Well now, I have said enough to my daughter. I must conclude by telling her that my heart will have a very fond remembrance of hers in that of Our Lord and solely for that of Our Lord, in Whose love and in that of His holy Mother I am her most humble servant.

30. - TO FRANCOIS DU COUDRAY

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

We arrived in this city three days ago, in good health, thank God. Yesterday, the examination of the ordinands began, and it will continue today, which is Friday, and tomorrow, so that next Sunday we can begin the retreat, the initial idea for which God gave to the Bishop of Beauvais. The schedule calls for the said

1608 to Thomas Gobelin, Seigneur du Val, Master Ordinary of the Chambre des Comptes, she was accepted into the Visitation convent in Paris on July 2, 1620, after her marriage was annulled, and on the advice of Saint Francis de Sales. She was professed February 12, 1622, and elected Superior several times. Saint Vincent used to say that "she was one of the holiest souls he had known." (Cf. Sainte Jeanne-Françoise Frémoy de Chantal. Sa vie et ses œuvres [8 vols., Paris: Plon, 1874-1880], vol. V., p. 65, note.) He put her in contact with Commander de Sillery in the hope that she would finish the work of bringing him back to God. She died March 25, 1655, at the monastery of Chaillot, where she was the first Superior. Her name is often mentioned in the biography of her sister: R.P. Salinis, Madame de Villeneuve (Paris: Beauchesne, 1918). (Cf. manuscript life of Mother Hélène-Angélique Lhuillier in the Archives of the Daughters of the Cross of Tréguier.)

Letter 30. - Collection for the process of beatification.

1It was in July 1628, says Abelly (op. cit., vol. 1, chap. XXV, p. 117), in the course of a journey, after a conversation with Saint Vincent, that the Bishop of Beauvais decided to receive the ordinands into his home in the month of September to have them given the instruction necessary for their new state and to teach them the virtues they were to practice. The Saint prepared a written rule and came to get everything ready about two weeks before the ordination. Such was the origin of the ordinands' retreats which were to attract Bossuet, Commander de Sillery, and so many illustrious people of rank to Saint-Lazare.

2Augustin Potier, Seigneur de Blanchemesnil, consecrated in Rome on September 17, 1617, renewed his diocese with the help of Saint Vincent and Adrien Bourdoise. He summoned the Ursulines to Beauvais and Clermont, had missions given in which he himself took part, established a seminary in his episcopal palace, and multiplied the Confraternities of Charity. He became Grand Almoner of the Queen, and was a member of the Council of Conscience. Named Prime Minister at the death of Louis XIII, he was going to receive the cardinal's hat
ordinands to live and lodge together at the collège,¹ where Mon-
sieur Duchesne the younger⁴ is to go and live with them and see
that they observe the rule which has been prescribed for them with
regard to the order of the day. The Bishop of Beauvais will open
the retreat Sunday morning. Monsieur Messier⁵ and Monsieur
Duchesne⁶ and I⁷ are to take turns speaking, according to the
subject that has been judged suitable. Monsieur Duchesne the
younger and another Bachelor, the pastor here, are to teach the
ceremonies required for each order. May it please Our Lord to
give His holy blessing to this good work, which seems to be
useful to His Church! And I entreat you to recommend it to Our
Lord.

But how is the Company doing? Is everyone in good health? Is
each one in good spirits? Are the little rules well observed? Is
debate being studied and practiced? Do you abide by the pre-
scribed schedule? I beg you, Monsieur, to work on that and to
master the abridged Bécan.⁸ Words cannot express the usefulness
of that little book.

Since I left, God has been pleased to make use of this wretch to

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¹Le Clerc, a close friend of Bourdoise, was its director. The vacation period made it quite
easy for him to put the college at the disposal of the ordinands.

²Bernard Duchesne, Doctor of the Sorbonne, had been a member of Bourdoise's community
from its beginning. He took an active part in the works of this holy man.

³Louis Messier, one of Bourdoise's first companions and his right arm, was Archdeacon of
Beauvais and a Doctor of the Sorbonne. His brother was the Pastor of Saint-Landry and Dean
of the Faculty of Theology at the Sorbonne.

⁴Jérôme Duchesne, a Doctor of the Sorbonne and a member of the community of Saint-
Nicolas from 1612 on, became Archdeacon of Beauvais. In 1621, he had given a mission with

⁵Saint Vincent explained the Ten Commandments. Jérôme Duchesne assisted at his con-
fferences and was so moved by them that he felt drawn to make his general confession to the

⁶Martin Bécan, a Belgian Jesuit, wrote a great number of brief treatises against the Cal-
vinnists. In addition, he composed a Somme théologique, an Analogie de l'Ancien et du
Nouveau Testament, a debate manual, and an abridged form of the same manual. Bécan was
very popular in his time, particularly because of his clarity and his method.
convert three people; but I must admit that meekness, humility, and patience in dealing with these poor misguided people was the essence of this good work. The first two individuals scarcely cost me anything, because they were predisposed; but I had to spend two days with the third. I wished to tell you this to my confusion, so that the Company might see that, if God has been pleased to make use of its most ignorant and wretched member, He will make much more effective use of each one in the Company.

The Bishop of Beauvais has not set the day in the month of October on which we are supposed to begin the mission in this diocese. He wants me to be at this first one, but I shall try to take the time during the interval to come and see you, in order to hear the rendering of the domestic accounts of the Company since the last one that was given, so that it might serve as a preparation for the next mission.

How is Monsieur Lucas doing in his work? Does he like that duty? Does he return to eat and sleep at the collège? Does he not assist at our conferences on feast days?

Please greet our entire Company, as a group and individually, and tell Monsieur Lucas to please assure the Bishop of Bazas of my most humble service. And you, please take care of your health and let me know if Monsieur de Saint-Martin came to the collège and if he is going to see Monsieur de Bazas with Monsieur Lucas.

I almost forgot to tell you that I think you would do well to feel out the tailor who works at the house as to whether he has any thought of giving himself to the house. That was his intention in

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9Antoine Lucas.
10Collège des Bons-Enfants.
11There is some doubt about the reading of these last three words.
12Jean-Jaubert de Barrault de Blaignac, Bishop of Bazas (1611-1630), then of Arles (1630-July 30, 1643).
13Jean de Saint-Martin, councillor to the diocese and judge of the Presidial Court of Dax and a compatriot of Saint Vincent.
14In 1628, no coadjutor brother entered the Congregation of the Mission.
the past, but his near-sightedness and the objection he had about sometimes doing the cooking held him back and me, as well.

Adieu, my dear little Father.\textsuperscript{15} I am, in the love of Our Lord and of His holy Mother, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

\textbf{VINCENT DEPAUL}

Beauvais, September 15, 1628

\textit{Addressed}: Monsieur du Coudray, priest, at the Collège des Bons-Enfants, adjoining the Porte de Saint-Victor, in Paris

\textbf{31. - TO SAINT LOUISE}

[Around 1629]\textsuperscript{1}

Mademoiselle,

I wish you good evening and hope that you are no longer weeping over the happiness of your little Michel, or worrying about what will become of our sister. . . .

\textit{Mon Dieu}, my daughter, what great hidden treasures there are in holy Providence and how marvelously Our Lord is honored by those who follow it and do not try to get ahead of it! — Yes, you will tell me, but it is on account of God that I am worried. — It is no longer because of God that you are worried if you are troubled because of serving Him.

\textsuperscript{15}The Saint gives this familiar title to François du Coudray in other letters.

Letter 31. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 84.

\textsuperscript{1}In the letters which definitely follow this date, Saint Vincent no longer calls Saint Louise "my daughter."
32. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Oh! what great hidden treasures there are in holy Providence and how marvelously Our Lord is honored by those who follow it and do not try to get ahead of it. I recently heard one of the great men of the kingdom say that he had learned this truth through his own experience. He had never undertaken anything on his own except four things. Instead of their working out well for him, they had turned out to his detriment. Is it not true that you wish, as is quite reasonable, that your servant not undertake anything without you and your order? And if that is reasonable from one man to another, how much more so from the Creator to the creature!

33. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around 1629]

... Therefore, patience until then, my dear daughter, I beg you. I assure you that I thought about you again this morning for a rather long time, and that I am and shall be all my life, in the love of Jesus and His holy Mother, your servant.

1The person to whom this letter is addressed is, according to Abelly, a devout woman, the same one who received no. 53, the tone and contents of which recall the letters addressed to Saint Louise.
2We find this same sentence in no. 31. Might not these two letters be fragments of the same letter, or might not the common sentence have been interpolated in one or the other?

Letter 33. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.
1See no. 31, n. 1.
34. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around 1629]

Mon Dieu, my dear daughter, how your letter and the thoughts [you] sent to me console me! Indeed, I must confess to you that the feeling has spread through every part of my soul, and with all the more pleasure, since they let me see that you are in the state God wants of you. Well now, continue, my dear daughter, to remain in this good disposition and allow God to act. But, indeed, my consolation has been negated by the condition about which you wrote me and which you had hidden from me concerning your illness. Well now, may Our Lord be blessed for everything! Take good care of your health for love of Him.

Forgive me for having detained your man so long. I was held up by a great number of visits. Moreover, I am feeling better, thank God. I still have a slight fever, but it is steadily lessening, while the desire I have for you to be quite holy is ever increasing.

Adieu, my daughter. God grant you a good evening!

35. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around 1629]

I praise God, Mademoiselle, that you have been so resigned to the holy Will of God. I beg Him that you and I may always have one and the same will with Him and in Him since such is a foretaste of Paradise. Moreover, I thank you for your good medicine. I promise you that I shall make use of it tomorrow with

Letter 34. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

See no. 31, n. 1.

Letter 35. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

See no. 31, n. 1.
God's help, and willingly. I beg you, in the name of God, to get well and to omit nothing necessary for that purpose. Furthermore, be at rest with regard to your interior. It is, nonetheless, as it should be, though you do not think so now.

Adieu, my dear daughter. I am, in His love and that of His holy Mother, your, etc.

36. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around 1629]

... the secret of your heart, which I truly wish may belong entirely to Our Lord. I beg the Blessed Virgin to take it from you so as to carry it off to heaven to place it in her own and in that of her dear Son. But do not think that all is lost because of the little rebellions you experience interiorly. It has just rained very hard and it is thundering dreadfully. Is the weather less beautiful for that? Let the tears of sadness drown your heart and let the demons thunder and growl as much as they please. Be assured, my dear daughter, that you are no less dear to Our Lord for all that. Therefore, live contentedly in His love and be assured that I shall be mindful of you tomorrow at the sacrifice which, unworthy as I am, I shall offer to the supreme Sacrificer. If I were not in such a hurry. . . .

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Letter 36. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter. The beginning and the end of the letter are missing.

1See no. 31, n. 1.
37. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around 1629]

If it were not so late as it is, I would come and see you to find out from you the details of the matter you wrote to me about. However, that will be for tomorrow with God's help. Honor, meanwhile, the Blessed Virgin's sorrow when she saw her Son suffering. Honor as well the eternal Father's acceptance at the sight of His only Son's sufferings. I hope that He will make you see and understand how much you are obligated to His Divine Majesty for His having honored you by associating your sufferings with His, and how much flesh and blood take you away from the perfection of the true love which the eternal Father and the Blessed Virgin had for their Son. Think about that, my dear daughter, and be consoled.

I wish you a good day. May you be quite strong and may you believe that I am, in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

38. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[April or May 1629]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with you forever!

Father de Gondi\(^2\) sent me word to come by coach to see him in Montmirail.\(^3\) That will perhaps prevent me from having the honor

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Letter 37. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter. On the back are found these words written in Saint Louise's hand: "Complete instructions concerning my son."

\(^1\) See no. 31, n. 1.

Letter 38. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

\(^2\) Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi, former General of the Galleys, entered the Oratorians on April 6, 1627.

\(^3\) A small city of Brie, in Marne, which was one of the De Gondi estates. Saint Vincent had
of seeing you, because I am leaving tomorrow morning. Do you feel like coming, Mademoiselle? If so, you would have to leave next Wednesday on the coach to Châlons, in Champagne. It is stabled at the Cardinal, opposite Saint-Nicolas-des-Champs. And we shall have the happiness of seeing you in Montmirail.

Please let me know what is the matter at our good demoiselle’s Charity.

If I come early this evening, I shall have the happiness of a word with you; if not, I am in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

_Addressed_: Mademoiselle Le Gras

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39. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Mademoiselle,

I am sending you the letters and the report that you need for your journey. Go, therefore, Mademoiselle, go in the name of Our

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*Saint Louise was quite familiar with the church of Saint-Nicolas-des-Champs which she had attended when she was living on the rue Cours-au-Vilain in the parish of Saint-Sauveur. It was in this church that she was delivered from serious temptations against faith and, by a kind of enlightenment from on high, had a glimpse of what God would do with her later on. (Cf. Abbé Gobillon, _La vie de Mademoiselle Le Gras_ [Paris: A. Pralard, 1676], p.17.)

*Saint Louise was getting ready to leave for Montmirail where Saint Vincent was. This was her first apostolic journey, her first tour as a woman-missionary. (Cf. Gobillon, _op. cit._, p. 32.) She usually traveled in the company of some devout ladies, taking with her a plentiful supply of linen and medications. As soon as she arrived in a locality that had a Confraternity of Charity, she gathered the members together, stimulated their zeal, studied the results obtained, and recruited new members. She visited the sick, distributed alms, and gathered the children together, teaching them the truths of faith. If there was a schoolteacher in the place, she gave her some practical advice; if there was not one, she trained someone. (Cf. Gobillon, _op. cit._, pp. 33-35.)

*Saint Louise stayed there many times in the company of Monsieur and Madame de Gondi. In 1621, he had preached a mission there (cf. Abelly, _op. cit._, vol. 1, chap. XIII, p. 55), and established his fourth Confraternity of Charity (ibid., chap. X, end, p. 47), whose rules we still have (cf. vol. XIII, no. 130). In 1644, the Duc de Retz founded a house of Missionaries in that locality.

*Châlons-sur-Marne.

*Saint Louise du Fay.
Lord. I pray that His Divine Goodness may accompany you, be your consolation along the way, your shade against the heat of the sun, your shelter in rain and cold, your soft bed in your weariness, your strength in your toil, and, finally, that He may bring you back in perfect health and filled with good works.\(^2\)

Go to Communion the day of your departure to honor the charity of Our Lord, the journeys that He undertook for this same and by this same charity, and the difficulties, contradictions, weariness, and labors that He endured in them. May He be pleased to bless your journey, giving you His spirit and the grace to act in this same spirit, and to bear your troubles in the way He bore His.

As for what you ask, whether you are to stay longer than we agreed, I think that it will be sufficient to spend one or two days in each place the first time, subject to your going back next summer if Our Lord lets you see that you can render Him some further service. Although I say two days, take more, if need be, and do us the kindness of writing to us.

With regard to Mademoiselle Guérin's Charity, please get the name of her parish. If we go to Chartres, we shall try to go and help her with the Charity since we do not know anyone in that area who is accustomed to this work.

Adieu, Mademoiselle. Remember us in your prayers and, above all, take care of your health, which I beseech God to preserve for you, being in His love. . . .

Montmirail, May 6, 1629

\(^2\)Saint Vincent took his inspiration here from this passage of the _Itinéraire des clercs_: "Be for us, Lord, a support in battle, a comfort on the road, a shady place in the heat, a covering in rain and cold, a vehicle in weariness, a defense in adversity, a staff in a slippery place, a harbor in shipwreck, so that, with You as leader, we may successfully reach the place to which we are directing our course and may return at last safe and sound to our own."
Monsieur,

I went to your home in order to have the happiness of seeing you and talking to you about the board of my nephew, Mathieu Pluyette, a scholarship recipient of your collège.¹ However, the holy task in which you are employed deprived me of that happiness of being able to meet you. I have taken the liberty of sending you this note by my man, who is well known at the Collège du Cardinal,² to ask you to let me have what is due the boy who is at the Collège de Senlis. Two quarters would be due on the feast of Saint John,³ if you have not given something to Denis out of that which is due at Christmas. We shall try to arrange for you to see him on the feast of Saint Remi⁴ with regard to his staying in Paris or obtaining your consent to remain in Senlis, which will be acceptable, as I see it. I am sending you the receipt directly, without specifying the sum. For the remainder, on the feast of Saint Remi, I shall receive one from the boy. Until then, I shall remain always, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

G. Pluyette

Fontenay, July 3, 1629

Letter 39a. - Signed letter. The original is in the Arch. Nat. (Paris), M 105 (Collège des Bons-Enfants). This edition uses the text published in Mission et Charité, 19-20 (Paris: January - June, 1970), p. 1. Throughout this edition all letters that have been discovered since the publication of Coste’s original work have been placed in chronological order and a, b, c, etc., as needed, have been added to Coste’s numbering to preserve his order.

¹In the fifteenth century, Jean Pluyette, principal of the Collège des Bons-Enfants, established and funded two scholarships for the collège. They were to be given to members of the Pluyette family or, lacking eligible family members, to inhabitants of Mesnil-Aubry and Fontenay-en-France. (Cf. Ch. Pluyette, Un recteur de l’Université de Paris au XVᵉ siècle. Jehan Pluyette et les fondations qu’il institua, Notice biographique et historique [Paris, 1900].) The Pluyette Foundation provided, up to 1789, for fifty-two scholars, of whom forty-one bore the name Pluyette.

²Collège du Cardinal Lemoine, which was very near the Bons-Enfants.

³June 24.

⁴October 1 is the feast of Saint Remi (or Remigius).
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I praise God that you have the health for the sixty people for whose salvation you are working, but I beg you to let me know right away whether your lung is being irritated by your talking so much, or your head by so much confusion and noise.

As for your son, I shall see him, but put your mind at rest, I beg you. You can trust that he is under the special protection of Our Lord and His holy Mother because of all the gifts and offerings you have made for him. He is also a friend of God’s people and, therefore, no harm can befall him. But what shall we say about this excessive affection? I certainly think, Mademoiselle, that you have to try before God to rid yourself of it. All it does is weigh upon your spirit and deprive you of the peace Our Lord wishes in your heart and the detachment from love of everything that is not Himself. Do so, therefore, I beg you, and you will give honor to God Who is responsible for the sovereign and absolute care of your son, and Who wishes you to be concerned only in a dependent and tranquil way.

We have been back for three or four days, in good health, and

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Letter 40. - Saint Paul manuscript, p.6.

1We read in Ecrits spirituels by Saint Louise, A. 50: “On the feast of Saint Agatha, February 5, I left for Saint-Cloud. At Holy Communion, it seemed that Our Lord was inspiring me to receive Him as the Spouse of my soul, and even that this was for me a kind of espousal. I felt myself more closely united with God in this consideration, which was extraordinary for me, and the thought came to me of leaving everything to follow my Spouse, of considering Him as such from that time on, and of looking upon the difficulties I would encounter as though I were His spouse receiving them as a share in His estate. I wanted to have a Mass said that day because it was my wedding anniversary, but I refrained from doing so in order to perform an act of poverty. I wanted to be totally dependent on God in what I was going to do, without telling my confessor anything about it. He said the Mass at which I received Holy Communion. When he came out on the altar, God allowed the thought to come to him of celebrating it for me as a gift, and of saying the nuptial Mass.”
our Company left today for Chelles.\textsuperscript{2} I hope to go there in two days.

I sent you a young woman from Maisons\textsuperscript{3} for a while. I beg you, Mademoiselle, to do her the favor I asked of you because of the one she will be able to do for you, and you will be cooperating in the salvation of two souls at the same time. Let me know if she has come to see you and when you think you will be finished in Saint-Cloud. Let me know also whether that good young woman\textsuperscript{4} from Suresnes,\textsuperscript{5} who visited you before and who spends her time teaching girls, has come to see you as she promised me last Sunday when she was here.

While waiting to hear from you, I beg Our Lord to strengthen you more and more, Mademoiselle, and I am in His love. . . .

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**41. - TO SAINT LOUISE**

[February 1630]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I praise God a thousand times and bless Him with all my heart for having restored you to health. I beg Him to keep you well and

\textsuperscript{2}Commune in the canton of Lagny (Seine-et-Marne).
\textsuperscript{3}Maisons-Alfort, near Paris.
\textsuperscript{4}Marguerite Naseau, whom Saint Vincent calls the first Daughter of Charity, and whose touching story he recounts in several of his conferences to the Sisters. (See in particular the conference of February 24, 1653 [vol. IX, no. 52].) She died in February 1633 of a malady contracted while ministering to others. The Sisters of Saint-Eloi Hospital in Montpellier gave to the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity a painting which is said to be her portrait, but there is no basis for this belief.
\textsuperscript{5}A locality in the suburbs of Paris.

Letter 41. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

\textsuperscript{2}Two details, the presence of a team of Missionaries in Chelles and that of Saint Louise in a locality near Paris bordering on the Seine or one of its tributaries, lead us to place this letter near no. 40.
bring you home safely. Therefore, Mademoiselle, come back towards the end of the week and even sooner if the opportunity presents itself, not by water but in a well-closed coach. Mademoiselle du Fay told me that she had not been able to find a carriage. I sent her your letter, but I have not spoken to your son for a certain reason which I shall tell you.

_Bon Dieu,_ Mademoiselle, how good it is to be God's child, since He loves those who have the happiness of possessing this quality in His sight even more tenderly than you love your child—although you have more affection for him than almost any mother I know! Oh well, we shall talk about it on your return. Meanwhile, be fully confident that she to whom Our Lord has given so much love for other people's children will merit Our Lord's special affection for her own child. Please live peacefully in this assurance, even, I say, in the joy of a heart that desires to conform itself completely to that of Our Lord.

Our Little Company is in Chelles and I am still here. There is a Jesuit who is working wonders in your parish. Mademoiselle de Villars is writing to you. I commend myself to your prayers and I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

**VINCENT DEPAUL**

_42. - TO SAINT LOUISE_

Mademoiselle,

With regard to your Confraternity of Charity, I cannot tell you

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2Saint Louise was very likely in Saint-Cloud.
3Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet.

Letter 42. - Saint Paul manuscript, p.42.
1Date of the establishment of the Charity of Saint-Nicolas to which this letter seems to be alluding.
2 Probably the Charity of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet.
how much it consoles me. I beg God to bless your labor and to perpetuate this holy work. You must take care not to let the curate keep the money because of the many difficulties that might arise. I shall tell you about them some other time. Let me tell you in advance that experience has shown that, of all the methods, the surest ones that can be practiced in the Charity are those which you had in mind. If you now relieve each one at the Charity of the obligation of getting the meat cooked, you will never again be able to restore this practice. If you have it cooked elsewhere and someone undertakes to do it out of charity right now, it will become a burden to her in a short time. If you hire someone to do it, it will cost a lot. Then, with time, the ladies of the Charity will say that the woman who prepares the food should carry the pot to the sick, and in this way your Charity will be reduced to failure. Experience has shown that it is absolutely necessary for the women not to depend on the men in this situation, especially for the money.

Well now, is that not a consolation to you, Mademoiselle? After that, will you say that you are of no use to the world?

43. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around 1630]

... and know, with regard to your son, that M. du Ch. 2 has told me wonderful things about him. I shall tell you about them when I return. I shall also thank you for what you told me about the young woman whom I discussed with you and for having thought of her. I beg you earnestly to exert yourself on her behalf.

I am delighted with the employment of those good young

Letter 43. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity. original autograph letter. The beginning of this letter is missing.

1 This letter precedes the institution of the Daughters of Charity and seems to belong to the time when Michel Le Gras was studying at Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet.

2 Perhaps Jérôme Duchesne, one of the priests in the community founded by Bourdoise.
women and I commend your desire to give them a painting, but not your giving way to concern over the matter. You belong to Our Lord and His holy Mother. Cling to them and to the state in which they have placed you until they make it clear that they wish something else of you, for whom I am, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

[Please offer my humble regards to Mademoiselle du Fay and M. Bliar.

44. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[1630]

So you are a small number of workers for so much work. Oh, well! Our Lord will work with you. The suggestion that each one of you take a day to feed the sick at your own expense seems fine to me. That is how it is done elsewhere until the day the confraternity is established.

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3 Perhaps some young women placed at the disposal of the ladies of a Confraternity of Charity in Paris to assist them in the service of the poor.

Letter 44. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 41.

1 Date of the establishment of the Confraternity of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet to which Saint Vincent seems to be referring.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Thank you for the trouble you took to write to me about the situation of the Charity. When God is pleased to let me see you, you can tell me about the community’s welfare.

It will indeed be proper for you to make use of those offerings for the needs of those poor people. I think you are good managers since you are only spending about half an écu.

If you get permission to establish the Charity from the record-office of the Bishop of Paris, you will have to pay something, but if it is Monsieur Guyard who grants it, it will be nothing. You can have it stamped with the small seal which will only cost five sous.

Well now, there are more than five women. I beg God to send you some others. As for the means, Our Lord will provide.

With regard to your difficulty, I think it would be well for you to speak to Mademoiselle du Fay, but as for the other things he is asking of you, please get advice as to what reply you should make. And do me the favor of thanking Mademoiselle du Fay for her jelly. Tell her that I am feeling better and that I beg her to ask

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Letter 45. - Original autograph letter, Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity.

1In 1630, with the approval of the Pastor and the help of a few ladies, Saint Louise founded and organized a Confraternity of Charity, of which she was the president, in the parish of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet. (Cf. Abelly, op. cit., vol. I, chap. XXIII, p. 109.) It is probably about this confraternity, still in its initial stage, that Saint Vincent is speaking in this letter. It was the second confraternity established in Paris. Nothing indicates that Saint Louise had any part in that of Saint-Sauveur which had already been in operation for several months.

2Louis Guyard, Vicar General of Paris. Formerly he had been principal of the Collège des Bons-Enfants.

3Twenty sous equal one livre.
God that I may make good use of this improved health. As for that poor young woman, what is it that she wants?
Take care of your health.
I am your most humble servant.

V. D. P.

45a. - G. PLUYETTE TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

I knew that you had not written down in your ledger the amount that you gave for the board of my nephew, Mathieu Pluyette, your young scholarship holder. I would have liked very much to see you about this matter but, for fear of not finding you, I have written this note to tell you that he was granted the scholarship a year ago at the beginning of Lent. An agreement was made with the cousin who gave up the place that he would receive nothing the following Easter. However, we have not been able to speak to you about that quarter, for you have as yet given my nephew the money for only three quarters: that of the feast of Saint John, the one for Saint Remi, and the other one for Christmas, as you can see from the receipts. What is left is due to the principal of Senlis, for in my day, because of the property in Le Mesnil, we used to receive nine or ten livres more at Christmas than we did at the other times.

So that someone does not come to see you under false pretenses, the bearer of this message is supposed to be the brother of the principal of Senlis who lives with a goldsmith. He will let me know what settlement you have made with regard to this matter.

I would have liked very much to see you, but Lent prevents me. I shall do so, with God's help, after Easter. Until then, I remain, Monsieur, your humble servant.

G. Pluyette

Fontenay, March 13, 1630

Monsieur,

I have not yet answered M. du Coudray, who had written to me on March 22 in your name to find out when my nephew had been accepted as a scholarship holder. I told you that it was a year ago after Christmas. He has the consent of his cousin, Denis, that he would receive nothing for the quarter. I already sent you the same information, namely, what he had given for Mathieu, because he had a receipt for it. As for the Le Mesnil estate, I think that if you have noticed the income of the scholarship holders, you are aware that they receive more than twenty-six livres at the quarters. I know that in my time there was more income. I was astonished when I found out from his letter that the Le Mesnil estate did not belong to the scholarship holders because that is in the contract concerning the property left to the scholarship holders.

I was thinking of going to Paris for the synod and of having the pleasure of seeing you. However, since it is not being held and I am afraid I would not find you at home because of your holy occupations, I have written this note for my nephew, the goldsmith. He will see that I receive your response. While awaiting it, I remain, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

G. Pluyette

Fontenay, April 14 [1630]


1 In Mission et Charité, this letter was assigned the year 1631. However, the letter seems to be connected quite closely with nos. 39a and 45a which bear certain dates, July 3, 1629, and March 13, 1630, respectively. All three letters make mention of Mathieu Pluyette, who is receiving scholarship funds yielded to him by a cousin, Denis, mentioned by name in no. 39a, as the cousin who yielded his place in 45a, and again as Denis in the present letter, numbered 45b in this edition. Both nos. 45a and 45b refer to the length of time that Mathieu has held the scholarship as one year after Christmas or one year at the beginning of Lent. Both of these descriptions refer to the same period of the year. In 45b, dated April 14, mention is made of a letter from Saint Vincent written by M. du Coudray and dated March 22. Could not the Saint's message be a reply to no. 45a which was written on March 13? Furthermore, Pluyette states in no. 45b that he has already sent Saint Vincent the information he is requesting, that is, how long Mathieu has held his scholarship, which information is contained in no. 45a. The above reasons taken together seem to indicate that the April 14 of the letter is April 14 of the year 1630.
It is very difficult, Mademoiselle, to do any good without conflict. And because we must relieve other people's distress as far as it is in our power, I think that you would be performing an action agreeable to God by visiting the Pastor and apologizing for having spoken without his knowledge to the sisters of the Charity and the girls. Tell him that you thought you could act in Villepreux just as you did in Saint-Cloud and elsewhere, and that this will teach you your duty another time. If he is not pleased with this, leave it at that. My advice is that you do this. Our Lord will perhaps draw more glory from your submission than from all the good you could do. One beautiful diamond is worth more than a mountain of stones, and one virtuous act of acquiescence and submission is better than an abundance of good works done for others.
TO SAINT LOUISE, IN VILLEPREUX

Paris, Saturday the 4th [May 1630]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Blessed be God, Mademoiselle, that I received the news of your recovery before that of your illness! I beg Him to strengthen you completely and in such a way that, one day, it may be said that the following words of Holy Scripture apply to you: Mulierem fortem quis inveniet? You understand this Latin, so I shall not explain it to you.

You say that the time the children are in school is not sufficient for them to be able to draw any profit from it and that they have two other days off. I see no difficulty in your extending the time a little and, for the reasons you advance, in your keeping them busy those two days; or in your trying to get the children who are not used to it to come to school. But I think it would be well for you to obtain the approval of good Monsieur Belin, and to inform those who talk about it that you are acting in that way because your stay will be so short. Tell them also that it is not a school, but a devotional practice lasting a few days.

As for little Michel, be at peace. Just two or three days ago I saw him going to his lesson and he was fine.

__Letter 47. - Autograph letter. Original in the Musée historique de l'Orléanais in Orléans. This text has been published in the Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission (1947/1948), pp. 499-500 and in Mission et Charité, 19-20, pp. 2-4. The text found in Coste, which was taken from the Saint Paul manuscript, p. 13, did not include the salutation or the last few sentences given here. __

1Date given by Gobillon, op. cit., p. 39.
2Prov. 31:10. “Who shall find a valiant woman.” (D-RB)
3Saint Louise was teaching the children catechism.
4Chaplain of the De Gondis in Villepreux. He had known Saint Vincent at the home of the General of the Galleys. When Saint Vincent was away, he used to substitute for him with the galley slaves of the faubourg Saint-Honoré. (Cf. Abelly, op. cit., vol. 1, chap. XIV, p. 60.) In another place, Saint Vincent said (letter of December 16, 1634 [cf. no. 190]) that he had had “one of the greatest shares in the conception, gestation, birth, and development of the Mission.”
I sent your letter to Mademoiselle du Fay and encouraged Mademoiselle du Fresne to go to Villepreux, which she wants to do more than anything in the world. But her illness will most certainly not permit her that pleasure which she ardently desires. I recommend her to your prayers.

As for you, take good care of your health. Do not take too much upon yourself, which I am afraid, however, you are doing by not wanting to take the respite of those two days or keep to the schedule customary in the schools. That is why, with this apprehension, contrary to what I said to you above, I beg you to be satisfied with the usual hours. This line of action will, to my mind, be more to the liking of Monsieur Belin. If you see a serious disadvantage in this, please write to me about it again, after you have begun, and I shall get a note from Father de Gondi for his farmer, so that he will carry out his order as quickly as possible.

Let us end here; they are hurrying me a little. I shall conclude, therefore, by asking God's help for you, strength of body, and holy tranquillity of spirit. I ask this of Him with as much pleasure as I am, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, Mademoiselle, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

My regards to your hostess.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, in Villepreux

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3A Lady of Charity, sister of Charles du Fresne, Sieur de Villeneuve.
4The text used by Coste ended here.
There has been no procurator at the Charity for a year. However, a good man has always written down the receipts and expenditures and is now willing to accept this responsibility by election.

The sisters of the Charity have somewhat lost enthusiasm for their work. They have often given up visiting the sick on their day because the treasurer is so willing that she has the cooking done for those whose turn it is, and also because she and the superior have at times been satisfied with giving the sick some money. They have also given some to a few needy people. They have often been careless about having meat and have placated the sick with eggs or something else that was to their liking.

The above-mentioned sisters, at least most of them, neglect Holy Communion for months. They need to be stirred up by some kind of exhortation when the procurator is going to be elected.

The superior was satisfied with keeping the money box at her house and had given both keys to the treasurer. They are troubled about receiving the sick, and say that they do not need a Charity which admits only those who have nothing at all, because there are very few or none at all of that sort. A lot of people have property but it is so tied up that they would die of hunger before they could sell it and help themselves.

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
Blessed be God that you are feeling better and are acquiring a taste for working at the salvation of souls! But I am really afraid that you are doing too much, and so that you may see that I have good reason, please look at what Monsieur Belin tells me about it. Be careful about this, I beg of you, Mademoiselle. Our Lord wants us to serve Him with common sense, and the opposite is called indiscreet zeal.

As for the sisters of the Charity, I think it is expedient that you assemble all of them, read the rules together, and try to put everything back into practice according to those rules, which are different from the others because that was the second establishment. But please tell them the practice in other places and try to persuade them to do likewise, especially with regard to the perpetuity of the sisters' membership, going to confession and Communion on the day a member dies, going themselves to visit the sick as often as they can, and receiving the sacraments more often. And finally, with regard to the meat, advise the sister acting as butcher, who is the superior, to distribute the meat justly.

My illness, which I see has distressed you, is quite minor and, had they not made me take a dose of medicine today, I would have gone out. Thank you for being concerned.

We have no water at all. I am sending to Monsieur Deure for some. Monsieur du Fresne and his sister are leaving Friday for Villepreux. God knows whether consideration for you has not hastened the trip a little.

Little Michel is fine; Brother Robert went to see him for me.

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2The Confraternity of Charity in Villepreux dates back to 1618; that of Châtillon-les-Dombes to 1617.
3The members of the Confraternity were not elected for life.
4"Butcher" was the title given to the member in charge of distributing the meat to the poor.
5A merchant who sold mineral and purgative water.
6No coadjutor brother of that time bore the Christian name of Robert. This probably refers to Robert de Sergis, born March 2, 1608, in Auvers, near Pontoise. He was received into the Congregation of the Mission in June 1628, was ordained a priest in April 1632, and died in December 1640 or January 1641. Saint Vincent often referred to a clerical student as brother. The context most often determines whether the person referred to was a clerical student or a coadjutor brother.
He told him that he is quite cheerful and contented. Be the same, Mademoiselle, I beg of you, since God wishes you to be so.

I am, in His love and that of His holy Mother, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Tuesday at noon.

Our regards to your Marthe.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, in Villepreux

49. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around 1630]

Blessed be God that you are freed from the first attachment. We shall talk about the other one when next we meet; I mean about the one for your confessor. Meanwhile, do what he advises you and everything that your fervor suggests, except the discipline, unless it be three times a week. Read the book concerning the love of God, in particular the one that deals with God's Will and indifference. As for all those thirty-three acts to the holy humanity

Letter 49. - Original autograph letter. Coste cited this letter as the property of the Daughters of Charity of Somma Vesuviana (Italy). This house is no longer in existence and the present location of the letter is unknown.

The nature of the advice that Saint Vincent is giving to Saint Louise leads us to believe that this letter was written before the foundation of the Daughters of Charity. The first Daughters of Charity assembled around Saint Louise on November 29, 1633.

Saint Louise had placed herself under the direction of Saint Vincent in 1624 or 1625. She was well satisfied with it and suffered a great deal from the absences of her director. The Saint would have preferred more indifference. Le Camus, Bishop of Belley, was already writing to Louise on July 26, 1625: "Forgive me, my very dear sister, if I tell you that you are a little too attached to those who direct you and that you depend on them a little too much. M. Vincent is out of sight and here we have Mademoiselle Le Gras upset and disoriented." (Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original.)


In memory of the thirty-three years that Our Lord spent on earth.
and the others, do not be distressed when you fail to do them. God is love and wants us to go to Him through love. Therefore, do not hold yourself bound to all those good resolutions.

I beg you to excuse me for not having been able to write to you until this evening, and to pray to God for us.

I am, in His love and that of His holy Mother, Madame, your most humble servant.

V. D. P.

I approve of the practice in honor of Mary, provided that you carry it out peacefully.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

50. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around 1630]

I think that it will be sufficient to put on your/our picture the same words as on the original. Therefore, please put those on it, Mademoiselle, and I shall preserve in my heart the ones you write to me concerning your generous resolution to honor the adorable

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3This word slipped from the Saint's pen. Saint Louise did not have a right to the title of Madame. The letter is, moreover, addressed to Mademoiselle Le Gras.
Letter 50. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

This letter predates the foundation of the Daughters of Charity.

2"Yours" because it was painted by Saint Louise; "ours" because she was giving it to Saint Vincent. The Foundress had a flair for painting. We still have some of the paintings that she did, "little water colors of delicate design, of fresh coloring, but unsophisticated pictures rather than real works of art." (Cf. Baumard, op. cit., p. 8.)

3Saint Vincent is referring to the painting that Saint Louise was copying. Maynard could not understand this sentence. He presumed that Saint Louise had summed up in a painting the resolutions and sentiments contained in the act of consecration she made shortly after her husband's death. (Cf. Abbé Maynard, Saint Vincent de Paul [4 vols., 3rd ed., Paris: Retaux-Bray, 1886], vol. III, p. 239.)
hidden life of Our Lord as Our Lord has given you the desire of
doing since your youth.⁴ O my dear,⁵ how that thought savors of
the inspiration of God and how far removed it is from flesh and
blood! Now then, that is the disposition needed by a beloved
daughter of God. Cling to it, Mademoiselle, and courageously
resist any feeling you get that is contrary to it. Rest assured that by
this means you will be in the state God requires of you in order to
have you advance to another for His greater glory, if He so sees fit;
if not, you will still be sure that you are constantly doing in this
God's holy Will. That is the goal towards which we tend and
towards which the saints have tended. Without it, no one can be
happy.

I beg your pardon for having detained your messenger so long
because of the large number of distractions I had; I who wish you
to be one of the most perfect images⁶ made in the likeness of
God. . . . ⁷ I have, in His love, I think, one and the same heart
with you. I am your most humble servant.

V. D. P.

51. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL, IN CROISSY¹

Thursday, June 27, 1630

Blessed be God, Monsieur, that you have begun preaching in
the pulpit and may it please His Divine Goodness to give His
blessing to what you will teach in His name! You have begun late;

⁴In her youth, Saint Louise had thought of entering the Capuchin nuns. She would have done
so, had not poor health proved an obstacle.
⁵An unusual expression coming from the Saint's pen; he probably meant to write: "O my
dear daughter!"
⁶A reference to the painting that Saint Louise was preparing for Saint Vincent.
⁷These ellipsis points replace a word that we were unable to read.

¹Croissy-sur-Seine (Yvelines).
so did Saint Charles. I wish you a share in his spirit, and I hope God will give you some new grace on this occasion. I beg Him with all my heart that it may be the one you wrote to me about at the end of your letter, that of being an example to the Company, in which we lack holy modesty, meekness and respect in our conversations. Attention to the presence of God is the means of acquiring them. I need them more than anyone else. Please ask them of God for me.

52. - TO A LADY

July 1, 1630

Madame,

The grace of our Lord be with you forever!

Since I answered your letter yesterday, it has occurred to me that I made no response to the advice you did me the honor of requesting: whether you should receive among the sisters of the Charity, in place of the late Madame Brunei, a relative of hers. Now, I shall tell you, Madame, that since the deceased had named and introduced her before dying, and since she has the qualities requisite for doing this good work, I feel that you would do well to accept her, even if the deceased lady had not named her. But I really think you should remind the sisters to remember to appoint someone to replace them when God chooses to dispose of them, because that is the only way to perpetuate this holy confraternity.

I beg you, Madame, to insist on this and to impress it well upon

2The biographers of Saint Charles Borromeo relate that for a long time this prelate had to struggle against excessive timidity, which caused him to tremble when he was preaching. For years he spoke from the altar, so as to be farther away from his audience; only much later did he dare go up into the pulpit.

Letter 52. - Reg. 1, fol. 8 v°. The copyist notes that the original letter was written entirely in the Saint’s hand.
them; to greet those good sisters of the Charity and your pro-
curator for me; and to assure your husband that I am, and that all
my life I shall be for him and for you, in the love of Our Lord,
Madame, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

53. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around 1630]

Relieve your mind of all that is troubling you; God will take
care of it. You cannot become involved in this, without saddening
(so to speak) the heart of God, because He sees that you are not
honoring Him enough by holy confidence. Put your trust in Him, I
beg you, and your heart's desire will be fulfilled. Once again I
repeat, cast aside all those mistrustful thoughts which you some-
times allow to invade your mind. And why would your soul not be
full of confidence, since you are, by His mercy, the dear daughter
of Our Lord?

54. - TO MONSIEUR DE SAINT-MARTIN

September 1, 1630

Saint Vincent entreats M. de Saint-Martin to procure clothes for his

1Abelly states simply that this letter was addressed to a devout person. The tone and the
content indicate that this devout person is none other than Saint Louise. The content also
allows us to speculate about the dating of the letter.
2It would seem that, when he wrote these words, Saint Vincent had Saint Louise's vocation
in mind.

Letter 54. - Process of beatification, deposition of Jean-Jacques de Casteija, grandson of Jean
de Saint-Martin (counselor of the presidial court in Dax) and Pastor of Saint-Paul-lès-Dax,
(Landes), who was in possession of the original letter in 1706.
3We believe that the person in question here is Jean de Saint-Martin, husband of Catherine
brother and nephews and to have repaired one side of their house which was in danger of falling into ruin. He goes on to write about a nephew who had recently left Paris, and who had received ten écus before leaving the capital. But this money came from an alms, and was not destined for the missions. Then he adds:

I beg you, Monsieur, if any other relative of mine gets the idea of coming to see me, please dissuade him. Since I have no means of assisting them, they will be going to a lot of trouble for nothing.

55. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[September 1630]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

It is not without good reason that you are going to visit a person of such high rank as the one who is asking for you and who perhaps needs your advice to make a decision on something very important. Go then, Mademoiselle, in the name of Our Lord and with His blessing. If the opportunity arises to do something for the children of that place, do it with prudence; a great deal of it is

de Comet. An uncle, the Canon de Saint-Martin, was then in Paris. He later became secretary to the Bishop of Dax (1640) and Officialis of the diocese (1644). He died in 1672. Abelly composed the first chapters of Saint Vincent's biography with the help of the recollections of Canon de Saint-Martin.

2It was this nephew who delivered Saint Vincent's letter. He had come to consult his uncle about a promise of marriage. Abelly gives some interesting details about his visit (op. cit., vol. III, chap. XIII, sect. 1, p. 208; chap. XIX, p. 292); others are found in the depositions at the process of beatification by Jean-Jacques Castetja, Jean de Paul, Charles Le Blanc, Anne Varin, and Jacques d'Apremont.

Letter 55. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1This letter was written during the vacation period, before Saint Vincent went to live at Saint-Lazare and while Saint Louise was at the head of the Charity of Saint-Nicolas, consequently in 1630, for in September and October of 1631 Saint Louise was not in Paris.

2Probably Geneviève d'Attichy, wife of Scipion d'Aquaviva, Duc d'Atri.

3Probably Attichy, in the diocese of Soissons, not far from the diocese of Beauvais.
necessary in that diocese. Nevertheless, by acting discreetly, the authority of the lady of that place will be yours in that of Our Lord.

As for Communion, I think you will do well to be content with what has been your custom. With regard to your son, he will be most welcome once the ordinands have left, about ten or eleven days from now, because we have neither a bed nor a room in which to put him. So please tell him to come at that time.

Monsieur Dehorgny will be coming to speak to you about the young man they want to send here. I ask your pardon, if owing to difficulties here, I do not have the honor of seeing you before your departure.

I beg you to let me know if your Charity⁴ is well off and if you need any money. Please believe that, thanks be to God, I am well and am your servant.

VINCENT

You must not go so near the Charities of the Beauvais diocese without paying them a visit at your convenience. Perhaps Mademoiselle d’Attichy⁵ would be willing to visit the nearest one.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

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⁴The Charity of Saint-Nicolas.
⁵Valence de Marillac, Saint Louise’s aunt and wife of Octavien Doni, Sieur d’Attichy, Superintendent of Finance. She was Michel’s godmother and had had eight children: Achille became a Jesuit; Louis entered the Friars Minor and became Bishop of Riez (1628), and then of Autun (1652); Antoine, the Marquis d’Attichy, was killed in battle in 1637 at the age of twenty-five; Geneviève married the Duc d’Atri; Anne became the wife of the Comte de Maure; Henriette entered Carmel; and Madeleine became an Ursuline. Deprived of their father in 1614 and of their mother in 1617, the children, still young, were cared for by Saint Louise and her husband. (Cf. Écrits spirituels, L. 267.) It is unclear to which daughter of Valence Saint Vincent is referring here. It may be Geneviève, if Coste’s footnote 2 is accurate.
TO SAINT LOUISE

[October 1630]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

These lines will serve to ask you to send us news of yourself and to give you some about us and about Germaine.

As for me, things are as usual; and with regard to Germaine, M. du Coudray tells me that he has begun to speak about her to the Pastor, to M. Belin, and to the schoolmaster, and that none of them is adverse to the proposal he has made to them. We shall see what will come of it.

I thought that we might give a mission in Saint-Cloud for these feast days, but we would not be able to do so without great inconvenience. That is why we are postponing it until Saint Martin’s day.

Meanwhile, tell us, please, what is on your mind? Mine has been very much occupied this morning with you and with the thoughts Our Lord is giving you.

I am, in His love, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL


1Date determined by M. du Coudray’s presence in Villepreux and the “proposal” concerning Germaine.
2One of the young women Saint Louise employed in the schools. She taught for a long time in Villepreux where we still find her in 1637.
3The Pastor in Villepreux.
4Chaplain of the De Gondi family in Villepreux.
5The schoolmaster in Villepreux.
6Proposal concerning a school for little girls in Villepreux of which Germaine would be in charge.
7Locality in the neighborhood of Paris.
8The feast of All Saints.
9Feast of Saint Martin of Tours, November 11.
Monsieur,

I am sending you a copy of the financial status of my nephew Mathieu, verified by a notary, as you wished. I think you are of the opinion that he should remain a little longer at Senlis for his basics; you have taken the trouble to question him about that, for which I thank you. He gives evidence of good will. I pray God that he may be able to further the holy desire of the founder and render himself capable of one day serving the people. He will do this in a more holy manner, when he has had the honor of your good company, of which I shall not deprive myself when I come to Paris, since you indicate that it will be agreeable to you. While awaiting this, I shall remain, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

G. Pluyette

Fontenay, October 2, 1630

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your last letter this past Saturday, just as I was leaving for Maubuisson,¹ and I asked Monsieur de la Salle to answer you. Now, this letter will be to assure you once again that your son is fine, as Monsieur Bourdoise² has assured me. I am also writing to

Letter 56. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Near Pontoise (Val-d'Oise).
²Adrien Bourdoise, who was born July 1, 1584, in Brou (Eure-et-Loir) and died in Paris, July 19, 1655, was one of the most zealous reformers of the clergy in the seventeenth century. He founded a community of priests, the priests of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet, or Nicolasites, from the name of the Parisian parish in which they resided. He made one of his retreats at Saint-Lazare. This fact and his advising the Duc de Liancourt, patron of several benefices, to rely on the judgment of Saint Vincent de Paul for the choice of beneficed clergymen, show the
tell you how consoled I am that your health has improved, and that I hope you will soon be completely cured. But how, when you have to talk so much, in air so thin, and with the cold you have! Undoubtedly, if you recover your health completely, we shall really have to say that God has cured you. I hope that today or tomorrow I shall receive more detailed news about the matter. Mademoiselle du Fay has just sent her servant for news of you and I really want to assure myself that we shall have something good to tell her.

Last Saturday I told her what you wrote about her and she was quite comforted. Is your heart not comforted also, Mademoiselle, to see that it has been found worthy before God to suffer while serving Him? You certainly owe Him special thanks and should do your utmost to ask Him for the grace to make good use of it.

You want to know whether you are to speak to the assembled members of the Charity. I would indeed like that very much, they would profit from it, but I do not know whether it is opportune or advisable. Speak to Mademoiselle Champlin about it and do what Our Lord inspires you to do.

I am, in His love and in that of His holy Mother, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Paris, October 22, 1630

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, in Montmirail³

³Below the address, Saint Louise herself wrote: "Villiers-le-Bel." Could she have gone to that area before or after her stay in Montmirail? It is possible.
57. - TO SAINT LOUISE

October 29, 1630

Mademoiselle,

Blessed be God that you are cured and that the thin air is doing you no harm! That being the case, please continue until you have results somewhat similar to those you have had elsewhere. But if you feel a relapse coming on, please prevent it and come back. I leave all that up to you while I go off on a little two-week trip to Beauvais.

Please recommend to the Prior¹ what you wrote to me concerning the election of officers.

57a. - G. PLUYETTE TO SAINT VINCENT

[Between October and December 1630]

Monsieur,

I had been in Paris some time ago, hoping to see you there and to speak to you about my nephew Mathieu Pluyette, holder of a scholarship from

Letter 57. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 9.

¹Most probably the Prior of Montmirail.


This letter from G. Pluyette to Saint Vincent seems to be closely related to nos. 39a, 45a, 45b, and 55b. All five letters mention Pluyette's nephew, Mathieu, who seems to be the same child in all the letters because four of the five, including this letter, mention his staying at the Collège de Senlis. Another fact seems to connect this letter with no. 39a: Pluyette's alluding, both in no. 39a and in this letter, to an objection concerning Mathieu's staying in Senlis. The only change within the letters appears to be the name of the cousin who is giving up his scholarship in Mathieu's favor. In no. 57a, Denis is no longer mentioned; the name is Etienne. A possible explanation is as follows: Mathieu, as stated in no. 45a (March 13, 1630), received his scholarship from Denis a year before that letter at the beginning of Lent, therefore, sometime in February or March of 1629. Mathieu also made an agreement at the beginning of that Lent that he would receive nothing at the end of the following Easter term, therefore, after Easter of 1630. It would seem that a second cousin, Etienne, likewise yielded his scholarship
your collège, who is continuing his basic studies at the Collège de Senlis. As I had mentioned to you, I would have liked very much for you to have taken the trouble to write a few lines giving notice that he would be remaining there for some time. I am afraid that his staying here is not considered proper. I believe that it is not against the founder’s intention.

I have sent you a note by my man who is holding the first payment, so that he might give you a receipt for the second quarter which fell due on the feast of Saint Remi. I had given something to cousin Etienne Pluyette in the belief that he would not receive anything at Easter time, but I think that he did receive something and that you are holding the rest. I am sending you a blank receipt for what he . . . , and when I can do so, I shall see you. Until then, I remain, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

G. Pluyette

58. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN BEAUVAIS

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

to Mathieu upon the termination of the year given up by Denis. In no. 57a, mention is again made of the quarter following Easter, stating this time that Etienne would receive nothing, but also stating that Mathieu is still holding a scholarship. Reference to a second quarter falling due on the feast of Saint Remi (October 1) would cover the two quarters beginning with that of Easter (March to June and June to October). The scholarship yielded to Mathieu by Denis would, therefore, have covered the period from March 1629 to March 1630, while that given up by Etienne would have begun in March 1630 and would have covered, at the writing of this letter, the period from March 1630 to October 1630. It would, therefore, seem quite possible that this letter, no. 57a, was written sometime at the end of 1630 between the feast of Saint Remi and the end of the year. If it were written in 1631, another quarter, that of Christmas, would have fallen due as well and would have been mentioned in the letter. Also, since Pluyette wrote no. 55b at the beginning of October, this letter seems better placed somewhere between the end of October and the beginning of December.

Letter 58. - Autograph letter. The original is at Le Mans in the treasury of the church of Notre-Dame de la Couture.

'The Saint had just spent two weeks in Beauvais and had realized that a visit from Saint Louise would be useful to the Confraternities of Charity established in that town. The history of the establishment of the Charities in Beauvais is worth knowing. Before 1629, one encountered everywhere in Beauvais, in the streets, at the doors of the churches, in the churches themselves, groups of boldfaced beggars who asked for, or rather demanded, alms with threatening words. Augustin Potier, Bishop of the diocese, was worried about the situation. He had a list drawn up of all the beggars and inquired into the extent of their needs. He thought it
Blessed be God that you have arrived in good health! Oh! take great care to preserve it for the love of Our Lord and His poor members and be careful not to do too much. It is a ruse of the devil, by which he deceives good people, to induce them to do more than they are able, so that they end up not being able to do anything. The spirit of God urges one gently to do the good that can be done reasonably, so that it may be done perseveringly and for a long time. Act, therefore, in this way, Mademoiselle, and you will be acting according to the spirit of God.

Now, let us respond to all that you wrote me. It seems to me really advisable that the treasurer be relieved of delivering the wine, and that this duty be given to someone else; because, were the inn to do it, you would have to pay an eighth. Some good would be helpful to create a fund which would be fed by alms and receipts from collections and to set up a central office to collect and distribute the alms. On April 16, 1629, he called the canons, municipal magistrates, and influential people of the city to a meeting in his palace and proposed to them his plan, which was adopted. To put it into action, they called upon Saint Vincent, who came immediately and set to work. He mounted the pulpit, spoke about the Confraternities of Charity, their operation, and their usefulness and soon had the joy of seeing the work established in each of the eighteen parishes. Once that was accomplished, he divided the town into districts to facilitate the distribution of the alms. (Cf. Abelly, op. cit., vol. I, chap. XXIII, p. 108; Delettre, op. cit., vol. III, p. 407; Règlements pour la Charité des pauvres malades establies à Beauvais l’onzième novembre mil six cent trente, Beauvais, 1669.) However, obstacles were not wanting. Alphonse Feillet discovered in the Archives of the Historical Committee of France a draft of indictment drawn up by the Lieutenant of Beauvais to complain "that about two weeks ago there supposedly arrived in this town a certain priest named Vincent. In contempt of the royal authority, without speaking of it to the royal officers nor to any other city group which might have an interest in the matter, he is alleged to have assembled a large number of women whom he had persuaded to join a confraternity, to which he gives the particular name of Charity. He wished to establish it in order to assist and supply with food and other necessities the sick poor of the aforesaid city of Beauvais, and to go around each week to take up a collection of the money that they would like to give for that purpose. All of this is supposed to have been carried out by the aforesaid Vincent and that established confraternity, in which he has supposedly received three hundred women or thereabouts, who, in order to carry out their above-mentioned duties and functions, often gather together, which must not be tolerated." And the Lieutenant of the town, indignant at the boldness "of the priest named Vincent," required a report to be drawn up and sent to the King’s Attorney General. Thanks to the holy man, the town was soon completely transformed.

2The Confraternities of Charity had at their head a superior, assisted by a treasurer, another woman to take care of the storage and distribution of the material goods of the Confraternity, and a procurator.
widow from Basse-Oeuvre or from Saint-Sauveur could easily do it. I think then that this is necessary so that the treasurer may have the time to attend to the management of the work and to the reception and discharge of the sick, for it is not at all appropriate for the nurse to do that, nor should she be paid six sous a day. Eh, bon Dieu! she would carry off most of the liquid assets of the Charity.

Would to God that good Madame de la Croix could follow your advice! It would be worth as much to her as a good religious order would be. As for the drugs, you have done well to deliver them, but your treasurer should not have bought them; she does not realize where that may lead. It would be well to remedy the matter through the Vicar General and the intervention of Monsieur du Rotoir. When the Bishop of Beauvais returns, it would be well to tell him the main facts, if you see that such is agreeable to him. Sometimes he wants this. But, as for getting his blessing, it seems unnecessary to me, because he does not stand on ceremony and likes to be dealt with frankly, and yet respectfully.

As for your lodging, if you have chosen Monsieur Ricard's house, you could not have done better; he is one of the best and most upright men I know; and his wife, whom I know only by reputation, is very devout. Indeed! I know how happy they will both be about it! I certainly hope that you are staying there.

As for M. du Rotoir's misgiving, he is right, and I think it advisable to insert into the rules that the sisters of the Basse-Oeuvre district will take care of the poor who die at Basse-Oeuvre and at Saint-Gilles. But as for the other districts, I think it is quite enough for the ladies of a parish to attend the funerals of their parish only: the sisters of the Saint-Sauveur district, of Saint-Etienne, and of Saint-Martin have too many sick and dying to be

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3 The name of a parish in the town.
4 Nicolas Levesque, who was to become the first superior of the Seminary of Beauvais.
5 Raoul Ricard, an attorney in the presidial court (royal courts established in the sixteenth century to relieve the pressure of appeals to the Parlements. In certain cases they also served as courts of first instance). For thirty years he remained procurator of the Charity of Beauvais.
able to attend all of their funerals and the other parishes are suburbs, each forming a district.

With regard to the collections, you should tell them before you leave that they should spend as many days as necessary in making them. I would really like to know the amount of each collection made. But you must remember, with regard to what I said about the funerals, that the Bishop must express his wish in these matters.

As for myself, I promise to write to Villepreux for the election of the lady to hold office and to speak to Father de Gondi about getting wood for Montmirail. In addition, I promise to let you know how your son is doing on the next trip, since I was not able to do so on this one for want of foresight.

In the meantime, be at peace. When you are honored and esteemed, unite your spirit to the mockeries, contempt, and ill treatment that the Son of God suffered. Surely, Mademoiselle, a truly humble spirit humbles itself as much amid honors as amid insults, acting like the honeybee which makes its honey equally well from the dew that falls on the wormwood as from that which falls on the rose.

I hope that you will make use of them in that way and that you will obtain forgiveness for me from the good Mother Superior of the Ursulines for leaving without receiving her instructions. Please assure the ladies holding office and Monsieur du Rotoir that I remain for them and for you, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

I am not ready to leave for our long trip; some matters of

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6The sisters of the Charities used to beg in churches and in homes. The money collected was placed in a coffer with a double lock, for which the superioress had one key and the treasurer the other.
importance are detaining us here; and Monsieur Lucas who has been seriously ill at the mission in Berry is coming back here. Paris, December 7, 1630

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, at the house of Monsieur du Rotoir, in Beauvais

59. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[1630 or 1631]

I have just received the enclosed from good Germaine. I beg you, Mademoiselle, to answer her for both of us. But I beg you even more humbly to excuse me for having neither come to see you nor invited you to come here. The constant work I have prevents me from doing so.

We have just set up the Charity at Saint-Benoît; but I do not know what spirit is afoot, causing each parish in Paris to want something special of its own and not to want to have any contact with the others. It is almost an insult to them to say; "in other places they do it like this." Or else they want to make a hodgepodge, taking one thing from Saint-Sauveur, another from Saint-

7Antoine Lucas.
8Berry-au-Bac, a little village in Aisne, in the district of Laon.
9Saint Louise's visit to Beauvais bore abundant fruit. The women flocked to her talks; the men managed to hear her by hiding nearby. When she left for Paris, the people accompanied her quite a distance along the road, praising and blessing God for having sent her. Gobillon relates (op. cit., p. 43) that a child who fell under the wheels of her carriage got up unharmed, thanks to her prayers.

Letter 59. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1We read in Abelly (op. cit., vol. I, chap. XXIII, p. 109): "The same year and the one following (1631), this confraternity (the Confraternity of Charity) was established by Monsieur Vincent, with the permission of the Archbishop of Paris and in agreement with the pastors of the parishes of Saint-Médéric (Saint-Méri), Saint-Benoît, and Saint-Sulpice."
Nicolas,² our parish, and yet something else from Saint-Eustache.³

You will be talked about at the Saint-Benoît meeting. Mademoiselle Tranchot is relating wonders about you. Do you think it would be a good idea for you to take the trouble to visit the good woman in order to stabilize⁴ her spirit so that she can strengthen the others? If you have visited her before, you could easily do so under any pretext you might find, for she will not fail to talk to you about it, nor shall I fail to be, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

I am leaving for Montreuil⁵ tomorrow and will return the same day, I hope. Remember us in your prayers. I wish you a good evening.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

60. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Before 1634]¹

If Germaine of Villepreux is accustomed to going to Holy Communion, I do not see any reason why you cannot do the same. Do

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³According to Abelly (op. cit., vol. I, chap. XXIII, p. 109), it would appear that the Confraternity of Saint-Benoît preceded that of Saint-Eustache. We see here that that is not the case.
⁴In the original letter, this word was left incomplete at the end of a line.
⁵Montreuil-sous-Bois, a populous township, situated at the gates of Paris. Saint Vincent had established there, on April 11, 1627, a Confraternity of Charity whose act of foundation is still extant (cf. vol. XIII, no. 138).
¹The advice given to Saint Louise seems to us better suited to the period preceding the institution of the Daughters of Charity (November 29, 1633).
so then, Mademoiselle. If you cannot take the discipline and if you have a belt of little silver rosettes which Mademoiselle du Fay had me get some time ago, use it instead of the discipline and the hairshirt, because they heat the body too much.

60a. - COMMANDER DE SILLERY TO SAINT VINCENT

Reverend and very dear Father,

I have no doubt that, knowing as you do the heart of your poor son, you wished, by your very kind and cordial letter, to fill it with such sweetness from your overflowing goodness that, although it is second to none in

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2In a rule of life which appears to date from 1630 or 1631, Saint Louise binds herself to receive Communion on "Sundays and Tuesdays [here the manuscript is torn], unless there come during the week feast days which oblige her to choose other days." (Ecrits spirituels, A.1.) Since elsewhere (Ecrits spirituels, A. 15 bis) the Foundress tells us herself that she had received from her confessor the order to receive Communion every Saturday, we are of the opinion that in the place where the manuscript is torn there was written "and Saturdays."

3The rule of life mentioned in note 2 states: "In a spirit of penance, I shall take the discipline two or three times, reciting a Pater in honor of Jesus Christ, an Ave in honor of the Blessed Virgin and the De Profundis for the souls in Purgatory. Every Holy Communion day, I shall wear the penitential belt in the morning, and on Fridays I shall wear it all day long." (Ecrits spirituels, A. 1.) Saint Vincent modified the rule and replaced the discipline by "a belt of small silver rosettes."

Letter 60a. - Abelly, op. cit., vol. I, chap. XXXII, 1st ed., p. 149. Coste first numbered this letter 25, but in his corrections in vol. VIII he revised the date he originally assigned. The letter has, therefore, been placed according to the revised date.

1Noël Brulart de Sillery, a member of the Order of the Knights of St. John of Malta and Commander of their establishment in Troyes, was one of Saint Vincent's most glorious conquests. After holding the highest posts at court, after being the Queen's First Squire, then her Knight of Honor, extraordinary Ambassador to Italy, Spain, and later in Rome to Popes Gregory XV and Urban VIII, he renounced public life, left the magnificent Hôtel de Sillery, sold his most sumptuous possessions, dismissed most of his servants, and went to live in a modest house near the first monastery of the Visitation. This took place towards the end of 1632. Saint Vincent, his director, had brought about this miracle. When he saw the Commander detached from all worldly possessions, he taught him how to make good use of his immense fortune. He took him to prisons and hospitals, and initiated him in the practice of all sorts of charity. Noël Brulart de Sillery put on the cassock in 1632, and received holy orders and was ordained a priest in 1634. He celebrated his first Mass on Holy Thursday, April 13, 1634, in the chapel of the Sisters of the Visitation. His priestly life was short, but replete with works of charity. He gave generously to religious congregations, especially to the Visitation,
cordiality, you oblige it, nevertheless, to surrender its weapons to you and acknowledge you, as it does most willingly in this and in everything, as its master and superior. Indeed, a person would really have to be quite ungracious and very uncouth not to be overcome with love for a charity so lovingly exercised by such a worthy and noble father towards a son who only causes him trouble. But nothing can be done about it. I humbly and willingly accept the shame of all the insufficiencies and weaknesses that you put up with in me, after having asked your pardon with all reverence and submission.

I assure you, my very dear Father, that I desire in good earnest, with the grace of Our Lord, to mend my ways. Certainly, my only Father, I think that I have never felt moved in this regard to the point where I am now. Oh! if only we can and do come to the point of working efficaciously on the honest amendment of so many miseries with which Your Reverence knows I am filled and surrounded on all sides, I am sure that you will thereby receive inexpressible consolations. And even though this benefit might not come about so promptly or so notably as your piety might desire, I beseech you, my good Father, per viscera misericordiae Dei nostri in quibus visitavit nos oriens ex alto, not to let your goodness grow weary and never to consent to abandon this poor son. You know well that he would be under too poor a guidance were he to remain under his own.

[Around 1631]


21 "Through the tenderness of the mercy of our God, in which the Orient from on high hath visited us" (D-RB). Lk. 1:78. "All this is the work of the kindness of our God; He, the Dayspring, shall visit us in His mercy" (NAB).

22It was around 1631 that Commander de Sillery began to come to see Saint Vincent (cf. no. 408), and this letter seems to be from the early days of their friendship.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Your son’s letter seems very discreet to me; I think someone helped him. But if he did write it on his own, there is reason to hope that he will become a man of good judgment. I think it will be well for you to defer his return to coincide with yours and for you to go ahead with your trip. Give him a two weeks' delay then and tell him that you will send for him as soon as you come back.² Tell him also that you have decided to place him as a boarder with the Jesuits so that he can study.³ On your return, it will be well to talk to those priests and to reserve a place for him before he comes back, so that he can be sent from the community to the Jesuits in his cassock, without staying at your house. It will be quite expensive; but then, we must believe that one who delights in holy poverty to a sovereign degree cannot be impoverished.

As for my journey, I am not even thinking of it; the long one has been interrupted or, more precisely, postponed, and at present I do not foresee any shorter ones. So be at rest in that regard and go with the blessing of God, which I beg Our Lord to grant you. Honor the tranquillity of His soul and that of His holy Mother and be very cheerful on your trip, since you have good reason to be so in the work in which Our Lord is employing you.

Letter 61. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter precedes, by a day or two at the most, the departure of Saint Louise for Montreuil, where she was on March 31, 1631.

²Young Michel was unhappy at Saint-Nicolas and had written this to his mother. Saint Vincent is of the opinion that he should stay in the seminary until his mother returns from Montreuil.

³At that time the Jesuits had a famous school in Paris, the Collège de Clermont, which has become the Lycée Louis-le-Grand.

⁴The Seminary of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet.
Please tell the Pastor⁵ that, if he wishes you to instruct the girls for the few days that you will be in Montreuil, you will gladly do so. He has gone ahead of you to look for lodgings; in the meantime, stay at the inn. If he urges you to go somewhere else, do it, *in nomine Domini*. The inn in which you will be most comfortable is that of the widow.

Good-bye, Mademoiselle. Remember me in your prayers, who am your most humble servant.

V. DEPAUL

62. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN MONTREUIL

I beg you to let me know how you are and how much you are counting on being in Montreuil. Remember especially to pray to God for me, because yesterday, finding myself between the opportunity of carrying out a promise I had made and an act of charity towards a person who can do us either good or harm, I set aside the act of charity in order to keep my promise and have really upset that person. This does not worry me so much as the fact that I followed my inclination in acting as I did, who am, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, Mademoiselle, your most humble and obedient servant.

V. DEPAUL

Paris, the last day of March, 1631

*Addressed:* Mademoiselle Le Gras

⁵Martin Le Marinel, a priest of the diocese of Coutances, who was named Pastor of Montreuil in 1627 and died in 1637.

**Letter 62.** - Autograph letter. According to Coste, the original was at the house of the Daughters of Charity, 10 rue Alexandre-Parodi, Paris. This house is no longer in existence and the present location of the letter is unknown.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I was quite consoled to receive news of your health and your work and I beg God to bless them both more and more. May He be your consolation when I sadden you, as I did last week, and during the interior trials with which it shall please God to afflict you.

I am satisfied with everything you told me about the Charity. Please propose to the sisters whatever you find appropriate in that regard, and draw it up, as much according to what you have written me as to what you will consider best, and I shall send you the formal rule between now and Sunday.1

As for your son, be at peace.2 When you come back, we shall talk about him, and I shall do what is necessary. I shall be in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

V. DEPAUL

Feast of Saint Francis of Paula [April 2, 1631]3

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, in Montreuil

Letter 63. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1This letter was written on Wednesday.

2See no. 61.

3This letter belongs with nos. 62 and 64.
Blessed be God, Mademoiselle, for the blessing and good health He is giving you! I shall send you, by the Pastor or by someone else, the rules for the Charity which I have adapted to the needs of Montreuil. Look them over and, if anything should be deleted or added, please let me know.

Taking up the collection in the village will be difficult. God has taken care of that by the alms given in church and there is good reason to expect the same for the future. The people are given to mockery in that area and the women might give up everything. That task may be done by the curate, according to the rules; I have spoken to the Pastor about it. Since he cannot go there himself, he is sending you Monsieur Bécu.

As for your removing someone, it is better to bear with all those who promise to do their duty well and then reduce the number to sixty, as the members die. Those received into the Charity will be considered members of the Saint-Nom-de-Jésus, and it will not be necessary to belong to the latter in order to belong to the former.

Three things should be done today: propose the rules to them in the names of the Archbishop and the Pastor; proceed to a new

Letter 64. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1The comparison of this letter with no. 63 shows us that it is in its correct place here. We think that it was written the following Sunday, April 6.

2Martin Le Marinel.

3Because of the ridicule which might have discouraged the women who were taking up the collection.

4The same result.

5The collection.

6Jean Bécu.

7We read in the act of foundation of the Confraternity: "To avoid a multiplicity of confraternities, we have, with the consent of the members of the Confraternity of the Saint-Nom-de-Jésus, united and incorporated the said Confraternity of Charity with that of the Saint-Nom-de-Jésus, established at Montreuil." (Cf. vol. XIII, no. 138.)

8Jean-François de Gondi, first Archbishop of Paris and brother of Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi, former General of the Galleys, did a great deal for Saint Vincent all during his
election; and, thirdly, fix the number of volunteers. As for the rest, present it when you see them again on Sunday. You should require them to meet on that day, or at least the officers, upon whom you will please impress their duty and that of the confraternity.

Your son is fine, according to what Monsieur Le Juge⁹ has informed me. He is the one who sent him your letter. So, be at peace in that regard. Meanwhile, I shall speak to the collège of the Jesuits on his behalf.¹⁰

We are busy with our ordination retreats;¹¹ I recommend their success to your prayers and I beg you to take care of your health.

Yesterday, Mademoiselle Sevin¹² was talking about going with Madame de Châteaufort¹³ to visit you, if she can.

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episcopate (1622-1654). He gave him the directorship of the Collège des Bons-Enfants, approved the document of foundation and the first rules of the Congregation of the Mission, and allowed him to become established at Saint-Lazare. In a word, he backed him in all his good works. His name, together with those of his brother and sister-in-law, ranks high on the list of benefactors of the Congregation of the Mission.

Thomas Le Juge was one of the chief assistants of Monsieur Bourdoise. He was a member of the community of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet as early as 1621. He became treasurer of the Seminary, January 27, 1647, and was reelected July 25, 1650. He died blind in 1653. (Cf. Schoenher, op. cit., vol. I, p. 182; Darche, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 433 and 479.)

¹See no. 61.

¹¹Retreats for the ordinands were given at the Bons-Enfants at that time.

¹²Mademoiselle Sevin, née Marie Véron, was the sister of the learned Pastor of Charenton, François Véron, renowned in his day as a controversialist. She was the mother of Gertrude-Elizabeth Sevin, who had just entered the monastery of the Visitation. Her husband, Jacques Sevin, a reader in the Audit Office, had died in December 1615. It was she who introduced into all the parishes of Paris the use of the soup kettle for the distribution of assistance to the poor. Her great charity and the proximity of her house had brought her into contact with Saint Vincent, who often made use of her advice. (Cf. Année sainte des religieuses de la Visitation Sainte-Marie [12 vols., Annecy: Ch. Burdet, 1867-1871], vol. IV, pp. 263-264.)

¹³Perhaps Honorée or Honorade de Forbin, wife of the Sieur d’Aguillenqui, Seigneur de Châteaufort.
Paris, Friday, April 11, 1631

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The short trip I made to the country, from which I returned the night before last, along with the ordinands' retreat which we opened again yesterday, prevented me from taking care of your son's business. Nevertheless, I have secured the word of Father Lallemant, the head of the Jesuit collège, that he will accept him as a boarder and I am now going to send your letter to M. Wiart. I have been told that God is blessing your work, for which I thank Him with all my heart. I beg Him to bring you back replete with health and good works, whichever day next week you think suitable in order to be here for the Holy Week services.

I am sending you a letter addressed to me, but I have only just now read the note in which you ask me to forward to Mme Forest a painting, a pot, and a package delivered here, which I have been uncertain about sending. I shall do so tomorrow, with the help of

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Letter 65. - Autograph letter. Dodin, in *Mission et Charité*, 19-20, placed the original in the house of the Daughters of Charity of the Hôtel-Dieu in Narbonne. This house is no longer in existence and the present location of the letter is unknown.

The letter was published with the layout and spelling of the original in the *Annales* (1958), pp. 625-626 and reprinted with modern spelling in *Mission et Charité*, 19-20, pp. 5-6. Coste published only part of it, using the text available to him in the Saint Paul manuscript (vol. I, pp. 106-107). In his citation for the letter, Coste established that its content led him to assign Friday, April 11, 1631, as its date: it was written the week prior to Holy Week; Palm Sunday fell on April 13, therefore, April 11 would be Friday of the preceding week, not April 2 (a Wednesday), as Charavay, a dealer in autograph letters, stated in the catalogue which announced the sale of the letter.

1Jérôme Lallemant (or Lallemand) was born in Paris in 1593, entered the Company of Jesus in 1610, and died in Quebec in 1665.

2François Wiart (or Wyart), a priest of the Community of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet, was born in Marles in the diocese of Laon and died in 1661 in Laon where he was trying to establish the seminary. He was treasurer or Superior of the Nicolaites from 1639 to 1647.

3A Lady of Charity whom Saint Vincent directed. At the process of beatification of Saint Vincent, twenty-seven letters which he had written to Madame Forest were submitted to the tribunal. All these letters have been lost.
God. Meanwhile, you see how unworthy I am of use and of serving as I ought. Our Lord will forgive me if He so desires. I am in His love, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, in Montreuil

66. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN MONTREUIL

[April 1631]

I received your letter of Wednesday, Mademoiselle, upon my return from the mission; I got back that same day. I have sent you the answer by the Pastor of Montreuil. I was telling you in my letter how I secured a place which they promised me for your son among the boarders. The headmaster himself promised it to me very readily. I have, moreover, sent to Monsieur Yart the letter that you wrote to him, according to which I expect that your son will soon be here.

Since God has not allowed you to do anything further for the Charity, we must praise Him for this and believe that He wishes nothing else for the present. Now, since your girls have been trained, what remains to be done, and what is preventing you from returning tomorrow? They really need you here at the Charity of Saint-Sulpice. They have made some beginning but, according to what I have been told, things are going so badly that it is a real pity. Perhaps God is reserving for you the opportunity to work there.

Letter 66. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1This letter was written at the beginning of Holy Week, Tuesday, April 15, at the latest.
2The Saint's absence was short; he had gone to find out the results of a mission given by his priests.
3No. 65.
4François Wyart or Wyart.
I am leaving today, if I can, to go six leagues from here, and I hope to come back tomorrow. In the meantime, I am in the love of Our Lord your most humble servant.

V. DEPAUL

_Addressed_: Mademoiselle Le Gras, in Montreuil

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67. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saturday, at nine o’clock [April 1631]

Mademoiselle,

I was promising myself the consolation of coming to see you, but I had to leave unexpectedly for the Bois de Vincennes. Your dear heart will forgive me and on my return, with the help of God, we shall talk about everything. Let me tell you in advance, however, that I am delighted the boy has decided on the collège. On the other hand, as far as the cost of the room and board is concerned, it cannot be helped. We must enter by this door to get him used to it. I believe that the room and board is two hundred livres per person, and I think that there are some who pay more; but I trust that he will be satisfied with that.

As for the person you wish to replace, there is no danger in having someone according to your own inclination; but the one you mention to me will not be suitable for you, as I see it. You need someone entirely new and faithful, who respects and fears you, and thinks the same way as you do; ask God for such a one.

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Letter 67. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1This letter appears to have been written before the schools reopened, perhaps on the first Saturday following Easter week, i.e., April 26.

2A locality in the suburbs east of Paris.

3The Collège de Clermont.
As for the foreclosure you mention, there is no difficulty in using it as you have explained to me.

Adieu, my dear daughter, stay quite cheerful. On my return we shall discuss this whole plan and your trip in the country. Do not let your heart grumble against mine for leaving without speaking to you, because I did not know anything about this in the morning. I hope to see you again in eight to ten days. Meanwhile, I am your servant. ⁴

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68. - TO ISABELLE DU FAY

[Between 1626 and 1632] ¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Here I am at home but wondering whether or not I should return to the country for a week or so. Because we have some matters that will keep me busy today and will deprive me of the pleasure of coming to your house to see you, I most humbly beg you to be so kind, if you are in the neighborhood around two o'clock, as to send for me at Mademoiselle Le Gras' house. I shall come to see you or shall ask you to come to Sainte-Marie in the faubourg, ² in

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¹The letter was very likely signed; however, due to inept cutting, the bottom of the original has disappeared.

Letter 68. - Reg. 1, p. 4. The copyist notes that the original letter was in the Saint's own handwriting.

²On the one hand, the name of Mademoiselle du Fay does not appear in any of the letters which are definitely from before 1626; on the other hand, this letter seems to have been written before Saint Vincent went to live at Saint-Lazare (January 8, 1632).

²The second monastery of the Visitation, established by Mother de Beaumont, August 13, 1626, in M. Le Clerc's house in the faubourg Saint-Jacques, thanks to the generosity of the Marquise de Dampierre and of Madame de Villeneuve. Saint Vincent was its Superior and Marie-Jacqueline Favre, the Superioress. (Cf. Histoire chronologique des fondations de l'ordre de la Visitation Sainte-Marie, Bibl. Maz., ms. 2439.)

Anne-Catherine de Beaumont-Carra was one of the mainstays of the Visitation. From the monastery of Annecy, where she had spent the first years of her religious life, she had
case I cannot get to the aforesaid lady's house at that time. You see, Mademoiselle, how firmly convinced I am that you are quite available and willing to accommodate yourself to the need of the moment. What a blessed state to be in!

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

69. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[May 1631]

My slight indisposition is not my usual little fever but a sore leg caused by a kick from a horse and a small tumor that had begun a week or two before that. It is so trifling that, were it not for a little tenderness it is causing, I would not fail to go into town. Thank you for your solicitude but please do not worry about it at all because it is nothing.

With regard to the interior trial\(^2\) that caused you to abstain from Holy Communion today, you made a rather poor decision. Do you not see clearly that this is a temptation? And should you in this case yield the advantage to the enemy of Holy Communion? Do you think you will become more capable of drawing near to God by withdrawing from Him than you will by approaching Him? Oh! surely, that is an illusion!

accompained Saint Jane Frances de Chantal to Bourges for the foundation of a new establishment. The first monastery of Paris chose her as its head in 1622 and again in 1625. During her second triennium she established the second monastery in Paris of which she was also elected and reelected Superioress. Subsequently, she directed the convent in Grenoble (1629-1635) and that of Pignerol (1644), and then founded an establishment in Toulouse (1647). She died there on January 30, 1656 (cf. vol. III, no. 949).

Letter 69. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

\(^1\)Saint Vincent would not have waited any longer to tell Saint Louise to write and thank M. Bourdoise.

\(^2\)In his first draft, Saint Vincent had written "pain" (douleur).
Regarding little Michel, is that not another temptation for you to get upset because of anxiety over your obligation to take care of him? Oh! Our Lord most certainly did well not to choose you for His Mother, since you do not think you can discern the Will of God in the maternal care He demands of you for your son. Or perhaps you feel that that will prevent you from doing the Will of God in other matters. Certainly not, because the Will of God is not opposed to the Will of God. Honor, therefore, the tranquillity of the Blessed Virgin in such a case.

I am very glad that you will be sending the good child to us tomorrow and that he will be spending the morning here. I also hope that you will allow him to do some painting while he is here, and that you will honor Our Lord's peace of soul by perfect acquiescence to His holy Will in all things.

As for the community,3 it would be well for you to take the trouble of thanking them warmly. But as for a gift, I do not think you can do anything much for them right now. Honor the holy poverty of Our Lord.4 Besides, nothing will please them so much as the gratitude of words. And if little Michel were to write a thank-you note to M. Bourdoise, it seems to me that that would be fine.

Please remember Saint-Sulpice and me in your prayers. I am your servant.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

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3The community of priests of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet. Little Michel had lived with them about three or four years.

4This sentence and the preceding one were scratched out. The type of ink would indicate that Saint Vincent himself crossed out the word "much," in the first sentence, and the entire second sentence.
I am hoping for much fruit from on high through the goodness of Our Lord, if union, cordiality, and support exist between you two. In the name of God, Monsieur, let this be your principal practice. Because you are the older, the second in the Company, and the Superior, bear with everything, I say, everything, on the part of good M. Lucas. I repeat, everything, so that, laying aside your superiority, you may adapt yourself to him in charity. That is the way Our Lord won over and directed the Apostles, and that is how you shall succeed with M. Lucas.

Therefore, humor him, never contradict him on the spur of the moment, but admonish him later cordially and humbly. Above all, let there appear no sign of division between you. You are, as it were, on a stage upon which one act of bitterness is capable of spoiling everything. I hope you will conduct yourself in this manner and that God will make use of a million acts of virtue, which you will practice in this way, as the basis and foundation of the good you are to do in that region.

71. - TO SAINT LOUISE

I thank you for the money [you] sent me, Mademoiselle, and ask you to mortify yourself by not hearing Mass here tomorrow. I
shall say it about four o'clock and you could not get up at that hour without placing yourself in danger of a relapse.

As for the rest, I beg you, once and for all, not to give it a thought until Our Lord makes it evident that He wishes it, and at present He is giving indications to the contrary. We want a number of good things with a desire that seems to be of God, and yet it is not always from Him. God permits it that way to prepare the soul to be what we desire. Saul was looking for a she-ass and found a kingdom; Saint Louis, for the conquest of the Holy Land, and he found the conquest of himself and a heavenly crown. You are trying to become the servant of those poor young women,² and God wants you to be His own, and perhaps of more people than you would be in that way. And even if you were only His, is it not enough for God that your heart is honoring the tranquillity of Our Lord's? Then it will be fit and ready to serve Him. The kingdom of God is peace in the Holy Spirit; He will reign in you if your heart is at peace. So, be at peace, Mademoiselle, and you will honor in a sovereign way the God of peace and love.

I recommend myself to your prayers and wish you a good evening with as much tenderness of my heart as I am, in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

72. - TO FRANCOIS DU COUDRAY, IN ROME

July 20, 1631

So, you have finally arrived in Rome, there where the visible head of the Church militant resides, where the bodies of Saint

²The young women whom Saint Louise was using to teach the children in the villages and to care for the sick in the Confraternities of Charity.


¹We know the fruitless steps that the Saint had taken in 1628 to obtain approbation for his Institute. The only way to attain it was to have a procurator in Rome, whose job it would be to
Peter and Saint Paul lie, as well as those of so many other martyrs and holy people who, in former times, gave their blood and dedicated their whole life to Jesus Christ. O Monsieur, how fortunate you are to walk on the ground where so many great and holy individuals have trod! This consideration moved me to such an extent when I was in Rome thirty years ago that, although I was burdened with sins, I could not help being moved, even to tears, it seems to me. I think, Monsieur, that it was this same consideration that strengthened and preserved you the night you arrived in Rome, where, after an exhausting walk of thirty miles, you were obliged to sleep on the ground and to struggle all the next day in the heat of the sun to get into the city. Oh, how many merits you gained in that way!

73. - TO FRANCOIS DU COUDRAY, IN ROME

You must make it understood that the poor are being damned for want of knowing the things necessary for salvation, and for lack of confession. If His Holiness were aware of this necessity, he would have no rest until he had done all he could to set things right. It is the knowledge we had of this situation that brought about the establishment of the Company, so as to remedy it in some way. In order to do this, we must live in a congregation and observe five things as essential for this purpose:

represent him and negotiate in his name. François du Coudray was chosen and left in May 1631. On January 12, 1633, the Congregation of the Mission was officially recognized and the favors requested for it were granted.

The trip that Saint Vincent made to Rome in 1607, after his captivity, was not his first. The Saint states several times in his conferences to the Missionaries (Conf. of October 17, 1659, 2nd point [cf. vol. XII, no. 214]) and to the Daughters of Charity (Conf. of May 30, 1647, and of September 19, 1649 [cf. vol. IX, nos. 30 and 41]), that he had seen Clement VIII, who occupied the Chair of Saint Peter from 1592 to 1605.

1. leave to the bishops the power of sending the Missionaries into the part of the diocese they choose;

2. the above-mentioned priests are to be subject to the pastors where they go to give the mission, for its duration;

3. they are to take nothing from those poor people, but live at their own expense;

4. they are neither to preach, nor catechize, nor hear confessions in cities where there is an archbishopric, a bishopric, or a presidial court, except in the case of ordinands and those who will make retreats in the house;

5. the Superior of the Company is to have complete control over it; and these five maxims are to be as it were the basic principles of this Congregation.

Notice that M. Duval's¹ advice is that nothing be changed in the plan for which I am sending you the notes. The words do not matter; but as for the substance, it must remain intact. Otherwise, anything changed or deleted would be greatly detrimental. So, stand firm and make them understand that we have had this in mind for many long years and have had experience with it.

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¹André Duval, renowned Doctor of the Sorbonne, author of several learned works, friend and advisor of Saint Vincent, was born in Pontoise, January 15, 1564, and died in Paris, September 9, 1638. The Saint never made an important decision without having recourse to his learning. He asked his advice before accepting Saint-Lazare (cf. Abelly, op. cit, vol. I, chap. XXII, p. 97) and before establishing vows in the Congregation of the Mission (letter of October 4, 1647, to Antoine Portail [vol. III, no. 993]). The humble doctor got upset one day when he saw his portrait in one of the rooms at Saint-Lazare. He insisted so much that Saint Vincent had to remove the picture. (Cf. Robert Duval, Vie d'André Duval, docteur de Sorbonne, ms. [Robert Duval was the nephew of André Duval]; J. Calvet, "Un confesseur de Saint Vincent," in the Petites Annales de Saint Vincent, May 1903, p. 135.)
74. TO SAINT LOUISE

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

You are a skillful woman to have adapted the rule of the Charity\(^2\) in this way; I think it is fine.

As for the Attorney General,\(^3\) I do not know if there is any harm in telling him that it is the same one I establish wherever we go to give the mission. He indicated to me some time ago that he really wanted it established in Paris and instructed me to talk over means of doing so with the Pastor of Saint-Nicolas\(^4\) and with the late Pastor of Saint-Sauveur;\(^5\) but that did not work out well.

You did not tell me whether the Pastor of Saint-Nicolas had been to the Archbishop's residence.

I would like to know whether there is any contagion\(^6\) around

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Letter 74. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

\(^1\)This letter was written shortly after the establishment of the Charity of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet, at a time when the plague was raging in Paris. These two circumstances joined together clearly indicate the year 1631.

\(^2\)Saint Louise adapted the General Rules for the Confraternity of Charity (cf. vol. XIII, nos. 124-125) to suit the particular circumstances required by the Confraternity of Saint-Nicolas (cf. vol. XIII, no. 141).

\(^3\)Mathieu Mole, born in Paris in 1584, became Attorney General in 1614 and First President [chief justice] of the Parlement of Paris in 1641. Appointed Keeper of the Seals, April 3, 1651, he lost the office on the thirteenth because of political pressure resulting from the Fronde, but he was reappointed on the ninth of September. He held the position of First President of Parlement until the Queen Regent, Anne of Austria, summoned him to the Royal Court outside Paris. He died January 3, 1656. (Cf. Amable-Guillaumé-Prospé Brugière, Baron de Barante, Le Parlement et la Fronde. La vie de Mathieu Mole [Paris: Didier, 1859].)

\(^4\)The gentle and zealous Georges Froger, Doctor of the Sorbonne, had been Pastor of Saint-Nicolas since 1603. He directed the community of the Daughters of the Cross for five years and died September 3, 1656.

\(^5\)Hollandre, Doctor of the Sorbonne. He was replaced May 5, 1628, by Jacques Fournier, a native of Le Mans.

\(^6\)The plague of 1631 caused terrifying ravages. In the course of a door to door collection to remedy the financial straits of the hospitals, people had had the imprudence to accept sheets and linen. These gifts, divided between the Hôtel-Dieu, which had two-thirds of them, and the hospitals of poor shut-ins, spread the contagion. The Saint-Louis Hospital was filled with the plague-stricken, and that of the Santé also opened its doors to them. In October 1631, the
that parish or within it and whether your ladies\textsuperscript{7} are afraid.

I am going to drink some of Monsieur Deure\textquotesingle s water soon. God grant that I may make good use of it, if it is beneficial for me.

I almost forgot to tell you that if the Attorney General mentions to you that he will speak to me about the matter, make him understand that I do not go out. If he raises no objections on the subject, you do not have to mention me to him. I am, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT

74a. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Mademoiselle,

Madame Laurent\textsuperscript{2} is coming to see you, having considered that the most appropriate for the present. I am sending you the letters I had written for her; use them according to your prudence. I praise God that you are now better than when you left and beg Him to fill you with peace and tranquillity. I doubt that M. is capable of what you say or that the young woman is fit to follow you. I think we need to postpone the decision on that.

Hotel-Dieu and the hospitals of Saint-Louis and Saint-Marcel had more than twenty-four hundred patients. The Hôtel-Dieu borrowed twenty thousand livres and the Archbishop of Paris ordered his priests to solicit and collect relief. The plague raged most violently during the months of September and October. Paris had already been tried by the terrible disease in 1623 and 1625. The plague appeared again in 1636 and 1638, but did not last long and could be localized. (Cf. Michel Félibien, op. cit., vol. V, pp. 69, 80, 82.)

\textsuperscript{7}The Ladies of Charity of Saint-Nicolas.

Letter 74a. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 81. Originally no. 89 in the Coste edition.

\textsuperscript{1}According to Coste (vol. I, p. 136, n. 1), this letter is closely linked to nos. 79 and 81 and preceded both of them. It was written in July or August and, therefore, as Coste advised in the corrections he listed in his vol. VIII, it has been placed between nos. 74 and 75. Saint Louise probably received it in Villepreux.

\textsuperscript{2}A Lady of Charity.
When will you be coming back? Will it be this week? It will be when good Madame Laurent’s initiation permits. I think I shall begin the visitation of the faubourg\(^3\) tomorrow. Someone wrote me about a good young woman from a place near Pontoise, who is quite suitable and very anxious to serve God by instructing children. I am, in the love of Our Lord.

75. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[September 2, 1631]\(^1\)

These lines will serve to tell you good-bye once again and to entreat you to take good care of your health. As for your son’s, do not worry about it; we are looking after him.\(^2\) Please write to us often.

I am writing to Father de Gondi that I think it is a good idea for you to go and begin in Le Mesnil.\(^3\) According to the success of the venture, we shall see about the other place. If I do not mention any other to you, Bergier\(^4\) seems the most suitable to me, then Loisy.\(^5\) Monsieur Ferrat, the bailiff of the estates,\(^6\) who lives in Vertus,\(^7\) will introduce you everywhere. I shall write to this M. Ferrat and to the Pastor of Le Mesnil. You will get the letters Friday morning in Montmirail.

Meanwhile, banish from your mind the reason you advanced to me for taking this trip. You could not imagine how that has sad-

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\(^3\)Second monastery of the Visitation located in the faubourg Saint-Jacques.

Letter 75. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

\(^1\)This date is marked on the blank page of the original; its accuracy may be questioned. The letter is certainly not earlier than August 29.

\(^2\)It was vacation time.

\(^3\)Le Mesnil-sur-Oger (Marne).

\(^4\)Bergeres-lès-Vertus (Marne).

\(^5\)Loisy-en-Brie, where the Saint had preached a mission in 1626.

\(^6\)Bailiff of Father de Gondi’s estates. The bailiff rendered justice in the name of his lord.

\(^7\)Principal town of a canton in Marne.
dened my heart. Oh no! I am not made that way, thank God; but God knows what he has communicated to me with regard to you, and you will understand in heaven.

I bid a good day to Mademoiselle du Fay, and to you, that you may return replete with merit and good works. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

V. D.

76. - TO THE PASTOR OF BERGERES

Monsieur,

Because Father de Gondi has seen the great good Mademoiselle Le Gras is doing in Montmirail and Villepreux by the instruction of the girls, he wanted to procure the same benefit for those in your parish and has asked this good lady to take the trouble of going to see you for that purpose. In her kindness, she has graciously consented to do so. She is on her way, therefore, and I beg you most humbly to assure me, Monsieur, that you will be quite pleased that Our Lord is presenting you with this opportunity for the benefit of the souls He has entrusted to you. I hope, Monsieur, that you and your parishioners will be consoled by it, if God chooses to give to her work among you a blessing similar to those He has given in the other places she has been.

Now, so that your people may be aware of Father de Gondi’s intention, will you please be so kind as to notify them during the sermon and encourage them to send their daughters to the above-mentioned lady’s house at the times she will suggest to you? She is also quite experienced in matters concerning the Charities. I beg you, Monsieur, to have her visit the women of the confraternity

Letter 76. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 15.
and to remember me in your prayers, who am, in the love of Our Lord. . . .

Paris, September 2, 1631

77. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN MONTMIRAIL

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Here are some letters that I am sending you for the Pastors in Champagne and for Monsieur Ferrat. Seal them, if you deem it advisable to give them to them, because I think there will be no harm done, whatever Father de Gondi may write. He wrote to me of the affection with which he was awaiting you; I hope you will rest satisfied with it.

I am still of the opinion that you should begin at Le Mesnil and [go] from there to Bergier,¹ Loisy, Soulières,² Souderon,³ and Villeseneux,⁴ unless the Bishop,⁵ Monsieur Ferrat, or your own prudence judges it better to act otherwise.

I am not sending you any other report since I do not think it is necessary. The spirit of Our Lord will be your rule and your tact. I commend myself to your prayers for our retreat,⁶ which I am going to begin as soon as I finish this letter. I am, meanwhile, in

Letter 77. - The original autograph letter is at the Provincial House of the Daughters of Charity in Lille.

¹Bergères.
²A commune in Marne.
³Souadron (Marne).
⁴Another commune in the same department.
⁵Henri Clausse de Fleury, Bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne (1624-1640).
⁶Saint Vincent and the members of his Community had the custom of making their annual retreat in common, usually in September.
the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Paris, September 2, 1631

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, in Montmirail

78. - TO FRANCOIS DU COUDRAY, IN ROME

September 4, 1631

A great person of rank, remarkable for his doctrine and piety, was telling me yesterday that he is of the opinion of Saint Thomas, namely, that he who is ignorant of the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation, and dies in that state, dies in a state of damnation. He maintains that this is the basis of Christian doctrine. Now, that touched me and still touches me so deeply, that I am afraid of being damned myself for not being unceasingly engaged in the instruction of the poor common people. What a motive for compassion! Who will excuse us before God for the loss of such a great number of people, who could be saved by the slight assistance we could give them? Would to God that so many good ecclesiastics who could assist them in the midst of the world might do so! Beg God, Monsieur, to grant us the grace of redoubling our zeal for the salvation of these poor souls.
You are always admirable in your humility. I receive a very great and quite special consolation from it, but particularly from the satisfaction you say you experienced during the visitation you made to our house in the faubourg. The Superior also writes me that she and all her daughters derived very great pleasure from it. May God be blessed, praised, and glorified for everything and may He be pleased to give my dearest Father a great crown for the pains he takes and the acts of kindness he performs for our good Sisters! Alas, dearest Father, how good you always are to me! I know this because of those few tears you shed when you saw the overall tone of our most recent responses.

We are leading a life in Paris almost as solitary as that of the Carthusians. Since we are neither preaching, nor catechizing, nor hearing confessions in the city, almost no one has anything to do with us nor we with them. This solitude makes us long for work in the country; and that work, for solitude.

1 Second monastery of the Visitation in Paris, located in the faubourg Saint-Jacques.
2 Marie-Jacqueline Favre who was "the first religious, the second professed, and the second Mother" of the Visitation (cf. Année Sainte, vol. VI, p. 346). Her biography was written by Mother Françoise-Madeleine de Chaugy, Vies des premières Religieuses de la Visitation Sainte-Marie (2 vols., Paris: Julien Lanier et Cie, 1852), vol. I, pp. 3-120. She was born in Chambéry in April 1592, the daughter of Antoine Favre, President of the Council of the Genevans, then First President in the Senate of Savoy, and of Benoîte Favre. She was one of the two companions of the Baronne de Chantal at the time of the foundation of the Visitation on June 6, 1610. She was successively elected Superior of the first monastery of Lyons (1615), of Montferrand (1620), of Dijon (1622 and 1625), of the second monastery of Paris (1628), and of Chambéry (1635). She founded the Visitation of Bourg-en-Bresse in 1627 and died in Chambéry, June 14, 1637, at the age of forty-five.

Letter 80. - Reg. 2, p. 34.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Since Providence is detaining you in Montmirail, you must adore it and do what God is presenting to you. It does not matter if that individual has a somewhat bad reputation; perhaps she has it wrongly or, then again, she may have mended her ways. Magdalen, from the moment of her conversion, became a companion of the Virgin and a follower of Our Lord. Since I am a great sinner, I cannot reject those who have been, provided they have good will. And then, perhaps it is the Prior who suggested that thought to Father de Gondi, to whom I shall say nothing about the affair; I think he will take care of it without saying anything. If not, please write and let me know.

As far as going to some villages around Montmirail is concerned, they are very far apart. There does not seem to be anything to do there, considering even the season.

An indisposition that I had when Madame Rousseau’s son came here did not allow me to speak to him, but I offered to be of service to him and I shall. Please assure his mother of this.

As for your son, he spent a very fine day here yesterday. He is well, thank God. We shall have him purged when it is time. He was promoted to the third year. Monsieur Dehorgny assures you that he will write to you; but the short time we had to let him know about it is the reason for your not receiving any letters at this time. Do not be anxious about him.

Madame Laurent returned ill from Villepreux four or five days

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Letter 81. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

Jean Josse, born at Chateau-Thierry around 1583, Prior of Montmirail from 1620 to September 23, 1636, the day of his death. (Cf. Alexandre-Clément Boitel, Histoire de Montmirail-en-Brie [Montmirail: Brodard, 1862], p. 75.)

The school year had just begun at the Collège de Clermont where Michel Le Gras, then eighteen years old, was a boarder.

A Lady of Charity. She was probably teaching the girls in Villepreux in the place of Germaine who was accompanying Saint Louise on her round of visits.
ago. M. Belin is going to teach the girls. I told him he will be relieved of that burden in a week or so, and I have spoken to a good young woman who will not be able to get there until the time I just said.

I know nothing about the tablecloths you mentioned. I shall thank Mademoiselle du Fay for them. As for Mademoiselle Guérin, I am going to find out whether she sent any here. She came to say good-bye to me this morning because she is leaving for Chartres. She told me it was because of the disease, which is spreading here. Between your house and this one, there are two infested dwellings. M. Guérin and his eldest son, however, are staying here.

Mademoiselle du Fay is ever so slightly indisposed. M. de Vincy\(^4\) came to see me yesterday and assured me that it is nothing. I can tell you the same for myself; I have not even had my little sensations\(^5\) for two days.

Germaine’s brother came here today. I gave him her letter and the distaff. He is off to Villepreux, where he will pass on news of her.

How is the Charity coming along? Are the women doing all right? Do they have many sick people and plenty of money? Is Mademoiselle du Fresne in Montmirail? How is she? I greet her with all my heart and her mother as well. I am not mentioning Monsieur du Fresne, for I think he is at Court, but I send my regards to Germaine. I also want to tell you that Madame de Marillac,\(^6\) the Marshal’s wife, is in Le Roule,\(^7\) very ill with diar-

\(^4\)Antoine Hennequin, Sieur de Vincy, and brother of Mademoiselle du Fay.

\(^5\)Saint Vincent is referring to the chills associated with the fever from which he often suffered.

\(^6\)Catherine de Médicis, the Queen’s cousin and wife of the Marshal Louis de Marillac, Louise’s uncle. The Marshal had been languishing in the state prisons since the end of 1630, a victim of Richelieu’s rancor. It is said that grief contributed greatly to Madame de Marillac’s illness; she died the very day Vincent wrote this letter. A detailed account of her death is found in a letter from Father Menant to the Marshal (Bibl. nat. fr. 20.150, f. 203).

\(^7\)At that time a hamlet situated outside Paris. It was incorporated into the capital in 1722. (Cf. Abbé Lebeuf, Histoire de la ville et de tout le diocèse de Paris [7 vols., Paris: Féchoz et Letouzey, 1883-1893], vol. VI, p. 515.)
rhea. Honor the patience of the Blessed Virgin in this and offer your grief to God. Would she not be most fortunate to leave this land of misery and go to enjoy the glory of Heaven?

Mademoiselle Guérin is writing to you and I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Paris, September 13, 1631

82. - TO ISABELLE DU FAY

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am much obliged to you, Mademoiselle, for sharing with me the state in which you find yourself. I thank you for this and entreat you to take things really easy and to get good medical treatment in order to recover your strength, and then to take care of it so that you can afterwards serve God. Our Lord wills it so, Mademoiselle, and I ask it of you.

O mon Dieu! how admirable and adorable are the ways by which He leads His own, Mademoiselle! Surely nothing is too much for Him when there is question of sanctifying a soul. He hands over body and soul to weakness in order to fortify them in contempt of earthly things and in the love of His Majesty: He wounds and He heals them; He crucifies them on His cross in order to glorify them in His glory; in brief, He gives them death in order to have them live in eternity. Let us accept these appearances of evil in order to have the real goods they produce,

Letter 82. - Reg. 1, p° 13 v°. The copyist notes that the original was entirely in the Saint's handwriting.

*The year during which the plague raged unremittingly in Paris.*
Mademoiselle, and we shall be very happy both in this world and the next.

Furthermore, I thank the Mother of the daughters for the honor she does me of remembering me, and I promise to make amends to her for her complaints. O mon Dieu! how I am looking forward to a good quarter of an hour hearing her tell how her daughters have been treating her and how the community has been. But I really do not wish this to be too soon, for the number of illnesses is increasing or, at least, is not diminishing. Today I was informed that yesterday three bodies were taken from a house near Mademoiselle Le Gras and that a Father of the Oratory died at Saint-Jacques and another at Notre-Dame-des-Vertus.

I wish you a good evening and am your servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

83. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN LE MESNIL

September 15, 1631

Mademoiselle,

Yesterday, I received your letter of the twenty-third of last month, in which I read what you had to say about that clergyman.

If the Bishop of Châlons has not sent for you and if he is nearby, I think you would do well to go to see him and tell him

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2It seems from this letter that Mademoiselle du Fay had a place to live outside of Paris in a community, probably at the convent of the Dominicans of Poissy. (Cf. no. 13.)
3Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas.
4Aubervilliers, a much visited place of pilgrimage known as Notre-Dame-des-Vertus or des Miracles. The Fathers of the Oratory had an establishment there.

Letter 83. - Probably an autograph letter. The original was put on sale by Charavay, March 28, 1874. It was published, no doubt from a copy made at that time, in the Pemartin edition (1882), vol. I, pp. 28-29. This letter, taken from Mission et Charité, 19-20, pp. 7-8, adds the first and last paragraphs of the Pemartin edition to the letter published by Coste, vol. I, pp. 126-127.

1The date given by Charavay.
2Henri Clausse de Fleury, Bishop of Châlons from 1624 to 1640.
quite simply and frankly why Father de Gondi asked you to take the trouble of coming to Champagne and what you are doing. Offer to curtail whatever he wishes in your manner of acting and to discontinue everything, if he so desires. That is the spirit of God. I find no blessing at all except in that. The Bishop of Châlons is a holy man; you must look upon him as the interpreter of God’s Will in the present situation. If he thinks it well for you to change something in your way of doing things, please be exact in doing it. If he thinks you should come back home, do so calmly and cheerfully, since you will be doing the Will of God.

If he is at a distance and is leaving you on your own, please continue to teach the little girls. If some women happen to be there, well and good, but at present please do not make an announcement for them to come. You can just have the sisters of the Charity notified to see you all together. Honor in this way of acting the humility of the Son of God in His.

Since our Company is presently in Bergeres, I think it is inadvisable for you to go there. Please stay, therefore, in Le Mesnil until the mission comes there; then you can go to Bergeres and to the other places. Let me know, please, the outcome of what you do regarding the Bishop of Châlons.

Your son returned to the collège yesterday in perfect health. He had been studying six hours a day on his own here. The head priest is fond of him and intends to give him a private room, which is no small favor. He was so at home with us that, as I said goodbye to him yesterday, he was moved to tears. That shows he is good by nature; you have cause for consolation on that point. You must ask God to continue His grace to him.

I am, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

3The Confraternity of Charity. Saint Vincent often refers to the ladies who comprised the Confraternity as sisters.

4A parish in the diocese of Châlons, now Bergères-les-Vertus (Marne).

5A parish in the diocese of Châlons, now Le Mesnil-sur-Oger (Marne)
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I wrote to you a week ago and addressed my letters to Father de Gondi; now I am sending you three bundles of shirts and the enclosed letter. Your son is fine, thank God, and it seems to me that his mind is developing more and more. As soon as the days are a little cooler, he will come here to be purged.

Good Madame Laurent is still sick; I sent someone to visit her. Mademoiselle du Fay has been a little ill, but she is better now, thank God. Marshal de Marillac’s wife has gone to receive in heaven the reward for all her good works. Come now! This will grieve you; but then, since Our Lord has willed it this way, we must adore His Providence and strive to conform ourselves in all things to His holy Will. Certainly, I am well aware that your dear heart asks nothing better and that, although the interior is upset, it will soon be quieted. The Son of God wept over Lazarus; why should you not weep for that good lady? There is no harm in it so long as, like the Son of God, you conform yourself in this matter to His Father’s Will. I am confident that you will.

But how are you? Does that thin air not bother you? And is Germaine not feeling sorry for her girls, who she knows are at the mercy of M. Belin? When are you going to Champagne? Is that good young woman getting stronger? Is there any good to be hoped for? A word about all that, please.

I cannot tell you anything new from here except that we have the disease across from our house and that Our Lord is keeping all

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1No. 83 being dated September 15, this letter, written a week later, is from September 22 or 23.
2Catherine de Médicis, Dame de Marillac, died September 13.
3See no. 81.
of us in good health, thank God, except for my little fever. I trust that you are not forgetting us in your prayers and that you truly believe I am, in the love of Our Lord and of the Blessed Virgin, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

I made a mistake when I told you that I was sending you some packages. I thought that three bundles of cloth I found on our table were shirts and that they were for you.

85. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Jesus Christ Our Lord be with you forever!

Here at last is a letter I am sending you from your son. I hope that we shall have him purged next Monday and bled, according to the instructions that you gave us.

Mademoiselle Sevin stopped me the day before yesterday along with that good heavyset young woman in mourning who lives near your house and who wants to enter Sainte-Marie as a lay sister. She told me she was looking for a place for you to live because Monsieur Véron needs your room. Since his son now has a position, he needs a place to receive people. I told her you would be very sorry to inconvenience him and that I was asking her to try to find a place for you and that I would tell you about it so as to find out if you have a preference for any neighborhood. Please let me

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4 After "your prayers," the Saint had written, "Good evening, Mademoiselle." He crossed out these three words to continue the sentence above.

Letter 85. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1 Let us recall here that Mademoiselle Sevin, widow of Jacques Sevin, Auditor in the Chambre des Comptes, was born Marie Véron.

2 Saint Louise had left Saint-Merri parish around 1619 to take up residence, along with her husband and son, in the parish of Saint-Sauveur. They lived on the rue Cours-au-Vilain or
know about that and also if you need any money, because they brought you the eighty or so livres from your annuity.

Mademoiselle Tranchot\(^3\) really wants you in Villeneuve-Saint-Georges\(^4\) where the Charity is going badly. I think Our Lord is reserving the success of that good work for you. Mademoiselle du Fay is well. She is still looking for a place to live, too.

Yesterday a priest from Saint-Nicolas\(^5\) was taken to Saint-Louis;\(^6\) he is one of the new ones. Today I sent that good young woman from Saint-Sauveur to Villepreux.\(^7\)

Now then, where are you at present? What is Our Lord doing with you? Someone told me that he met Father de Gondi on the way to Champagne. I imagine that you are there, too. May it please Our Lord to bless your work there and strengthen you for it!

I am, in His love and that of His holy Mother, Mademoiselle, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Paris, October 12, 1631

Courteau-Vilain which today is formed by that part of the rue Montmorency extending from the rue Beaubourg to the rue du Temple. In 1626, she went to live on the rue Saint-Victor near the Bons-Enfants (cf. Gobillon, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 29). On October 8, 1627, a letter was addressed to her at the home of M. Tiron Saint-Priest on the rue Saint-Victor (cf. Madame de Richemont, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 46, n. 2). In 1629, she was living in the home of M. Guérin, the comptroller, still on the rue Saint-Victor. (Cf. letter of Alexandre Regourd, Arch. of the Daughters of Charity.) At the time this letter was written she was at M. Véron's home. Since he needed the rooms she was using, she looked for another place in the same neighborhood.

\(^3\)A Lady of Charity.

\(^4\)In Val-de-Marne.

\(^5\)From Adrien Bourdoise's community.

\(^6\)A hospital founded in 1607 to care for the plague-stricken who, up to that time, had been nursed at the Hôtel-Dieu.

\(^7\)Marguerite Naseau. She had left her work as schoolmistress in Villepreux to come to the aid of the Ladies of Charity at Saint-Sauveur. Saint Vincent was sending her back to Villepreux temporarily to replace M. Belin.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
I praise God for your health, for your work, and for everything you wrote to me. Your son came here with a slight headache four or five days ago. We had him bled the following day and made him stay in bed. M. Quartier told us not to purge him until his headache was cured. It was gone after three days, so that he no longer feels ill at all. That is why we had him take his little dose this morning. He is cheerful and well-behaved with us, so that he edifies us all. If this keeps up, there will be reason to praise God and to hope that you will receive some consolation from him. When he has been purged and has been well for three days, we shall permit him to go back to the college. I repeat, when he has been well for three days and, I mean, if his headache does not return — because right now, he has none at all.

Today, I shall send the money to Mademoiselle Sevin for the dress, and to our sister Germaine the letter, which will arrive just at the right time.

If that good eighteen-year-old girl has common sense and an intelligent mind, do not scruple about letting her take care of the girls. A good mind is better at that age than a poor one at the age of fifty.

I shall also send the blanket to your son and do everything you told me.

It is true it is much to be desired that the people who want to apply themselves to this good work have no other concern nor matter to attend to but that. I am going to Pontoise at the first opportunity. I have heard about a young woman there. I shall hire

Letter 86. - Original autograph letter at the Provincial House of the Priests of the Mission in Naples.

1 A doctor in Paris.

2 As a schoolteacher in Le Mesnil.
her for Sartrouville where Madame de Villeneuve wishes someone.

Our little group will leave in two or three days.

Please give the Lieutenant my most humble regards and tell him that I am his servant and that I request him to reserve three beds for us at the inn. I also send greetings to Germaine; please tell her that I ordered her letter delivered to her brother.

In the meantime, I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Paris, eve of the feast of Saint Luke, 1631

_Addressed:_ Mademoiselle Le Gras, in Le Mesnil

87. - TO MONSIEUR COLLETOT

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The Confraternity of Charity, whose rules I sent to you, is not intended for the care of the plague-stricken. There are a few places where the servants of the poor, that is, those fine women who belong to the Charity, have decided, not to go and visit the contagious, but rather to take them food or carry it to some place for them, at a certain distance from where those poor people have

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3 Commune in Yvelines.

4 Widow of Claude-Marcel de Villeneuve, Master of Requests, sister of Mother Hélène- Angélique l’Huillier of the Visitation, friend of Mademoiselle Le Gras and of Madame de Lamoignon and Foundress of the Daughters of the Cross, which she instituted in 1641; she died January 15, 1650, at the age of fifty-three. (Cf. R.P. de Salinis, _Madame de Villeneuve_ [Paris: Beauchesne, 1918].)

5 October 17.

Letter 87. - Autograph letter. The original is in the British Museum, foreign private letters, Egleton 27, p. 166.
taken shelter, so as not to be in danger of catching the disease. This is to be understood of places where nothing is organized for the plague-stricken. However, the confraternity in question is not for the plague-stricken specifically, only indirectly.

If someone in your parish is afflicted with the disease, then the Charity should appoint some good poor woman or man to deliver the supplies. The servants of the poor do not have to go there, each one on her day, as they do with the other sick people.

This, Monsieur, is all that I can tell you in answer to your letter, except that I am asking God to bless the holy work you are undertaking and to sanctify your soul. May He Himself be your reward in this world and in the next and make me worthy of being, in His love and in that of His holy Mother, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Monsieur Colletot, Prior of La Forêt-le-Roi

88. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN LE MESNIL

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I showed your letter to Father de Gondi, those of the Bishop of Châlons to you, and yours to him. Now, all things weighed and considered, and to his great regret, he is of the opinion that you should obey the Bishop of Châlons. He thinks that God wills it thus, since it is by order of the person who is the interpreter of His Will in the place where you are. Now, such being the Will of God,

1There is some doubt about the reading of this word.

Letter 88. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

Evidently the Saint means: I have shown Father de Gondi your letter to me, the ones the Bishop of Châlons (Henri Clausse de Fleury) wrote to you, and your answer to this prelate.
please come back home. You will not fail to receive the reward you would have had if you had instructed all the girls in that area. Oh! how happy you are because you have this relationship to the Son of God, having been obliged, like Him, to withdraw from a province where, thank God, you were doing no harm! Father de Gondi will thank you here for the trouble you have taken and will let you know how he feels about it. I beg you not to think that this is being done through your fault. No, it is not that, but a simple disposition of God for His greater glory and for the greater good of your soul. What is most sublime in the life of Saint Louis is the tranquillity with which he returned from the Holy Land without having succeeded according to his plan. Perhaps you will never have an opportunity in which you can give more to God than in this one. Make use of it then according to the measure of the grace Our Lord has always shown in you.

Mademoiselle Sevin is writing to ask you to find another place to live. You can go with Mademoiselle du Fay and live there until you get a place that is suitable for you. Good Mademoiselle Sevin will be working on that.2

As for the fifty écus, keep them. Let us know here what you do with them. Your son has returned to the collège; he is very well and doing well likewise.

My most humble regards to the Pastor, to M. Ferrat, and to Germaine. And I am, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

V. DEPAUL

Paris, eve of the feast of All Saints [1631]3

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, in Le Mesnil

2Did she have the time to work at it? She died at the end of December and was interred on the thirty-first in front of the pulpit in the church of Saint-Nicolas. (Bibl. Nat., ms., fr. 32.590.)

3October 31. The contents of the letter dictate the year.
There is no objection at all to accepting alms from Father de Gondi. If you have already refused them, offer your apologies to M. Ferrat. Father de Gondi is our founder. We have no right to refuse what he gives us for the love of God any more than we would refuse a gift from someone who was not from the place where we were giving a mission. Saint Paul acted in that way; he never accepted anything from the place where he was working, but he took from the other churches in order to work in the new ones when the toil of his own hands was not sufficient, or when preaching and conversions prevented him from working with his hands to earn his living. *Spoliants Ecclesias Macedoniae, ut non essem vobis oneri*, he said to the Corinthians,\(^1\) although he stated that his glory in preaching the Gospel was in accepting nothing.

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\(^{1}\) *Robbing the churches of Macedonia, so as not to be a burden to you.* 2 Cor. 11:8-9. "I robbed other churches, I accepted support from them in order to minister to you. When I was with you and in want I was a burden to none of you, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my needs. In every way possible I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and I shall continue to do so" (NAB). Saint Vincent did not quote Saint Paul verbatim.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Yesterday I went to the Attorney General's home and found four or five carriages in front of his door. Since it was very late and I would have had to wait a long time, I thought it better to put off my visit until today after dinner. Therefore, I shall see him presently, according to the Prior's order. I shall not have the honor of going to see the latter this morning, both because it seems to me that he wishes us to have the Attorney General's word before settling the matter, and so that you, Monsieur, may do us the

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**Letter 91. - Collection for the process of beatification.**

1He was at the head of Saint-Laurent parish, at that time near Paris, from 1628 to May 9, 1661, the day of his death. He was the principal instrument in achieving the union of the Congregation of the Mission and the Priory of Saint-Lazare. He wrote a detailed account of this union which Abelly incorporated into his work (op. cit., vol. I, chap. XXII, pp. 95 ff.).

2Since Saint Vincent took possession of Saint-Lazare on January 8, 1632, it seems appropriate to assign 1631 as the probable date for this letter.

3Mathieu Molé.

4Adrien Le Bon, Canon Regular of Saint Augustine, was born in Neufchâtel (Seine-Maritime) and died at Saint-Lazare, April 9, 1651, in his seventy-fourth year.

5Adrien Le Bon was led to resign the Priory of Saint-Lazare because of the misunderstanding that existed between him and his religious. The talk of the successful results that Saint Vincent and his Missionaries were achieving on their apostolic journeys, as well as the advice of the Pastor of the parish, caused him to look in their direction. M. de Lestocq personally accompanied him to the Bons-Enfants. The generous offer of the good Prior alarmed Saint Vincent's humility. He refused. Adrien Le Bon persisted in his project. Six months later, he returned to the collège and again renewed his offer in vain. For another six months, he renewed his requests, which became more insistent from day to day. Finally, it was agreed that the decision would be left up to André Duval. He was of the same opinion as the Prior. The major obstacle was overcome but an agreement still had to be reached concerning the clauses of the contract. This was not easy. Saint Vincent's letter to M. de Lestocq acquaints us with some of the points argued by both parties. The contract was signed January 7, 1632 (cf. vol. XIII, no. 77). The following day Saint Vincent and his men came to live at Saint-Lazare (cf. vol. XIII, no. 78). This account, confirmed by the statements of the Saint (cf. letter of January 30, 1656, to Nicolas Etienne, vol. V, no. 2001), deserves far more credence than that contained in Claude de Moulinet, *Histoire des chanoines réguliers de l’Ordre de S. Augustin de la Congrégation de France depuis l’origine jusqu’en 1670* (4 vols., Bibl. Sainte-Geneviève, ms. 611-614, n.d.), vol. III, p.57. The author of this work asserts that the gift of the
charity of telling him a few difficulties to be found in the proposals which he did me the honor of offering me yesterday. The above-mentioned Prior did me the honor of telling me yesterday evening that he had consulted his religious about our manner of acting in choir, the housing and furniture, and the board that those who would wish to live with us would pay. Now, with regard to the last difficulty, which is that each religious would pay only two hundred livres board, I accept that most willingly, although I have calculated the expense exactly from what it has cost us at present and it will cost us more, and although even the students are paying ninety écus.

As for the housing, I am afraid that some difficulty might arise in the course of time if we were together in the dormitory, because we observe silence from the evening after prayer until the next day after dinner, when we have an hour of recreation; and from recreation until the evening after supper, at which time we have another hour of recreation. When that is over, we again enter into silence, speaking only when necessary and in a low voice. Now, whoever takes that from a community introduces into it an inexpressible disorder and confusion. This has led a holy person to say that he will guarantee, when he sees a community observing silence exactly, that it also observes everything else pertaining to regularity; on the contrary, when he sees another in which silence is not

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6 The religious were nine in number: Adrien Le Bon, Prior; Nicolas Maheut, Sub-prior; Claude Cousin, Receiver; Claude Gothereau, Dispenser; Richard Levasseur, Sacristan; Adrien Descourtils; Jacques Lescellier; François Cacquet; and Claude de Morennes. (Cf. Arch. Nat. M 212; cf. also vol. XIII, no. 77.)

7 One écu equals three livres.
observed, that it is impossible that anything else pertaining to regularity be observed.

Now, there is good reason to fear, Monsieur, that those gentlemen will not wish to oblige themselves to such silence and that, by not doing so ourselves, we may destroy so necessary a practice which we have tried to observe until now to the best of our ability. Therefore, I think it would be advisable to return to the proposals that the religious made to me in the presence of the aforesaid Prior, that is, that they take a few private rooms, with fireplaces, which we shall have arranged for their use. As for furniture, they can take their own from their rooms, and we shall provide them with linen and tableware or give each one fifty livres to buy some. Far from considering this simony, on the contrary, it seems to me more than reasonable to act in this way since those gentlemen will be leaving us their community furniture. By this means, therefore, they will leave us the dormitory, in which we shall be able to observe our silence without difficulty.

With regard to the choir, the Prior suggests an order of precedence and that we wear the domino and also the almuce. Now, allow me to tell you, Monsieur, that although I make no objection at all to the Company’s having to leave the first places to those gentlemen when they wish to come to choir, nonetheless, I do not think it advisable to burden us with the almuce or with the domino. To avoid confusion and the suspicion that Parlement might have of our beginning to become canons, and consequently that we are tacitly renouncing our plan to work unceasingly for the poor people of rural areas, it is, I repeat, advisable that we not be burdened with the almuce or with the domino and that the service be left to us to be performed according to the obligation of our

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8A black hooded cape or cloak.
9The fur which canons usually wear on their arm.
10Parlement refers to the French judicial system. At the time of Saint Vincent, France had eight Parlements, each with its own legal jurisdiction, chief of which was the Parlement of Paris. They registered or gave sanction to the King’s edicts, ordinances, and declarations, and supervised the implementation thereof.
conscience, as is agreed in the contract. Now, the manner in which I intend to do that, and which the Prior formerly thought proper, is to recite the office *media voce*, without singing, except for High Mass and Vespers on Sundays and feast days.

Those, Monsieur, are the difficulties I find in the proposals that the Prior did me the honor of offering me yesterday evening and which I most humbly beg you to mention to him this morning and to let me know how he feels. I am perfectly confident that, since he is thinking primarily of the glory of God and the salvation of the people in these matters, and, seeing the inconveniences that could arise if things were carried out as he suggested, he will accept the very humble protest I offer him. I would prefer that we remain forever in our poverty rather than change the direction of God’s plan for us. I am ashamed to bother you so much; please forgive me.

I am, meanwhile, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Saturday morning

92. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I shall send for the painter tomorrow and shall do as you told me. By the same means I shall let the nurses of the sick poor of


The letter was written no later than 1631, as there is mention made of Mademoiselle Sevin, who died in December of that year; on the other hand, several indications prevent us from going back any further.
Saint-Sauveur know what Mademoiselle Tranchot has told you concerning your son. We shall see him whenever you wish, but I do not think that you should have him take Orders so soon. He is not old enough for Holy Orders; and as for the four Minor Orders, they are neither useful nor necessary at present. He would have to set aside his studies to prepare for them. That would also be a great loss for him.

How sorry I am about your suffering! But, such being the order of Providence, what can you do? And truly, what real harm do you have to fear from this? So, there is a man who says you promised to marry him, and it is not true. You are being falsely accused. You are suffering interiorly, unjustly, and without cause. Are you afraid that people are talking about you? Maybe they are, but rest assured that that is one of the greatest means of conformity with the Son of God that you could have on earth. You will thereby acquire victories over yourself that you could never have had. Oh! how much vain complacency is being destroyed in this way and how many acts of humility are being brought forth by this means! Courage! Nothing but good can come to you from this, both in this world and the next. So, strengthen yourself within against the feelings of nature, and the day will come when you will bless the hour in which Our Lord tried you in this manner. I am, in His love, your most humble servant.

V. D.

I beg you to excuse me for not [having sent] this reply to you today; the trouble I am having with our negotiations kept me from doing so. Please find out from Mademoiselle Sevin what she

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2Michel Le Gras was only about eighteen years old.
3Saint Louise was forty years old at the time.
4These words were left out in the original letter.
5Might he not be referring here to the negotiations in progress with regard to uniting the Priory of Saint-Lazare to the Congregation of the Mission?
knows about it and let me know. I have just returned from town, where I have been since this morning.

Tuesday evening

_Addressed_: Mademoiselle Le Gras

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93. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Before 1634]

Here is that good young woman who has come to be your servant, if you so desire. She is healthy, thank God, except for a slight fever which recurs regularly. I think she will look after you very well. If you like, you can send her back home for a week or so.

As for the water, drink it freely; it has never harmed anyone and there are many who are cured by it. Madame de Portnal is beginning to feel well from it. I shall tell Monsieur Deure to send you some, or else, you can ask Mademoiselle to tell him.

I shall be leaving tomorrow in haste. If I can, I shall see you. I hope to be only ten to twelve days. Assist us with your prayers and be comforted in the object of your love, who is our suffering Lord. I shall be in the love of our Lord and in that of His holy Mother, your servant.

V. D.

I repeat that you are not to stop drinking that water.

Letter 93. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1This letter certainly preceded the foundation of the Daughters of Charity (November 1633), because after that date Saint Louise had no maid in her service.

2A purgative or mineral water of which M. Deure was a merchant.
December 23, 1631

... As for the reports you would like to have presented by others who might be less interested in the matter than we, I also would like that, although it seems to me to be rather naïve, but what recourse do we have? One who says things quite plainly as they are and puts his faith in God is pleasing to God, as is, I think, this line of action. Truth and humility go well together.¹

Letter 94a. - TO POPE URBAN VIII²

[January 1632]

Some years ago, having reflected in his piety and charity that in many places of France the country people in particular are de-


¹François du Coudray was in Rome negotiating the approbation of the Congregation of the Mission.

Letter 94a. - The original is in the Archives of the Congregation of Religious in the Vatican. A Latin text was published in the Annales (1926), pp. 140-144, and an Italian text in the Annales (1941), pp. 27-30. Both volumes contain historical explanations which form the basis for the following footnotes.

²Giovanni Mazzini, of the Vatican Library, discovered this petition in the Archives of the Congregation of Religious on July 17, 1925. Unlike the petition of 1628 (no. 28), which was submitted to the Congregation of the Propaganda, this petition was presented to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. As was customary, Saint Vincent addressed this request for approbation of his Congregation to “His Holiness.”

³In May 1631, Saint Vincent dispatched François du Coudray to Rome in order to have a personal representative working for the apostolic approbation of his Congregation. He gave Du Coudray specific instructions (no. 73) and entrusted to him his latest petition (no. 94a).

In February 1632, this petition was presented to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars with the following résumé: Established in Paris with the consent and approbation of the Ordinary, of His Most Christian Majesty, and of Parlement, this Congregation of secular priests is to visit, instruct, and minister to the people of the countryside in matters of faith; it requests the confirmation of the Institute. The Congregation examined it on February 13, 1632; Cardinal Guido Bentivoglio submitted his report on April 30, 1632. He advised that the Nuncio to France and the Archbishop of Paris be asked again for their opinion concerning this desired apostolic confirmation. Saint Vincent alluded to this request in his letter to Du Coudray, July 12, 1632 (no. 112). Subsequently, Pope Urban VIII approved the Congregation of the
prived of spiritual consolation, and that many of them are ignorant of the principal articles of faith about the Most Holy Trinity and the sacred mystery of the Incarnation, without which there is no salvation, or do not believe in them as they should, that they do not dare to reveal and confess their sins to their pastors, either because of shame or because they are too familiar with them, and that many live in error thinking they have confessed correctly although they are concealing even more serious sins, the nobleman Emmanuel de Gondi, Comte de Joigny, gave the sum of forty-five thousand lire of Turin for the foundation of a congregation of secular priests called the Missionaries who were to instruct the above-mentioned country people in the rudiments of Christian doctrine, hear their confessions, administer to them the sacraments of the Church, preach to them, and teach them all the other things concerning their salvation, wherever and whenever they should be sent by the localOrdinaries to perform these spiritual functions. Some secular priests, living together in a house located in the city of Paris and occupying themselves with spiritual activities of this sort to the very great edification of the people, have already happily begun such an institute under the direction of Vincent de Paul, a priest of the diocese of Aix in the province of Auch, founder of the said Congregation and Superior of the aforesaid house. They observe the following:

1. First, the principal purpose of the said Congregation is to venerate the Most Holy Trinity and the sacred mystery of the Incarnation.

Mission by the Bull Salvatoris Nostri. If we compare this petition to the Bull, we can see that the Bull reproduces the exposition almost word for word.

The above information seems to indicate January 1632 as a probable date for this petition and calls for an alteration of the date previously assigned to Salvatoris Nostri. January 12, 1632 has always been the date assigned to this Bull; it appears that this is an error. The Bull was issued in “the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord 1632, the eve of the ides of January, the tenth year of our Pontificate.” In bulls, the year of the Incarnation begins, not on January 1, but on March 25. Therefore, the eve of the ides of January in the year of the Incarnation 1632 is actually January 12 of the civil year 1633 (Annales [1926]). Moreover, Urban VIII was elected Pope in 1623 (August 5, 1623), so the “tenth year of our Pontificate” would be 1633. The date of Salvatoris Nostri is, therefore, January 12, 1633.
2. The priests of the said Congregation are sent by the local Ordinaries — to whom the Congregation submits itself in this matter only, and to whom it wishes and intends, now and in the future, to show a perfect obedience — to the cities and towns and other places of the Kingdom of France which are subject to the rule of the Most Christian King, except those which have the title of Parlement or Bailiffship, where there is no lack of priests, either secular or regular, or other ecclesiastical ministers. They are sent to them to teach the Commandments of God to those who do not know them and to instruct them in the rudiments of Christian doctrine, to hear their confessions, to administer to them the Sacraments of the Church, and to carry on among them the office of teaching catechism and preaching. However, they first obtain the permission of the pastors, without which they never go in to perform these functions, nor do they wish to be able to do so.

3. In places where they have preached, they establish, by authority of the Ordinaries, Confraternities of Charity, as they are called, if these are needed in order to help the sick poor, and they themselves contribute something to this holy work out of their own goods.

4. With the greatest possible charity they try to settle and calm lawsuits and quarrels in which the country people in particular are sometimes involved all through their life.

5. They welcome into their houses parish priests who wish to make spiritual retreats and receive instruction concerning the administration of their parishes. They make an effort to assemble these parish priests once a month to deal with cases of conscience and the administration of the Sacraments, whenever this can be done conveniently for the local vicinity and is without detriment to their churches.

6. At ordination times they welcome into their houses those who wish to receive Orders so as to teach them how they are to exercise these Orders and receive them worthily.

7. The aforesaid Congregation does all these things without
charge and without any expectation of compensation, and promises to do the same in time to come.

As time went on, lifting up their minds more and more to heavenly things, the aforesaid priests decided upon the following ordinances:

1. The Congregation shall consist of laymen, clerics, and priests who shall have all things in common.

2. The laymen shall be content with the service of Martha and take care of domestic matters.

3. Clerics shall have to be seventeen or eighteen years old before they can be admitted into the Congregation, and shall become members of the Congregation after a year of probation.

4. The above-mentioned Vincent de Paul shall remain Superior of the said house of Paris, and after the other houses of the Congregation have been founded, he shall be elected for his lifetime as Superior General of the Congregation.

5. After the death of the said Vincent de Paul, the Superior General of the Congregation at any given time shall be elected every three years, and may be maintained in office for no more than one other term of three years.4

6. The Superior General shall appoint Superiors and other lesser ministers and remove them at his discretion. He shall visit each house of the Congregation, the property and members, correct, and have other authority and superiority which the Superiors General of similar or other Congregations have, may have, or will have in the future.

Moreover, since experience has proven that this pious institute has brought forth abundant fruits, and since it may be hoped that

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3Coadjutor brothers.

4In the rules issued by Saint Vincent in 1655, the Superior General was to govern for life. This rule perdured until the General Assembly of 1968, in which the Constitutions and Statutes were revised to conform with the decrees of Vatican Council II. According to no. 105, § 3, the Superior General is elected for a term of six years and can be reelected for one additional term of six years.
such happy beginnings will have even happier progress, and since
those things which are strengthened by the protection of the Apos-
tolic See are more lasting, Vincent, the Superior of the said house
and the other priests of the Congregation humbly beseech the said
Congregation to show itself especially gracious to the aforesaid
Congregation, and through it to each of its members, and to
approve and confirm by apostolic authority everything that has
been done so far, strengthen it by apostolic recognition, and allow
the Superior General of the aforesaid Congregation and his suc-
cessors, for the greater progress of this Congregation, to enact any
other statutes, beyond the aforesaid ordinances, provided they are
licit and proper and in no way contrary to the sacred canons and
decrees of the Council of Trent. May they also be allowed, accord-
ing to the nature of circumstances and times, and as often as it
shall seem appropriate, to change, alter, modify, limit, and correct
them, and have the power to issue new norms freely and unre-
strictedly, provided the aforesaid statutes, their changes, altera-
tions, modifications, limitations, corrections, and the new ones to
be issued are first approved by the Ordinary. May the Congrega-
tion itself and each one of the present and future members enjoy
all and each one of the privileges, immunities, freedoms, exemp-
tions, faculties, favors and graces, indults, indulgences and other
concessions which other Congregations use, have, and enjoy, or
may or will be able to use, have, and enjoy in the future. May they
use, have, and enjoy them in the same way and to the same extent
and without any difference, as if they had been specifically and
expressly granted to the said Congregation, its Superiors, and
other members. May you be pleased to grant and permit this and
to declare null and void [everything to the contrary].

*The Congregation of Bishops and Regulars.*
95. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Mademoiselle,

Blessed be God that His goodness is strengthening you more and more in His love and in the accomplishment of His holy Will. It will indeed be fitting for you to make some sort of pilgrimage for what you told me; but for the love of God, Mademoiselle, do not get sick on the way. We must accept illness as we would a divine state. It is true that Our Lord helps you in a special way. It seems to me that you are killing yourself from the little care you take of yourself. Be quite cheerful, I beg you. Oh, what great reason people of good will have to be cheerful!

96. - TO SAINT LOUISE

To be on the safe side, you should have a doctor’s certificate stating that it would be advisable for you and your son to eat meat, and send it to the secretary of the Archbishop of Paris whose name is M. Baudouin. He will get you the permission without any difficulty. Once that is done, do not make any objection to eating meat. On the contrary, as far as in me lies, I order you to do so and to put aside the misgivings that you are allowing to enter your heart. Be fully confident that you are the dear daughter of Our Lord, through His mercy.

I am ordering you, moreover, to procure for yourself the holy joy of your heart by all the relaxation you can possibly take, and to forgive me for not having had the happiness of seeing you because of the great number of matters that are keeping me busy. Rest

Letter 95. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 66.
Letter 96. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.
assured, Mademoiselle, that I shall have this happiness as soon as I can and that I am your servant.

V. D.

I beg you to see about that permission tomorrow morning, so that you can start eating meat tomorrow, because fish does not agree with you at all.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

97. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around 1632]1

I beg you, Mademoiselle, do what Monsieur Bouvard2 tells you, confident that God will bless his remedies. I am not telling you to take them all; I hope there will be no need for that. Come now, you must do this. As for the rest, it will take care of itself in its own time. Above all, remain in good spirits. I shall see Monsieur Bouvard and talk to him about you and about the drug.

As for the other matter we talked about yesterday, do not be concerned about it. He who has time at His command will take care of that affair in the time He has foreseen as appropriate from all eternity.

Get better then, and soon, I beg you, and I shall be, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, your most humble and obedient servant.

V. D.

Letter 97. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1The letter appears to have been written before the institution of the Daughters of Charity.

2King Louis XIII's principal doctor, who died October 22, 1658, at the age of eighty-six. Several of his daughters entered the Visitation, including Marie-Augustine, who was Superior of the monastery of the faubourg Saint-Jacques, the second Monastery of the Visitation in Paris. She died there on November 15, 1659, at the age of forty-eight, having spent twenty-eight years in the Visitation community.
98. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around 1632]

Did I not tell you yesterday, Mademoiselle, that you had to consent to what you were asking, because in any case your heart would have no rest until it was done. Do it then, at an appropriate time, calmly and without haste. Because of you I shall have one done again myself one of these mornings. However, visit Monsieur Bouvard afterwards. But get well soon in order to serve God. Oh, how my heart longs for that to be so, and quickly! Come now, do what has to be done on your part. In the meantime, keep your spirits up and do what you have to do in a cheerful way. I shall be, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, your most humble servant.

V. D.

I would like to know if M. Meynard is an attorney at the Châtelet or at the Court.

99. - TO ISABELLE DU FAY

[Between 1626 and 1635]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

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**Letter 98.** - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

*The mention of M. Bouvard who was Saint Louise's doctor, for a very short time it seems, leads us to place this letter near no. 97.*

*Name given to two fortresses in Paris. The Grand Châtelet was the headquarters of the criminal jurisdiction; the Petit Châtelet served as a prison.*

**Letter 99.** - Reg. 1, f° 69. The copyist notes that the handwriting of the original was that of Saint Vincent.

*The name of Mademoiselle du Fay does not appear in any of the letters definitely written before 1626 or after 1635.*
I am writing these lines to tell you about us and to find out about you. For our part, as things stand now, thanks be to God, I am feeling better and better. Were it not for a slight fever that has taken hold of me for a day or two, I would have come to thank you for your great kindness to me.

And you, Mademoiselle, how is everything with you? Are you in better health now than you were a few days ago? Are you stronger? But are you taking better care of your health than in the past? And are you being brave? Do you let yourself get depressed sometimes? For the love of God, Mademoiselle, strengthen yourself on both of those points so that you may serve God in holiness and justice for many years to come.

Also, please let me know where disciplines can be bought because I need about a dozen of them. But there is no need to send me an answer right now; a day or two will be soon enough.

My cordial greetings to M. de Vincy. I remain, for you and for him, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

100. - TO FRANCOIS DU COUDRAY, IN ROME

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Monsieur le Jarriel, the banker, has very kindly undertaken for us the forwarding of the bulls uniting Saint-Lazare with our little Congregation and has had them directed to Monsieur Marchand. As soon as you receive the said documents, Monsieur, please take

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2Mademoiselle du Fay’s brother, Antoine Hennequin, Sieur de Vincy.

Letter 100. - Autograph letter. According to Coste, the original was at the Hospice Saint-Nicolas in Metz. The present location of the letter is unknown.

1An expeditionary banker at the court of Rome.
the trouble to go and see Monsieur Marchand and to begin work on the matter, in order to get them expedited as soon as possible. They are absolutely necessary to us, because of the opposition we are getting and on account of which they are pressuring us back here. I still dare to hope from the kindness of Messieurs Le Bret and de Luzarches that they will continue their charity to us at this crucial time in our establishment. We shall owe to both of them what God alone can give them. You can address your letters to the above-mentioned gentleman, Monsieur Jarriel, as to an old friend of ours to whom, after God, we owe a considerable part of the success of this affair.

It remains for me to entreat you to take care of your health above all things, and while waiting for God to bless the outcome of your work, I remain in His love, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Paris, March 2, 1632

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2The opposition was coming from the monks of Saint-Victor; from Louis de Mesgrigny, the Abbot of Quincy; and from the pastors of the city, faubourgs, and suburbs of Paris. Called to Saint-Lazare at the beginning of the sixteenth century by Etienne de Poncher, the Bishop of Paris, who was hoping to reform the abuses by a change in administration, the monks of Saint-Victor had not ceased to occupy the priory ever since, and had come to consider it their own property. However, this was not the case. All the provisions indicated that the bishops of Paris reserved for themselves the right to recall the prior and even to replace the monks of Saint-Victor with other ecclesiastics. Moreover, on December 5, 1625, the monks of Saint-Victor Abbey had decided that the various houses of the order would, henceforth, be independent from the Abbey. This was, in fact, a renunciation of their rights over Saint-Lazare. Rome took its time before accepting Saint Vincent’s petition. The Bull of Union was signed by Urban VIII, March 15, 1635, but it was never sent. Alexander VII granted a new one on April 18, 1655. (Cf. Arch. Nat. MM 534; cf. also vol. XIII, no. 112.)

3Jacques Le Bret, Canon of Toul, Auditor of the Rota, and cleric of the Apostolic Chamber, was a native of Paris. He was appointed to the See of Toul on April 24, 1645, and consecrated at Saint-Louis-des-Français. The King of France, who had not been notified diplomatically, refused to recognize him. The dispute was settled by the death of the party concerned; he passed away in Rome on June 15 of the same year. Jacques Le Bret rendered many services to the Congregation of the Mission.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am very glad that you have taken as you should the news of Mademoiselle de Potrincourt's illness; I have not heard anything about her for five or six days now. But I am sorry that you are allowing your spirit to plunge into certain useless apprehensions which are more a hindrance than an advancement to your salvation. I beg you, place yourself completely in that holy love which is brought about by trust in God and mistrust of oneself, Mademoiselle. Leave that fear, which seems to me rather servile at times, to those to whom God has not given the understanding of Him that He has given to you. Above all, disregard those thoughts which seem to weaken the holy faith that God has placed in you. Disregard even more the author from whom they come who has no power but that which you give him. Now absit that you have ever given him that control! The tears brought on by your suffering from this problem are so many witnesses of what I am telling you. So be at peace in that regard.

As for Monsieur de Marillac, I consent to everything that you think proper, but take care not to implicate yourself. I think that in these matters one must be disposed to take the advice of the

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**Letter 101.** - Original autograph letter, Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity.

1Françoise de Mornay, the wife of Jacques de Biancourt, the Seigneur de Potrincourt.

2Saint Louise had formerly been assailed by doubts concerning the immortality of the soul and the existence of God; might these temptations have come back to her?

3Far be it.

4The biographers of Saint Louise suppose that Saint Vincent is referring to Saint Louise's uncle, Michel de Marillac, imprisoned by Richelieu at Châteaudun (where he died on August 7, 1632) because he had allied himself with the Cardinal's enemies, and that Saint Louise wanted to make an attempt to obtain his liberty. (Cf. Richemont, *op. cit.*, p. 100; Baunard, *op. cit.*, p. 114; Emmanuel de Broglie, *La Vénérable Louise de Marillac* [Paris: Lecoffre, 1911], p. 65.) This is only one hypothesis among others. It is not at all certain that the former Keeper of the Seals, Michel de Marillac, is meant here. Saint Vincent also could have had in mind, for example, Louis de Marillac, Marshal of France, whom Cardinal Richelieu also imprisoned and then executed, or even Michel de Marillac, the grandson of the former Keeper of the Seals.
person from whom one has asked counsel. When he tells you something contrary to your opinion, you must not go back to it again. Do, however, what Our Lord suggests to you. Of one thing I can well assure you, He will give you nothing but perfect advice. I am, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, your most humble servant.

V. DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

102. - TO N.

You are well aware that the religious of [Saint-Victor] are contesting our possession of Saint-Lazare. You could hardly believe the acts of submission I have rendered to them as the Gospel prescribes, although truly they are not called for. M. Duval has assured me of this as has everyone who knows what this affair involves. Things will be as Our Lord wishes. He knows that His goodness has made me as truly indifferent on this occasion as during any other difficulty I have had. Please help me to thank Him for this.


1 The content of the letter prompts us to assign this date.

2 On December 17, 1631, the religious of Saint-Victor had brought forth a first request to prevent the contract of union. They presented a second one to have it broken on May 13, 1632. In spite of the support of the Abbot of Quincy and the pastors of Paris and the suburbs, they were unsuccessful. On August 21, the Parlement decided to look at the agreement and, on September 7, ordered its registration. At the same time it required that the Priests of the Mission present themselves "to the Archbishop of Paris in order to obtain letters of perpetual establishment in the above-mentioned house of Saint-Lazare." (Arch. Nat. M 212, file 4.)
Monsieur,

Two reasons seem fitting to me for dedicating to you Le Bon Laboureur. The first is the gratitude owed to you by all good tillers of the soil for the profit that comes to them through your holy exercises, which oblige all those who experience them or have some knowledge of them to bless God. For the good of our century, He has passed on to you, by a metempsychosis, which He alone can bring about, the spirit, affections, and design, together with the name of the great Patron of missionaries, Saint Vincent Ferrer. The apostolic missions he instituted in his time are manifestly more necessary now than they ever were before. May God be blessed for having given you that spirit and the ardent charity of Jesus Christ which urges you, as we see, to run to the assistance of souls who cost Him all His blood.

Blessed also be those who, urged on by the same charity, assist you in this truly laborious yet noble and honorable undertaking. There is none more excellent since it divinizes the men whom it associates with the works of the Savior, and makes them His collaborators in the salvation of the very men for whom He died. Men among whom I do not doubt that we must number all the firstborn at whom the world has scarcely deigned to look, tillers of the soil and other villagers. They have been of singular importance to Our Lord. In order to show them His special love, He wanted them to be the first to have the news of His birth into the world. And as if He had been born primarily for them, He went about during the years of His public life seeking them everywhere in villages large and small to announce to them the Kindgom of God. Finally, He deigned by a
prerogative of incomparable favor to associate them with Him in the works of His Passion, for Simon the Cyrenean who helped Him to carry His Cross was, says the Evangelist, a man who was coming from the village.

All these considerations are worthy of that burning zeal which you have for poor village people. You certainly have this consolation and advantage in your undertakings that, although our century is indiscreetly critical, and although the majority of people, since they judge the projects of other people's devotion by their own feelings, take part in censoring all new establishments whether they be of religious orders or of other congregations or communities, yours, nonetheless, by a certain secret privilege which is a manifest blessing of God, remains sheltered from the contrariness of tongues. It meets with general approval both in the mind and on the lips of all those who know what it is. They have savored the good odor with which you fill every place to which you go and they recognize in the abundance and sweetness of your fruits that the tree which produces them can only be thoroughly good.

Now, besides this general reason, I have a personal one for dedicating Le Bon Laboureur to you. The reception you gave my book on its first appearance obliges it to present itself to you again now that it is ready to be published a second time. Since it is in the world only to be used for the instruction of country people, it comes to offer you all that it is and all that it can be, begging from you the influence it needs to be profitably employed. Not that, heretofore, it has been unsuccessful, for, thanks be to God, it has surpassed the hopes of its author and has been received better than it deserved wherever it has appeared. But, because the recommendation received from you up to the present has lent it credibility, it is convinced that when it is henceforth fully endorsed by you, you will treat it as your very own, and that with an extraordinary charity you will supply for its defects which are only too frequent.

It would have been better for it to have received its own education from you before undertaking the instructions of others. But to tell the truth, the same thing happened to me that once befell a great Spanish clergyman, Master Avila, when he saw the Company of Jesus established by Saint Ignatius. "There," he said, "is a project which I had conceived, but in such a confused way that my spirit was not able to bring it to birth." I say that in some way the same thing befell me, without for all that wishing to enter into comparison with that great man. And in fact it is a truth that I believe I once told you. I had been thinking for a long time of contributing

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5Blessed John of Avila, born in 1500, Apostle of Andalusia, died in 1569.
what I could to assist the poor in the villages, since I was under an obligation to do so by my birth, by my role as a priest, and by the necessities everyone can see only too often everywhere.

As I was preparing to carry out this plan according to my capabilities, I fortunately heard about the institution of your Congregation, dedicated to the salvation of the same people for whom I intended to work. It was this common partiality for and aim at a like goal which made me earnestly seek the honor of your acquaintance which I shall cherish all my life, and the means of learning through the practice of your works, in which out of your kindness you afforded me as much experience as my free time allowed, how to be a good missionary. This experience led me to realize especially that I was finding in your missions what I had sought with such great difficulty and not found elsewhere: the right way to assist tillers of the soil effectively. And had it not been that the poor Bon Laboureur had even then more than half appeared, and that its printing was almost completed, I would have withheld it completely, but only until it had learned at your school what it would afterwards be obliged to repeat to the people in the villages. However, as it was far advanced, and because you ordered it that way, I allowed it to appear on condition that, if it were once again to be printed, you would do it the charity of correcting its defects. It is the carrying out of that promise that it has been awaiting, of which your weighty and continual occupations, as I see it, have deprived it up to now.

People do not cease, however, urging it to make its appearance once again just as it is. And it is doing so to please those who are encouraging it, but not without taking on your livery so that it might have more reasons to call itself your own. It has taken the rules from your missions and the organization of your Confraternity of Charity, in order to make them known, everywhere that it is found, as exercises quite suitable for tillers of the soil, and of a piety both exemplary and greatly necessary in the villages. It still hopes that you will one day do it complete charity and keep your promise, so that it may appear less defective the third time it is published, if such comes to pass.

That is what I am asking of you, Monsieur. Also, continue the honor of your gracious kindness to me with the place you have given me among your Missionaries, and the title, Monsieur, of your most humble and affectionate servant.

R. DOGNON

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent de Paul, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Paris
103. - TO SAINT LOUISE

It is better, therefore, to act in the way you wrote to me, Mademoiselle, and to postpone your plans so as not to run any risk. If between now and my return you find some trustworthy person, act; if not, wait. Our Lord will see to the matter, especially if you are happy at the foot of the Cross where you are at present and which is the best place in this world you could be. So be happy there, Mademoiselle, and fear nothing. Do not forget us in your prayers, and I will take care to recommend you to our good country people.

*Addressed:* Mademoiselle Le Gras

104. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Before 1634] Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

This note will serve three purposes: to say good day to you and to thank you for that altar cloth you so kindly sent us; it was so beautiful and delightful that it almost stole my heart away with pleasure yesterday seeing your own in it. Even though I did not know it was there, I saw it the moment I entered the chapel. The pleasure lasted all day yesterday and still lingers with an unex-

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Letter 103. - Original autograph letter, Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity.

1Along with the biographers of Saint Louise, we can interpret these words as referring to steps she wished to take for the deliverance either of Michel de Marillac, the former Keeper of the Seals, or of Marshal Louis de Marillac.

Letter 104. - Autograph letter. Seventeenth or eighteenth century copy at the Hospital of Pernambuco (Brazil).

1Everything indicates that this letter was written before the institution of the Daughters of Charity. Might not the emphasis with which the Saint speaks of Saint Joseph indicate that he wrote it on March 19?
plainable tenderness which gives rise to a number of thoughts within me. God willing, I shall be able to share these with you, contenting myself, meanwhile, with telling you that I am asking God to adorn your soul with His perfect and divine love while you embellish His house with so many beautiful adornments.

The third purpose is to request you not to go to the poor today. In that way you will honor the inactivity of the Son of God and that of Saint Joseph, who, although he had the power of heaven and earth in his care and under his authority, nonetheless, wished to appear powerless. Send Madame Richard to them. Perhaps God will then impart to her some grace that she needs and to you, some degree of humility, of compassion for the sick, or of self-knowledge — your powerlessness to advance towards the object of your fervent aspiration.

In short, you will profit if you do this, because Our Lord wishes it so, in Whose love and in that of His holy Mother and of Saint Joseph, I am your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

105. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[May 1632]

Mademoiselle,

What you tell me about the Marshal de Marillac seems worthy of great compassion and distresses me. Let us honor therein the

Letter 105. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 74.
1This letter was written on the eighth, ninth, or tenth of May as the content dictates.
2Louis de Marillac, the Comte de Beaumont-le-Roger and Marshal of France; Michel de Marillac, the Keeper of the Seals; and Louis de Marillac, Louise de Marillac's father, were sons of the same father. The first mentioned, who was the youngest of the three, was an ambassador in Savoy, Italy, Lorraine and Germany, the Commissary General of the armies of Louis XIII, a Field Marshal, the Captain General of the Queen's men-at-arms, Lieutenant General for the dioceses of Metz, Toul, and Verdun, Governor of the town and city of Verdun,
good pleasure of God and the happiness of those who honor the suffering of the Son of God by their own. The way our relatives go to God is of no importance to us, provided they go to Him. Now, the good use of this kind of death is one of the most certain paths to eternal life. Let us not feel sorry for him then, but let us accept the adorable Will of God.

106. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1632 and 1636] 1

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with you forever!

Here I am, your neighbor, since noon. 2 I sent someone to see if you were at home around two o’clock, but you had gone to pray. If you would kindly take the trouble to come here tomorrow right after dinner, we will hear from you in person what you have been writing to us. In the meantime, I beg you to honor the interior states of abandonment in which the saints, indeed even the Saint of saints, found themselves at times, and the closer union they afterwards enjoyed with God. I bid you good evening and am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

V. D. P.

and Marshal of France. He distinguished himself at the siege of Montauban, where he was wounded; at the battle of the Ile de Ré; at the siege of La Rochelle; at the taking of Privas; and elsewhere. He was the King’s Lieutenant General to the army of Italy when Richelieu decided to arrest him. The Cardinal Minister had him seized by his commissioners on October 30, 1630, at the camp of Felizzo in Piedmont, and kept him in prison for many long months. The death sentence was passed against him in Rueil on May 8, 1632, and carried out two days later on the Place de Grève in Paris.


1This letter was written at the time when Saint Vincent was established at Saint-Lazare (after 1631) and Saint Louise was living near the Collège des Bons-Enfants (before May 1636).

2Saint Vincent often used to go to the Collège des Bons-Enfants.
I cannot resist telling you that I intend to give you quite a scolding tomorrow for giving way as you do to those useless and futile apprehensions. Oh! prepare yourself for a good talking-to!

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

107. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[May 1632]

Mademoiselle,

As for your little retreat,² make it in a leisurely way according to the order set down in the Introduction by the Bishop of Geneva,³ but make only two meditations a day: one hour in the morning and half an hour after dinner. In the intervening time, read something from Gerson⁴ or the lives of the holy widows to whom you have a more particular devotion. Use the remaining time to reflect on your past life and on the time you still have left. But please do all this quite calmly, after you have changed your lodgings, and be satisfied with doing so for six days. Do not forget me in your prayers. Perhaps I shall make my retreat at the same time. May God grant us the grace to make it well!

Letter 107. - Autograph letter. According to Coste, the original was at the Provincial House of the Daughters of Charity in Turin. The present location of the letter is unknown.

²"I would really like to make eight to ten days of retreat twice a year, namely, on the days between Ascension and Pentecost, to honor the grace God gave His Church in giving it His Holy Spirit to guide it, and the choosing of the Apostles to announce His Holy Gospel. In order to put this Gospel into practice, I shall listen to it attentively and have a special devotion to the law of God, His commandments. The other days of retreat will be during Advent... " (Ecrits spirituels, A. 1.) A tear prevents us from knowing the remainder of the text.

³Introduction to the Devout Life, by Saint Francis de Sales.

⁴Saint Louise writes in one of her letters to Abbe de Vaux (L. 63): "After confession, the reading is from Gerson or another similar book which prompts one to the love of God."

Gerson's literary work is extensive. Among the books written or translated into French, which
I am, in His love and in that of His holy Mother, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

108. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[May or June 1632]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Jesus Christ be with you!

If with M. Compaing’s advice you think it advisable to dismiss that woman, do so. If you need money for that purpose, I shall pay it. I am involved up to my ears with a large number of retreatants, an appointed bishop, a First Président, two doctors, a professor in theology, and M. Pavillon, in addition to our exercises. All that, I could have been recommended to Saint Louise, we point out the following: l’Opus tripartitum, La Doctrine de bien vivre en ce monde, Les règles de bien vivre, Le trésor de Sapience, and La mendicité spirituelle. The Imitation of Jesus Christ, sometimes attributed to Gerson, does not appear in this list. Coste notes that, elsewhere, Saint Vincent subscribes to the opinion that it was written by Thomas a Kempis.

Letter 108. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1It would seem that this letter was written just after Saint Louise had changed lodgings and when she was still in the parish of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet.

2Guillaume Compaing, the son of the Seigneur de l’Estang, had the honor of being assisted at his first Mass by Saint Francis de Sales. He lent his house to the priests of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet and entered their community himself in 1621. He did a great deal of good, both for the parish of Saint-Nicolas, whose vicar he remained for forty-three years, and for the Daughters of Sainte-Geneviève, whose director he was. The reconstruction of the parish church cost him a large amount of money and even his life for he died August 21, 1665, crushed by the fall of a scaffolding. (Cf. Darche, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 348-351.)

3The chief justice of the Parlement of Paris. After the King and the Chancellor, the First President was the senior law-officer of the realm.

4Nicolas Pavillon was born in Paris, November 17, 1597. As a very young priest he placed himself under the direction of Saint Vincent, who had him teach catechism, employed him in the work of the missions, and sent him to the Charities where his presence was deemed useful. More than once he entrusted him with the direction of the conferences and retreats for
must say, prevents me from coming to see you. For that reason, please send me the report you mentioned to me.

I am very pleased with your fine lodgings, and I shall have a word with Germaine at her convenience. M. Belin is here. As regards that gentleman for M. Renouard, you must ask for him through little Hermite; he knows him. You will have to tell him that he is the one he wanted to give us, the one who was formerly a merchant. Your son is here; he returns to me better and better each time.

Adieu, Mademoiselle, I am your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

109. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[June 1632]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

ecclesiastics. Appointed to the bishopric of Alet in 1637, Pavillon accepted only upon the Saint's entreaties. This elevation did not deter him from his apostolic works. He gave a mission in Rueil at Richelieu's invitation; then in Saint-Germain-en-Laye at the King's request. He was consecrated at Saint-Lazare, August 22, 1639, and went to his diocese accompanied by Etienne Blatiron, a priest of the Mission. A zealous, intelligent Bishop, dedicated to reform, he justified the expectations placed in him. His episcopate would have been more fruitful had he been more on his guard against Jansenistic ideas. Saint Vincent begged him in vain to sign the formulary. The Bishop of Alet died December 8, 1677. There are several biographies of this prelate, some published, others in manuscript form. The most recent, written by M. Etienne Dejean, is entitled: Un prêtre indépendant au XVIIe siècle, Nicolas Pavillon, évêque d'Alet (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1909).

Saint Vincent opened wide the doors of his house to persons wishing to make their retreat there. His hospitality was gratuitous. God alone knows the countless number of priests and lay people from every country and walk of life whom he received, either at the Bons-Enfants or at Saint-Lazare. (Cf. Abelly, op. cit., vol. I, chap. XXVI, pp. 119 ff.)


This letter needs to be placed near no. 110. It was written prior to the departure of Saint Louise for Villeneuve, where she was on June 27.
*Mon Dieu,* Mademoiselle, how many faults I commit in your regard! Yesterday I assured you that I would have the pleasure of coming to see your devout and beautiful paradise today and that I would see Madame Goussault, the President's wife, and Mademoiselle Poulaillon. And yet I did neither one nor the other, but went off to the country. I have just returned from there. I went to work at the Charity of Champigny which really needs your presence. I most humbly beg you to forgive me and to go to Villeneuve tomorrow, if Madame Goussault and Mademoiselle Poulaillon will take you there. Please write to them about it this morning. If neither of them can go, I wonder if you would be uncomfortable in the boat to Joigny which leaves at eight o'clock on Saturday. I think not, because it is covered. When you are in Villeneuve, stay at Mademoiselle Tranchot's house and give the Pastor the letter I write to him, the tenor of which you will see.

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2Saint Louise’s new home.
3In 1613 Geneviève Fayet had married Antoine Goussault, Seigneur de Souvigny, Councillor of the King and President of the Chambre des Comptes of Paris. Five children were born of the marriage. Widowed in 1631, she dedicated herself untiringly to works of charity. She was the first to have the idea of an association of ladies for the relief of the sick at the Hôtel-Dieu and was the first superioress of the group. It was thanks to her that the Daughters of Charity were called to the Hospital of Angers. Her name recurs constantly in Saint Vincent’s letters to Saint Louise. She died on September 20, 1639, in the exercise of charity.
4Marie de Lumague was the widow of François de Pollalion, a gentleman in ordinary of Louis XIII’s household. She was among those devout widows whom Saint Vincent put to work in the apostolate. Born in Paris, November 29, 1599, married at the age of eighteen and widowed shortly after, she made a vow of continence and placed herself under the direction of Saint Vincent. Together with Saint Louise and other charitable ladies, she visited the Charities, instructed little girls, and took alms to the poor. She especially wanted to gather together and reform delinquent girls and to this end she founded the Daughters of Providence. Saint Vincent worked on the rules of this institute, procured funds for it and good directors as well, and obtained its approbation by the King and the Archbishop of Paris. Mademoiselle de Pollalion died September 4, 1657. (Cf. Hyacinthe Collin, *Vie de la Vénérable Servante de Dieu Marie Lumague, veuve de M. Pollalion* [Paris: Cl. J.-B. Hérissant fils, 1744]; Abbé L. Teillet, *Histoire de l’Union chrétienne de Fontenay-le-Comte* [Fontenay-le-Comte: L.-P. Gouraud, 1898].) Saint Vincent always writes Poulaillon instead of Pollalion.
5Champigny-sur-Marne (Val-de-Marne).
6A town situated on the banks of the Yonne, one of the tributaries of the Seine.
7Saint Louise wrote beside the address the following words taken from the letter of October 12, 1631: “Mademoiselle Tranchot really wants you in Villeneuve where the Charity is going badly.”
There will be no harm in your instructing the girls only; it will facilitate the means of winning their mothers over to God. As for the Charity, you will find only nine sisters in the confraternity; try to get some others. If we can, we shall send you Monsieur Pavillon to preach some Sunday.

I shall say nothing to you about the rest. Our Lord will advise you as to what you must do. Please take care of your health and honor Our Lord's cheerfulness of heart. For my part, I beg God to bring you back in perfect health, full of merit, and laden with spoils from the enemy of the empire of God, in Whose love I am your servant.

V. D. P.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

110. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN VILLENEUVE-SAINT-GEORGES

Mademoiselle,

Your letter of the twenty-seventh was given to me here in the house. I wrote to M. Pavilion right away asking him to go and see you and I sent him your letter; he has not answered me. As soon as I receive an answer, I shall send it to you. Otherwise, M. [Soufliers],¹ who rather enjoyed teaching catechism in Villeneuve, will come. M. de la Salle is not here either.

I certainly had no doubt at all that you would find it very difficult to reestablish the Charity and more so than you tell me.

¹The copyist wrote Soudier, but this was an obvious distraction, because the two Le Soudier brothers did not enter the Congregation until 1638. François Soufliers, born in Montmirail in 1606, in the diocese of Soissons, received at the Bons-Enfants in August 1629, and ordained a priest in September 1631, was Superior of Notre-Dame de la Rose from 1642 to 1644. On the feast of Saint Matthias [February 24], 1642, he pronounced his vows. Saint Vincent recommended that his manner of dealing with heretics be imitated.
But blessed be God that there is some reason to hope you will set it up again!

As for the difficulties you reported to me, I think it wise for you to act as you have written to me. Mademoiselle Poulaison told me that she hopes to spend Saturday night at your house, and I wrote to Madame Gouassault that they were counting on her in that town to pay a visit to the school teacher of Villeneuve on Sunday afternoon. O Dieu! What a virtuous little group! I beg Our Lord to bind your hearts together into one, which will be His own, and to strengthen you in your work.

Paris, July 7, 1632

III. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN VILLENEUVE-SAINT-GEORGES

Saint-Lazare, July 10, 1632

Mademoiselle,

Blessed be God, Mademoiselle, that in the midst of so much work you are well and that He has blessed your efforts! I really do think it would be well to establish a schoolmistress in Villeneuve, but where shall we find one? From a letter written to me by M. Belin, I gather that Germaine would not mind going there; but how can we withdraw her from Villepreux if someone else is not put there? And then, where shall we find that someone? I surely cannot see any way to do it, especially in the little time you have before seeing Mademoiselle d'Attichy. We shall see about it when you return, which will probably be some day next week. In the meantime, please give the mothers of your pupils the hope that you will send them a teacher as soon as you can, or that you will come to see them and discuss the means of housing and maintaining the schoolteacher. We shall be expecting you then during that time.

Letter III. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 31.
Please find out how the Charity in Crosnes\textsuperscript{1} is doing. It is a little village as far from [Villeneuve]\textsuperscript{2} as the Saint-Victor gate is from Notre-Dame, or thereabouts. If you had a horse to go there, you would not lose any time.

112. - TO FRANCOIS DU COUDRAY, IN ROME

July 12, 1632

As soon as I have received the statements that the Congregation wishes from the Nuncio\textsuperscript{1} and from the Archbishop,\textsuperscript{2} I shall send them to you, if indeed we can obtain them. For, it is true that they are trying to cause us trouble as you informed me, even the person from whom we should expect the greatest assistance after God. But all that would not surprise me. It is my sins which give me reason to be afraid, not the outcome of the affair. Sooner or later, that will be settled both there and here. But I could not express to you how much the deceit amazes me. The Father General\textsuperscript{3} denies

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\textsuperscript{1}In Essonne, an arrondissement of Corbeil two kilometers from Villeneuve. An arrondissement is an administrative district, a division of a Département, administered by a sub-prefect.

\textsuperscript{2}The copyist of the Saint Paul manuscript inadvertently wrote Villepreux.

\textsuperscript{3}Alessandro Bichi, born in Siena in 1598, was first a substitute Court auditor; then Bishop of Isola, May 5, 1628; and Nuncio to Naples. Transferred to the See of Carpentras on July 2, 1630, he was named Nuncio to Paris on September 6 and remained in that post until March 26, 1634, the date of his recall to Rome. In the course of his nunciature in France, he was raised to the dignity of Cardinal-Priest on May 28, 1633, with the title of Saint Sabina. He died in Rome on May 25, 1657. (Cf. Tanizey de Larroque, Le Cardinal Bichi, évêque de Carpentras - Lettres à Peiresc, Paris, 1885.)

\textsuperscript{2}Jean-François de Gondi.

\textsuperscript{3}Charles de Condren born in Vauxbuin, near Soissons, December 16, 1588, entered the Oratory on June 17, 1617, after receiving his doctorate at the Sorbonne. He founded the seminary of Langres in 1619 and that of Saint-Magloire in 1620; then he established a house of his Order in Poitiers, where he remained for over a year. On his return to Paris, he made a fine reputation for himself as a director of souls, which attracted to him Gaston, Duc d'Orléans, brother of the King; Olier; Meyster; Amelote; and other eminent persons of rank. He governed the Oratory from October 30, 1629 to January 7, 1641, the day of his death. (Cf. Denis Amelote, La vie du P. Charles de Condren [Paris: H. Sara, 1643].) Saint Vincent held him in
it all, however, and has promised to write to Cardinal Bagni, to the Ambassador, and to Father René. As soon as I have his letters, I shall send them to you. In the meantime, please act in as Christian a manner as possible with those who are hampering us. I see them here, just as often and cordially, thank God, as I have been wont to do. It seems to me that, by the grace of God, not only do I feel no aversion towards them, but I honor and cherish them the more. Furthermore, I have not yet complained to Father de Gondi about them, for fear of making him averse to his vocation. What they wrote from there is true, that Father B. went to give a mission in Normandy with six or seven others about two weeks after Easter, and that I sent them M. Renar because they entreated me to do so in order that they might conform themselves to us. Since then, one of their men came to spend two or three days at one of our missions in this diocese to see how we do things. If they wish to come more often, they will be welcome. I

high esteem. "He spoke to me about him in terms that might seem unbelievable," writes Jean-Jacques Olier (Mémoires autographes, vol. II, p. 225), "and I remember that he said to me concerning him: 'There has not been found a man like him, non est inventus similis illi'; and a thousand other similar things, going even so far as to fall on his knees and strike his breast, when he learned of his death, and accuse himself, with tears in his eyes, of not having honored the holy man as much as he deserved."  

Giovanni Francesco Guidi di Bagno, born in October 1578, was the Bishop of Cervia and Rieti; the Vice-legate of Avignon; Nuncio in Flanders, then in France (1627); Cardinal in 1629; and died July 24, 1641.

The Marquis de Brassac.

Father René Barréme, the favorite disciple of Father de Condren, was born in Arles, received into the Oratory in 1623, and died in Arles on January 16, 1685. He had a special talent for the missions and excelled in giving catechetical instruction, which he taught with the aid of large pictures representing the principal mysteries and the Sacraments. (Cf. Ingold, op. cit., vol. I, p. 246, n. 1.)

Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi, after the death of his wife, became an Oratorian Father in 1627.

Possibly François Bourgoing who preceded Saint Vincent in the parish of Clichy and was to succeed Father de Condren as Superior of the Oratory.

Among the members of the Tuesday conferences, Saint Vincent had no one, perhaps, who was a more zealous and useful auxiliary than François Renar, born in Paris, April 25, 1604. This holy priest divided his time between spiritual direction and works of charity. Every morning from six o'clock until noon, he was at the disposition of his penitents, among whom was Jeanne Potier, the wife of Michel de Marillac. He was seen at the Hôtel-Dieu, visiting and instructing the sick. He preached in hospitals and jails, taught catechism to children, and went
could not consider myself a Christian if I did not try to participate in the *utinam omnes prophetarent* of Saint Paul.\(^\text{10}\)

Alas! Monsieur, the countryside is so vast! There are people by the thousands filling up hell. All the ecclesiastics, with all the religious, would not suffice to remedy this misfortune! Should we be so dispicable as not to allow these people to devote themselves to the assistance of those poor souls who are constantly being lost! Oh! surely, that would render us guilty of hindering the accomplishment of the mission of Jesus Christ on earth. And if they wish to place obstacles in our way, we must pray, humble ourselves, and do penance for the sins we have committed in this holy ministry. Therefore, I beg you, Monsieur, not to stop seeing those Fathers, acting in their regard as Our Lord advises us to act towards those who try us and hinder us, and begging those to whom God has given good will towards us to do them no harm by word or by action.

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\(^{10}\text{Would that all were prophets. Saint Vincent does not intend to make a textual quotation. The equivalent of these words is to be found in 1 Cor. 14:39 - 'Set your hearts on prophecy, my brothers, and do not forbid those who speak in tongues.' The allusion is even clearer in Nm. 11:29 - 'But Moses answered him [Joshua], 'Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the people of the Lord were prophets! Would that the Lord might bestow his spirit on them all?'' (NAB)\)
113. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around 1632]

Mademoiselle,

It will be well for you to contact Madame Goussault and Mademoiselle Poulaillon to ask their opinion about Germaine. Just two days ago I became aware of that way of acting, which seems cordial and deferential to me. I may perhaps have offended them by having you make the final decision about your work without telling them.

114. - TO ISABELLE DU FAY

[Between 1626 and 1635]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Since a very close friend of mine is involved in a case for which M. de Villenosse is the judge, my heart could not hide from him that I hoped to be able to render him some service through your kindness. I very humbly ask you, Mademoiselle, to do me the favor of taking an interest in the matter and of presenting the enclosed document to him with your recommendation. The eminent virtue of this person, his need, and your charity in my regard give me the confidence to bother you with this. My embarrassment at having to trouble you will make me more circumspect and

Letter 113. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 42.

This letter seems to have been written close to the time when the first contacts were established between Saint Vincent, Madame Goussault, and Mademoiselle de Pollalion.

Letter 114. - Reg. 1, f° 68. The copyist notes that the original was written in Saint Vincent's hand.

The name of Mademoiselle du Fay does not appear in any of the letters written before 1626 or after 1635.
reserved another time so as not to do so, on condition that you will not take the trouble of coming here and that you will not spare me in any way you judge me capable of serving you. I am, in the love of Jesus and His holy Mother, Mademoiselle, your.

The case is to be judged tomorrow. I beg you, Mademoiselle, to see to the recommendation today.

115. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Mademoiselle,

Charity towards those poor convicts is of incomparable merit before God. You have done well to assist them and will do well to continue in any way you can until I have the pleasure of seeing you, which will be in two or three days. Give a little thought to whether your Charity at Saint-Nicolas would be willing to take on the responsibility for them, at least for a time. You could help them with the money you have left. Indeed, it is difficult, and that is what makes me suggest the idea casually. 2


1The content of the letter, as explained in note 2, prompts us to assign this date.

2From the day he was appointed Chaplain General of the galleys of France, Saint Vincent made every effort to improve both the spiritual and corporal conditions of the poor convicts who were waiting in the dungeons of the Conciergerie or in other Paris prisons to be sent to the galleys. In 1622, he rented a house for them in the faubourg Saint-Honoré, near Saint-Roch Church. In the contract signed April 17, 1625, by Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi, his wife, and Saint Vincent, it is stipulated that the Missionaries will be bound in perpetuity "to assist the poor convicts spiritually so that they may profit by their corporal punishment." (Cf. vol. XIII, no. 59.) In 1632, the Saint obtained from the King and the city officials permission to turn an old square tower into a hospital for the sick galley slaves. It was situated near the Pont de la Tournelle, between the Porte Saint-Bernard and the Seine. Saint Vincent served as their Chaplain. Not satisfied with visiting them himself, he exhorted devout persons to come and bring them words of consolation. Saint Louise and her girls were associated with this work as with the others. (Cf. Abelly, op. cit., vol. I, chap. XXVIII.) It would be unjust not to recall here that the priests of the parish of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet, whose role has been so well highlighted by Abbé Schoenher (op. cit., vol. I, p. 127), rivaled the zeal of Saint Vincent and Saint Louise on behalf of the galley slaves in their parish. It is certain that from 1634 on, or
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have never been less satisfied with myself as far as you are concerned, because it has been such a long time since I have seen you. You may well believe that only an excess of work keeps me from doing so. I shall try to have that happiness tomorrow, begging you meanwhile to take care of your health. Send word to me about it, as to one who is, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Friday morning

perhaps even earlier, the chaplaincy of the galley slaves' house was entrusted to them. The Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement, probably spurred on by Saint Vincent, who needed support, undertook the same work. (Cf. René de Voyer d'Argenson, Annales de la Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement, ed. by H. Beauchet-Filleau [Marseille; Saint-Léon, 1900], pp. 54-56.)

Letter 115a. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter. A gift of the Province of Rennes, this letter was submitted to the examination of Father Raymond Chalumeau, C.M., Archivist of the Congregation of the Mission in Paris. It was his considered opinion that the letter is an absolutely authentic original which can be placed between 1630 and 1638.

Letter 116. - The original autograph letter was at the Collège d'Antoura, near Beirut. Unfortunately, all the documents of this house were destroyed during the upheavals of 1914. However, there is a photocopy of the letter in the Archives of the Mission in Paris.

1Dates of the occupancy of Saint-Lazare (January 8, 1632) and of Mademoiselle du Fay's death. The letter seems to belong more likely to 1632 or 1633.
I approve of everything you wrote to me. Because Madame Goussault is in the country and Mademoiselle du Fay does not have her carriage, I shall try to come and see you tomorrow or the day after. Meanwhile, get much stronger.

I bid you good day and am, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Saint-Lazare, Sunday morning

The young woman you take with you to Villeneuve will have to be very determined; she will have much to suffer.3

117. - TO SAINT LOUISE

I praise God, Mademoiselle, that you are not ill as Mademoiselle du Coudray1 made me fear this morning. But is what you say true, that it is not so? Well, I am begging Our Lord that that be the case.

We shall, therefore, postpone Mademoiselle du Coudray’s confession until the Blessed Virgin’s feast day, since it seems that you want it that way without saying so, and know all about it. Besides, I have some business here in the house tomorrow morning. I wish a good evening to her as to you, and to your son the grace to do what you mentioned to me.

I did not answer you sooner because I have just come back from the city.

Good evening, Mademoiselle. Please offer to God the interior

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2Villeneuve-Saint-Georges (Val-de-Marne).
3This probably refers to a young woman destined to teach school in that locality. (Cf. no. 111.)

Letter 117. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1A close friend of Saint Louise.
needs of him who is, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

*Addressed:* Mademoiselle Le Gras

**118. - TO ISABELLE DU FAY**

[Between 1626 and 1635]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I would not have been so slow about seeing you to thank you for all the good things you have so kindly done for our chapel and for us, or rather, for Our Lord and His holy Mother, were it not that God chose to do me the favor of keeping me home with a slight fever which I have had since last Sunday. Please accept my thanks by means of these lines, Mademoiselle, along with the assurance that my heart, as seems fitting to me, would be most happy to see yours. But since Our Lord does not want this yet, may His Holy Name be blessed! However, I shall not fail to bring you to Our Lord in my unworthy prayers. I also recommend myself most humbly to yours, begging you to honor the holy tranquillity of Our Lord’s soul by believing that you are His dear daughter and He your dear Father, and I, in His love, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

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*Letter 118.* - Reg. 1, f° 68 v°. The copyist notes that the original was in the Saint’s own handwriting.

*References to Mademoiselle du Fay appear in Saint Vincent’s correspondence only between 1626 and 1635.*
119. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Since in conscience you can have [the matter taken care of without any fear] and you realize that if you do not do so you are jeopardizing the transaction which so many people [want], ask Monsieur Clichun to do you this service, as he will gladly do it. If you are troubled by the doubt that you can deal with this affair in that manner, be at peace and think no more about it. If it is the treatment you get from your auditors, think of the fear of those who render an account before God at the moment of death. Let us try to act so rightly that we shall have reason to trust in the infinite goodness of the Auditor of our Life, our Sovereign Judge.

Thank you for the book [you] sent me and please take care of your health. It is no longer yours since you destine it for God. And my heart is no longer my heart, but yours, in that of Our Lord, Whom I desire to be the object of our one love. Please remember to offer to God a matter that affects us.

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Letter 119. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1The letter was written before the institution of the Daughters of Charity.

2The words placed in brackets here have been so carefully scratched out that we dare not assert that they are exact.

3Saint Louise always awaited the decision of her saintly director. We read in her writings: "I must persevere in awaiting the Holy Spirit, although I do not know the time of His coming. But, in accepting this lack of knowledge and my ignorance of the ways by which God wishes me to serve Him, I must leave myself completely at His disposal so as to belong entirely to Him. And to prepare my soul, I must give up everything willingly in order to follow Him."

(Ecrits spirituels, A. 5.)
120. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN ASNIERES

Mademoiselle,

My regards to the president, as well as to the curate in Asnières, and to all your good women from the Charity. I recommend myself to their prayers.

Please tell the above-mentioned lady that I beg her, and also you, to help us thank God that our case concerning this house was confirmed in Parlement the day before yesterday.

121. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1632 and 1636]

In your opinion, Mademoiselle, am I not rather ungracious to you? Did your heart not murmur a little against mine for my being so close and not having seen you or sent you news of us? Now then, some day you will know the reason for all that before God.

I came here yesterday to work on something I had to write. Perhaps I shall still be here tomorrow, but not without going into the city or without seeing you, perhaps at Mass.

In the meantime, I bid you good evening. I have scarcely given your son any direction at all yet. There goes the bell taking the pen from my hand.


1A place near Paris. In February 1630, Saint Louise had visited the Confraternity in Asnières (Ecrits spirituels, A. 50), to which she had perhaps returned since that time.
2The president of the Charity.
3Perhaps the union with the Priory of Saint-Lazare.

Letter 121. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1This letter appears to have been written between the time Saint Vincent established himself at Saint-Lazare (after 1631) and while Saint Louise was still near the Collège des Bons-Enfants (before 1636).
2To the Collège des Bons-Enfants.
Good evening, Mademoiselle. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

122. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around 1632]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

We must wait for that good young lady to make up her mind. Madame Goussault wants to take the trip with Marie\(^2\) before confiding her to you.

Draw up the rule; then I shall go over it and do what you asked me. Tell me the obstacles that you fear.

I begin my retreat today and am putting everything aside for later. Please pray to God for me.

I am, in His love. . . .

V. D. P.

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1\(^{\text{st}}\) Date of Marie Joly's entrance into the community.

2\(^{\text{nd}}\) Marie Joly was employed at the Hôtel-Dieu, the Charity of Saint-Paul, that of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, and was the first Superior of the Sedan house where she remained from 1641 to 1654. Recalled from that city, she yielded to discouragement and ran away from the Motherhouse. A few days later, she was readmitted at her request and made up for her momentary weakness by exemplary conduct. On August 5, 1672, she was the Superior at Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas.
123. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Since I am unable to come and see you myself, I want you to know, Mademoiselle, that I am begging Our Lord to tell you Himself what you should do. Go ahead then and do in nomine Domini what you think our amiable and ever-adorable Savior is asking of you. I beg Him with all my heart to take you and to bring you back, to be the light of your heart and its gentle warmth, to let it know and love what He desires of you and, especially, to let you be the consolation of His dear daughters, and they yours, in His perfect love.

One of those Jacobin Fathers¹ was the Prior and the other the Novice Master two years ago. As for the candlesticks you gave to Sainte-Marie,² I commend you for that, provided they are not silver.

Remember me before God, in Whose love and in that of His holy Mother I am, for the superior who will be elected from your group³ and for her young women, a most humble and obedient servant.

Monsieur Clichun returned half an hour after you yesterday.

124. - TO FRANCOIS DU COUDRAY, IN ROME

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Monsieur du Coudray, your brother, wanted me to enclose this letter with the one he is writing to you and to join my prayers to

Letter 123. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.
¹Dominicans. Because their first monastery was situated on the rue Saint-Jacques in Paris, the Dominicans were popularly called the Jacobins.
²Convent of the Visitation nuns.
³The superior of the Charity in the parish of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet.