re-read the ninth article<sup>2</sup> to see if you find this addition acceptable: "The sisters in the parishes, either in villages or in towns, may not buy any material, either serge or linen, for their clothing; the Superioress of their house provides it. For this end, it is customary that any surplus left over from the money given them by the Ladies of their food and clothing be brought to the said Superioress for this purpose; when she considers it appropriate, she permits them to purchase little necessities themselves when these are presented to her."

My thoughts are so scattered that I cannot explain clearly the meaning of what I want to tell you without using my poor wording, which your Charity will change as you wish.

Article number 15,<sup>3</sup> whether it be changed or expanded, is essential, if you judge it appropriate: "The Sister Servants must notify the Superioress of the needs arising from the illness of their sisters before subjecting them to remedies." Some act in this way, but others provide remedies as the end of the article foresees.

I failed to mention, Monsieur, that Article 13 stands more in need of reins than of spurs<sup>4</sup> because, as soon as a sister becomes ill, she must be

1. During their retreats, the priests of Saint-Lazare withdrew to a small house at the far end of the garden.
2. In 1656, the text of the Common Rules of the Daughters of Charity was being drafted (Coste VI, 66). Monsieur Vincent would explain this Article 9 during the Conference of August 5, 1657 (Coste X, 287).
3. Articles 13 and 15 would be explained during the Conference of November 11, 1657 (Coste X, 338 and 343).
4. The bridle holds back a horse; the spurs push it forward.

served chicken and veal and be settled in bed like a lady. When the sisters have superfluities such as these or when they have them to arrange their rooms, they claim that the Ladies want them. Assuredly, the Ladies would be satisfied with neatness and cleanliness.<sup>1</sup>

You will perhaps be as astonished as I was to learn that one of our sisters made a bathrobe, or had it made, and that her sick companion was wearing it yesterday when she got up. This happened at Saint-Merry. That is a simple thing, it is true, but many a young noblewoman or woman of the merchant class in Paris does not possess one. Moreover, Monsieur, such a thing has far-reaching consequences. Please reflect on whether or not everything I told you concerning this article is to be taken into consideration and do me the honor of believing that I am in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your very humble and most obedient servant.

P.S. Since you will take the trouble to have this book (of Rules) re-copied, you would do us a great service, Monsieur, if you had it folded again, so that it will be thicker and stronger when covered with parchment and will also be more durable in the house.

**L.503 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER BARBE ANGIBOUST**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Bernay*

December 15, 1656

My very dear Sister,

I am a bit worried about you because I have not had news of you for so long. I have not had a letter since the linen arrived and I have already thanked you for it twice. I have been waiting to hear of the departure of the Pastor of Sainte-Croix<sup>2</sup> because I wanted to send you and Sister Laurence<sup>3</sup> the crosses you requested. However, I am afraid that he may well have left without letting us know. If such be the case, when you have found another safe way to send them, please let us know. I hope that it will be in time to let us send you your New Year's gifts.

Please send me all the news about yourself, assure Sister Laurence of my affection, and believe that I am for both of you, my dear Sisters, your very humble sister and servant.

- 
1. During the Conference of December 14, Monsieur Vincent comments on this subject.
  2. One of the parishes of Bernay.
  3. Laurence Dubois, see Letter 419.