until ten thirty. I consoled myself by the fact that, if your Charity forgives me, we can start again tomorrow, if you are agreeable. If the preceding remedies helped you by drawing off the heavy fluids, then tomorrow the dose could be greater and taken in the morning so as to finish drawing off the fluids. You could take either 24 grains of cornachin powder or the weight of two écus of senna or a few crystals and some rhubarb in an infusion of our good peach blossom syrup. I think, my Most Honored Father, that this would do you good and would help us soon to have the honor of seeing you again.

I hope that you will be good enough to send me an answer about this. I hope also to be helped so that my indifference to my interior state and to everything pertaining to the service of God and my salvation will not lead to my condemnation. I flatter myself by the erroneous belief that God is willing to accept everything from me—even my careless life—in what concerns my personal conduct. This leads me to fear, my Most Honored Father, that it is only in name that I am, your very humble daughter and most obedient servant.

1659

*Establishment of the Daughters of Charity at Vaux and Narbonne.*
*Visitation by Monsieur Dehorgny at Nantes, Cahors and Ussel.*

L.605 • TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

(December 31, 1658)

My Most Honored Father,

I praise God with all my heart that your Charity foresees the expression of our needs. I thank you most humbly for this. My heart derives so much reassurance from this that, without it, I would find it difficult to endure so long a deprivation. Reflect a bit, my Most Honored Father, on the means I could employ so as not to go astray and be lost, living as I am without revealing my condition to you and without advice or communication.

Permit me to ask if your leg is any better and if we can soon hope for a cure.

The last hours of the year are at hand. I throw myself at your feet to beg your Charity to obtain mercy for me as I await only that hour when
God will call me to render an account of my life. It is for that moment alone that I implore your charity because my constant infidelities and immortifications so frequently lead me to offend Our Lord.

It seems to me that something still remains to be done for the spiritual strengthening of the Company. If your Charity would allow me to send a memorandum about this, I would do so even if I must blush for shame because of it. All our sisters are anxiously awaiting the honor of seeing you. Offer us to God in the way that He wishes and honor me by believing, my Most Honored Father, that I am your very humble and most obedient daughter and servant.

P.S. My ailments prevented me from finishing this letter yesterday. I am beginning the year with great weakness and suffering of mind and of body. For this and for all my needs I ask you, your Charity, for your holy blessing. I ask it as well for the entire Company.

I had asked Monsieur Portail to ask your Charity, for the love of God, to have a High Mass celebrated in your church for our deceased Sister Barbe who was in the Company for a very long time and was very faithful to her vocation. All our sisters would be assembled for it. I believe that it would be a great consolation for them and would be an encouragement to do good.

Enclosed are our pictures and maxims for the year. I am sending them to your Charity so that, if you are willing, we can distribute them as usual on your behalf after you have blessed them to obtain for us the grace of using them well.

The First Day of the Year 1659

L.605B - TO SISTER (NICOLE HARAN)²

at Nantes

January 4, 1659

My very dear Sister,

I pray that the love of Our Lord will fill your dear heart with its holy flames so that your dear little community may experience its sparks by the cordiality and mutual support flourishing among you. I make the same wish for all our dear sisters, whom I embrace in spirit in the love of Our Lord, because these virtues are absolutely necessary for all

1. Barbe Angiboust, see Letter 43, died on December 27, 1658 at Châteaudun.
2. Nicole Haran, see Letter 495.
Christians and particularly for the Daughters of Charity.

I praise God with all my heart for the choice He has made of our sisters of Angers for Nantes. Oh, what good I hope will come of this because of the gratitude which will animate them to remember the fidelity to which they are so obliged! I urge them to reflect and to recall that it is not necessary always to be filled with joy and consolation in order to please God. Since the Son of God accomplished the work of salvation for the entire world through sorrow and pain, it is quite logical for us, if we wish to share in His merits, to overcome ourselves and to accept suffering.

I just received your letters but I do not have time to read them. I can only tell you that God has seen fit to afflict us by calling to Himself our dear Sister Barbe Angiboust. She left us an outstanding example of virtue. I believe that if our sisters were conscious of it, it would be sufficient to animate them to attain a blessed eternity.

I beg Our Lord to enlighten all of you by bestowing His holy blessing upon you at the beginning of this year during which I wish you fidelity in accomplishing His most holy will in which I am, for each of our dear sisters, my very dear Sister, your very humble and affectionate sister and servant.

L.606 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER ANDRÉE MARÉCHAL

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Liancourt

January 8, 1659

My very dear Sister,

I admire your patience for not complaining about me because I have not written to you until now. I am doing so in order to rejoice with you because of the grace which God has given you since your arrival. I have learned of the good you have done and are doing in the work which God has entrusted to you and which you are carrying out in the manner He desires.

I hope that God will continue to grant you the grace of perseverance which is so essential for our salvation. Enclosed is your baptismal certificate which the sisters at Nantes sent to me. If you discover that you are older than you thought, remember that death is equally surprising and is coming sooner than we expect.

1. Marie Gaudoin and Michelle, see Letter 198.
2. Barbe Angiboust, see Letter 43, died on December 27, 1658.
3. Andrée Maréchal, see Letter 368, returned from Nantes at the end of 1658.
Please remember me to Sister Jeanne\textsuperscript{1}. I am sure that you both received your holy pictures for the new year which we sent you and that you earnestly desire to strive to imitate these good saints and to put into practice the accompanying maxims. Divine Providence has selected them for you. I beg Our Lord to grant you the grace you ask from Him to attain this goal. I am in His most holy love, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and affectionate servant.

L.607 - TO SISTER MARIE DONION\textsuperscript{2}

\textit{Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Brienne}

January 8, 1659

My very dear Sister,

You may be certain that we often think of you and are distressed by the awareness that you are completely alone, although I have absolute confidence in the guidance of God and of your guardian angel. I am sure that your God-given spirit of obedience is a consolation for you and I beg Our Lord with all my heart to comfort you. I had been longing for the consolation of your dear letter and I thank you for it. You have had much to do since Sister\textsuperscript{3} left. She has entered her retreat which is the reason she has not answered your letters. She will not fail to convey your message to Monsieur Portail, but do not believe what you say about him. He is far too charitable for all his daughters.

You must not worry about the sheets that were lost, since it was through no fault of yours. As for the sheep, if it belonged to you, you can say, "God has given it to me and God has taken it away. Blessed be His holy name in us and in what belongs to us!"

I did not find the note for Brother Mathieu\textsuperscript{4} that you mentioned. Assure his brother, however, that he is fine, thank God, and that he just returned from Burgundy two or three days ago. I shall not fail to relay to him the news of his brother and the concern he has for him.

I had planned to send you one of our sisters at the same time as this letter, but Madame, the Countess de Brienne, sent word asking me to wait until she had spoken to me. This annoyed me somewhat, but we have to submit to it. As for all the girls you mentioned to Sister Catherine,\textsuperscript{5}

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\textsuperscript{1} Undoubtedly, Jeanne Pangoy, see Letter 195b.
\textsuperscript{2} Marie Donion, see Letter 382.
\textsuperscript{3} Catherine Baucher, see Letter 506.
\textsuperscript{4} Brother Mathieu Regnard, see Letter 393.
\textsuperscript{5} Catherine Baucher, see Letter 506.
she will tell me about them after her retreat. We will then let you know what you are to tell them. In the meantime, I urge you to be a consolation for them so as to help them to discern the will of God.

I am sending you, on behalf of our Most Honored Father, the holy picture chosen for you. I beg you to accept it along with his blessing and the graces he asked of God for you and for the entire Company. I am confident that you continue to offer prayers for the preservation of his health and, now that he is ill, that you will pray even more fervently, asking God for his complete recovery.

Monsieur Portail has also been ill all winter, but now, thank God, he has returned to his usual state of health. However, our sisters very rarely have the consolation of speaking with him because of his indisposition.

You know, my dear Sister, that God was pleased to call to Himself our good Sister Barbe Angiboust at 7 a.m. on the Feast of Saint John the Evangelist. Her devotion throughout her illness, her conformity to the will of God, her patience and her ability to see herself as dying at the feet of Jesus Crucified reveal to us the goodness of her life and the love of God for those who are faithful in carrying out His designs. I beg Our Lord to grant us this virtue. I am in His most holy love, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and very loving servant.

P.S. Sister Catherine sends her heartfelt greetings as do all our sisters. Once again, God has willed to reveal to us that He is our King.

L.608 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER LAURENCE DUBOIS¹
Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Bernay

January 9, 1659

My very dear Sister,

I beg Our Lord to be your strength and consolation at the beginning of this year so that you may bear generously, for love of Him, all the crosses that it may please His goodness to send you.

Truly, the choice made of these good girls was not a success. The mistress of the last one was not able to keep her any more than we were. I believe that she has returned to her home. As for the little one, there seems to have been no valid reason to have sent her. She is even more immature in mind than in body. Please explain to her father that I apologize for not writing to him, but that I have not been feeling well, and tell him that his daughter is still in the same frame of mind as when

¹ Laurence Dubois, see Letter 419.
she wrote to him and that I would, therefore, ask him to come for her. Make him understand that not only has she always been quite useless to us but that she has also been a financial burden, and therefore he must pay her expenses.

I am quite apprehensive about sharing this news with you, my dear Sister, but I must tell you that it has pleased Our Lord to call our dear Sister Barbe Angiboust1 to Himself. She died on the Feast of Saint John the Evangelist, at 7 a.m., after having practiced to the end all the virtues that you recognized in her. During her illness, God honored her by the most excellent marks of a true Christian woman and servant of God by granting her the grace to conform her will to His, to raise her thoughts frequently to Jesus Crucified and to practice great patience. So it is that, even here below, God begins to recompense His faithful servants.

Sister Marie,2 Sister Anne's3 sister, has also been seriously ill. However, it has pleased God to restore her health and I believe that she is going to write to her.

Enclosed are your holy pictures and maxims for the new year. They are accompanied by our Most Honored Father's blessing which I asked of him for all our sisters. I beg you to redouble your prayers for the preservation of his health. He has been quite ill this winter, and still is, although, by the grace of God, he is a bit better.

Please greet Sister Anne for me. I remain, for both of you, in the love of Our Lord, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and very loving servant.

L.609 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

[January 1659]

A young man came and told us quite simply of his obligation to see to it that a twenty-one-month-old baby, that had been taken away from its mother, be well brought up. Since he wants to become a monk, he set forth the terms he was willing to meet in order to be relieved of his responsibility. He would pay seven pounds a month to the hospital and he would leave an outright gift of 1,000 pounds to the child so that, when he is old enough to learn a trade, he can be placed as an apprentice.

Some delicate spirits in the Company have a repugnance for the word "Confraternity" and wish only the term "Society" or "Community."

1. Barbe Angiboust, see Letter 43, lived with Laurence Dubois for three years in Bernay.
2. Marie Levies, see Letter 551.
3. Anne Levies, see Letter 536.
I took the liberty of saying that this word [Confraternity] was essential: that it could be a strong barrier against innovation; that it signified our secular status; and since Divine Providence had added to it the words "Society" and "Company," that we thereby understood that we must live regular lives by observing the Rules that we received at the foundation of our Confraternity, as they were explained to us.

Sister Louise Ganset's money is cleared to be handed over. However, since it changed hands after the death of Monsieur Bézé, the person who is now overseeing it wants a memorandum from Monsieur du Fresne. I beg you very humbly, my Most Honored Father, if you consider it appropriate, to take the trouble to let him know. Sister is growing weaker by the day and we are afraid that she will not live much longer and, therefore, that the legacy that she wants to leave the Company could be lost. I feel obliged to take this little precaution and to ask you very humbly to forgive me for all the trouble I have caused you recently. This is a habit of mine which, with your assistance, I want to correct along with all my other faults. I am, my Most Honored Father, your very humble daughter and grateful servant.

L.609B - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

February 1, 1659

My Most Honored Father,

If God did not make me insensible to the suffering I experience at seeing myself so abandoned, I would be enduring great pain. I am touched by the fact that I am not sufficiently enlightened to make good use of it, in keeping with the plan of Divine Providence. Nor do I possess the means to make this privation, which I have perhaps merited, useful to me. This letter is a consolation for me since I can— as I am now doing— ask for your blessing for all our sisters, especially Sister Marie of the Hôtel-Dieu, Sister Anne from Angers, who has been in the Company for 18 years, and Sister Geneviève from near Maule. After their recent retreat, they expressed to Monsieur Portail their desire to be allowed to renew their vows tomorrow. The sister who came from Brienne with Sister Catherine very humbly asks for the simple habit of the Daughters of Charity.

1. Louise Ganset, see Letter 11.
2. Monsieur du Fresne, see Letter 511.
3. Anne Vallin, see Letter 63.
4. Geneviève Caillou, see Letter 19.
5. Catherine Baucher, see Letter 506.
Several persons request your prayers for a matter of great importance for the glory of God and the salvation of souls redeemed by the blood of His Son. You are aware of how greatly I need your prayers and that is sufficient for me since I am, my Most Honored Father, your very humble daughter and most obedient servant.

L.610 • TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE DELACROIX

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Châteaudun

February 23, 1659

My very dear Sister,

It seems to me that it has been a very long time since you have sent me news of yourself. I am a bit disturbed by this. I am also surprised that Sister Anne does not write to me. I would be relieved to know if the differences among your administrators have been settled.

Let me know also if you have had any news from Varize since Sister Marthe's arrival, and tell me about Sister Sulpice. I think that she is a good soul but, since she has a very joyful and simple character, she must be supervised to some degree, because of the dangers existing in that place. This was why Sister Barbe had changed her. I am convinced that all her intentions are good, even during her periods of recreation, but everyone does not see things this way. I beg you, above all, if you send her to do the cooking, not to leave her alone in the bakehouse, nor any place else where there may be an entrance from outside.

I send greetings to both our dear sisters. I am also sharing with you news of our Most Honored Father's improved health. He is beginning to go out and we have already had the honor of seeing him. I am certain that you continue to pray that God will preserve him. Monsieur Portail is also better, thank God. They are both as anxious as I for your return. I pray that God will preserve your health so that you may come. I am in the love of Jesus Crucified, my very dear Sister, your very humble and very loving servant.

1. Jeanne Delacroix, see Letter 297, was sent to Châteaudun after the death of Barbe Angiboust.
2. Anne Bocheron, see Letter 544.
3. Marthe, see Letter 544.
4. Sulpice Dubois, see Letter 587.
5. Barbe Angiboust, see Letter 43.
My very dear Sister,

I am as eager as you to see you come here for the exercises but there are two reasons which prevent me from having you do so. The first is that this is the season for the real harvest for the little schoolgirls during which they may be instructed and thoroughly prepared to spend devoutly this holy season of Lent. This would enable them to observe Easter in a fitting manner, especially those who are to make their First Communion.

I also urge you, if your occupations permit, to have catechism for the older girls on Sundays and feast days, and to encourage them to come to see you. They sometimes are in as great need of instruction as the little ones. However, this must be done kindly and gently, without causing them to be ashamed of their ignorance, if you notice any in them.

The second reason for not having you come at this time is that I would be glad to have Sister Françoise come here before you to make the same exercises. I, therefore, urge you to send her to us as soon as possible so that you will not be alone at the end of Lent, which is the busiest season.

I am complaining loudly to Sister Anne for not sending me a word about herself. I am disturbed that she does not know how to write. I am afraid that she does not apply herself. I urge you to encourage her strongly to learn.

I praise God with all my heart for the blessings His goodness bestows upon your little community. This is evident in the support, union and cordiality which exist among you. I hope that your fidelity will cause this same goodness to continue.

I had forgotten that you had sent us some scalpels. If they have been lost, I will send you others, as soon as possible.

I ask the three of you to pray for me and I am in the love of Our Lord, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and affectionate servant.

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1. Claire Jaudoin, born on March 7, 1629, entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity in April 1653. She served the poor at La Roche-Guyon for many years. After a three year term as Bursar, she went to Châteaudun where she died in 1684.

2. The exercises of the annual retreat.
My Most Honored Father,

I thought that I was consoling Sister Jeanne Lepintre by telling her that I did not think that her ailment appeared to be serious, but I did not make myself clearly understood.

I do not know where this Hospital for Shut-ins is located. However, I beg your Charity to recall that you do not consider it appropriate to send a sister alone. You are also aware that we do not have any to give. Moreover, I think that they may be asking for sisters for Saint-Eustache because the servants of their poor have left them. However, there is some opposition to this.

Please give me your holy blessing, my Most Honored Father, as to your most obedient daughter and very humble servant.

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My very dear Sister,

I praise God with all my heart for the joy He has given you at the arrival of our sister. I fully expected you to find consolation in her.

I am truly amazed that you have received no money. Madame de Brienne is in arrears for more than a year and we have been unable to obtain payment. Do not let the first mail go by without telling me of your needs, in case you have received nothing. I beg you, for the love of God, my dear Sister, not to deprive yourself of the food you need. Sister Geneviève was shocked to see how thin you are, but she had forgotten that you are naturally so. Nevertheless, be careful not to remain in that state through necessity. Borrow money freely when you need it. I am sure that you will not abuse this permission.

As for your request to be relieved of responsibility, do not consider

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1. Jeanne Lepintre, see Letter 64, suffered from psychological problems during the last years of her life.
3. Geneviève Vigneron, see Letter 135.
4. Marie Donion, see Letter 382, asked to be relieved of the duty of Sister Servant.
it, I beg of you. You must not afflict our sister to this degree, but you
must remain submissive to Divine Providence by rendering service to her.

God willing I will send you, by the first mail, a book of meditations
along with another little book which is essential for the instruction. We
were unable to obtain them for this mail.

I urge you to send us news of Sister Barbe's mother. Let us know if
you delivered to her the letters that Sister brought because we have
received some since and they are anxious about them.

Our Most Honored Father is well, thank God. So is Monsieur Portail.
In keeping with your wish, I will not fail to remember you to them. I ask
for a share in your prayers. Believe that I am in the love of Our Lord,
my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and very loving servant.

My very dear Sister,

I truly shared in your suffering in all the matters you mentioned to
me. However, we must not find it strange that lying persons utter
calumnies against us because we are Christians and Daughters of Charity
as well. This fact obliges us to put up with everything as we have been
taught by this great lover of suffering, Jesus Christ.

I am a bit saddened because it appears that you have had a
misunderstanding with your Pastor who leads a very holy life, is quite
learned and toward whom we are greatly indebted because of the charity
and good will he has always shown our sisters. I gave your letter to
Monsieur Vincent. He is aware of the Pastor's virtue and he told me to
urge you always to maintain toward him the attitude of respect we owe
him. As for the other matters, you realize that his Charity does not answer
immediately. I can only assure you that, by the grace of God, our sisters
have always been faithful to their obligations and have certainly never
taken books or anything else.

I am ashamed that you defended yourself so vociferously. But, what
can we expect? Our weakness will not allow us to be overcome.

I do not think that you should teach our sister or permit her to be
taught anything more. She is not capable of this and I do not want to

1. Barbe Bailly, see Letter 356b.
2. Nicole Georget, see Letter 237.
expose anyone to her initial attempts.\textsuperscript{1} I am sending you the cross you requested; through it you will learn to accept willingly those which it pleases Our Lord to send you. I recommend myself to your prayers and to Sister Marie's. I am in His most holy love, my very dear Sister, your very humble and very loving servant.

L.615 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

March 25 [1659]

I had promised myself the honor and the blessing of receiving Holy Communion at your Mass, my Most Honored Father, but I do not deserve this. It is already a great deal that Divine Providence reminded your Charity to be so kind as to grant me about a quarter hour of your time afterwards, otherwise I would have been severely hindered. All our sisters, from far and near, who have had the happiness of pronouncing their vows, and I, unworthy though I be, beg you, my Most Honored Father, to offer us to God in this sovereign mystery so that we may properly renew our vows, particularly the 12 sisters who will have the privilege of assisting at your Mass. We hope to share in it because of the need which your Charity knows we have of this. In all humility, we ask for your paternal blessing. Allow me also to recommend my children to you and to call myself, my Most Honored Father, your very humble servant.

L.616 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

March 30 (1659)

Madame, the Baroness de Mirepoy, told me that she would be delighted to participate in the General Assembly. Do you think it appropriate for me to inform her of the time and place, when I learn them? I refused, once again, her offering of ten écus for the retreat. However, she forced it upon one of our sisters who then returned it by putting it in the dress of her lady-in-waiting. This lady, in turn, left it on the doorstep. I was not there. My Most Honored Father, does your Charity consider it appropriate for me to return the money when I send her our Rules for her consideration and inform her about the Assembly?

\textsuperscript{1} Marie was learning to let blood.
We have not yet sent a response to Monsieur l'abbé de Vaux whose letter I sent to your Charity; nor have we answered the confessor of our sisters in Nantes concerning Sister Nicole Haran’s suggestion that we increase the number of sisters and name an assistant. I am awaiting your orders in these matters. I humbly ask for your holy blessing since I am, my Most Honored Father, your very humble daughter and most obedient servant.

L.617 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER GENEVIÈVE DOINEL¹
Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Chantilly

April 14, 1659

My very dear Sister,

I just saw, in your letter, the trouble you continue to have in obtaining money both for your needs and for the Confraternity of Charity. This truly disturbs me; however, we have done all that we can without making any progress.

It is true that it has been some time since I have allowed myself the consolation of writing to you, but the fact that opportunities to send you letters pass so quickly is part of the reason.

As for Sister Marie's² request, I am fully in agreement. Tell her, my dear Sister, that she will be welcome to make her retreat whenever she can conveniently come here.

I beg Our Lord to preserve you in His grace. I send my very humble greetings to Monsieur Pesset to whom both you and we are greatly indebted. Believe me always in the love of Our Lord, my very dear Sisters, your very humble and very loving sister and servant.

¹ Geneviève Doinel, see Letter 352.
² Marie went to Chantilly in November 1658 to replace Louise.
L.618 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER NICOLE HARAN

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

April 30, 1659

My very dear Sisters,

I very humbly ask your pardon for allowing so much time to pass without writing to you. The great amount of business and my poor health are truly the reason. However, I will add, my dear Sister Haran,¹ that the condition in which you tell me your little community finds itself so consoled me that it seemed to me that I had nothing more to say to you by way of advice for your growth in holiness. Moreover, the direction, or rather the Director, that Divine Providence has given you and that you received by the order of our Most Honored Father, is a great support for you. Listen to him, I beg of you, and obey him as you would an angel. In reality, you should consider him in this way and often reflect on this concept. Should nature or temptation give rise to other thoughts or even to feelings of repugnance when it comes to accepting and esteeming his advice, be firmly convinced that the evil spirit has a master plan for your destruction. Moreover, my dear Sisters, what is there on earth that you could desire for your salvation, that you do not possess? You are called by God to make use of all your thoughts, words and actions for His glory, and thus to do nothing contrary to His commandments but rather to grow in holiness by practicing his counsels. Therefore, you must mistrust any thought that comes to you that would turn you away from the path on which obedience has placed you. An example of such a fault would be: "Oh, if I were in this place or that one! Oh, how much good I think I would accomplish!" Be certain that this is an illusion and that you would do worse there. Spirits lacking in steadfastness never lay solid foundations of virtue because their vacillation prevents them from developing habits of obedience, humility, forbearance and fidelity to the observance of their Rules. The devil always keeps these souls in a state of inaction. I am so convinced of this, on account of the numerous examples I have seen of it in various places and even among our sisters, who have lost their vocation in this way or have remained in a state of torpidity and cowardice which has caused them to cling to their evil habits and inclinations, that even should an angel come down from heaven to tell me this, I would not be more certain. For this reason, I exhort all of you, my dear Sisters, in the name and for the love of Our Lord, to believe me. I urge each of you to say to herself, "Well now, my Savior, You truly want me to be here so that I may share in Your merit and win a

¹. Nicole Haran, see Letter 495.
place in Your Holy Paradise. I am going to set to work diligently, as if I had only just begun to make an earnest effort to understand fully our Rules and to strive to put them into practice by obedience to my Superiors.” You will discover in your Rules many instructions both for the service of the poor and for your spiritual exercises which cannot always be performed at the hour indicated but which must be adapted to the customs of various places. Sister Nicole will clarify this for you and you must obey her as you would Our Lord Himself.

I hope that Monsieur Vincent will send one of the Priests of the Mission to Nantes1 and Angers this summer. I beg you, my dear Sisters, to prepare for his visit by the faithful observance of your Rules, of which you will render him an account. Do not, instead, fill your minds with things you would like to persuade him are fine, so as to satisfy your useless desires. This does not mean that you are not to unburden yourselves completely of anything that might be troubling you, but do this with an attitude of implicit trust because he cannot tell you anything that he does not believe God desires of you.

Assure your Revered Director of my very humble respect and gratitude. Tell him that we received the letters that you mentioned to me. Allow a little time for the things suggested before giving him an answer. I will seek one from Monsieur Vincent.

I had asked you for the age, mental state and health of these good postulants as well as an idea of what they know how to do, whether or not they have been in domestic service and if they have spent a long period in one household. I must know all this before I can give you an answer.

I am disturbed because I am unable to write to Sister Françoise Ménage.2 I am waiting for a safe way to send her the chaplet of the Crown of Our Lord. It seems to me that I have sent you two of them since I sent one to Hennebont but I am afraid that they have been lost. Sister Madeleine Ménage3 was seriously ill but, thank God, she is better and sends her greetings to her sister. With all my heart, I want Our Lord to shower His choicest blessings upon your little community, filling it with His most holy love in which I am, my very dear Sister, your very humble and very loving sister and servant.

1. Monsieur Dehorgny would not arrive until December 1659 (Coste XIII, 91).
2. Françoise Ménage, see Letter 363.
3. Madeleine Ménage, see Letter 538.
May 4, 1659

My very dear Sister,

We are sending little Elisabeth back, having judged that for her own good she should not be received as one of our sisters, because she is so immature in both body and mind. I make the same request to you that I made to Sister Louise, namely, not to show her any special consideration but to treat her like the other girls, and not to allow her to become accustomed to being among you or to reside with you.

Because I am confident that my letters will not be lost, I am taking advantage of this safe route of delivery to write to you to rejoice with you, by thanking God for the graces His goodness has bestowed upon you, enabling you to continue to love His service by observing your Rules especially by the cordiality and support you show one another. I cannot tell you what a consolation this is for me. So long as these holy practices exist among you, you can be certain that God is with you. I beg Him with all my heart to continue to grant you His graces and I am in His most holy love, my dear Sister, your very humble and very loving sister and servant.

May 13, 1659

My very dear Sister,

You pleased me greatly by reminding me that we have one of your scalpels. I do not know how we forgot to send it whereas we remembered your letter which we forwarded to the Countess de Brienne the very next day after we had received it. She told us yesterday that she had ordered a gentleman, whom I believe to be her solicitor, to give you 200 pounds. When you have received the money, I urge you to notify us so that we

1. Catherine Gesse, see Letter 120.
2. Louise-Christine Rideau, see Letter 149.
3. Marie Donion, see Letter 382.
4. Madame de Brienne, see Letter 86.
may give an account of it to the Countess who says nothing about the past nor about what we sent you.

I am returning your scalpel and ask you to let me know if you have received the two écus from Sister Barbe's\(^1\) brother-in-law. As soon as we are informed, we will be certain to send them to these two hospitals. Assure this good sister that we will not fail to pray for her mother.

As for the sister whose will has turned in another direction, this is a sign that she was not really called. We will always have enough sisters because we will have only those whom God wills to give us.

I beg you not to go to visit the sick without rubbing your nose with vinegar and putting some on your temples. I continue to hope that you are in good health and I praise God for this with all my heart. I beg Him to grant you the graces you need to become great saints, believing as I do that you are unstinting in your efforts to correspond with them. I recommend myself to your prayers and to Sister Geneviève\(^2\)'s. Her sister came to see us; she is fine, thank God. I beg Him to grant you the strength you need to cope with the heavy demands of your work and I am in His most holy love, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and very loving servant.

P.S. I will do what you and Sister Geneviève request. I will not fail, from time to time, to communicate to our Most Honored Father the desire of our dear sisters in distant places. I am sure that you do not fail to pray for the preservation of his health and of Monsieur Portail's; I shall be certain to remember you to him. All our sisters send their greetings.

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L.621 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE DELACROIX\(^3\)

*Daughter of Charity at Châteaudun*

May 26, 1659

My very dear Sister,

You tell me that bands of soldiers passed through your neighborhood and that the sisters have a quantity of thread to spin, but you do not mention whether or not the soldiers did any harm on their way through. Nevertheless, thank you for your care of the sisters. You also say nothing about little Sister Sulpice\(^4\) concerning the recommendations I received

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1. Barbe Bally, see Letter 356b.
2. Geneviève Vigneron, see Letter 135.
3. Jeanne Delacroix, see Letter 297, was at Serqueux when she was named to go to Châteaudun.
4. Sulpice Dubois, see Letter 587.
about her. This worries me because I know that you are so tolerant that you are not always aware of things that are to be feared.

As for this good girl, we must have a little more information about her. We must not be in a hurry to accept her but must test her thoroughly beforehand. Sister Claude tells me that this girl does not have the means to pay for her first habit. That is an obstacle. It is unbelievable that she cannot obtain the money from her family unless there has been mismanagement in the home.

I will do everything possible to send some strong and energetic sisters, but, in the meantime, I beg you not to allow yourself to be crushed by your burden.

By all means, my dear Sister, use the little book that belonged to our deceased sister. You did not tell me how many sick there are in your hospital. I praise God for the blessings He is bestowing upon the instruction of your children. Let us know something about the lady who gave you news of our dear sisters in Serqueux. Sister Marie is eagerly awaiting your arrival. I do not know what Divine Providence will decree in this matter. I would also willingly consider you for other places because, although we have almost 40 sisters here, we have considerable difficulty in finding a few for the establishments.

Pray for the Company so that, in His goodness, God may send His Holy Spirit upon all in general and upon each individual sister in order that we may all be very faithful to Him. Our Most Honored Father is still in the same condition. Pray fervently for the preservation of his health, I beg of you. Remember me to all our dear sisters and convey to them the most affectionate greetings of our community. Believe me in the love of Our Lord, my dear Sister, your very humble and very loving servant.

P.S. When you have the opportunity, I would ask you to make your packages smaller and to put everything into one so as to save shipping charges. The last ones cost eight sols.

L.622 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

June 2, 1659

Madame de Glou very humbly entreats you, my Most Honored Father,

1. Claude who is at Varize, see Letter 544.
2. Barbe Angiboust, see Letter 43.
to grant her some time to speak with you tomorrow morning, at an hour
that is convenient for you.

Allow me to ask you if it should not be every year, during this period
of the Feast of Pentecost, that we hold the election of Officers, either to
elect new ones or to prolong the terms of those holding office. If so,
although we shall perhaps have to elect some sisters who are not in Paris,
I would ask your Charity to let me know the day. I would also ask you
to recall that my pride or foolishness always prevents me from presenting
my needs to you. Nevertheless, I realize how important this is to me for
the salvation of my soul and the accomplishment of the will of God.
Therefore, have the goodness to help me to surmount my difficulties and
to make better use of my remaining days so that, at the end of my life,
I may not be filled with shame. I hope for this from the goodness of God
and beg Him for it with all my heart as I entreat your Charity to grant
me some time for this purpose, since, for many years, it has been by this
means that I have been assured that I was fulfilling the will of God by
doing what I was ordered to do. I desire this grace until the end, although
I am unworthy of it, along with the grace of calling myself in His most
holy love, my Most Honored Father, your very humble and most obedient
daughter.

L.623 - TO SISTER LAURENCE DUBOIS

at Bernay

July 23, 1659

My very dear Sister,

Although you would excuse me for forgetfulness or excessive
negligence, I do not want to excuse myself. Nevertheless, I could tell you
that, since Easter, I have been continuously ill and still am, as the good
Pastor may have told you. It was from him that I had news of your dear
self.

Some time ago, one of your relatives stopped here. He gave us news
of your family and said that everyone is fine. I have not as yet seen nor
have I been able to send the letter that you wrote to your brother. I will
let you know as soon as I have had an answer.

What I have learned of your employments greatly consoled me. I found
particular consolation in your way of life which is permeated with
cordiality and mutual support. I was greatly comforted also by the respect,

1. Laurence Dubois, see Letter 419.
modesty and charity with which you act. It is in this way, my dear Sisters, that you must edify the public and not be persons who only bear the name and wear the habit of the Daughters of Charity and who do everything except their duty, yielding rather to gossip and idle thoughts, with no consideration for the observance of their Rules. May Our Lord protect us from this evil!

My greetings to Sister Anne. I am, for both of you, in the love of Our Lord, your very humble sister and servant.

L.624 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

August 2 [1659]

Enclosed is the letter that I received this morning from Madame de Bouillon. I think that I should respond promptly. I am sending it to learn from your Charity whether or not you consider it appropriate for me to treat her in this way.

The Sister Renée she mentions is the one involved in the rumors concerning this good ecclesiastic. He told her on two different occasions to come here. She is likewise the one that the said Lady wanted left with her as long as she remained in the country. I ask your Charity please to consider all these circumstances because a request is being made for another sister, perhaps so as to keep Sister Renée there permanently, as she desires. More than a month ago, I was told that she never left the château. Madame has the habit of often delaying the sisters there to visit her and Sister Renée expects this.

We are not at all acquainted with Monsieur Piètre whose decision could either harm us or be very beneficial to us. Would we dare, my Most Honored Father, to ask your Charity to send someone to him on your behalf. We will assemble at 2 o'clock today to discuss the matter of the fountains. I was told that Monsieur Piètre may live near Saint-Jean. I will send for him there as well as for our sisters from the Hôtel-de-Ville area. Would your Charity please intercede with Our Lord for us, so that we may obtain what is necessary, and bless us for His holy love. Believe me, my Most Honored Father, your very humble . . .

1. Anne Levies, see Letter 536.
2. Madame de Bouillon, the younger. She was at her château in Morainvilliers.
3. The Daughters of Charity obtained authorization to bring water from the city to their house.
4. Saint-Jean-de-Grèves, a parish of Paris.
L.625 - TO MADAME DE BOUILLON

August 21, 1659

Madame,

I was aware of Sister Toussainte's illness and I would not have failed to send someone to help Sister Renée if we had a sister suitable for that. Since we are continuously in this state of powerlessness, and will be for some time to come, I very humbly beg you, Madame, to pardon me for not responding to your request as quickly as you would wish. Allow me also to tell you that, since Sister Toussainte is on the road to recovery, she does not need to have someone with her while Sister Renée is serving the sick. Because the other sister has a great deal of experience and is accustomed to teaching school, the children will receive adequate instruction.

This is not meant to imply, Madame, that I do not pay careful attention to whatever you do me the honor of telling me. I respect, as I must, your instruction which I will follow exactly because I am certain that you want everything to redound to the glory of God and the good of the poor who are so dear to you. In the love of Our Lord, I take the liberty to call myself, Madame, with the respect I owe you, your very humble and most obedient servant.

L.626 - (TO MONSIEUR VINCENT)

August 24 [1659]

My Most Honored Father,

Our two sisters who asked your Charity for permission to make their vows are completing the fifth year since their entrance into the Company. One is called Pétronille. She is not unmindful of the esteem that she must have for the vows or of their meaning. The other sister is a simpler soul with less knowledge, or even understanding, but she loves God and her vocation—as does the first sister. Both of them have always been steadfast in their vocation. They have Monsieur Portail’s approval. This second sister is named Louise.

1. See Letter 624.
2. Toussainte David, see Letter 270.
3. Pétronille Gillot, who entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity in 1654, went to Nanteuil after her seminary.
My patron saint reproaches me for my infidelity. For this reason, I beg your Charity to ask pardon of God for me and to beg new graces from Him so that I may accomplish His holy will. Tomorrow, if I am able, I will attend holy Mass with our sisters so that this small number may represent the entire Company for you and so that your Charity may obtain for it the grace of fortitude through the blessing of Our Lord for this intention.

L.627 - TO SISTER GENEVIÈVE DOINEL

at Chantilly

September 3, 1659

My very dear Sister,

I have truly been distressed to have left you all alone for so long and I praise God for having furnished me with the means to be able to send you our dear Sister Françoise. She has a very sweet disposition and a great desire to give herself totally to God. I beg you to be an example for her of a true Daughter of Charity who is given to God for the service of the poor and who, therefore, must be more with the poor than with the rich; who has Rules to observe and no time to waste; who, except when she is required to visit the poor, must prefer her own house and the company of her sister whom she must love and support; who, consequently, must never complain to anyone about her companion or about anything that transpires between them, not even in confession where one must be careful not to reveal the faults of others; who must never speak of her neighbor, especially of priests, other than with great respect; and who must not go to talk with the clergy, except in church. The Daughters of Charity are obliged, therefore, to strive to become more holy than religious. Our sister will tell you what she learned about this from our Most Honored Father’s last conference as well as about the charity he showed us today for the repose of the souls of our deceased sisters. Let us implore Our Lord for the grace to profit by the mercy He shows our poor Company. Believe me in His holy love, my dear Sister, your very humble and very loving sister and servant.

P.S. I beg you, my dear Sister, to convey my respectful greetings to Monsieur Pesset. Once again, I recommend our sister to you. I beg you,

1. Geneviève Doinel, see Letter 352.
2. Because of her health, Françoise remained at Chantilly for only a few months.
above all, to live together in such a way that you will have no need to
go to different confessors. This is extremely important.

Our sister does not seem to be in good health. If she is no better, you
will have her with you only temporarily, while awaiting the arrival of
another sister.

L.628 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

Wednesday [September 1659]

My Most Honored Father,

I believe that we must send for Sister Marie-Marthe¹ as early as today.
One of our sisters reminded me that the sisters named² are not industrious,
except Sister Carcireux.³ Because it is true that the others are naturally
very slow-moving, I am afraid that, without much work to do, there may
be cause for complaints. Also, depending on the situation in Cahors, I
think that it may be necessary to send Sister Carcireux there to satisfy
His Excellency.⁴

We would need one of your servants or someone else, my Most
Honored Father, to go on horseback to Vaux⁵ and our sister must leave
tomorrow at dawn. This necessity leads me to inconvenience you in order
to make up for the fault I committed when I thought only of the
compatibility of personalities, which appeared to me to be the more
urgent need. I will have to know your decision so that I can have the
horse readied. Please excuse all my imprudence since I am, my Most
Honored Father, your most obedient and very humble servant.

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1. Marie-Marthe Trumeau, see Letter 102, was recalled from La Fère to be sent to Cahors.
2. Three sisters would leave for Narbonne: Françoise Carcireux, Anne Denoual and Marie
   Chesse.
3. Françoise Carcireux, see Letter 254. Louise de Marillac was hesitant about her placement.
   She would go to Narbonne.
4. Monseigneur Alain de Solminihac, see Letter 518.
5. Vaux-le-Vicomte, a new establishment.
TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER CARCIREUX

En route to Narbonne

September 15, 1659

My very dear Sisters,

When I learned that I could still communicate with you during your journey, I did not want to lose the opportunity to assure all of you that physical separation does not prevent spiritual presence among persons whom Our Lord has united by the bonds of His holy love. The stronger this love grows within us, the closer it binds us together. Since this same love gently persuaded you to heed the call to the place to which you are going, I have no difficulty in convincing myself that the entire trip will serve to prepare you to act properly in that place where God is awaiting you. There you will discern His will through the voices of those who will speak to you by order of the Bishop of Narbonne.¹

Before you arrive, I must tell you, my dear Sisters, what a consolation it is for me to see you living in your cloister on this journey as you did in the streets of Paris. I am equally consoled to know that you do nothing other than what Sister Marie-Marthe² tells you to do and that she, in turn, acts only on the order of Reverend Mother Marie-Thérèse³ in matters pertaining to the services you can render this religious. When you leave the coach, all four⁴ of you are to stay together except when these good religious want you with them.

You will recall, Sister Françoise,⁵ what, on your return from Richelieu, you remarked as not being good but which was not, by the grace of God, an evil. If, upon your arrival, you had Sister Marthe with you, I would not pity you. She would put you on the right path. However, if she is not there, redouble your confidence in God. After you explain that you are going to receive the Bishop’s orders, remain at peace until you are told what you are to do. Above all, since those people are not familiar with your poor way of life and your humble dwelling, do not desire to be treated differently, even in small matters. Do not argue but explain your reasons humbly, firmly, briefly and gently. If you are asked for your opinion, give it only to explain how the poor are served in Paris. If it is

¹. The Bishop of Agde and of Narbonne, one of the sons of Madame Fouquet, see Letter 307.
². Marie-Marthe Trumeau, see Letter 102, went to Cahors.
³. Mother Marie-Thérèse, a Visitation nun, the Superioress of the Monastery of Sainte-Marie in Toulouse, was the sister of the Bishop of Narbonne.
⁴. Françoise Carcireux, Anne Denoual and Marie Chesse who went to Narbonne and Marie-Marthe who went to Cahors.
⁵. Françoise Carcireux, see Letter 254.
for a hospital, do not forget to represent the needs of the bashful poor who would receive no assistance because they would never go to the hospital no matter how much pressure was put on them. For this reason the establishment of the Confraternity of Charity is absolutely essential. I am not telling you this, my dear Sisters, to encourage you to be the first to speak of these things, but rather to assure you that you may do so, should the need arise. I beg Our Lord to enable you to act in all things according to His spirit and I am in His holy love . . .

L.629 - (TO MONSIEUR VINCENT)

[October 1659]

My Most Honored Father,

Sister Mathurine¹ did not depart. She will not leave until the early part of next week. She expressed the desire to make a short retreat and to go to confession. She would be very happy if your Charity heard it, provided your important business will not weigh you down if she takes your time. I would ask your Charity for an answer on this point.

I am sending you the letter I received yesterday from the Queen of Poland as well as my response. I ask your Charity to keep it, if it should not be sent; otherwise, please return it so that I can copy it over without mistakes. Enclosed also is a letter from Sister Carcireux² which will give you news of your priests³ who left for Narbonne.

My Most Honored Father, I am sending you the memorandum I mentioned to your Charity. It outlines the spiritual means to bring about the solid establishment of the Company of the Daughters of Charity. I beg you to show it to no one, lest it be ridiculed. My poor heart greatly needs your Charity to be able to see its weakness because of the loss of a letter similar to this one almost immediately after it had been written. Your Charity would be well aware that, now more than ever, I need advice and correction so that I may more truly call myself, my Most Honored Father, your very humble and most obedient daughter and servant.

P.S. Our two sisters from Hennebont have arrived, thank God.

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¹ Mathurine Guérin, see Letter 280, was sent to La Fère to replace Marie-Marthe Trumeau.
² Françoise Carcireux, see Letter 254.
³ Monsieur des Jardins, Monsieur Lemerer, and Monsieur Tanguy (Coste VII, 147).
L.630 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER NICOLE HARAN

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Nantes

October 15, 1659

My very dear Sister,

I was informed about what you told our Most Honored Father concerning the matter you mentioned to me. I have not yet had the honor of speaking to him and of learning his decision; however, I am sure that you are convinced that his Charity will not fail you in your hour of need. We will do all in our power to send a sister to Hennebont and one to Nantes next week. At that time you will learn the decision concerning your request. Nevertheless, I sincerely hope, my dear Sister, that your strength is greater than the obstacles and that your love and fidelity to the will of God have fortified your courage to resist all dangers. This does not mean that I do not wish to see you, my dear Sister, or that I do not believe that Divine Providence may want something of which we are unaware. I entrust you entirely to His guidance. Believe me in the love of Jesus Crucified, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and very loving servant.

P.S. I greet all our dear sisters with all my heart.

L.631 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX

at Angers

October 18, 1659

Monsieur,

I believe that you will soon be receiving a visit from Monsieur Dehorgny, if he has not already arrived in Angers. I am certain, Monsieur, that he will afford himself the honor of seeing you. I am certain, also, since your Charity still continues to assist our poor sisters, that you will be good enough to inform him of their strengths and weaknesses, and that together you will determine the means to restore the spirit of submission and cordiality in this little family.

I received a letter yesterday from Sister Étiennette who tells me that

1. Nicole Haran, see Letter 495.
2. Nicole Haran begged Mademoiselle to send sisters to Nantes, see Letter 618.
3. Monsieur Dehorgny, see Letter 5.
4. Étiennette Dupuis was the Sister Servant, see Letter 600.
the administrators are requesting only two sisters. I very humbly entreat you, Monsieur, if your Charity considers it appropriate, to take the trouble to order our sisters to explain to them that, if they decrease the number of workers, one of the gentlemen of the administration must take the trouble to inform me and also to assure me about the provisions made to cover the expense of the sisters’ travel. I very humbly ask your pardon, Monsieur, for taking this liberty with you. The continuation of the grace which Divine Providence bestowed upon us by granting us your assistance is so necessary that I cannot prevent myself from hoping for it for love of Him or from begging Our Lord for it. You act for love of Him and in that love I take the liberty of calling myself, Monsieur, your very humble and most obedient servant.

L.632 - TO SISTER MATHURINE GUÉRIN

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

Feast of All Saints, 1659

My very dear Sister,

I am truly distressed for having taken so long to answer your second and most recent letter. In it I recognized your diligence in responding to the request I made to you before your departure. I thank you for this with all my heart.

The feast we celebrate today answers you by the lips of Jesus Christ when He spoke the last beatitude to His Apostles. I am sure that you consider this article which treats of calumny as the most important. It is His intention to reveal the truth Himself as his Goodness has already done in various places and in similar circumstances, as you well know.

Do not stop listening, my dear Sister, to all that is said and report it to me. However, let those who speak see that it is only the expression of truth that is causing them to become angry and most often to seek self-justification, although they are guilty. However, when what is said is false, you must be at peace, not worry about it and leave our justification to God.

Because our sisters did not communicate openly, the remaining sister

1. Mathurine Guérin, see Letter 280. At the beginning of her letter, Louise de Marillac alludes to the persecution Mathurine had endured in Liancourt. Weighed down with humiliations, to the point of being deprived of the sacraments for four months, she manifested so much virtue and courage that Monsieur Vincent was struck by admiration for her.

2. Julienne Allot, see Letter 561.
may sometimes pass on to you her suspicions for facts. What leads me
to say this is the sale that took place in which one thing could have been
mistaken for another. I praise God with all my heart for the change you
are finding there and I beg Him to continue this grace.

You did not act improperly, my dear Sister, during your first visit to
the Ladies. I think that the custom of getting acquainted with one another
that prevails there, as in other very small towns, should not make it
necessary for you to call on the Ladies. Receive their visits as visits to
the poor and in the room reserved for the poor, not in your room. Thus,
you will not be acting contrary to your Rules. Do not bring them to the
chapel either, because I do not know how the hospital is laid out.

We are most indebted to your Pastor. I did not fail to inform our
Most Honored Father of his charity. I believe that he will not oppose
our following his recommendation as set forth in the first paragraph of
this letter. You know that I always act in this way in important matters.

Please let me know if, since the departure of Madame, the King's
Nurse,¹ you have found her ledger recording receipts and expenditures. I
believe that when she was there she, or the person to whom she entrusted
the responsibility, took care of this matter. However, I shall not fail to
write to Sister Marthe² to find out how she handled the accounts. What
I told you about the linen leads me to this conclusion.

I am rather surprised that the Pastor did not present a clearer defense
of our sister's innocence. I am afraid that he is perhaps dissatisfied with
this establishment and that everything was not communicated to him.

You are astonished, my dear Sister, because those who appear
ill-disposed support the sisters. They are forced to do so, even against
their will, by the truth that God alone knows. This is the work of Divine
Providence in which the Daughters of Charity must place all their trust,
rather than in the powerful, or in spiritual leaders, or still less, in our
own efforts.

We are most grateful to this good Monsieur Le Mairre who is good
enough to take the trouble to intervene with the Queen on your behalf
so that you may receive your wages. I think that it is necessary for him
to know that only the wages for the past two years are still owed us and
consequently that our sisters have received anything that dates farther
back than that.

I am expecting great things of you, my dear Sister. I know that you
have done all that you can and in the best possible way, as God and the
requirements of justice demand. I am not at all worried about the success

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1. Madame Perrette du Four, First Nurse of Louis XIV. On the order of the Queen, she
asked Monsieur Vincent for Daughters of Charity to assist the wounded soldiers at La
Fère (Coste X, 197). She continued to take an interest in that hospital later on.
2. Marie-Marthe Trumeau, see Letter 102.
and future of this work. I am eager to know how the sale of the clothing and belongings of the soldiers has been organized and whether or not the profits will go to support the Hôtel-Dieu.

If you need scalpels, let me know. I do not know if Sister left us any. If so, I will send them to you; if not, you will have to buy some since she had whatever she needed purchased for her here. She did not tell me what the money she left me was for. She gave it to me as she was going out the door for her long journey. She said only that there were 20 francs for the chasuble. I found that amount.

I think, my dear Sister, since benediction is offered in the church where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, that it would be appropriate to continue to allow or even to have the Ladies and other women attend. Sister Marthe was not the only one to permit this. However, you acted correctly when you informed this good man that he was not to remain after the conclusion of services nor was he to hold them at times that would interfere with the observance of your Rules.

As for the boarders, reflect on the necessity and importance of having them, and then be good enough to inform me of your conclusions. I will then request a decision from our Most Honored Father and communicate his orders to you.

I am certain that you will find Sister Marthe's papers because she is very well aware of the order that must be maintained in hospitals. I would be very surprised if she had failed to record the names, places of origin and dates of admission and discharge or death of the patients or if she had not kept an exact account of receipts and expenditures.

I am sending a note to Sister Julienne. If she has trouble reading it, be charitable enough to do so if she requests this favor of you. Also, please teach her to spell.

I imagine that your charity for us causes you to remember all of us in your prayers. Be assured of the prayers of all our sisters. They are the same as when you left them but those who had been ill are better, thank God.

The water tank has been installed and I think that the whole system will be ready before long. Help us to thank God for the goodness of Divine Providence in watching over the Company. Believe me in His most holy love, my dear Sister, your very humble and very loving sister and servant.

1. Trip to Cahors.
2. Julienne Allot, see Letter 561.
L.633 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

November 12 [1659]

My Most Honored Father,

Sister Noëlle, who has been in the Company for nine years and has done as well as her simplicity permits and who greatly fears God, very humbly begs your Charity to offer her to God and to allow her to make her vows tomorrow during holy Mass. For a long time, she has shown very special charity toward little children.

I also believe that a decision must be reached tomorrow concerning the sisters to be sent out. Please send us a message. In keeping with my usual confidence, I ask your Charity for your holy blessing and I take the liberty of calling myself, my Most Honored Father, your least and most unworthy daughter and servant.

L.634 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER ANNE HARDEMONT

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Ussel

November 13, 1659

My very dear Sister,

I admit that I am wrong and that it has been too long since I have allowed myself the consolation of writing to you. You give me great pleasure by not holding that against me. I hope that you realize that I do not lack the desire to afford you whatever satisfaction I can. From your letter, I gather that you are beginning to have high hopes for your new establishment. I believe that the Duchess is on her way back here. With the help of God, I will not fail to speak to her about your suffering poor. She did, indeed, tell me that, upon her return from Ussel, she would go where you mentioned. I hope that she will then set about carrying out her plan for that place.

I am sending you the picture and the reading glasses that you requested a long time ago. I am not writing to Sister Avoie because I have already done so. Please, my dear Sisters, accept this method of corresponding with you so that I can economize my time for my health's sake.

1. Anne Hardemont, see Letter 110.
2. Madame de Ventadour, see Letter 268.
3. Avoie Vigneron, see Letter 578.
Sister Mathurine\textsuperscript{1} went to La Fère to replace Sister Marie-Marthe\textsuperscript{2} who went to Cahors to help our sisters there. They have both\textsuperscript{3} been ill. Sister Carcireux\textsuperscript{4} went to Narbonne with two relatively new sisters.\textsuperscript{5} Both of them are overwhelmed with difficulties but this is the seal God places on His works.

Let me tell you the good news, my dear Sister. Divine Providence which continues to watch over us, has moved the City Administrators to furnish us with water. The pipes have already been laid from the reservoir to the House. This leads me to hope that we will have a completely functioning water supply before Christmas. My dear Sisters, see how faithful we must be to God since He is so good to us! Let us spare no efforts to observe the commandment He gave us to love Him.

We have recalled two of our sisters\textsuperscript{6} who were in Châteaudun at the time of the death of Sister Barbé\textsuperscript{7} whom we must look upon as blessed. Our Most Honored Father, having learned the truth concerning her life and death, wanted them to remain here to recount these things to the assembly of our sisters held on the Feast of Saint Martin. During it, admiration was expressed for the steadfastness she manifested in carrying out the orders given her wherever she was placed and in assisting her sisters to observe their Rules faithfully. Her detachment from all things and her ability to trample upon any form of human respect or self-satisfaction were praiseworthy.

I must tell you, to my own humiliation, that, when one of the two sisters asked pardon of Sister Barbé for a serious fault she had committed against her, her response was so gentle and so humble that the recollection of it brought tears to my eyes. Sister Barbé answered, “What, Sister, you put up with so much from me, why would I not bear with you?”

Those who had seen Sister Barbé during her illness declared that they could not believe that they were looking at the same person after her death. Moreover, the ordinary people, who came for two days in such numbers to view her that the doors had to be closed, said that make-up had been used because she was so beautiful. See, my dear Sisters, what a good thing it is to persevere in the love and service of God! I am in

\begin{itemize}
  \item Mathurine Guérin, see Letter 280.
  \item Marie-Marthe Trumeau, see Letter 102.
  \item Adrienne Plouvier and Louise Boucher.
  \item Françoise Carcireux, see Letter 254.
  \item Anne Denoual, see Letter 647b, and Marie Chesse, a native of Brittany, born October 28, 1637, who entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity on September 30, 1657. In September 1659, she went to Narbonne where she remained for 17 years. She was then named Sister Servant at Gex, and later at the hospice of the Saint-Nom-de-Jésus in Paris. After a three-year term as Treasurer General, she returned to Gex where she died on April 19, 1699.
  \item Anne Bocheron, see Letter 544 and Sulpice Dubois, see Letter 587.
  \item Barbé Angiboust, see Letter 43.
\end{itemize}
Him, my dear Sisters, your very humble sister and very loving servant.

L.635 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX

November 16, 1659

Monsieur,

Monsieur Dehorgny\(^1\) greatly consoled me in the suffering I was experiencing because I thought that my faults were causing our sisters to receive the just punishment they had so often merited of being abandoned by your Charity. He told me that you had had the goodness to promise him that, for the love of God, you would continue your charitable ministry to them so long as your more important duties allowed. I very humbly thank you for this, Monsieur, because I cannot even express the harm I had foreseen befalling them should they be deprived of this grace. May God be forever blessed for your decision and for the glory which, in His holy designs, He is preparing for souls who work for the salvation of others who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ. With the respect and submission I owe you, Monsieur, I am in Him, your very humble daughter and most obedient servant.

L.637 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

[November 1659]

I do not know the name of the young lady who wrote to me, my Most Honored Father. Enclosed is my answer in case your Charity considers it appropriate to send it to her.

Please reflect on whether it might not be necessary to send one of your priests to find the Pastor so as to discover why he refuses to hear our sisters’ confessions. Their previous confessor also refused but they returned to him despite orders to the contrary which they had received. One is led to believe that one of the sisters may have told him about this prohibition.

I spoke to our sister who came from Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois and

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1. Monsieur Dehorgny, see Letter 5, made the visitation at Angers.
she has sworn to abide by the prescribed orders. I hope that she does so for many reasons.

For the love of God, I ask for your blessing for my needs and for those of all our sisters and I very humbly beg your pardon for my lack of discretion in detaining you too long and for all my other faults. I remain your unworthy daughter and very humble servant.

L.636 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

November 23 [1659]

Monsieur Mercier, resident priest at Saint-Barthélemy\(^1\) and confessor for our sisters at the Hôtel-Dieu, desires to be numbered among those who participate in the Tuesday Conferences.\(^2\) To this end, he came to ask me to inform you, my Most Honored Father, that I have known him for a long while, having met him at the residence of Monsieur de Villenant whose mother esteems him.

I imagine you have seen the letter that the Lady from Saint-Cosme\(^3\) sent me yesterday. She made one fairly reasonable request but the others were just the opposite. I think that it would be wise, my Most Honored Father, to send an answer, if you consider it appropriate, but that we should not entrust it to the sister who brought the letter, because I believe that she is partly to blame for a good portion of the disturbances although, in reality, a bit of negligence and human respect on my part are also factors. This sister is the one who wanted to leave the Company some time ago, but she humbled herself and remained. It is true that her companion, who is a very simple girl, showed some lack of prudence as I often do with regard to the virtues necessary to enable me truly to call myself, my Most Honored Father, your very humble and obedient servant.

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2. Conference organized by Monsieur Vincent as early as 1633 for the formation of priests. These Tuesday Conferences became famous and brought to Saint-Lazare priests noted for their doctrine and their holiness.
L.639 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

December 7, 1659

Sister Barbe Bailly,¹ who has been in the Company of the Daughters of Charity for 14 years, made her first vows 11 years ago tomorrow. She renewed them each year until the year 1656 when she says, my Most Honored Father, that she received permission from your Charity to make permanent vows, which she did. She now very humbly begs your Charity to offer to God the renewal of these vows which she desires to make with your permission.

For the love of God and for the fulfillment of His holy will for the Company, I also beg you, my Most Honored Father, to ask Our Lord, because of His love for the choice He made of His most holy Mother, to pardon all the faults committed against interior and exterior purity and to grant us the grace of true purity which, in His mercy, He wills to find in us. Since I am the most at fault, I am also in need of more powerful intercession. Please allow me to consider myself, my Most Honored Father, as your unworthy daughter and servant.

L.640 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER NICOLE HARAN

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

December 10, 1659

My very dear Sister,

With all my heart, I thank you for sending me news of our sisters. I was worried about them. You made me very happy by standing firm about sending Sister Marie² to Hennebont. Please let me know if our sisters who remained in Angers gave the other sisters part of the surplus from their trip, and if so, how much. I would also like to know if the Vicar General of Vannes sent funds to cover the cost of Sister’s trip.

I beg all our sisters to have great esteem for the grace that God is bestowing on them by sending them someone to visit them on His behalf.³ I urge them to dispose themselves to make their communications truthfully and with simplicity of heart, for the glory of God and not for their personal satisfaction or for any other reason. I hope for this

1. Barbe Bailly, see Letter 356b.
2. Marie Gaudoin, see Letter 294.
3. Monsieur Dehorgny went to visit the sisters at Nantes.
disposition in all of our sisters because what can sisters, who have given themselves to God, desire but to seek all the assistance possible to be faithful to Him. This is so important that it is all that can be wished for to provide greater assurance of our salvation since God Himself has called us to Him in this way. Let us ask His goodness for the grace of which we and all our sisters stand in need. Believe me in His holy love, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and very loving servant.

P.S. I send my respectful greetings to your Director and I urge you, Sister, if the administrators request any sisters, to ask them, once they have received a favorable response, to remember to send us the address in Paris where we can receive the money necessary for their trip.

L.641 - FOR SISTER MATHURINE GUÉRIN¹
(at La Fère)

December 15, 1659

My very dear Sister,

I am anxious to know if you have received a lengthy response to your first long letter as well as another written at nearly the same time. I am truly astonished by several things that you told me especially by the claim that you believe is being made on the money allocated by the Queen, if it is forthcoming. These funds rightfully belong to our sisters since it is incontestable that they never used the food for the poor for their own needs. Moreover, if you recall the disposition and comportment of Sister Marthe,² you will have no difficulty in believing this, but you will have a great deal of trouble in accepting what is being said in the same vein as the earlier gossip.

I am giving you no answer concerning any of the other matters that you mentioned in your last letter. I am awaiting the response of our Most Honored Father, who, as you know, does nothing in a rush so that whatever is done may correspond as closely as possible with the will of God. Moreover, since no contract of establishment has been drawn up for us with the hospital, we must await the expression of God’s will in the matter.

We have received no news from your home region other than what we are sending you; nor have we seen the young man who usually stops

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¹ Mathurine Guérin, see Letter 280.
² Marie-Marthe Trumeau, see Letter 102.
here. It seems to me that you had sent your address so that they could write to you. If not, you can still do so.

Monsieur Vincent and Monsieur Portail are in the same condition as when you left us. All the sisters send their greetings especially those whom you mentioned in your letters. With all my heart, I do the same, my dear Sister, your very humble and very loving sister and servant.

L.575 - TO SISTER ANNE HARDEMONT
(at Ussel)\(^1\)

(c. 1659)

My very dear Sister,

You are aware that the works of God, even the greatest and those which contribute most to His glory, are often the most painful for those who undertake them. Offer yourself frequently to Him and ask Him what He wants you to do. Do not worry about your strength. Rest assured that you will receive all that is necessary from the goodness of God for as long as He knows that you must remain in that place.

If you had not so often been employed in very arduous work, I would encourage you to be generous; but you do not need generosity, you have enough. However, I would ask God for the grace to enable you to imitate the inaction of the Son of God. During His stay upon earth, He did not always work to the full extent of His powers. His labor in the family of Saint Joseph reveals this. You perhaps frequently admired this before He placed you in a situation where you are called upon to imitate it. May His holy name be blessed!

L.634B - TO SISTER CARCIREUX\(^2\)

(c. 1659)

My very dear Sister,

As for the disposition and behavior of the person you mentioned, be careful that you are not contributing to this situation by giving her too much authority over others or by having her take care of matters that

\(1\). Copy Chétif, series Anne Hardemont.

\(2\). Françoise Carcireux, see Letter 254, was in Narbonne.
you should be looking after yourself. We must act on our own and teach by our actions, otherwise our advice has little effect. I am sure that you practice support and gentleness in dealing with all our sisters, to the extent that these virtues are necessary, so I am not recommending them to you. However, I do recommend brevity in your communications when you believe that you must ask for advice or when you feel obliged to give it. Otherwise, we become boring and contemptible. The situation deteriorates to the point where people do everything in their power to avoid speaking with us because of the loss of time and the uselessness of this activity. I beg you, my dear Sister, to accept this recommendation gratefully for the love of Our Lord in whom I am your very humble sister and servant.

L.642 - TO SISTER ANNE HARDEMONT

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Ussel

December 20, 1639

My very dear Sister,

Madame, the Duchess de Ventadour, has not yet arrived in Paris. She is spending some time at Vigny because her residence here was not habitable. With the help of God, I shall not fail to speak with her about the matters you mentioned when I have the honor of seeing her.

I praise God with all my heart for the disposition in which you tell me you now are. Nevertheless, I share the pain you are experiencing because you feel that you are doing nothing. Be thoroughly consoled, my dear Sister, by the thought that you are imitating the state in which the Son of God found Himself when, after leaving the temple where He had been working for the glory of God, He went with the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph to obey them. He thereby accomplished the will of God by toiling for many years at the humble tasks of a carpenter’s shop. Yet He had come upon earth to labor for the salvation of the entire human race.

We do not know, my dear Sister, why Divine Providence has put you aside, leaving you hidden in the Son of God. Nevertheless, by working unostentatiously and quietly in the service of the poor, you are most certainly fulfilling the designs of Divine Providence. If you reflect upon this, my dear Sister, as I am sure you do, you will find profound peace and you will wait lovingly and confidently until God wants something

1. Anne Hardemont, see Letter 110.
2. Madame de Ventadour, see Letter 268.
else of you. In this way, you will be practicing holy indifference. Our Most Honored Father spoke to us about this virtue last Sunday during the conference\(^1\) his Charity gave us. He explained that it is an angelic state because the angels in heaven, who are destined to serve souls, await peacefully the command of God to know what they are to do, whether that be in heaven for the accidental glory of blessed souls, or in purgatory for the consolation of those who are suffering there, or on earth, to communicate to souls the holy inspirations necessary for their salvation.

It has perhaps been quite a while, my dear Sister, since you have written to our dear Father. He has less time than ever. Although he cannot leave Saint-Lazare, because of problems with his legs, he is nonetheless weighed down with business. I believe that he would be comforted if you wrote to him about your situation. He could then answer you because he perhaps no longer recalls what you told him. Nor do I, my dear Sister, because I think that I have always answered you promptly.

I hope that you will have the happiness of seeing Monsieur Dehorgny.\(^2\) He told me that he would take the trouble to go to Ussel if it was not too far from those places he was to visit. I desire this with all my heart and urged him to do so in my response.

I do not know if I told you that Sister Mathurine Guérin\(^3\) has gone to La Fère to replace Sister Marie-Marthe.\(^4\) I will send you a few more than your usual 50 pictures. The large ones cost more than the small. This number includes those you already have. The entire thing comes to two pounds, five sols. You have only 17 pictures and not 17 double sheets. Your glasses come to 16.\(^5\)

I will wait to write to Sister Avoie\(^6\) until I have some news for her. I greet her with all my heart. I am, for both of you, in the love of Our Lord, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and affectionate servant.

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1. Conference of December 14, 1659 (Coste X, 698).
2. Monsieur Dehorgny, see Letter 5, continues his visits (Coste VII, 195).
3. Mathurine Guérin, see Letter 280.
4. Marie-Marthe Trumeau, see Letter 102, had left for Cahors.
5. The price of eye glasses.
6. Avoie Vignerol, see Letter 578.
My very dear Sister,

I believe that you must have received a letter from that good young man at the Academy to whom I forwarded your letters shortly after your departure. You will, therefore, have news of your relatives and friends. I can assure you that news of them touches me as deeply as does news of my own family. The same is true of matters concerning you, especially your health. I beg you to give me a detailed report on this point.

If you completely entrust everything to the guidance of Divine Providence and love the most holy will of God, this will contribute greatly to your peace of mind and heart. In fact, this is one of the most essential practices I know of for growth in holiness.

You have undoubtedly had the consolation of an answer from our Most Honored Father. Since I sent my letter along with Monsieur Portail’s, it must have reached you before mine did.

We received the two écus that you sent. We know that you asked for two scalpels but we have not obtained them yet. As for the two books and the schedule you must follow, if you have not written to our Most Honored Father about this and received a response from him, I would say that I believe that it is his intention to postpone things a bit. I cannot recall if I mentioned this in my last letter.

I will wait until I have re-read Sister Julienne’s letter before writing to her because I have to ask her to explain what she told me when she wrote during Sister Marthe’s time there. With the help of God, I will also relay your request to Sister Marthe.

With regard to what you tell me about the boarders, let me say that I see Monsieur Vincent so seldom that I do not yet have his recommendation. His ailments, the heavy demands of his work and the rigors of the weather keep him confined to his room. We must pray earnestly for the preservation of his health. I am sure that you do not fail to do so and that you are also helping our dear sister to begin to practice true and solid virtue or to persevere in this way if God has granted her the grace to undertake it. I greet her with all my heart as do all our sisters, with a special remembrance for you for whom I am truly and in the love of Our Lord your very humble and very loving...

1. Mathurine Guérin, see Letter 280.
2. Julienne Allot, see Letter 561.
3. Marie-Marthe Trumeau, see Letter 102, was at La Fère from 1656 to 1659.
P.S. Let me know, please, if Madame de Liancourt's daughter has gotten married.

L.645 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

Evening of the 23rd [December 1659]

Because I foresaw difficulties from sending the sister back to Saint-Cosme¹ before having her explain the entire situation to your Charity, I sent another sister there this morning, my Most Honored Father, with permission to say that she was coming to assist our sister with the service of the poor. She would be there until I have learned how I was to answer the letter that had been sent to me. To do this, I needed directives from you, my Most Honored Father.

Lest there be another letter, I believe that it is necessary, if your Charity considers it appropriate, to reach a decision for the present as well as for the future. If you are willing, could it be tomorrow, during a little conference, at the time your Charity tells us?

For a long time, my Most Honored Father, you have also been reflecting on the means to provide more efficacious service for the little children. I beg Our Lord to reveal His will in this as in all other matters so that it may be faithfully fulfilled in your poor daughters and very humble servants.

L.644 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

December 24, 1659

My Most Honored Father,

The coming of Our Lord has produced in three of our sisters the desire to empty themselves so as to give themselves entirely to Him by the vows they wish to make, if your Charity permits them to do so, tomorrow, at the hour you will indicate, either during the holy Mass that you will say or during another. The names of our dear sisters are Sister Jeanne Gressier,² from Senlis; Sister Gabrielle,³ from Gionge; and Sister Marie

1. See Letter 636.
2. Jeanne Gressier, see Letter 456.
3. Gabrielle Cabaret, see Letter 533.
Petit,\textsuperscript{1} from Paris. The latter is in her fifth year in the Company. There is also Sister Marie Prévost\textsuperscript{2} who asks your Charity to allow her to renew her vows which she has already pronounced several times. All four have the approval of Monsieur Portail. All the older sisters also very humbly beg your Charity to offer to the Infant Jesus the renewal of the gift that they have made to Him for their entire lives. Sister Julienne wanted me to mention her by name.

My Most Honored Father, tomorrow is the twenty-fifth of the month, the day on which holy Mass is to be celebrated for the entire Company, for its needs and intentions, of which your Charity is aware. Allow me to tell you, my Most Honored Father, that my powerlessness to accomplish any good prevents me from having anything acceptable to offer to Our Lord, other than my wretched renewal, except the deprivation of the only consolation that His goodness has given me for 35 years. I accept this for love of Him and in the way that His Providence ordains because I hope to obtain from His goodness and your charity the same assistance by an interior pathway. I beg this of you for love of the union of the Son of God with human nature, without, however, losing hope of having the honor of seeing you when that can occur without endangering the little health He has given you. I implore Him to preserve it until His designs have been accomplished in your soul, for His glory and for the benefit of many others among whom I have the honor to be, since I am, my Most Honored Father, your very humble and most obedient daughter and servant.

L.646 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER CHARLOTTE ROYER\textsuperscript{3}

\textit{Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Richelieu}

December 27, 1659

My very dear Sister,

I suppose that you were surprised to see our dear Sister Étiennette\textsuperscript{4} arrive without any letter. Do not be upset. She did not go to Richelieu without an order from Monsieur Vincent. Since that is so, you must find consolation in it because I am sure that Monsieur Dehorgny\textsuperscript{5} led you to

\begin{itemize}
  \item Marie Petit entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity in 1655. Her name is found at the end of the list of sisters in the Company on August 8, 1655 (Coste XIII, 577).
  \item Marie Prévost, see Letter 229.
  \item Charlotte Royer, see Letter 254.
  \item Étiennette Dupuis, see Letter 600, came from Angers.
  \item Monsieur Dehorgny, see Letter 5, visited the houses in the West and the Center of France.
\end{itemize}
hope for some relief in the suffering caused by your ailments. Accept Sister Etiennette among you, not to increase the number, but to await the decision of our Most Honored Father which will tell both of you what will be happening to you. I said the same thing to Sister Perrine\(^1\) that I am saying to you. I also told Sister Etiennette this. This does not mean that she cannot assist you in your works of charity. You will find her filled with good will in this regard.

Send me details about yourself and Sister Perrine. What are your dispositions? How many sick poor do you usually serve? How do you serve them? Do the Ladies prepare the soup? Do they take up a collection? If so, who does it? Is the money given to the sick? Also let me know how many schoolgirls you teach and if the older girls sometimes come on feast days for catechism and to hear the instruction you give the little girls.

It is true, my dear Sister, that it has been far too long since I have written to you. I beg your pardon for this. However, I sent you some letters from your mother and you did not let me know that you had received them. Moreover, when your letters require no answer and I do not know what you are doing, my memory is not adequate to enable me to write something and share news. Nevertheless, I promise to correct this fault with the help of God.

I think that you know that Sister Françoise Carcireux\(^2\) has gone to a place that I believe is more than 100 leagues from here. She asks to be remembered in your prayers. I am sure that, wherever she goes, she will be a good servant of Our Lord.

Please convey my very humble and respectful greetings to your Reverend Superior\(^3\) as well as the very humble gratitude of our aforementioned sister for all that she owes to his charity. We must certainly honor those whom God gives us to help us to reach Him but we must especially do so by following their advice. I am sure that you do not fail in this regard. I praise the goodness of God for the graces He has bestowed upon you. I am in the love of His Son, born for us in a stable, my very dear Sister, your very humble and very loving sister and servant.

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1. Perrine, see Letter 287.
2. Françoise Carcireux, see Letter 254.
3. Monsieur de Beaumont, see Letter 531b, was Superior of the Priests of the Mission at Richelieu.
My very dear Sisters,

I received great consolation from your letter because I saw in it what seems to me to be a reflection of the union of your hearts and the tranquillity of your minds. This leads me to believe that our good God is pleased with you because this is the means by which you know you can restore peaceful living among you, should you ever perceive that you are not accomplishing the will of God or faithfully observing your Rules.

I praise God with all my heart for the grace His goodness has bestowed upon Monsieur Pesset by giving him so much charity for the sick poor. His labors have merited this grace for him because, in their hour of need, he spared them from destitution. Sister Geneviève, please greet him for me with the humble respect I owe him. It would have helped us with our needs had we received promptly the remainder of what was owed us. However, we must leave this to Divine Providence.

I think that, if the stocking you mentioned is not finished, it will be soon. I will be sure to look into it and send it to you.

You invite me to go to the Crib so that I can meet you there near the Infant Jesus and His Holy Mother. From the way you speak, I gather that you visit it lovingly so that you may be united to all our sisters. I, however, visit it seldom because I stop only on my way back from holy Mass. Let me tell you that, this year, the Crib is in a little grotto at the feet of Jesus Crucified. It is in a large alcove so it seems to be a better representation of Bethlehem than we have had other years. You will learn from Jesus, my dear Sisters, to practice solid virtue, as He did in His holy humanity, as soon as He came down upon earth. You will learn from Jesus in His infancy that you will obtain all that you need to become true Christians and perfect Daughters of Charity. You will do so by entreating Him to grant you His Spirit as He did at your holy Baptism. However, this time, there is an essential difference. At your Baptism, you did not have the use of reason so as to correspond with this precious gift, but now, 0 my dear Sisters, if you obtain this gift from Him anew, you will have the strength to strive to acquire the holiness He asks of you. I beg Him in His holy love to grant you this grace and I am in this same

1. Geneviève Doinel, see Letter 352.
2. Marie-Marthe had recently arrived. She came to replace Françoise who was ill.
love, my very dear Sisters, your very humble and very loving sister and servant.

L.647B - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER CARCIREUX

Daughter of Charity at Narbonne

December 30, 1659

My very dear Sister,

For a long time, I have deprived myself of the consolation of writing to you because I was waiting to learn from you what had become of the three of you. I am distressed if Sister Anne Denoual is still separated from you. What are the services being given in each place? How far is one house from the other? What direction are you receiving?

I am sure, my dear Sister, that you have a lot to do but, for the love of God, undertake only what you can accomplish so that you will not be obliged to hire another person to help you. You are aware that this should never be done. This does not mean that in case of great necessity, for example, when you have more than the usual number of sick or when some other need arises, you cannot employ outside workers, such as a laundress or a seamstress, but you should do so only rarely and never to spare yourselves labor because it is essential that you carefully combine work with concern for the management and frugality of the house. Experience has taught you the importance of this especially during the time you spent at Saint-Sulpice.

I should perhaps not speak to you in this way, but I must tell you that my powerlessness to act has caused me to see very clearly the difference between a Sister Servant who says, “Let’s do this,” and one who is content to say, “Do this,” without ever putting her hand to the task. In the first case, the Sister Servant is an equal among her sisters. In the second, when she gives an order, she removes herself from the group and from the work and cloaks herself with the mantle of her authority.

Your letter dated the ninth of this month has just been handed to me. From it, I still do not know if the three of you are together. O my dear Sister, how I share in your affliction on account of the accident that has just occurred because of our mutual fear of the loss of this soul which is so dear to God! As for what concerns you—I should say you and us—we cannot call this an affliction. Some people believe the worst and

1. Françoise Carcireux, see Letter 254.
2. Anne Denoual entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity around 1656. She was sent to Narbonne in September 1659. In August 1660, she asked Monsieur Vincent for permission to make her vows (Coste VIII, 391).
gossip about it. You are publicly mocked and scorned. Oh, what a blessed beginning! You have every reason to be consoled. God looks after the interests of the afflicted. I am also certain that the majority of people will not attribute this crime to our sister. But even should God permit that the truth never be known, would we have reason to be afflicted? No, truly not, my dear Sister. However, we and especially the entire Company, must accept this trial as coming from Divine Providence as our share in the Cross of Our Lord and as an opportunity He has given you to enable all of us to follow Him.

I urge you, my dear Sister, to be a great consolation for our dear Sister Anne and to anticipate her needs by your support and cordiality. Sometimes the initiation of marks of respect or deference is very helpful in winning hearts and in entering upon the practice of solid humility. I assure you that I was deeply edified by Sister Anne’s letter both because of what she told me about the past and because of the attitude she revealed concerning the future. Nevertheless, I grieve over your separation.

Your father came to visit us and he is fine, thank God. You know this since he has written to you. You realize that he continues to complain but you also know fairly well from experience that he has no need for you or your presence at home. I believe that in this matter, as in all else, you are at peace and that you entrust the outcome of everything that touches your life into the hands of Our Lord because you desire only to accomplish His most holy will. May He be forever blessed for the disposition of mind He gives the Bishop of Narbonne for the care of his flock!

I am sure, my dear Sister, that you have no time to spare for anything else or for any other purpose than the service of the poor. Therefore, you must not think that you are obliged to visit or to write to nuns or to the Ladies, unless there is great necessity. If you have time to spare, I am convinced that it would be better spent earning some money by working for your poor; or you could instruct your poor patients and say a few kind words to them that would be beneficial for their salvation. Such activities are more useful than passing hours in exchanging compliments.

Do not think, my dear Sister, that you were not correct in writing, as you told me you had, to Madame Fouquet who is a very good and virtuous nun. However, because I am firmly convinced that you love your vocation and are well-rooted in it, I do not hesitate to tell you quite frankly whatever comes to my mind. That is also why I give you all the advice I believe it is my duty to give and which I hope will be beneficial for those sisters whom I foresee God wants to use to maintain the Company in the spirit of humility and simplicity of Jesus Christ.

If I did not know you well and if I were not convinced that you would

1. Mother Marie-Thérèse Fouquet, see Letter 628b.
accept what I am telling you graciously and with forbearance, I would be very careful not to speak to you in this way. I urge you to send me news of yourself as soon as possible. Believe that I am in the love of Our Lord, your very humble and very loving servant.

1660

February 14: death of Monsieur Portail.
March 15: death of Louise de Marillac.

L.648 - TO SISTER JEANNE DELACROIX

Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Poor (at Châteaudun)

January 3, 1660

My very dear Sister,

It seems to me that too much time has passed since we have shared news with one another. I think that the same reason has prevented both of us from doing so. It is also true that I have been busier since Easter. I have also missed having Sister Marthurine help me with my correspondence but she was ill at the time. Then it was decided to send her to La Fère to replace Sister Marie-Marthe who went to join our two other sisters in Cahors. So you can see quite clearly, my dear Sister, that neither my heart nor my will has been wanting nor, with the help of God, will there ever be a lack of affection or any kind of forgetfulness between us since we are so closely united in the love of our dear Jesus.

I believe that I told you that the Priests of the Mission had sent you word that your debtors have no intention of paying and that the matter should be pursued through the judicial system. However, your consent is necessary. Please let me know what to tell them.

Enclosed are your holy pictures and maxims for the new year. They are for all of you and have been blessed by our Most Honored Father. We are distressed because we no longer see him. Because of his bad leg, he can stand only with great difficulty. We must redouble our prayers for his health. Monsieur Portail is in much better health than he was last

1. Jeanne Delacroix, see Letter 297.
2. Mathurine Guérin, see Letter 280.
3. Marie-Marthe Trumeau, see Letter 102.
4. The Priests of the Mission of Le Mans, the native region of Jeanne Delacroix.