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 Fathers\(^1\) 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 group\(^3\) and for her young women, a most humble and obedient servant.

Monsieur Clichun returned half an hour after you yesterday.

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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

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Letter 123. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

\(^1\)Dominicans. Because their first monastery was situated on the rue Saint-Jacques in Paris, the Dominicans were popularly called the Jacobins.

\(^2\)Convent of the Visitation nuns.

\(^3\)The superior of the Charity in the parish of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet.

his, so that you may see fit to conclude the business you have with one another. I most humbly beg you, Monsieur, to do this as soon as possible, if you are not ready to leave soon and if your business can be concluded by someone else to whom you can send your power of attorney and some written statements. But I beg you that it not be to me, because I am too busy and do not at all understand business matters.

I know you will tell me that it was not your fault and that you have sought him out many times for that purpose, and will call me to witness myself that I have been a mediator between the two of you in order to reconcile you. But my answer to that is that the time was not ripe then, as it appears to be now from the frame of mind I seem to see in your brother. So, while awaiting your favorable reply concerning this matter, I recommend myself to your prayers and am, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Paris, September 19, 1632

Your brother would like two guaranteed and accurate copies of annates\(^1\) from two different agents, M. Marchand and some other. I most humbly beg you, Monsieur, to send them to him.

Addressed: Monsieur du Coudray, Priest of the Mission

125. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL, IN MONTMIRAIL

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

\(^1\)A tax, equivalent to one year's revenue, paid to the Holy See by the recipient of an ecclesiastical benefice or office.

Yesterday, I received your letter of the seventh of this month. It made me aware of the blessing Our Lord is pleased to continue bestowing on your mission, which consoles me as much as you can imagine. O Monsieur, how touched I was by the note you sent me concerning the success at Courboin¹ and the needs of Viffort² Well now, may God be glorified for everything. May you recognize, Messieurs [sic], the gratitude you owe Him for having chosen to make use of you for that purpose. And may I be confused at seeing myself unworthy of cooperating in this good work!

I am, moreover, in arrears for not having written you with every coach. Lay the blame for it on some rather unusual difficulties I am having here.

What shall I say about your way of going to Joigny except for you to manage as you think best. But, if you do go on foot and take only one horse, I ask two things of you: that you travel by short stages and that those who are tired take turns riding the horse. If you have not yet sent anyone to Soissons, do not do so. The Bishop of Soissons³ is supposed to be in this city soon. I will do what is necessary. If there is still some village that needs attention, what do you think, Monsieur, of leaving Messieurs Bécu⁴ and Miloir⁵ for that purpose? However, if it is only for three or four days, wait for them and leave as soon as you have finished. You are needed in Joigny where you will find Monsieur Pavillon, M. Renar, Messieurs Morel,⁶ Massé,⁷ and another from Saint-

¹A small locality in Aisne where, on June 19, 1622, Saint Vincent had established a Confraternity of Charity composed of men and women, for which he himself drew up a set of rules which we still possess. (Cf. vol. XIII, no. 137.)
²A small locality in Aisne.
³Simon Le Gras (1624-1656).
⁴Jean Bécu.
⁵François Miloir, a Priest of the Mission, was born in Abbeville. Around November 1630, he was received into the Congregation of the Mission where he remained only a short time.
⁶Perhaps Claude Morel, a renowned doctor of the Sorbonne born in Vitry-le-François, who became preacher to the King in 1640, Theologian for the diocese of Paris in 1662, and Dean of the school of theology. He died April 30, 1679, after taking an active part in the struggle against the Jansenists.
⁷This is neither Jean-Baptiste nor René Macé, both priests of Saint-Sulpice. In 1632 both men were too young to take part in a mission.
Nicolas, besides Messieurs de Sergis and de Renel. M. de la Salle is not there; he remained here because he is ill.

We gave orders for M. Pavillon to do the preaching, and for Messieurs Renar, Roche, Grenu, and Sergis to be responsible for the following: the first man, the Credo; the 2nd, the Commandments of God; the 3rd, the Our Father and the Hail Mary; and the [4th], the Sacraments. As for the children’s catechism, Messieurs Roche and Sergis are to be relieved when they are teaching the adult catechism, and you, Monsieur, will take care of directing the group. I pray Our Lord to grant you a generous share in His spirit and guidance for that purpose.

Courage, just undertake this holy work in that spirit, Monsieur. To that end, honor the prudence, foresight, meekness, and exactitude of Our Lord. You will do well if you have the rule observed as it should be. The blessing of God is found abundantly in doing so. Begin then with rising, retiring, prayer, the Divine Office, and entering and leaving church at the appointed time. O Monsieur, what a precious treasure is the habit formed by these things, and how many disadvantages are found in the contrary! Mon Dieu! why will we not take the trouble of doing this for God, since we see that most people are exact observers of the rule of life they have laid down for themselves in the world? Never, or very rarely, do lawyers fail to rise and retire, to go to and from court at the same hour; and most workmen do the same. Only we ecclesiastics are so fond of our ease that we work only according to the impulse of our inclinations. For the love of God, Monsieur, let us strive to

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8The community of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet, founded by Adrien Bourdoise.
9Jacques de Renel, a Priest of the Mission, was born in 1606 in the diocese of Amiens, entered the Congregation of the Mission in August 1629, and was ordained a priest on Easter Sunday, 1631. His name appears here for the first and last time.
10Nicolas Roche, a Priest of the Mission, was born in Amiens, received into the Congregation of the Mission in 1629, and ordained a priest in 1631.
11Daniel Grenu, born in Abbeville on January 1, 1606, was ordained a priest in 1630 and received into the Congregation of the Mission in September 1631. He was a very active missionary and worked zealously in Champagne, Gasceny, and Dauphine.
12The text of the original reads: and the 3rd. Correction is necessary.
rid ourselves of this miserable sensuality which makes us prisoners of its whims.

I have written rather at length to Monsieur de Sergis concerning what you will have to do in case this letter finds you in Montmirail. Go then, in nomine Domini, and please greet or, rather, embrace our men in nomine meo. Write to me often. Tell our men that, of all the missions we have given, there is none more difficult or important than that of Joigny, both because of the mentality of the place and because of the power the Evil One has there in some matters. Tell them that hoc genus daemoniorum non ejicitur nisi in oratione, maxima modestia et prudentia et humilitate, and that the men who make up the Company require those very virtues. Let them beware of two notable faults remarked during the preceding mission, namely, sensuality, not to say intemperance, and an exaggerated love of self, not to say gross vanity in sermons and discourses on this subject.

I beg you, Monsieur, to warn the Company of this so that they can avoid falling into these faults. Do not forget at Chapter to admonish the group in general and the individuals whom you see falling into these faults. For believe me, Monsieur, if we are not careful, we shall fall into these faults. If we do so, O Dieu, where shall we be? What will become of a company so important and nonetheless composed of sensual, effeminate, and immortalized men? Who does not see that it cannot last long and that these vices are the source of all the others? Now then, Monsieur, for the love of God, pray with regard to this matter and see that it is done. I, wretch that I am, have reason to fear being the cause of all these faults because they are all to be found in me as in their source. From me they spread to the Company, or to a part of it. (For thank God, there are some people who are not like that. They rather mortify and humble themselves in all things.) Pray that God will

\[13\] This kind of demon is cast out only by prayer, the greatest moderation, prudence, and humility. In this passage Saint Vincent amplifies the thought of Our Lord contained in Mt. 17:21: "[This kind does not leave but by prayer and fasting]." (NAB)
forgive me and grant me the grace to correct myself. I am, meanwhile, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Saint-Lazare, November 28, 1632

Addressed: Monsieur Portail, Priest of the Mission, in Montmirail

126. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around 1632]

Mademoiselle,

I praise God that you have suffered no harm from your journey or from your short sojourn in Serain. I beg Him to strengthen you completely, so that you may serve Him for the good of the little souls in the place where you are now.

As for what you tell me about Saint Benoîte, you will be honoring the spirit of Our Lord in her by the relationship of your work to hers and the remoteness of your customary place of residence. If you cannot do this in all things, God be praised that you are doing

Letter 126. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 9.

The last sentence leads us to believe that the letter was written around December 21, the anniversary of the death of M. Le Gras. What precedes appears to indicate that the Company of the Daughters of Charity had not yet been founded.

A locality in Aisne near Origny-Sainte-Benoîte.

Saint Benoîte (Benedicta), virgin and martyr, is honored by the Church on October 8, anniversary of her death. Her biographers relate that she was the daughter of a Roman senator and that, along with twelve companions, she came to live in Origny-sur-Oise, now Origny-Sainte-Benoîte, near Saint-Quentin, on a hill outside the town and beside the river. Every day she would leave her cell to exhort in a familiar way the inhabitants of the place and its surroundings. The conversions she made drew down upon her the anger of the persecutors, who had her beheaded on October 8. Saint Louise was imitating Saint Benoîte in her work and, like her, she was doubtless living in a place far from the town. Would not what is said here about Saint Benoîte give the impression that Saint Louise was then in Origny-Sainte-Benoîte?
it in something, while waiting to do more if His Divine Goodness so pleases. He who is faithful in a little, says Our Lord, will be set over a greater work. Be faithful to this little and perhaps Our Lord will have you do more. Only God knows whether or not that will contribute to the glory of M. Le Gras, for whose soul and for your own you wish me to pray.

127. - TO N.

[Around 1633]

In conformity with the former practice of the Church, by which bishops would have instruction given in their own houses for a period of several days to those desiring to be promoted to Orders, the Archbishop ordered that, from that time on, those in his diocese who had that desire would retire for ten days before each Order to the house of the Priests of the Mission in order to make a spiritual retreat. They practice meditation, so necessary for ecclesiastics; make a general confession of their whole past life; review moral theology, especially that which concerns the use of the sacraments; learn to perform well the ceremonies of all the functions of all the other Orders; and, finally, are instructed in all the other matters necessary for ecclesiastics. They are lodged and fed during that time. Such fruit is resulting from it, by the grace of God, that it has been observed that all those who have made this retreat lead a truly priestly life afterwards. Furthermore, most of them dedicate themselves in a very special way to works of piety. All of this is becoming evident to the public.


1Abelly says that this letter was written "about two years after" the episcopal decree pertaining to ordinands, which was issued February 21, 1631.

2Jean-François de Gondi.

3From 1631 to 1643, there were six retreats for ordinands given every year at the Motherhouse of the Priests of the Mission. After 1643, the retreat held in the middle of Lent was
I was afraid that your difficulty had not been settled because Mademoiselle Delamare has been at your home for a long time. That is why I wrote the note I sent you, and not to dissuade you. Now, since your judgment has dealt with it in that way, we shall wait until tomorrow right after one o'clock. In the meantime, make your meditation tomorrow morning on the Birth of Our Lord and repeat the same thing at ten o'clock. Then, after dinner, meditate on the shepherds. Your last meditation will be on the Purification of the Blessed Virgin.

Adieu, Mademoiselle, remember our spiritual needs and that I am your servant.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras
I have learned from various people of the blessings the goodness of God is so kindly lavishing on your mission in [Mortagne]. We were all greatly consoled by this. And because we recognize that this abundant grace comes from God, a grace which He keeps on giving only to the humble who realize that all the good done through them comes from God, I beg Him with all my heart to give you more and more the spirit of humility in all your duties. You must believe most assuredly that God will take this grace away from you as soon as you allow vain complacency to enter your mind, attributing to yourself what belongs to God alone.

Humble yourself greatly then, Monsieur, at the thought that Judas had received greater graces than you, that those graces had produced more results than yours, and that, in spite of that, he was lost. What would it profit, therefore, the greatest preacher in the world, endowed with the most eminent talents, to have made his preaching resound with applause throughout an entire province and even to have converted several thousand souls to God, if, in spite of all that, he were to lose his own soul!

I am not telling you this, Monsieur, because I have any particular reason to fear this vain complacency in you or M. . . . who is working with you; but, so that, if the demon should attack you from that angle, as doubtless he will, you may very carefully and faithfully reject his suggestions and honor Our Lord's humility. These past few days, I have had as the subject of my talk the ordinary life Our Lord wished to lead on earth. I realized that He


1Probably Robert de Sergis or Lambert aux Couteaux. We know from other sources that both were working together near Bordeaux in 1633.

2The date and the name of the locality where the mission was being given were known by Collet (op. cit., vol. I, p. 244), who quotes an excerpt from this letter.

3Probably Mortagne-sur-Gironde (Charente-Maritime).

4Lambert aux Couteaux or Robert de Sergis.
had so loved this ordinary and abject life of other men that, in order to adapt Himself to it, He had humbled Himself as much as He could, even to the point (O marvelous act which surpasses the whole capacity of human understanding!) that although He was the Uncreated Wisdom of the Eternal Father, He had wished, nevertheless, to preach His doctrine in a much simpler and more humble style than that of His Apostles. Pray, consider what His sermons were like and compare them with the epistles and sermons of Saint Peter, Saint Paul, and the other Apostles. It would seem that the style He used was that of a man of scant knowledge and that the style of His Apostles was that of men possessing far greater knowledge than He. What is even more astonishing is that He willed His sermons to have less effect than those of His Apostles. We see in the Gospels that He won over His Apostles and disciples almost one by one and did so with great labor and fatigue, while Saint Paul converted five thousand at his first sermon. This has certainly given me more enlightenment and knowledge, so it seems to me, about the great and marvelous humility of the Son of God than any other thought I have ever had on the subject.

Every day at Holy Mass we say these words: *In spiritu humilitatis*, etc. Now, a holy person told me one day, as he had learned from the blessed Bishop of Geneva,⁵ that this spirit of humility which we ask of God in all our Masses consists mainly in remaining ever attentive and ready to humble ourselves incessantly on every occasion, both interiorly and exteriorly. But, Monsieur, who will give us this spirit of humility? Indeed, it will be Our Lord, if we ask Him for it and if we are faithful to His grace and careful to put it into practice. Let us do so then, I beg you, and to that end let us try to remember one another when we pronounce those same words at the holy altar. I hope for this from your charity.

⁵Saint Francis de Sales.
Most honored and dear Father,

Alas! how good and paternal your heart is towards me and how I wish to believe for my consolation that it is most faithful in continuing its dear remembrance of me before the Divine Goodness. I have great need of this because of my age and difficulties. Now eternally praised be His Divine Goodness for the mercy He is pleased to lavish on souls by the holy and efficacious meekness of the spirit of His faithful and true servant, our most holy father. For it is true, I admit to you, my dearest Father, that the spirit of our most worthy and true brother and father has indeed been caught in his nets. I do not think that any other hand than that of this blessed man could have guided him so wisely, so gently, or so firmly as it did in this retreat. It was so exact that he is now completely separated from the world to the edification and consolation of everyone, and what is more, to the greatest glory of God and the consolation of his dear soul, and most certainly to the profit, honor and consolation of the Daughters of the Visitation who are infinitely obligated to him.

Our dear Sisters in the city are especially privileged with a great happiness by having him so near them. Oh! may God grant us the grace of corresponding faithfully to the sincere friendship and wholehearted charity that good gentleman has for us. I can assure you, dearest Father, that I love, honor, and revere him with all the breadth and strength of my soul.

I believe that you are now spending more time in Paris. Mon Dieu! take care of that dear and worthy person and do not allow him to live a life that is too severe or austere. I know he has great confidence in you. Moreover, I believe that our good Father Binet will now be. . . . You see, I rather think that I am becoming hardened with age.

I have to finish in order to go to that blessed parlor. My dearest Father, may God fashion you more and more according to His own heart! Earnestly beseech His Goodness to be merciful to me so that, together

Letter 130. - Original autograph letter, Visitation of Chartres.
1Commander de Sillery had taken lodgings near the Visitation monastery in July 1632.
2Saint Francis de Sales, co-founder with Saint Jane Frances de Chantal of the Visitation Order.
3Commander de Sillery.
4Three lines of the original have been crossed out here and cannot be read.
with our blessed father and all of you, our dear friends, I may praise Him eternally. Amen.

Most honored Father, I am in spirit your most humble and most obedient daughter and servant in Our Lord.

131. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between January 1632 and February 1633]

Mademoiselle,

I learned just now, only an hour ago, about the misfortune that befell the young woman whom your nurses of the poor were sheltering, what the doctor thinks about it, and how you went to visit her. I confess to you, Mademoiselle, that at first it touched my heart so deeply that, had it not been night, I would have set out at that very moment to come and see you. But the goodness of God towards those who give themselves to Him in the work of the Confraternity of Charity, no member of which has ever been stricken with the plague, makes me trust completely that you will suffer no harm. Would you believe, Mademoiselle, that not only did I visit the late Sub-prior of Saint-Lazare, who died of the plague, but that I even felt his breath? And yet, neither I nor our men who nursed him to the end suffered any ill effects. No, Mademoiselle, have no fear. Our Lord wishes to make use of you for something that concerns His glory, and I think He will preserve you for that purpose. I shall celebrate Holy Mass for your

Letter 131. - Abelly, op. cit., vol. I, chap. XXIII, end, p. 109. The first half of this letter, as far as the words "Would you believe," is to be found in the Saint Paul manuscript, p. 82; and since the text of this manuscript is more reliable than that of Abelly, we prefer to follow it for this section.

1This letter was written after the Congregation of the Mission took possession of Saint-Lazare (January 8, 1632) and before the death of Marguerite Naseau (February 1633).

2This young woman, perhaps Marguerite Naseau, was stricken by the plague.

3Nicolas Maheut, whose name appears at the end of the contract signed on January 7, 1632, by the Priests of the Mission and the religious of Saint-Lazare.
intention. I would come to see you tomorrow were it not for an appointment I have with some doctors at the Madeleine with regard to business pertaining to the establishment of that house.4

132. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

You can imagine, Mademoiselle, how my heart feels the sorrow of yours. Danger for you, there is none, by the grace of God. As for Marguerite,1 it would be well to have the surgeon from the

4In April 1618, Robert de Montry, a merchant in Paris, having heard that two young women of loose morals wanted to change their life, offered them shelter in a house belonging to him in the faubourg Saint-Germain. Other girls, tortured by remorse, followed the first two. Thus a small community was formed. The virtuous merchant took care of their needs until the Marquise de Maignelay, the sister of Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi, agreed to take on the responsibility of the nascent work. She bought a house for them on the rue des Fontaines on July 16, 1620, maintained them during her lifetime, and left them in her will a legacy of 101,600 livres. The new establishment was authorized in May 1625 by Louis XIII, who endowed it with an annual income of 3,000 livres. It was approved by Urban VIII on December 15, 1631, and again confirmed by Royal Letters on November 16, 1634. Saint Vincent immediately grasped its importance and willingly agreed to work on the organization of the Institute. It can be said that he was its soul. The young women of loose life who retreated to the Madeleine retained their secular dress and took their place among the repentant girls. Several were there against their will by authority of the courts. After a few years of trial, the penitents put on a rather rough gray habit and entered the ranks of the repentant women. When there was no longer room to doubt the steadfastness of their conversion, they became nuns, took the habit of Saint Augustine, and pronounced solemn vows. Heading the community with titles of prioress, sub-prioress, treasurer, and portress, were four Visitation nuns chosen by the Archbishop of Paris. They handled all the income. They were changed from time to time to give them a rest, for theirs was an arduous task. The first Superior was Sister Marie-Anne Bollain who took office on July 20, 1629. (Cf. M. de Montry, Relation véritable de la naissance et progrès du monastère de Saine-Marie-Madeleine [Paris: n.p., 1649]; Abelly, op. cit., vol. II, chap. VII, pp. 328 ff.; Félibien, op. cit., vol. V, p. 152; Histoire chronologique des fondations de tout l'Ordre de la Visitation Sainte-Marie, vol. I, pp. 264-272, Bibli. Maz., ms. 2430.)

Letter 132. - According to Coste, the original was at the house of the Priests of the Mission in Rongy (Belgium). The present location of the letter is unknown, but there is a photocopy in the Archives of the Mission, Paris.

1Because she had placed a plague-stricken woman in her own bed, Marguerite Naseau, then
Santé visit her in case the doctor objects to going there. Monsieur Cotti is easily frightened. Nevertheless, I think it would be wise to have that done as soon as possible. Monsieur Bourdoise will give the order for it. Please see that he is asked. He knows what has to be done; he has been through this before.

Regarding the sick poor, I think you should discontinue that practice. It is to be feared that, if the money is distributed to them, the ladies may be content to do that hereafter. However, propose it to the Pastor and follow his orders.

If that poor girl is brought to Saint-Louis, you will have to give the other one some money and send her off.

As for you, I am wondering if it might not be advisable for you to go and relax in the country for a little while and visit the Charities of Verneuil, Pont-Sainte-Maxence, and Gournay-sur-Aronde. I have given Jourdain the responsibility of coming to see you to tell you when the coach for Senlis is leaving, and of serving you in any way you may wish.

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2 The hospital of the Santé, or Sainte-Anne Hospital, was built in 1607-1608 to receive the plague-stricken.
3 Through fear of contagion.
4 He did not live far from the house in which Marguerite Naseau was living.
5 Saint Vincent wanted to send Saint Louise away because of the epidemic.
6 In Oise.
7 Pont-Sainte-Maxence (Oise).
8 Gournay-sur-Aronde (Oise).
9 Saint Louise also went to La Neufville-Roy and to Bulles (Oise). We still have her notes on the trip and the report of her visits which she addressed to Saint Vincent. In Verneuil, she stayed at a baker's house. The visiting of the sick left something to be desired. The confraternity possessed a few resources which they did not know how to use. The Marquise wanted to buy a house to lodge the sick, whereas several sisters preferred the purchase of a small plot of land "because of the number of deaths that sometimes occurred among the cattle." The sisters of Pont-Sainte-Maxence received only words of praise; Saint Louise had stayed at the Fleur-de-Lis. In Gournay she found the sisters a little more unrefined than elsewhere. The homeless sick were hospitalized with a woman who took care of them and received five sous a day for her trouble. In La Neufville-Roy and Bulles, the confraternities were better off: they had sheep, lambs, and money; but union among the sisters was far from perfect. In La Neufville-Roy, Saint Louise stayed at the inn. (Cf. Ecrits spirituels, A. 52 and A. 53.)
The Archbishop has just asked me to come to see him. As soon as I can, I shall come and visit you. In the meantime, write me your opinion concerning what I am suggesting. If you need money, please take your traveling expenses out of the funds of your Charity. I beg you to do this and to remain quite cheerful.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL

M. Dehorgny will come to see you immediately after dinner.

Saint-Lazare, feast of Saint Matthias [1633]

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

133. - TO MICHEL ALIX, PASTOR OF SAINT-OUEN-L'AUMONE

March 1, 1633

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Is he to whom you are giving up your parish a good man? Will he be able to do in your parish the good that you are doing there?

1 As we know, the feast of Saint Matthias used to fall on February 24 or 25, depending on whether or not it was Leap Year. In order to determine the date, we have to know the year. Most of Saint Louise's biographers place the date of Marguerite Naseau's death in the year 1631. We cannot accept this date because the above letter was certainly written after January 8, 1632, the day Saint Vincent and his Missionaries took over Saint-Lazare, and even after the death of the Sub-prior of that house. (Cf. no. 131.) Supposing that the Sub-prior of Saint-Lazare died just a few days after the Priests of the Mission had taken possession of this establishment, no. 132 could belong to February 25, 1632. But given this hypothesis, no. 131 would have been written shortly after the death of the Sub-prior, which is very unlikely, for this death does not in any way seem to be an event of the preceding day. For these reasons, we prefer to believe that no. 132 is from February 24, 1633.

Letter 133. - Reg. I, p° 8 v°. The copyist notes that the writing of the original was that of Saint Vincent himself.

1 In Val-d'Oise.
Will you be able to support yourself on four or five hundred livres? The first seems to me a large amount and the second, considerable. I have been in that place. It seems pleasant enough to me, but larger than yours. It would indeed be well for a pastor to have enough money to do good for the poor; I think there are enough of them to be found. In either case, you could set aside two hundred livres as an allowance for yourself. That being so and there not being any question of the first difficulty, you need to take some time to think about it, and even to go to the place to find out what the man is like and to see if you will like the locality. Whatever you do, I beg you not to hurry. It is a matter of great importance, and I assure you that I would be grieved if you made a decision without having asked God about it and without having consulted M. Duval or M. Coqueret, or both. It is a question of knowing whether God wishes you to leave the spouse that you have taken or, to be more exact, that He Himself has given you.

I am, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

I answered you immediately after receiving your letter.

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2Jean Coqueret, a Doctor of the Collège de Navarre, was the head of the Collège des Grassins and Superior of the Discalced Carmelites of France. He was a friend of Saint Francis de Sales, of André Duval, and of Saint Vincent, with whom he had given a mission in Villepreux in 1618. Born in Pontoise in 1592, he died in Marseilles, October 7, 1655. Saint Vincent consulted him before introducing vows into his Company and invited him to the conferences which were held at Saint-Lazare on the subject of Jansenism.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I thank you most humbly for the rosaries and pictures you sent us. I beg God that they may be profitable to those to whom we shall distribute them, and that He may be your glory as He is the One Who gave you this devotion. As for the rest, are you being quite faithful to what you were directed concerning your manner of observing Lent, Mademoiselle? I beg you, if you are not, to become so and to let me know how you are feeling.

I most humbly recommend myself to your prayers and ask that you give the enclosed letter to Monsieur de Vincy.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL

135. - MADAME GOUSSAULT TO SAINT VINCENT

Reverend Father,

By the mercy of God, we have heard Holy Mass every day. As soon as we were in the carriage I would say: In viam pacis,¹ and everyone would answer me. Then I would remind them of the points of prayer, after which we said the Angelus.

Sometimes the first of our chats was about the thoughts we had had during our prayer, and then, in a somewhat more entertaining conversation, either about our distractions or our dreams, sometimes waging war

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¹Letter 134. - Reg. I, f° 24. The copyist notes that the writing of the original was that of Saint Vincent.

¹Years between which the name of Mademoiselle du Fay appeared in the correspondence of Saint Vincent. This letter was written during Lent.


¹In the way of peace: opening words of a prayer recited at the beginning of a journey.
on those who had said something amiss. Afterwards, Grandnom\(^2\) would read for about half an hour from the Pèlerin de Lorette; then two of our girls would sing the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus and the rest of us would repeat the same thing they had sung. When we were passing through a village, we would greet its Guardian Angel; and in the village where we were to stop, I would ask particular assistance from Our Lord.

In Etréchy,\(^3\) we had our first dinner. I made my way to the church and asked if there was a Hôtel-Dieu. I came upon some little children with whom I chatted, and the thought came to me that they were God's children. I experienced a joy with them — while having them say their Our Father — which did away with the slight sadness I had had the morning of my departure. Every time my clock struck the hour, whether in the carriage or out of it, we would say a Hail Mary, placing ourselves again in the presence of God and asking for the accomplishment of His holy Will.

We spent our first night in Etampes. As we passed the church, I asked to leave the carriage and sent someone to find out where the Hôtel-Dieu was. It was very far away; nevertheless, I went there on foot with only my maid and my footman. I spoke to a young nun who turned out to be the Superior. I sat down to talk with her while my footman went to buy something to give to the sick. As I spoke to her of the necessity of a director, she stared at my face. I was dressed with a low collar and no farthingale,\(^4\) like a servant. She said to me: “What sort of woman are you? Are you married? I have heard so much about a certain Mademoiselle Acarie,\(^5\) but I think you are someone else.” She then began to tell me how she had wanted to join the hospital nuns, that she had been chosen to be the Superior of six nuns there who are unreformed, but that after two years she had as yet accomplished nothing. I encouraged her a great deal. She told me that it would be necessary for her to come to

\(^2\)Intendant of Madame Goussault.

\(^3\)A commune in the district of Etampes.

\(^4\)A roll of material that women used to put under their skirt to make it stand out at the hip line.

\(^5\)Born on February 1, 1566, in Paris, Barbe Avrillot married Pierre Acarie, Vicomte de Villemore, at the age of sixteen and became the mother of six children. After Henri IV exiled her husband, she took an active part in various religious enterprises, especially the introduction into France of the Discalced Carmelites (1604). Her three daughters entered Carmel. After the death of her husband, Madame Acarie entered the Discalced Carmelites as a lay sister, taking the name of Marie de l’Incarnation. She died in Pontoise on April 18, 1618, renowned for her virtues and miracles, which earned for her the honors of beatification in 1794. Her life, written in 1621 by André Duval, has tempted the pen of many other biographers up to the present time.
Paris. I offered her my house. I had a great desire to pray to God for her. At the inn, I heard that the hostess was greatly afflicted because of her son. I spent my time after supper conversing with her, then I gave the subject for prayer and the examen, as usual.

The next day, about dinner-time, in Angerville, I could not find a Hôtel-Dieu. While dinner was being prepared, I went to the church. After dinner, I came down to find quite a number of poor people waiting for me, and also some children and adults who were acting surprised. I began by having them make the Sign of the Cross, which the majority did not know how to do, and I felt very sorry for them. They seemed to me to be a likable group of people.

I slept in Artenay where I taught catechism in the church; I think I already told you that. Then I had dinner in Orléans where I arrived fasting at the Jesuit Fathers in order to receive Holy Communion, for it was Thursday. I marveled at the fact that everywhere I found everything just as I would wish, both for soul and body. Their Hôtel-Dieu is wealthy, from what I am told, but the sick are not better off for it. There are few nuns and they have servants under them on whom they rely too much. I had intended to stay there a little while for some business. I do not know why I disliked it so much. I was lodged with some Huguenots. I left everything there and went to spend the night in Cléry where I visited and had Holy Mass said the next day at Notre-Dame. I had dinner in Saint-Dyé, where I found the church very well looked after, and the poor and the children better instructed than anywhere else.

I went to spend the night in Blois. There I found many devotions, but the Hôtel-Dieu is not visited at all and is in disorder. I mentioned this to one of my cousins who is very devout. She told me that Father Lallemant, the Superior of the Jesuits, had strongly encouraged the ladies to visit it, but that perhaps God had allowed me to come there to convince them that in Paris women of rank visit the Hôtel-Dieu, and now they will be prompted to go there.

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6 A commune in the district of Etampes.
7 Principal town of a canton in Loiret.
8 In Loiret.
9 In Loir-et-Cher.
10 Jérôme Lallemant was born in Paris on April 27, 1593; entered the novitiate of the Jesuits, October 2, 1610; and died in Quebec, January 26, 1673. After teaching literature and philosophy and serving as rector in Blois and La Flèche, he became Superior of the Mission of Canada. He has left interesting accounts of that Mission which were published in Quebec in 1858.
I did not stay there because there were measles in my uncle's house. I went to have dinner in Veuves\(^{11}\) and to spend the night in Amboise where God granted me many graces. Their Hôtel-Dieu is poor. They take in all the transient cripples and orphans, but not the sick. There is a tradesman in that town who has put up funds for a schoolteacher. I questioned some of the poor in her presence and asked her to come and see me the next day. She did so and I was very edified by her. It was the first Sunday of the month. I went to confession and Communion at the Minim Fathers\(^{12}\) and after dinner I did not fail to set out again in order to spend the night in Tours. There I saw the finest and most well-organized Hôtel-Dieu anywhere. The following day I went to Communion at Saint François-de-Paule where indulgences could be gained and there was a large gathering of people. In the afternoon, I left to spend the night in Langeais, and the following day I went to hear Holy Mass in Chouzé,\(^{13}\) which belongs to this diocese here. The good priest who said the Mass could really, to my mind, stand having a mission. I even contemplated saying something to the Bishop of Angers\(^{14}\) about it. The little children are hardly instructed at all!

From there I went on to Saumur where I remained that day, the whole of Wednesday. On Thursday I went to Communion again there. All my servants were very devout. As soon as we caught sight of the place, we sang the Te Deum.

I almost forgot to tell you how we spent our afternoons. Sometimes we recited our chaplet in two groups, and every day, the Litany of the Blessed Virgin; the others would repeat the same thing so that we might say them twice.

Our recreation lasted just as long as our prayers. Sometimes we played the game of not saying 'yes' or 'no'; whoever said it paid a Hail Mary to the one who was able to catch him. We sang Alleluia and other hymns, but did so in such a merry way that one of my farmers, who was on horseback, enjoyed watching us. I tried to teach Catherine how to read well and to enunciate properly. She would give answers and use language that made us laugh until we cried. In a word, Father, it is quite easy to serve God on these terms.

When I arrived here, two gentlemen came to meet me and kept me from going to the Hôtel-Dieu or to the church; and besides, it was early. I

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\(^{11}\)Commune in Loir-et-Cher.
\(^{12}\)A religious order founded by Saint Francis of Paula around 1435.
\(^{13}\)Commune in Indre-et-Loire.
\(^{14}\)Claude de Rueil.
came straight here where I found a magnificent supper and so many people to welcome me that, in short, I was treated like a great lady.

The following day, I had time only to hear Mass. The gentlemen of the Court of Justice and all the leading citizens of the town came to visit me. Again the following day I had a hard time slipping away to visit the Hôtel-Dieu, which I found in fairly good order. There is a good woman, the wife of a townsman, who had made a vow to end her days in the service of the sick and she has been a great blessing for them; above all, she is very mindful of their salvation. Since then, I have been to visit the prisoners twice, bearing in mind what Our Lord said in the Gospel: "I was a prisoner." I gave them pictures and rosaries and obtained the release of some poor prisoners who aroused my compassion. What is unpleasant is that everything is known in the town and always exaggerated.

Sunday I went to Vespers in the church of a religious order where, contrary to my custom, I spent two hours before the Blessed Sacrament. While there, I thought of a way I could talk about catechism in the presence of the women in this house whom I thought in great need of it. I decided to go to the poor on the farms, took the ladies along, and questioned the children who are fairly well instructed. There is a good priest who takes great care of this. Father, this turned out so well that Mademoiselle Le Fèvre, who is married to a Councillor and has four children, told me on our return that she had enjoyed it very much and that she knew almost nothing about all that and added: "It is quite evident that you love the poor a great deal and that you are at your heart's content among them. You looked twice as beautiful while you were talking to them."

Father, it is admirable that God granted me the courage to speak in the presence of their priest and at least one hundred people. They listened and then, afterwards, paid me so many compliments. Even the good priest told me that he would consider himself most fortunate to be able to end his days near me, without wages or reward, just to listen to the words that would come from my lips. Those are his own words.

Well now, Father, I am writing to you, trusting that you will praise God and love Him for His infinite mercy. I cannot tell you the graces He granted me here and in Saumur, in spite of my very great unfaithfulness. I should be transported with love towards Him. Father, pray that He will bring down my pride in any way He sees fit. I am ready to lose everything and to leave everything, preferring humility to all consolations and possessions. The example of my Savior is very powerful; He left the bosom of His Father to come and practice it in poverty and self-abasement.

Well, let us get back to the catechism lessons. The fact is that, since
then, those good women come to pray with me whenever I give the subject for prayer, especially one who is a young girl. Now, I think she is deeply touched, I may say, won over. There is a good, devout woman who came to see me and told me that, if I were here for a year, I would convert the whole town. I assure you, she really made me laugh. [Three] 15 things please the people here: I do not play the role of the reformer, I laugh heartily, and I go to my parish church.

Recently, they urged me strongly to have my portrait painted. They have a man who does it to perfection — he is the one who painted the late Monsieur — and it is the custom here. There is no middle-class woman so unimportant that she is not painted. After their death, their portrait is placed in the church near their tomb. Well, I refused them and was sorry. I think I did so through a false humility of not wanting to appear so vain as to have my portrait painted, and there would have been more virtue in having it done out of condescension.

Recently I played backgammon for an hour and made up my mind to obey them in everything that is not sin, that is, until I receive an answer, because I shall do whatever you wish.

You know that I am, for the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, Reverend Father, your most humble and obedient servant.

Angers, April 16, 1633

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent de Paul, Superior of the Priests of the Mission, at Saint-Lazare

136. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[April 1633]

Mademoiselle,

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

I am not writing you myself because I have had a bloodletting for my slight fever. I forgot to send you Monsieur Figeard, the

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1The text of the original reads: Two. Correction is necessary.

Letter 136. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original signed letter.

1Reference to Madame Goussault's letter (probably no. 135) prompts us to assign this date.
doctor, a little while ago. I beg you to forgive me for this and also
for not sending you the notes on the retreats. Allow me to tell you
that you should not send your young women to the place you
mention without finding out from the doctor if there is any dan-
ger.² I trust, nevertheless, that God in His goodness will not allow
any harm to result from doing so, for you are aware of the special
protection He affords the members of the Charity.

I received a letter from Madame Goussault about the blessings
of her trip. When I get further news from her I shall share it with
you.

Your letter of yesterday is not near me and I cannot remember
its contents except what concerns the young man³ you mentioned
to me. With regard to him, let me say that I do not feel he should
lay aside the cassock while he is uncertain about the choice of his
present state in life. I think he should be left in his present situa-
tion until he has definitely made up his mind, and let his good
mother not help him too much to come to a decision. Very likely
the clerical state is best for him. If he is inclined that way, I think
he should be strengthened in his determination.

As for the young woman who is making her retreat,⁴ since she
is ready for her general confession, you may use Busée⁵ in
French. After her general confession, give her the following sub-
jects of prayer: on the first day, the Incarnation; second, the
Nativity, which she will repeat for her third meditation; and
fourth, the shepherds. On the second day, the first meditation will
be the Circumcision; the second, the Magi; the third, the Purifica-
tion; and the fourth, the life of Our Lord from his twelfth to His
thirtieth year. The third day, the first meditation, the vocation of

²The danger of contagion.
³This evidently refers to Michel Le Gras whom the Saint, out of delicacy, does not name.
⁴This is undoubtedly one of the young women employed in the service of the poor under
Saint Louise or one who intended to embrace this state.
⁵Father Jean Busee of the Company of Jesus is the author of a highly esteemed book of
meditations published in Douai in 1624 and entitled Enchiridion piarum meditationum in
omnes dominicas, sanctorum festa, Christi passionem et caetera. It was translated into French
by the Jesuit Fathers and in 1644 by Antoine Portail, who added several meditations.
the Apostles; the second, the first sermon of Our Lord; the third and fourth, the Beatitudes. The fourth day will be on judgment, concerning which you will have her consider the happiness of those who have taken pity on the poor, which meditation she will repeat twice; the third and fourth will be on some mystery of the Passion; and at the end you will have her draw up her rule of life, that is, her schedule for the day. The hours for meditation will be: the first upon rising, the second at ten o'clock, the third at two, and the fourth at five o'clock. She can read from Granada and the lives of the saintly women who have excelled in charity.

That is all I can tell you for the present except that, tomorrow morning or the day after, I shall send you Monsieur Brunet. That will not prevent you from observing the order of these meditations. In the meantime, please let me know what the doctor thinks of the curate’s illness, and I shall be, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

If the girl is accustomed to making only three meditations a day, please do not give her any more. I think I shall be unable to send you M. Brunet until the day after tomorrow in the afternoon.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, in Paris
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The horse’s falling on top of and under me was quite dangerous and the protection of Our Lord most extraordinary. It is God’s goodness which dealt with me in this way, and the misuse of my life which caused Him to show me His rod. I beg you to help me obtain the grace to mend my ways for the future and to begin a new life. The fall left me with a slightly sprained ankle which, at present, gives me little pain.

I am supposed to be purged tomorrow, and the next day I shall be able to go out in the carriage to a place a league away. Wednesday I shall be able to go to Sainte-Marie¹ in the city. From there, if I can do so, I shall have the pleasure of coming to see you. In the meantime, regarding what you said about that doctor, I shall tell you that if you said anything that might lessen his reputation, you will do well to tell the good you know about him to the same person and to two or three others.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL

Saint-Lazare, May 1 [1633]²

I am sending you a letter from Madame Goussault,³ the President’s wife. Please send it back to me tomorrow morning after you have read it.

Letter 137. - According to Coste, the original autograph letter was in Shanghai, in the house of the Priests of the Mission. The present location of the letter is unknown, but there is a photocopy in the Archives of the Mission in Paris.

¹First monastery of the Visitation nuns in Paris.
²The text says 1623” but this date is obviously incorrect because the Saint did not take possession of Saint-Lazare until 1632. The letter was written on a Sunday when Madame Goussault was out of town, circumstances which fit the date of May 1, 1633.
³This probably refers to Madame Goussault’s letter of April 16, 1633 (no. 135), which Saint Vincent had promised to send to Saint Louise.
[May 1633]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I do not believe that the Commander² has made a donation or a will in favor of anyone. I shall see the notary today and let you know the decision. If, however, you wish to plan your trip, you may as well; for in any case, if there were need, you could be here by the next day. I would really like you to be able to go by coach because of the very hot weather.

With regard to your employment,³ my mind is not yet enlightened enough before God concerning a difficulty which prevents me from seeing whether it is the Will of His Divine Majesty. I beg you, Mademoiselle, to recommend this matter to Him during these days in which He communicates more abundantly the blessings of the Holy Spirit, rather, the Holy Spirit Himself. Let us persist, therefore, in our prayers, and may you remain quite cheerful.

I certainly hope that what you fear about your legs is not true, I who am your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

Letter 138. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹It seems that this letter was written shortly before the institution of the Daughters of Charity (cf. note 3) and near or during the octave of Pentecost which, in 1633, fell on May 15.

²Although the word Commander refers everywhere else in the letters to the Commander de Sillery, who died September 26, 1640, it refers here to someone else. Commander de Sillery did indeed make many gifts by will and Saint Vincent was well aware of them. Perhaps the Commander (Commander of the Knights of St. John of Malta) referred to here is La Porte, the uncle of Cardinal Richelieu.

³Abelly quotes this sentence (op. cit., vol. I, chap. XXIV, p. 113), relating it to the institution of the Daughters of Charity and this is, in fact, the most reasonable meaning.
139. - TO MICHEL ALIX, PASTOR OF SAINT-OUEN-L'AUMONE

Feast of Saint Barnabas, 1633

Monsieur,

At last the little meeting for you pastors can be held Monday, at two o'clock in the afternoon, here in this house. Do you think you can be present? I have given the group great reason to hope so. Expecting then the happiness of seeing you on that day, before dinner, and that you will recommend the matter to Our Lord in the meantime, I am, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

140. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1633 and 1636]

Mademoiselle,

I did not obey you last evening or the rest of the day with regard to that little remedy, certainly not through lack of respect or condescension for your charitable advice but because of some difficulty of my own. I want to be sure that you will excuse me for this, as also for not having the pleasure of seeing you before I

Letter 139. - Reg. 1, p. 9. The copyist notes that the original was in Saint Vincent's own handwriting.

1June 11.

2The meeting concerned the organization of the ecclesiastical conferences which became so famous in such a short time and attracted to Saint-Lazare the most eminent priests, known both for their holiness and their learning. Abelly has recounted the assembly mentioned here (op. cit., vol. II, chap. III, sect. 1, pp. 246 ff.).

Letter 140. - The original autograph letter is the property of the international office of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society in Paris, 5 rue du Pré-aux-Clercs.

1This letter was written after the institution of the Tuesday Conferences and before the transfer of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity to La Chapelle.
return to Saint-Lazare because of a pastors’ meeting we are having there today. Be assured, Mademoiselle, that I shall make it a point to use the remedies you suggest at Saint-Lazare and that I shall return here\(^2\) afterwards, God willing. Then we shall give you more spiritual direction than I have been able to do at this time.

Meanwhile, please see to it that you take care of yourself while you have that little cold, and that you do not do so much another time. Trusting that you will heed this advice, I say adieu once again and I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

141. - TO AN ECCLESIASTIC

[July 9, 1633]\(^1\)

May God be glorified, Monsieur, for all the graces and blessings He is bestowing on your mission! Does it not seem to you that so many workers who remain idle could be well employed in the great harvest in which you are now working, and that those who are aware of the need the Master of the harvest has for workers will be guilty of the blood of His Son which they are allowing to remain fruitless for want of application? Oh, how well the idea you so kindly shared with me some days past was received by the ecclesiastics, by all those we mentioned in general and by each one in particular! We saw them together about two weeks ago\(^2\) and, in a uniformity of spirit which appears entirely of God, they resolved to do what you proposed. I began my speech with the

\(^{1}\)To the Collège des Bons-Enfants.


\(^{2}\)This letter was written the day of the pastors' second meeting, which Abelly places on this date.

\(^{3}\)June 13.
words you expressed to me, without mentioning your name, except when it was necessary to include you as one of them and to reserve your place in their group. They are to meet again today. O Monsieur, what reason there is to hope for much good from this group! You are its promoter and it is to your interest that it succeed for the glory of God. Please pray to Him for that intention, Monsieur, and for me in particular.

142. - TO FRANCOIS DU COUDRAY, IN ROME

[July 1633]

You should know something that I think I have not yet written to you: it has pleased the goodness of God to grant a very special and unimaginable blessing to our ordinands' retreat. It is such that all those who have made the retreat, or almost all, are leading lives such as ought to be led by good and perfect ecclesiastics. There are even a number of them, outstanding by reason of their birth or the other qualities which God has granted them, who are living as regular a life in their own homes as we do here, and who are as interior and even more so than many among us, were it myself alone. They live by a schedule, make mental prayer, celebrate Holy Mass, and make their examens every day as we do.

3Abelly writes: "These ecclesiastics then met again the following ninth of July and determined the order to be observed in their conferences. They elected some officers to maintain this order and fixed Tuesday of each week for the meeting, . . . M. Vincent gave them 'the ecclesiastical spirit' as the topic of their first conference, which was held on the sixteenth of the same month." More than 250 ecclesiastics attended the Tuesday Conferences during Saint Vincent's lifetime. Twenty-two of these became bishops, Bossuet among others.


1Abelly merely states that the letter was addressed to a Priest of the Mission in Rome. This priest could only be M. du Coudray.

2This letter was written shortly after the sixteenth of July, the date of the first ecclesiastical conference.

3In order to have a clearer knowledge of one's defects, to make expiation for them, and to acquire a greater purity of soul, Saint Vincent advised those whom he directed to make two
They work hard visiting the hospitals and the prisons, where they teach catechism, preach, and hear confessions, as they also do in the collèges, with very special blessings from God. Among others, there are twelve to fifteen in Paris who live this way and who are persons of rank. The public is becoming aware of this.4

Now, a few days ago, one of them, speaking about the way of life led by those who had made the ordinands' retreat with him, put forward an idea that he had had of binding them together by way of meetings or by forming a society. This has been done to the great satisfaction of all the others. The goal of this assembly is to attend to their own perfection; to take the means of seeing that God be not offended, but that He be known and served in their households; and to procure His glory among ecclesiastics and the poor. All this is to take place under the direction of someone from here, where they are to meet once a week. And because God has blessed the retreats which a number of pastors in this diocese have made here, these gentlemen were eager to do the same thing and have in fact begun. Now, there is reason to hope for much good from all this, if is pleases Our Lord to bless His work, which I recommend particularly to your prayers.

143. - TO ISABELLE DU FAY

[Between 1626 and 1635]1

... their hardness of heart. O Mademoiselle, how that sort of sin captivates hearts in a tyrannical way and how fortunate are examinations of conscience each day: the particular examen on some virtue to be acquired or some vice to be rooted out; the general examen on each of the actions of the day. (Cf. Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission, chap. X, par. 9.)

4They had just given a mission to the workers who were building the church of the Visitation. (Cf. Abelly, op. cit., vol. I, chap. I, sect. I, p. 247.)

Letter 143. - Reg. I, p. 4 v°. The beginning of the letter has been lost. The copyist notes that the original was in Saint Vincent's own handwriting.

1Years between which the name of Mademoiselle du Fay appeared in the correspondence of Saint Vincent.
those who are delivered from it! After all, you acted in that matter according to what was in you and before God you will have the reward as if you were entirely the cause of the salvation of those souls; for God does not consider the outcome of the good work undertaken but the charity that accompanied it. May the Divine Goodness be pleased to forgive me the insufficiency of my own, I, who am, in His love, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

144. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1632 and 1639]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

How are you, Mademoiselle? Could you join us on the trip to Pontoise? If so, you would have to be ready by two o'clock today, Sunday, and you could go to confession tomorrow morning.

Good day, Mademoiselle. Please write what you have decided to Madame Goussault. I wish you a good day once again and am, in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

Letter 144. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1The date of Saint Vincent's earliest contacts with Madame Goussault and the date of her death.
O Monsieur, how fortunate we are to honor the poor family of Our Lord by the poverty and lowliness of our own! I was saying with consolation, a few days ago when I was preaching in a community, that I am the son of a poor farmer; and in another gathering, that I have looked after pigs. Would you believe, Monsieur, that I am fearful of feeling vain satisfaction from this because of the pain nature suffers from it? It is true that the devil is quite clever and cunning, but surely, even more so than he, is the man who considers himself honored by the lowly condition of the Child of Bethlehem and His holy parents.

146. - TO ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
I have in no way doubted your charity towards us, Monsieur,

Letter 146. - Arch. of the Chapter of Cahors, file I, no. 25, original autograph letter.

1 Alain de Solminihac was born in the Château of Belet in Périgord on November 25, 1593. He was only twenty-two years of age when one of his uncles resigned the Abbey of Chancelade (Dordogne) in his favor. This abbey depended on the Order of Canons Regular of Saint Augustine. He replaced the old buildings with new constructions and had discipline restored to the abbey. On January 21, 1630, Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld sent him full powers to visit the houses belonging to the Canons of Saint Augustine in the dioceses of Périgueux, Limoges, Saintes, Angoulême, and Maillezais. Alain de Solminihac was sought after in many places to establish reform. Appointed to the bishopric of Cahors on June 17, 1636, he devoted himself body and soul to the church of which he was the shepherd. He procured for his people the benefit of missions, visited the parishes of his diocese regularly, created a seminary for the formation of his clergy, and entrusted its direction to the sons of Saint Vincent. At the time of his death, December 21, 1659, the diocese of Cahors was completely renewed. Since God had manifested the sanctity of Alain by several miracles, his cause was introduced in Rome at the request of the clergy of France. (Cf. Léonard Chastenet, La vie de Mgr. Alain de Solminihac [new ed., Saint-Brieuc: Prud’homme, 1817]; Abel de Valon, Histoire d’Alain de Solminihac, évêque de Cahors [Cahors: Delsaud, 1900].) On October 4, 1981, Pope John Paul II beatified him.
but I am certainly dissatisfied with myself. That utterly divine virtue appears quite different in the use you make of it and in mine. The manner in which you have had those young ecclesiastics received and the way you treat them make me see as it were a diamond of God’s goodness in your charity and reveal to me my own clumsy, insipid way of welcoming and treating the servants of God. Oh! to be sure, I am determined to mend my ways, if Our Lord is pleased to grant me this grace through the prayers which I am begging you to say for me.

Moreover, they tell me of the refreshment not only corporal, but also spiritual, which you are giving them. It is with such lofty sentiments that they are receiving it and conveying it to me that I really intend to give our Company a good conference about it. By all means, Monsieur, please continue, in the name of Our Lord, to do them so much good.

On the whole, Monsieur Lambert\(^2\) is very good. The other

\(^2\)Lambert aux Couteaux and Robert de Sergis. By a decree of January 20, 1632, Saint Vincent had committed himself to leave in perpetuity, within the jurisdiction of the Parlements of Toulouse, Bordeaux, or Provence, two Missionaries and a servant to give missions there gratuitously. In exchange, he received from Nicolas Vivien, the King’s Councillor, the sum of ten thousand livres, which he needed to cover the expenses incurred by the preparation of the Priory of Saint-Lazare. (Arch. nat. MM 538, p. 292 v°.)

\(^3\)Lambert aux Couteaux, born in Fossemanant (Somme) in 1606, had been a member of the Congregation of the Mission since August 1629. He was then preaching in the south of France with Robert de Sergis and was taking advantage of a few days of rest to recollect himself at the residence of the Abbot of Chancelade, where Saint Vincent had told him to go. He founded the house of Toul in 1635 and remained there as Superior until 1637. In January 1638, he began the establishment in Richelieu (Indre-et-Loire), where he was Pastor and Superior for four years. The General Assembly of 1642 named him Assistant to the Superior General. In 1650 and 1651 he was again in Richelieu. For a brief period he was Superior at the Bons-Enfants (1646-1649), then at Saint-Charles (1650). The Saint had such confidence in him that he had him make the visitation of Saint-Lazare. He sent him to render the same service to the Missionaries of La Rose and Toul, as well as to the Sisters of Angers and Nantes. Urged by the Propaganda in 1647 to designate someone as coadjutor of Babylon, Saint Vincent could think of no one more worthy than Lambert aux Couteaux. In his response to Bishop Ingoli he expressed himself as follows: “I must admit, Your Excellency, that the loss of this man is like having me tear out one of my eyes or cut off one of my arms.” The plan did not materialize. It was again upon him that the Saint cast his eyes to establish the Congregation in Poland where the Queen was calling for the Missionaries. Lambert aux Couteaux went there in 1651. Everything had to be organized in that war-torn and plague-stricken country. His efforts were blessed by God but short-lived; he died January 31, 1653, a victim of his dedication to the plague-stricken. (Cf. Notices, 1st series, vol. II, pp. 1-28.)
man is not bad, thank God, but he has a slight disinclination, not
to say aversion, towards practices which resemble religion, and he
does not have enough submission and humility with regard to
matters which offend his intelligence. In the Rouen seminary he
acquired some sort of spirit of reserve and of opposition to private
direction. As a result, when he finds himself in conversation
dealing with those matters, he cannot help showing some of that in
his words, which have even done harm to two people here. In spite
of this, he has always been perfectly obedient to all the superiors I
have sent to him in the country and to me, without any act of
obedience whatever. I thought, Monsieur, that I ought to tell
you this because I hope this letter will be delivered to you during
the time I think you will have him for retreat.

Now let us talk about the Pébrac affair. I went to see the
Archbishop of Arles purposely and gave him the letter you had
written to him. I also gave Monsieur Fontaine his. Then we talked
about the Pébrac affair. Here is the Archbishop's advice: he feels
that you must first satisfy the Archbishop of Bordeaux, and
then Abbé Olier. But if the Archbishop has not gotten Sablon-
ceaux settled, and is not doing so at present, he thinks you would do well to arrange for Pèbrac. It remains then to find out what the Archbishop of Bordeaux intends to do. If he is not considering some action at the present time, you should negotiate with good Abbé Olier. There are eighteen religious in that monastery. He is now offering one thousand francs, from which he will be exempted in proportion as the religious die. It will be up to you, Monsieur, to inform us of what you have worked out with the Archbishop of Bordeaux, who is on his way to your districts, and to let us know your pleasure. As for Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld, the Archbishop of Arles thought it best not to mention the matter to him yet.

Career were consecrated to the work of missions. He participated in the labors of the priests of Saint-Lazare whom he edified by his zeal and humility. For reasons still unexplained, perhaps, as has been said, because of a divergence of views on the question of whether he should accept the episcopal state, Olier passed from the direction of Saint Vincent, who had been his confessor for three years (1632-1635), to that of Father de Condren. This was not a desertion—far from it. In 1649 he wrote: "For extraordinary affairs, we do not fail to see Monsieur Vincent, and for ordinary matters, all our brothers assembled." He did not begin the Seminary of Vaugirard or accept the pastorate of Saint-Sulpice until he had consulted the Saint. "M. Vincent is our father," he often used to say to the ecclesiastics in his seminary. Jean-Jacques Olier died April 2, 1657, assisted by his holy friend. The latter consoled the priests of Saint-Sulpice in their affliction, and it is believed that we still have a fragment of his address to them on that occasion. (Cf. Etienne-Michel Faillon, *Vie de M. Olier, fondateur du séminaire de Saint-Sulpice* [4th ed., 3 vols., Paris: Poussielgue, 1873]; Frédéric Monier, *Vie de Jean-Jacques Olier, curé de la paroisse et fondateur du séminaire de Saint-Sulpice* [Paris: Poussielgue, 1914].) For Saint Vincent's address, mentioned above, see vol. XIII, no. 51.

9Henri de Sourdis was commendatory Abbot of the abbey situated in that locality. Alain de Solminihac sent two religious there to establish reform.

10François de la Rochefoucauld was born in Paris, December 8, 1558. He became Bishop of Clermont, October 6, 1585, Cardinal in 1607, Bishop of Senlis in 1611, and commendatory Abbot of Sainte-Geneviève in Paris in 1613. He resigned his bishopric in 1622 in order to dedicate himself entirely to the reform of the abbeys dependent on the Orders of Saint Benedict, Saint Augustine, and Saint Bernard. With that end in view, he obtained from Pope Gregory XV on the eighth of April special powers and the title of Apostolic Commissary. Supported by such men as Saint Vincent, Father Tarisse, and Father Charles Faure, he caused order and discipline to flourish once again in the monasteries. The Cardinal died February 14, 1645, having at his side Saint Vincent, who prepared him to appear before God. His body was buried at Sainte-Geneviève and his heart was given to the Jesuit Fathers. (Cf. M.M. La Morinière, *Les vertus du vrai prélat représentées en la vie de l'Eminentissime cardinal de La Rochefoucauld* [Paris: Cramoisy, 1646]; Lallemand et Chartonnet, *La vie du Révéré Père Charles Faure, abbé de Sainte-Geneviève de Paris* [Paris: J. Anisson, 1698].)

11The Abbot of Chancelade was obliged to postpone the reform of the Abbey of Pèbrac.
The Abbot of Foix is also here with us. He is a very fine young man who visits us often and with confidence. His abbey belongs to your Order. The revenue of the monks, including the offices and benefices belonging to them, is worth ten thousand livres. He wants to have reform at any price and already began to talk about it here, but since people told him about Chancelade, its nearness makes him desire that service from there. You know that Foix is near Toulouse, and God knows that you are one of the people in the world in whom Our Lord has given me the most confidence and that I am, in His love and in that of His holy Mother, Monsieur, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Paris, August 23, 1633

Addressed: The Abbot of Chancelade

Olier renewed his request June 1, 1634, this time with greater success. Alain de Solminihac came to Pérac, and an agreement was concluded among them: himself, Olier, and the religious of the abbey. Everything seemed to be settled when some unforeseen difficulties upset the arrangements made and put the abbey back into its former state.

François-Etienne de Caulet, born in Toulouse, May 19, 1610, was endowed with the Abbey of Saint-Volusien in Foix in 1627. He became attached to Jean-Jacques Olier and accompanied him on his missions in Auvergne, in the diocese of Chartres, and in other places in the kingdom. He supported him in his parochial ministry and, together with him and M. du Ferrier, founded the Seminary of Vaugirard. Saint Vincent, who knew the Abbot of Saint-Volusien, thought that he would do well at the head of a diocese. Thanks to him, François de Caulet was consecrated Bishop of Pamiers, March 5, 1645. In 1638 he testified against the Abbé de Saint-Cyran. As Bishop, he continued to combat Jansenism for a long time, forbade in his diocese the reading of books by adherents of the movement, and made every effort to bring back those who had strayed from the path of truth. His association with Nicolas Pavillon, Bishop of Alet, succeeded in winning him over to other ideas. The Bishop of Pamiers died August 7, 1680, without having made the act of submission to the Church. (Cf. Jérôme Besoigne, *Vies des quatre évesques engagés dans la cause de Port-Royal* [2 vols., Cologne: n. p., 1756]; Georges Doublet, *Un prélai janséniste, F. de Caulet, réformateur des chapitres de Foix et de Pamiers* [Paris: A. Picard, 1895].) M. Gazier, an authority on Jansenism, had in his library, so rich in books and rare manuscripts, a manuscript entitled *Histoire abrégée de la vie de M. François de Caulet, évêque de Pamiers*, by Father Gabaret.
147. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around September 2, 1633]

Mademoiselle,

Marie has replied to me quite earnestly, lovingly, and humbly that she is ready to do what you wish and in the way you wish. She is only sorry that she does not have enough common sense, strength, or humility to be of use for it; but, if you tell her what she has to do, she will follow your instructions completely. Oh, what a good girl she seems to be! I certainly think, Mademoiselle, that Our Lord has given her to you Himself so that He might make use of her through you.

What shall I say to you about the rest of your letter except that I praise God for having consoled you on the feast of Saint Lazarus at the Bons-Enfants, and that what I think He is asking of you is that you honor His holy Providence in your conduct by not hurrying or bustling about? I shall try to come and hear about the thoughts Our Lord has given you with regard to this matter. But as for Chartres, I do not see any way of going there because right now we are in the midst of our most important affairs.

As for what you say, that you need some reproof to keep you from falling back, we shall give it, please God.

Business has caused me to detain Marie until now. Send her to visit those virtuous religious of the Hôtel-Dieu every day if you can give her that time, but please have her do so in such a way that the good young woman does not get tired of it.

Letter 147. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 79.

1The final sentence, if it has not been interpolated, obliges us to place this letter before nos. 161 and 163, which belong to the early months of 1634. It could belong to 1632, but we believe it to be rather from 1633. Be that as it may, it was surely written very shortly after the second of September, the feast of Saint Lazarus.

2Saint Vincent and Saint Louise sometimes went to pray at Notre-Dame de Chartres. Perhaps, shortly before the Company of the Daughters of Charity was to come into being, the Founders wanted to place their project under Mary's protection.
Madame Forest would like very much to get acquainted with you; she is a good and virtuous lady. I am, in the love of Our Lord.

148. - TO SAINT LOUISE

To be sure, Mademoiselle, it is well to take notice of the more ardent affections that agitate your heart so that you can do your best to regulate them by the standard of the holy and ever-adorable Will of God. And you have done well, in this doubt, to seek enlightenment so that you may do what Our Lord is asking of you, without fear of burdening me by seeking it. Understand once and for all, Mademoiselle, that a person whom God in His plan has destined to assist someone else is no more overburdened by the advice that the other requests than a father is by his own child.

As for that good woman, Madame Sarvoisy, I think it would be advisable to seek information about her from those good gentlemen before coming to the point of acting. However, we are not that far yet because we have suggested that Sainte-Marie test her to see if she has a vocation for that holy house. When she has been tested and rejected, then we shall do as you are suggesting.

Rest assured, Mademoiselle, of the heart of one who is, in the heart of Our Lord and in His love, your most humble servant. Permit me to add to this the recommendation of holy indifference, although nature grumbles against it. I tell you that everything is to be feared until we succeed in this, since our inclinations are so wicked that they seek themselves in all things. Courage! May Our

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1Alexandre-Antoine de Francelles, the Pastor of Saint-Jean-en-Grève in Paris and one of the witnesses at the process of beatification of Saint Vincent, presented to the tribunal twenty-seven letters from the Saint to Madame Forest, whom he directed. These letters have all been lost.

Letter 148. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1Visitation nuns.
Lord be in our hearts and our hearts in His, so that they may be three in one and one in three and that we may wish only what He wills.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

149. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1632 and 1636]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have just now finished reading your note in haste; it worries me a little because of your slight fever. I beg you to send for M. Le Sourd. You probably began to purge yourself too much; but still I hope it is nothing. Meanwhile, let me tell you that Madame Goussault wishes that good young woman from Montdidier to be a member of the Charity, so please regard her as such.

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

V. D.

Ten o'clock

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, rue de Versailles, opposite the Epée-Royale

Letter 149. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1 Date of the transfer of the Daughters of Charity to La Chapelle.

2 A doctor.

3 This little street, parallel to the rue d'Arras, connected the rue Saint-Victor with the rue Traversière or Traversine. The house opposite the shop sign of l'Epée-Royale was in the middle of the rue de Versailles. At present, its location seems to correspond to 21 rue Monge. It was probably there on November 29, 1633, that the Company of the Daughters of Charity came into being.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The blessing of peace and reconciliation in lawsuits is something so great and pleasing to God that He says to each one of us: *Inquire pacem et persequere eam.* He not only tells us to accept this divine peace when it is offered to us, but to seek it out and run after it. Now, I praise God that you want to do this by leaving all your business matters to go and settle the dispute you are having in your district. But I think it is important for the glory of God that you put off your trip until the Monday after the [first] Sunday of the month.

You have your two curates here who are doing well, thank God, and are edifying us very much. The retreat they are making was not only necessary for them in a certain sense, but useful as well. You could not recall them in less than a week without prejudice to the Church in general, to your own parish in particular, and to them.

Moreover, neither could you miss the upcoming pastors' meeting, which is of very great importance and which absolutely requires your presence, without prejudice to the good of the Church in general and to as many individual parishes as there are pastors. That is why, Monsieur, I think you would be wise to write, either to the person with whom you have to deal or to someone else who is acting as an intermediary to adjust the differences between you, that you cannot leave any earlier for the two above-mentioned reasons, but that you will not fail to do so the Thursday after the first Sunday of the month in order to go the place required so as to

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**Letter 150. - Reg. 1, f° 14.** The copyist notes that the original was in Saint Vincent’s own handwriting.

*Search for peace and seek to attain it.* Ps. 34:15. “Seek peace and follow after it.” (NAB)
proceed to the settlement of this matter in the spirit of peace Our Lord has given you.

What I am saying to you, nevertheless, Monsieur, is said with all the submission and deference I owe you and wish to render you all my life in Our Lord. It is said also with the confidence I have that there is no one in the world so difficult, if he is somewhat predisposed to reconciliation, who will not listen to your reasons and wait until that time — during which nothing is done, even at law. Moreover, I am hoping, Monsieur, that si quaerimus sic primo regnum Dei, omnia adjiciantur nobis in bonum.²

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

V. D. P.

151. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[August or September,¹ around 1633²]

Madame,³

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have just received your letter which worried me a little because of your relapse. I greatly fear that you risked going out too soon. Oh, well! blessed be God! I beg you, Mademoiselle, in the name of Our Lord, to do all in your power to take care of yourself,

²If we seek first the kingdom of God in this manner, all things will be added to us for our good. Mt. 6:33. “Seek first his kingship over you, and all things will be given to you besides.” (NAB)

Letter 151. - The original autograph letter is at the house of the Priests of the Mission at San Silvestro in Rome.

¹The time of year when Saint Vincent usually made his annual retreat.

²This letter appears to have been written shortly before the establishment of the Daughters of Charity.

³This word is obviously the result of a distraction.
no longer as a private individual but as a person upon whose health a number of others are dependent.

Today is the eighth day of our little retreat; I hope to continue to the tenth with the help of God.

I think your good angel did what you told me in the letter you wrote me. Four or five days ago, he communicated with mine concerning the Charity of your young women. It is true; he prompted me to recall it often and I gave that good work serious thought. We shall talk about it, God willing, on Friday or Saturday, if you do not write to me sooner.

As for that good young woman from Beauvais, please do not send her on Thursday. Would she be suitable for teaching the little girls in the villages? That is what you will mainly need. Our Lord, in the footsteps of Whose Providence you are walking, will Himself provide someone. You must leave that worry to Him and remain in peace.

Have you seen a doctor? Would you like me to send you ours? We are at your service.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL

Tuesday, at two o'clock

152. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[September or October 1633]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Letter 152. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

'This letter was written during the grape-harvesting season and seems to be near the date
They had indeed told me that you would not do anything just now in the region of Villeneuve\(^2\) during the grape-harvesting season. Oh, well! Go there at the appointed time, please. If, meanwhile, you would like to go to the Bois de Vincennes, there is great need for it; but then, those good women will likewise be unable to come. I think it would be well for you to postpone your visit a little while longer.

We must surely meet before making a firm decision about the girls, and it can only be towards the end of the week. In the meantime, please send them away for the next twelve to fifteen days, at which time you can notify them through the student. It will be good, meanwhile, to have them understand that they must remain in a spirit of indifference. Indeed! They must be trained in the knowledge of solid virtues before we can make use of them.

The pen is being removed from my hand. There is a good priest here asking for me. Therefore, I must conclude with a thank you for the concern you have for my health, assuring you that I shall take care of it as you desire.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am your servant.

V. D.

You do not mention the state of your own health, which I heard is a little worse. Please take care of it.

*Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras*

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\(^2\)Villeneuve-Saint-Georges.
153. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around 1633]

Mademoiselle,

Here is that good young woman whom Madame Goussault, the President’s wife, thought we should send to you. Please be so kind as to have someone see her so that she can be instructed. Monsieur Compaing can send you some priest for that purpose, or else, if necessary, Monsieur Véron will be happy to take the trouble to talk to her. I hope she will be a capable young woman and conduct herself well.

The President’s wife bids you good day and I am, in the love of Our Lord. . . .

154. - TO THE LIEUTENANT DE GANNES

December 19, 1633

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The time is at hand when we are obliged to come and work on your estates in Picardy. Father de Gondi allowed us to put it off

Letter 153. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 73.

1This letter appears to precede the establishment of the Daughters of Charity.
2To teach school.
3A curate at Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet.
4Perhaps François Véron, a renowned controversialist born in Paris around 1575. He was a member of the Company of Jesus from 1595 to 1620 and a great adversary of the Protestants and Jansenists. He died in Charenton where he was Pastor on December 6, 1649. (Cf. Pierre Féret, Un curé de Charenton au XVIIe siècle [Paris: J. Gervais, 1881].)

Letter 154. - Reg. 1, f° 1 v°. The copyist notes that the original was in Saint Vincent’s own handwriting.

1It was after the general confession of a peasant from Gannes (Oise) that Saint Vincent and Madame de Gondi first thought of establishing the work of the missions.
2The contract drawn up April 17, 1625, between Saint Vincent and the De Gondis stipulates
that the Priests of the Mission "shall be obliged to go every five years throughout all the estates of the above-mentioned lord and lady to preach, hear confessions, catechize, and perform all the good works" mentioned in this same contract. (Cf. vol. XIII, no. 59.)

3Catherine de Gondi, the Duchesse de Beauprêau and the wife of Pierre de Gondi whom she had married August 3, 1633.

4Honore d' Albert, Seigneur de Cadenet, peer and Marshal of France, vidame [minor noble] of Amiens, created Duc de Chaulnes by Letters Patent of January 1621, Governor of Picardy beginning July 3, 1633. He later became Governor of the city and citadel of Amiens, then of the province of Auvergne, and was in command at the siege of Arras in 1640. He died October 30, 1649.

5Pierre de Gondi, the eldest son of Father de Gondi and the former pupil of Saint Vincent, had succeeded his father in his titles and high positions. He was, like him, General of the Galleys and Seigneur de Gannes.

until now. Therefore, there are six priests of our Little Company coming to work there. I commend them to you and entreat you to furnish them with money if they need any. I shall reimburse you for it upon receiving a letter of demand, giving it to whomsoever you send.

I returned the night before last from Villepreux where I had gone to see the General's wife3 who, for her age, is one of the most accomplished persons I have ever seen. I hope she will follow the example of our good deceased Madame.

I have been assured that the Duc de Chaulnes4 has promised the General5 that he will be firm in keeping his estates free of gendarmes. The new title of Duc de Retz which he will have will not harm matters.

I saw Martin in Villepreux and he has probably given you all sorts of news. That is why I shall close now with the affectionate and humble greetings I offer your wife, your son, and your daughter-in-law. I am, in the love of Our Lord and His most holy Mother, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
Mademoiselle,

May the charity of Jesus Christ, which urges you to think of me, be your health!

I have just learned that you are ailing somewhat and that worries me a little. I beg you to do all you can to get better for His service. I most humbly thank you for all the care and charity which you exercise towards me, for such good bread, your preserves, your apples, and for what I only now learned that you have just sent me. Oh! surely, Mademoiselle, that is too much! God knows with what pleasure I receive your gifts; yet also, ever in my mind is the fear that you are depriving yourself of necessities in order to practice charity in this way. In the name of God, do not do it any more.

I went out today and am none the worse for it, and tomorrow I shall have to go to Saint-Lazare. I admit that I have worked rather hard these past few days, but I am actually out of doors, thank God.

Well, our mail has left for Rome and, because we still have a few less pressing matters to work on, I shall be able to come and spend the night here tomorrow and stay for a few days. Therefore, we shall have more time to discuss matters with you. I was setting aside tomorrow for seeing you here at Mass; but, since your cold requires you to stay in your room, I beg you not to budge from it; we shall see each other on my return. If I do not see you tomorrow morning at your house before I leave, it will be because I am practicing the little rule of the Missionaries with regard to people

Letter 155. - Archives of the Mission (Paris), original autograph letter.
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 had been at the Collège des Bons-Enfants for a few days.
in the Charity. But, nevertheless, if you wish to see me, you have only to say so, if by chance you are not well.

I did not talk to the wife of the Keeper of the Seals. I thought it would be better for it to be Madame Goussault, the President's wife, or Madame Poulaillon; I shall talk to them about it. In the meantime, I wish you a good evening and am, in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

January 17, 1634

What shall I tell you about those ecclesiastics from Provence? You saw from the letter they wrote to me, how they have formed ties with the congregation of Father Paul de Motta; that they tell

Saint Vincent had made it a rule for his Missionaries not to go and visit the young women and the Ladies of the Charity except in cases of necessity or utility.

Pierre Séguier had received the Seals on February 28, 1633. His wife, Madeleine Fabri, born November 22, 1597, died in Paris on February 6, 1683. She assisted Saint Vincent and Saint Louise with her influence and her fortune.

The Congregation of the Missionary Priests of the Most Blessed Sacrament, founded in the city of Avignon in 1632 and approved by Innocent X in 1647. Its object was the work of missions and the direction of seminaries. Its founder, Christophe d'Authier de Sisgau, was born in Marseilles in 1609. He became Bishop of Bethlehem in 1651 and died in Valence in 1667. (Cf. Nicolas Borely, Vie de Mgr. Christophe d'Authier de Sisgau, évêque de Bethléem [new ed., Lyons: n.p., 1703].) Further on we shall see the renewed efforts Authier de Sisgau made to bring about the union of his Congregation with that of Saint Vincent, and the steps taken by the latter to have the name of Missionary Priests changed because of the confusion that might arise.

Paolo Motta, a Milanese gentleman, had founded in Rome in 1620 the Congregation of Saint Joseph which Paul V approved and to which he gave an oratory near the collegial church of San Lorenzo in Damaso. Before 1646, the priests who formed its membership did not live a life in common; they instructed the people, heard confessions, preached the word of God, and spread the practice of spiritual exercises. Father Paolo Motta died January 22, 1650. Several
me they have the same purpose as we; and that if we wish to join forces, they will be allowed to make that agreement and to come to this city with someone from the aforesaid congregation of Father Paul to discuss it with us. I praise God that He is so good as to raise up in this century so many good and holy souls for the assistance of the poor common people. I beg Him with all my heart to bless the plans of those holy ecclesiastics and grant them success for His glory. As for the union, it is to be desired; but unions require the same end, the same means and, what is more, one same spirit. Even though people have the same aim, they cannot help being divided. All the Orders in the Church have the same end, which is charity, and for lack of the same means they do not always agree. An Order has the same end, the same means, and the same spirit; nevertheless, it often has disorders.

I say this, Monsieur, so that you may realize how important it is, if we do unite, that we have the same end, the same means, and the same spirit and that, before uniting, we be mutually informed about one another's expectations, the means of attaining them, and whether we have one same spirit. Now, they are right in offering to see us to find out about these things. If they do us this charity, God knows with what pleasure we shall welcome them and how simply and familiarly we shall approach the subject.

I am writing a letter to that good priest — you will see it. If he is in the same disposition in which he wrote to me, and Father Paul is, too, give him the note; but, if he is not, do not give it to him. If he is and Father Paul does not want to have anything to do with the affair, you will decide whether it would be wise to give it to him. If they really want to join us, to tend to the same end, to accept our means, and to send some men here to take on our spirit, then I think there is nothing to be said against the union.

I just remembered a serious error which I noticed only too late:

in the exposition of our Bulls, it seems to me that pastors are spoken of in an insulting way. How can that be remedied? I beg you to look into the matter and have that part taken out.

156a. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[January 1634]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter yesterday and your outline of the rules for your Daughters, which I have not yet had the chance to read. I shall do so as soon as I can. As for what you tell me about them, I have no doubt that they are as you describe them to me, but we have to hope that they will mature and that prayer will allow them to see their faults and encourage them to correct them. It would be well for you to tell them what constitutes solid virtue, especially that of interior and exterior mortification of our judgment, our will, memories, sight, hearing, speech, and the other senses, of the attachments we have to bad, useless, and even to good things; all this for the love of Our Lord Who acted in this way. You will have to strengthen them a great deal in all these matters, especially in the virtue of obedience and in that of indifference. But, because too much talking is harmful to you, do so only occasionally. It would be well for you to tell them that they must be helped to

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3The Bull Salvatoris Nostri (cf. vol. XIII, no. 81; also Acta Apostolica in gratiam Congregationis Missionis [Paris: Chamerot, 1876], p. 3; Arch. nat., M 209, no. 6). Although dated January 12, 1633, the Bull had not as yet been promulgated when Saint Vincent wrote this letter. The passage that offended the Saint was suppressed.

Letter 156a. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter. The discovery of Saint Vincent's letter to Father Charles Faure (no. 156b) mandates the repositioning of this letter to Saint Louise (formerly no. 182).

1Reference to the letter to Father Faure, the date of which is certain, enables us to alter the date which Coste originally used [between 1634 and 1638].

2The Daughters.
acquire this virtue of mortification and given practice in it. I shall also tell them so that they will be well disposed to it.

Let us allow that good young woman to continue the practices of the Third Order since she is a member. Please have her make her devotions privately on Wednesdays. I really wish that widow from Colombes\(^3\) could read; please have her see us. Well! I just noticed, on rereading your letter, that she has two children; if that is so, how could we admit her?

I keep forgetting to have the pictures bought for your Daughters. M. de Sergis has just come back; I shall ask him to do it.

Enclosed is a short note to Father Faure\(^4\) for M. Gallois' son.\(^5\) I would like to have more influence with him than I do in this matter. He will understand. Well then, let us end with the request I am making that you take care of your health. I am, in this hope, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

V. D.

\(^3\)A commune near Paris.

\(^4\)Charles Faure, born at Louveciennes (Yvelines), November 29, 1594, took the habit of the Canons Regular in the Abbey of Saint-Vincent de Senlis and was professed March 1, 1615. The examples of laxity he saw did not lessen his progress in virtue. His reputation for holiness reached the King, who entrusted him with the delicate mission of establishing the reform in the Monastery of Sainte-Geneviève in Paris. He was so successful that, in order to extend the reform, Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld gathered into one congregation, under the name of Congregation of France, several houses of the Canons Regular spread throughout the provinces of the kingdom. He placed them under the Abbey of Sainte-Geneviève and appointed Father Faure Vicar General of the new Institute. Father Faure visited the establishments, laid down the rules for them, and founded some seminaries. The Congregation of France was canonically erected by a Bull of February 3, 1634. On October 17, the General Chapter elected Father Faure Superior General for a term of three years. He was reelected in 1637. The constitutions not permitting a third term, he yielded his position in 1640 to Father Boulart, but kept such extensive powers for himself that his successor could do nothing without his advice. When Father Boulart's three-year term ended, Father Faure was once again placed at the head of the Congregation of France. He fell ill that same year and died November 4, 1644. His attitude toward Saint Vincent was rather cold and reserved. He left several works on asceticism. (Cf. Lallemand and Chartonnet, op. cit.)

\(^5\)Perhaps the son of Philippe Gallois, Saint Vincent's notary.
156b. - TO FATHER FAURE, SUPERIOR OF THE CONGREGATION
OF SAINTE-GENEVIEVE

Reverend Father,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have been asked to use my influence with you to request you, as I am doing most humbly, to be pleased to receive among your seminarians the son of Monsieur Gallois. I have heard much good about the latter and that he willingly assists those houses where he has children. Therefore, please do him this charity, Father. In addition to your being satisfied with it, I shall add this obligation to many others I have towards you, and I shall be all my life, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, Reverend Father, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
prêtre indigne de la Mission

Bons-Enfants, January 1634

Addressed: Father Faure, Superior of the Congregation of Sainte-Geneviève

Letter 156b. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, photocopy; the present location of the original letter is unknown. Coste appears to have mentioned this letter in vol. II, no. 694, where he states that Charavay gave a description of it in his catalogue. The now certain date necessitates the placement of the letter in vol. I.

1Unworthy priest of the Mission. In later letters, Saint Vincent often wrote the initials of this French phrase after his name. It has been traditional in the Congregation of the Mission to append to one's name the Latin of this French phrase of Saint Vincent: indignus sacerdos Congregationis Missionis or the initials i. s. C. M. Hereafter, this edition will use the latter abbreviation.
TO ISABELLE DU FAY

[Between 1626 and 1635]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever! I thank you most humbly for everything in your letter and was quite consoled by what you told me in it. I am indeed looking forward to finding you truly strong and brave. Now then, let us become so, Mademoiselle, and draw our strength from our weakness which serves as a reason for Our Lord to become Himself our strength.

I praise God for what you told me about your brother, Mademoiselle, and pray that he will continue to grow stronger and stronger in the fidelity Our Lord is asking of us.

I am even better than a few days ago. The doctor, who just left here, advised me to go, on the first nice day that comes along, to the mission that is going to be given in a place two leagues from here. I shall not fail, meanwhile, to remember you in the Holy Sacrifice, which I shall offer to God for your intentions, being in His love, your . . .

TO JACQUES PERDU, IN POISSY

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever! Blessed be God for the difficulties He is pleased that you should

Letter 157. - Reg. 1, f° 68 v°. The copyist notes that the original was written in Saint Vincent's own hand.

Period within which the name of Mademoiselle du Fay appears in the correspondence of Saint Vincent.

Antoine Hennequin, Sieur de Vincy.

Letter 158. - Collection for the process of beatification.

A Priest of the Mission, born in Grandvilliers (Oise), April 19, 1607. He entered the
encounter! You must honor, on this occasion, the ones His Son had on earth. O Monsieur, how much greater they were since, because of the aversion people had for Him and His teachings, He was forbidden entrance to every province and [it] cost Him His life! People were right to suppose that He was preparing His disciples when He told them that He was sending them like sheep in the midst of wolves; when He told them that people would make fun of them, scoff at them, and spit in their face; that fathers would turn against their children and children would persecute their fathers; and, finally, when He justified the ceremony of shaking the dust from their garments when they found themselves among people who would not make good use of their teachings.

Let us make good use of them, Monsieur, on these occasions, and let us, like them, bear with the contradictions that will befall us in the service of God. Rather, let us rejoice as at a great good when they come upon us, and let us begin on this occasion to use them as the Apostles did, following the example of their Master, Our Lord. If we do this, oh! rest assured that the very means by which the devil has tried to battle against you will help you to overcome him. You will rejoice all heaven and the good souls of earth who will see or hear of it. The very persons with whom you have to deal will bless you in the end and be grateful to you as a collaborator in their salvation. However, hoc genus daemoniorum non ejicitur nisi in oratione et patientia.

The holy modesty and interior recollection of the Company will be yet other means to this end, and notably circumspection in questions which one cannot ask in confession without some difficulty.

For the love of God, Monsieur, work out well together the

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Congregatio of the Mission in 1630, was ordained a priest in 1632, placed in Richelieu in January 1638, and died in September 1644.

2This kind of demon is not cast out except by prayer and patience. As was his wont, Saint Vincent alludes to a biblical passage without quoting it exactly. Compare: Mk. 9:29 - "This kind you can drive out only by prayer"; and Mt. 17:21 - "[This kind does not leave but by prayer and fasting.]" (NAB)
things that are to be asked and the manner. Monsieur Renar has
great experience in that matter. Come to an agreement about it and
learn how to overcome the dislike those people have for the Mis-
sionaries so as to refrain from what has scandalized them or do the
opposite if the occasion arises. I beg you, Monsieur, to look into
the matter and to let me know about it, as also about the place
from which the talk of this scandal is coming.

Having weighed all the reasons you sent me, I think it will be
good in the future to give only a short catechism lesson at which
all the boys and girls will be present, reserving the right to decide
otherwise if the large numbers require it. And because an excess
of the word of God dat illis nauseam, please follow Monsieur
Renar's advice with regard to the discontinuance of sermons on
Sundays and feasts, and even with regard to the other days if he,
together with the Prior, thinks it advisable. By the latter's advice, I
believe, he has probably told you what he told you about the
sermons, and wisely, since contraria contrariis curantur. O
Monsieur, how willingly we ought to fall in with the opinions of
others! Saint Vincent Ferrer observed this practice as a means of
perfection and holiness. If it is good for an individual, why not for
a company? And nevermind saying that you are not accustomed to
it, because it is God's good pleasure that we adapt ourselves to
people's moods, to places, and to times. Oh! let us act then in this
way, and you will constantly see what it will win for you before
God.

I am sending you the organ and shall delegate you to deliver it if
Monsieur Régnier cannot attend to it, or if indeed that gentleman
is not discreet enough and you think I should recall him. In that

3Nauseates them.
4Contraries are cured by contraries.
3Jacques Régnier, a Priest of the Mission, was born in the diocese of Boulogne (Picardy) and
entered the Congregation of the Mission in August 1627 in Paris. He was ordained a priest in
April 1632.
regard I beg you to observe him carefully, and Leleu as well, and to give me accurate information concerning their behavior.

As for the wood and the other things, I greatly fear that the Prior will refuse to pay you for them. Please find out where you can get them and if you can afford to get them elsewhere even though everything is rather expensive.

I praise God that the good Prior of Aigue sometimes eats with the Company. Show him that you enjoy this and thank him affectionately and humbly.

I beg you, moreover, to strongly recommend holy modesty to the Company as being perhaps one of the most efficacious means of doing good to those people.

This, Monsieur, is all I can tell you for the present, except that I add thereto my most humble regards to the Prior, to Monsieur Renar, and to Monsieur Flahan. Please commend an important affair to God and tell Monsieur Renar that it will perhaps be advisable for him to be present next Wednesday at two o'clock at the meeting at which the pastors will be present and the catechism will be discussed. He will be able to leave the same day and be back home the following day at noon.

Good evening, Monsieur. I am your servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

February 1634

Addressed: Monsieur Perdu, Priest of the Mission, in Poissy

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6 This name does not appear in the catalogue of the Mission, although Leleu appears to be a member of the Congregation at this time.

7 A priest in the Congregation of the Mission, although his name does not appear in the catalogue of the Congregation; Saint Vincent advised him “that he would do better somewhere else...” (Cf. no. 197.)
159. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between January and March 1634]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The meeting took place yesterday at Madame Goussault’s house. Mesdames de Villesabin, Bailleul, Dumecq, Sainctot, and Poulaillon were there. The proposal was accepted and [they]
decided to have another meeting next Monday. In the meantime, we shall offer the affair to God and shall receive Holy Communion for that intention. Each one will propose the matter to the ladies and young women of her acquaintance. What do you think of Mademoiselle Guérin? Madame de Beaufort will join them. We shall need you and your Daughters; we think four of them will be necessary. That is why we must see about a way of getting good ones. Think about the sister of that good woman you have. Talk about it to Michelle. I do not know whether the widow of Les Clayes would want to do it and would be suitable. Moreover, what shall we do with her children? I am going to Saint-Lazare and shall perhaps come back this evening to spend the night here.

Madame Goussault spoke to me yesterday about the recall from exile of that widow you sent to her. I told her that I would scruple interfering in those matters unless I knew the person as well as I know you, and that the wife of the Keeper of the Seals can scarcely get mixed up in those affairs. If you take my advice, you will relieve yourself of such occupations. The law did not deal with her in that way without serious grounds.

Well now, you see that your work is growing more diverse. Strengthen yourself as much as you can.

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

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

7There were more people at this second meeting than at the first. Madame Goussault was elected president. She was given an assistant and a treasurer. (Cf. Abelly, op. cit., vol. I, chap. XXIX, p. 133.).
8Perhaps Suzanne de Fournel, the widow of Gilles de Beaufort, Seigneur de Mondicourt, Mondiès, Malmaison, and other places. He died in 1631.
9A small commune in Yvelines.
10At the Bons-Enfants.
11Madame Séguiier.
160. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between January and March 1634]\(^1\)

Mademoiselle,

I thank you most humbly for the good you have done for that good widow;\(^2\) I believe they will not be taking any of your young women for the Hôtel-Dieu. They feel that some of those being offered from the city will be more suitable for representing the Ladies in their absence and they are probably right.

But how are you? Please send me word. I praise God with all my heart for the most loving dedication He gives you of belonging entirely to Him and I am, in His love, your most humble servant.

V. D. P.

Pardon me if I am so brief; I am in a great hurry.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

161. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[1634, around March]\(^1\)

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Yesterday three fine girls from Argenteuil\(^2\) came to offer their

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Letter 160. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

\(^1\)There is no doubt that this letter was written shortly after no. 159.

\(^2\)Perhaps the widow mentioned in the preceding letter.

Letter 161. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

\(^1\)This letter seems to have been written very shortly before no. 163, which is from March or April 1634.

\(^2\)Since the Department of Seine-et-Oise was divided into three departments in 1963, Argen-
services for the Charity at the suggestion of the priest to whom I had someone mention it. He is supposed to come and see me tomorrow concerning the matter. I did not send them to you because it was too late when they arrived but, according to what they told me, they will come to see you on Friday.

I see no great difficulty in Jacqueline’s going to her brother’s wedding. Marguerite, from Saint-Paul, will be doing likewise, and from what she said, she is also supposed to send you a fine young woman. Mademoiselle de la Bistrade and Madame Forest are supposed to come and ask you to relieve them of Nicole because of her many health problems and because Marie, who is bearing the whole burden, cannot go on unless you send them someone to replace Nicole. They will be asking you, therefore, about both matters and Mademoiselle de la Bistrade will promise to pay you for Nicole’s food. I told her I would write to you about it. So think about it, Mademoiselle, and about whether that poor young woman who is so weak and ill-fitted for the Charity could earn her living by sewing or some other trade when she is a little stronger. And do all you can, in the name of God, to get well yourself.

I am very glad that you did not go out yesterday. On the day you do go out, take something before leaving. Our Lord is a continual Communion for those who are united to what He wills and does not will.
I am, in His love, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Saint-Lazare, Monday morning

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

162. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between January and March 1634]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

All things come to him who waits; this is true, as a rule, even more in the things of God than in others. It is not advisable for me to be the one who speaks to the Master — for a reason of my own — unless I meet him by accident. If Madame Goussault, the President’s wife, thinks it appropriate, she can say a word to him about it, if you want to let him know and if she does not see any disadvantage in doing so. It is true that it is advisable to see the Ladies once more, both to give them some advice concerning that matter and to teach them how they ought to instruct the sick to examine their consciences and recognize their sins.

I have not yet been able to go to the Madeleine; I shall go there tomorrow if I can. In the meantime, forgive me. As for Nicole, it is greatly to be feared that she will never change because of her age. On the other hand, I would still find it hard to give my vote to send her away. Try depriving her a little of Holy Communion;

Letter 162. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1This letter was written a few days after the establishment of the Ladies of the Hôtel-Dieu.
2The name given to the Canon-administrator of the Hôtel-Dieu.
3The Ladies of the Hôtel-Dieu.
4Monastery of Sainte-Madeleine where women led a penitential life in reparation for previous indiscretions.
perhaps that will help her. If not, in nomine Domini. After you have done what you can, if she does not improve, send her away.

I send you my regards, meanwhile, and ask God to keep you in perfect health and in His love. I am, in this same love of Our Lord, your most humble. . . .

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

163. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[March or April 1634]

I [cannot help] telling you, Mademoiselle, how reluctantly I depart for Villers with M. Lumague because I have not had the consolation of seeing you on account of our ordinands whose number includes the Commander de Sillery. I assure you that if you knew how sorry I am you would have pity on me. Oh, well! Please do all you can to stay well. I hope to return next Monday.

Madame Forest came here to thank us for the good stout young woman you wanted to send them, because their Nicole is better. That being the case, I think you will do well to send Jacqueline to the Hôtel-Dieu, or else Jeanne. The one who is left can help at your Charity with the young woman from Grigny.

Madame Goussault thinks it advisable for us to consider finding

Letter 163. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

"Reference to the ordination retreat of Commander de Sillery prompts us to assign this date.

"The words in brackets are not found in the original letter. This interpolation by Coste supplies for an obvious omission.

"Villers-sous-Saint-Leu (Oise).

"Jean-André Lumague, Seigneur de Villers-sous-Saint-Leu, father of Mademoiselle Pollalion, and a great friend of Saint Vincent.

"The Commander said his first Mass on Holy Thursday, April 13, 1634, a few days after his ordination.


"A commune in Essonne."
you a place to live near Notre-Dame. Think it over, please, and do your best to stay well.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am leaving in an hour and am your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

163a. - TO SISTER HELENE-ANGELIQUE LHUILLIER

My very dear Sister,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received with consolation your letter of yesterday, as well as that of our worthy Mother for the Visitor, whom I also hold most dear. I hope to share in the profit you derive from reading these letters. Thank you for all that.

Please, my dear Sister, tell the good young woman destined for Le Mans through your kindness what she has to do. Her brother just told me that she is in a state of holy impatience on account of her happiness.


1Religious of the first monastery of the Visitation in Paris.
2Most probably April 9, 1634.
3Saint Jane Frances de Chantal.
4To prevent any deviation from the primitive spirit of the Visitation, Saint Vincent and other friends of that Community thought it would be well to have Visitors appointed to make canonical visitations of the convents in order to eradicate abuses and to watch over the preservation of the traditions of the Order. It appears that, before her death, Saint Jane Frances finally agreed to that practice. (Cf. Roger Devos, "Le testament spirituel de sainte Jeanne-Françoise de Chantal et l'affaire du visiteur apostolique," Revue Historique Spirituelle, 48 [1972], pp. 453-456; 49 [1973], 199-126, 341-366.)
5The Visitation was established in Le Mans in 1634. The first six religious arrived there on July 22, 1634.
I am, in the love of Our Lord and with the affection that He knows, my very dear Sister, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

164. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Before 1640] ¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Here I am, back from the mission of Villers² since last evening and in good health, thank God. Please let me know the state of yours and whether you think it well to send for two fine young women chosen by Mademoiselle Poulaillon for the Charity. They seem to be very good young women. Let me know then by this messenger what you think, please, because I have to give Mademoiselle Poulaillon an answer tomorrow. She sends you her regards but will not be here until Saturday.

I shall have the pleasure of seeing you as soon as twenty-five ordinands allow me to do so. I am, meanwhile, Mademoiselle, your servant.

V. D.

Wednesday morning

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

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Letter 164. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹It is impossible from the content of this letter to assign a date to it more accurately. As Coste observed in dating this letter, when writing to Saint Louise after 1639, Saint Vincent almost always wrote words like "Wednesday morning" and/or the time of day at the head of the letter.

²Villers-sous-Saint-Leu.
Mademoiselle,

I just arrived from town about fifteen minutes ago and found the enclosed upon my return. You see that I have to be at Saint-Lazare before seven o'clock tomorrow, which will deprive me of the consolation of seeing you in the morning as I had planned. Please forgive me and on Thursday, God willing, I shall make up for my absence, being unable to do so tomorrow because we are having the priests' meeting at Saint-Lazare.²

I saw good Madame Saunier this morning and found her all aflame for the Charity and ready to become a member. But a problem has arisen in that affair which causes us to judge it advisable to postpone the Ladies’ meeting, which was supposed to have taken place on Thursday, until another day. Please inform her of that, Mademoiselle, and do all you can to stay well. In that regard, it will be a great help to you not to worry so much about your Daughters, to eat well, and not to go out so early.

I bid you good day and I am, in the love of Our Lord. . . .

166. - TO SAINT LOUISE

(Now 198a.)

Letter 165. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 73.

¹This letter was written after the establishment of the Ladies of the Hôtel-Dieu and before the transfer of the Daughters of Charity to La Chapelle.

²For the weekly conference.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have seen that good young woman, Madeleine. I think you will have to work with her a little as her passions are rather strong. So what! When these young women have the strength to overcome themselves, they work wonders afterwards. Accept her, therefore, please, and I shall speak to the wife of the Keeper of the Seals.\(^2\)

As for that good young woman from Argenteuil who is melancholy, I think you are right in raising objections to taking her, for it is a strange disposition, that of melancholy. I think that you have enough young women for some time and that you should train them well to read and sew so that they can work in the country.

I shall be expecting you on Tuesday. Good day, Mademoiselle. I am, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DE PAUL

Therefore, send that young woman’s companion back, please.

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168. - TO SAINT LOUISE

(Now 198b.)

169. - TO SAINT LOUISE

(Now 198c.)

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**Letter 167.** - The original letter is at the Provincial House of the Daughters of Charity (Provincia de Santa Luisa de Marillac) in Madrid.

\(^1\)This letter seems to have been written in the early days of the Company of the Daughters of Charity and shortly after no. 161.

\(^2\)Madame Séguiier.
I am like you, Mademoiselle; there is nothing that bothers me more than uncertainty. But I do indeed greatly desire that God
may be pleased to grant me the grace of making everything indifferent to me, and to you as well. Come now, we shall make every effort, please God, to acquire this holy virtue.

Yesterday I was at Saint-Victor until five o'clock with the Archbishop, who had ordered me to come there. Then he had me get into a carriage to go to the city with him. From there I came back to spend the night here without going to the collège. That is the reason you have not heard from me. If this afternoon, right after dinner, you can take the trouble to come to the collège, we shall discuss everything, and I shall be, in the love of Our Lord, that of the holy Virgin, and of Saint Magdalen, your servant.

176. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1634 and 1636]

So here at last is the first victim Our Lord has chosen to take from your Daughters of Charity. May He be forever blessed! I trust, Mademoiselle, that she is very happy, seeing that she died in the practice of a virtue with which she could not be lost; for she died in the exercise of divine love since she died in that of charity. I am asking Our Lord to be therein your consolation and that of our very dear Sisters. I beg you to wish them all a good day for me.

of Saint Magdalen, whose feast day is July 22, leads us to assume that Saint Vincent was writing this letter on that date.

1Abbey of Saint-Victor.
2Jean-François de Gondi.
3At Saint-Lazare.

Letter 176. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

2Marguerite Naseau is certainly not the Sister in question here; she had died of the plague in Saint-Louis Hospital in February 1633.
I think it is too much to put off the funeral until tomorrow, seeing that you have no other room in which to put it; it is to be feared that it may be too greatly upsetting for our sick Sisters and for you. You could speak to Saint-Nicolas about it, asking whether it could be done this evening. If not, well, send the notice as it is, but the Ladies in office cannot be there so early in the morning.

As for the young woman's clothes, I see no objection to giving them to her mother. That will not prevent you from giving her an alms such as twenty sols or a demi-écu each month. I think it will suffice to send the notice to the Sisters and not to the officers in the parishes.

As for the rest at the end of your letter, I agree, and am, in the love of Our Lord. . . .

_Addressed:_ Mademoiselle Le Gras

**177. - TO FRANCOIS DU COUDRAY, IN ROME**

_July 25, 1634_

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Yesterday, I received your letter of the second of this month, in which [you] spoke to me about Saint-Lazare and how you have put that affair in order. You spoke to me further about the translation of the Syriac Bible into Latin and about the young Maronite and sent me a copy of one part of the privileges you obtained. Now, I shall tell you that yesterday I saw Advocate-General Bignon

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3The body of the deceased.
4To the Pastor of Saint-Nicolas.
5One écu equals three livres; one livre equals twenty sols.

Letter 177. - Collection for the process of beatification.

Jérôme Bignon, the Advocate General in the Paris Parlement, a Councillor of the State and
about Saint-Lazare. He is considered one of the most learned, pious, and capable men in his field in Christendom. His advice is that, although he does not think it necessary for us to have recourse to Rome, we do so, nonetheless, in order to root out, as he says, all the pretexts that anyone might have to harass us hereafter, but still that we must try to do so as quickly as possible. He says that a thousand écus is a great deal and for you to make an effort to get the best bargain you possibly can. You must make them understand that this benefice does not depend on the Pope and that it did not belong to the religious of Saint Augustine. It belongs to the city of Paris and its conferral has always rested with the Bishop of Paris. The priors gave him an account every year of the administration of the revenue, which administration was given to them only one hundred or one hundred twenty years ago. Before that, the property was administered by secular priests and sometimes by laymen because it is a leper-house. It so happens that about three hundred years ago a Bishop of Paris named Fulco took the administration away from some secular priests who were living in the house in community, one of whom was the administrator, and gave it to some others on no other authority than his own. Poncher, also a Bishop of Paris, removed it from the hands of secular priests who were also living in community — one of whom was

the King's librarian, was, according to Moreci (cf. Louis Moreci, Le Grand Dictionnaire Historique [5 vols., Paris, 1718]), "one of those extraordinary geniuses whom recent centuries can boldly compare to the greatest figures of antiquity." At the age of fourteen he was already the author of the Discours de la ville de Rome, principales antiquitez et singularitez d'icielle. The following year, the Traité sommaire touchant l'élection du Pape appeared. His great juridical knowledge made him the trusted adviser of Anne of Austria. He worked on the treaty of alliance with Holland (1649) and on the treaty concluded with the Hanseatic League (1654). He died April 7, 1656, at the age of seventy.

Fulco de Chanac, Bishop of Paris from 1342 to July 25, 1349, the day of his death.

Etienne de Poncher occupied the See of Paris from 1503 to 1519. By a decree of February 20, 1518, "...he promises, both in his own name and in that of his successors, to appoint to the above-mentioned priory and hospice of Saint-Lazare a religious of the said Congregation of Saint-Victor, as long as it is within the reform, and should the reform be relaxed, the said Bishops of Paris will resume their rights to establish in that position, as they did formerly, any other ecclesiastics they wish." (Arch. Nat. MM 534.)
the prior, whom the Bishop used to name *ad nutum*, note that — and he put it into the hands of the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine in 1517. He gave its administration to one of the Canons whom he named prior, likewise removable *ad nutum*, without the authorization of the Pope or any other than his own, not even of the King, or of the court.

The letters of appointment of these priors have always been *ad nutum* and all of them have given an account to the Bishop of Paris. Finally, never has any prior obtained a letter of appointment from the court of Rome except the one in question. He did so in an attempt to retain the position in perpetuity, eight or ten years after he was made prior by the Bishop of Paris. You can see that very fact in his letters of appointment whose date I have sent you. Please hold fast and bear carefully in mind this observation concerning the nature of Saint-Lazare that I am sending you here, so that you may have it thoroughly examined by the officers of that court. Although the benefice does not depend on the Pope, nevertheless, because of the devotion we have of not possessing anything except by his authority, we were eager for both his approval and his blessing. The Advocate-General, who is familiar with the court of Rome from having been there, believes that, if you were to represent all this clearly to the officers, you would soon get to the end of it and inexpensively. If, after all, you cannot succeed within a month after receiving these remarks, he is of the opinion that that should not keep you from coming back here. The confidence we must have in Monsieur Marchand's good will and the recommendations we shall have sent from here will enable us to conclude this affair in a reasonable way, as one does in like matters, in the course of time.

That is why, Monsieur, I most humbly beg you to act in this way and not to delay because of this matter, nor for the proposal you received to work on the translation of the Syriac Bible into Latin.

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*At the will or at the good pleasure* [of the Bishop].

*Banker in Rome.*
Well do I know that the translation would be useful to the curiosity of some preachers, but not, to my mind, to the winning of the souls of the poor for whom the Providence of God has destined you from all eternity. It must be enough for you, Monsieur, that by the grace of God, you have devoted three of four years to learning Hebrew and know enough to uphold the cause of the Son of God in His original language and to confound His enemies in this kingdom. Imagine then, Monsieur, that there are millions of souls stretching out their hands to you and speaking in this way: 'Alas! Monsieur du Coudray, you who have been chosen from all eternity by the Providence of God to be our second redeemer, have pity on us. We are wallowing in ignorance of the things necessary for our salvation and in the sins we have never dared to confess, and for want of your help we will certainly be damned.' Imagine further, Monsieur, the Company telling you that for three or four years it has been deprived of your presence and is beginning to miss you. You are one of the first members of the Company and, as such, it needs your advice and example. And please listen, Monsieur, to my heart telling yours that it feels intensely moved by the desire to go to work and die in the Cévennes, and that it shall go if you do not soon come into those mountains. The Bishop from there is crying out for help. He says that the region, which was formerly among the most devout in the kingdom, is now perishing from hunger for the Word of God. There are no villages, except five or six, which do not have some Catholics among the Huguenots; and there are a great number where there are no priests or churches. They are, perhaps, awaiting their salvation from you and me.

Come then, Monsieur, and please do not put it off any longer, unless it be for about a month or six weeks to do what you can with regard to the matter of Saint-Lazare. I will expect you, at the latest, towards the end of November. Bring with you, please, good

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6A mountainous region of Southern France between the Departments of Hérault and Ardèche.
Monsieur Gilioli and that good Maronite, if you think he wishes to give himself to God in this Little Company. And please practice speaking modern Greek with him on the way so that you may teach it here if necessary; who knows?

The Ambassador to Turkey did me the honor of writing to me, calling for priests from Saint-Nicolas and from the Mission. He thinks they will be able to do more there than I would dare to tell you. Well now, we shall consider the proper action to take when you are here, both with regard to that affair and to all other matters concerning our consolidation.

But in the name of God, Monsieur, do all you can to obtain the indulgences His Holiness has given the Jesuit Fathers and the Oratorians when they give a mission in rural areas. The indulgence is plenary for those who attend their instructions, go to confession and receive Communion from them in the country. And would to God that you could also get them for the Confraternities of Charity; they are working wonders, by the grace of God! We have established them in several parishes in this city and recently set up another composed of one hundred or one hundred twenty ladies of high rank. Every day, four at a time, they visit and assist eight or nine hundred poor or sick with jellies, soups, broth, preserves and every other kind of sweet — in addition to their ordinary food, which the house provides — so as to dispose those poor people to make a general confession of their past life and to see that those who die leave this world in a good state and that those who recover take the resolution never to offend God again. This is being done with a special blessing of God, not only in Paris but also in the villages. It is for this Confraternity of Charity that Mademoiselle Aubry de Vitry is asking for indul-

Giovanni Gilioli, a Priest of the Mission registered by mistake in the catalogue of coadjutor brothers, had been born in Ferrara around 1606 and had entered the Congregation of the Mission in July 1629.

The Comte de Marcheville.

The Ladies of the Hôtel-Dieu.
gences, that is, for the women who are members of the confraternity and for those who take care of the alms.

Well now, Monsieur, this is a long letter for you, but then, in no way could I have laid aside my pen any sooner, so much am I comforted by talking to you.

And I must also ask you to bring us five or six books like the first three you sent us concerning the parishes of the Congregation of the Priests of the Assumption of Our Lady, which was organized by Father Savone, the Jesuit, among the Jesuits of Naples. Bring also any other that may be useful to us for the missions and for our ordinands.

Moreover, Monsieur de Creil¹⁰ did not ask me for any money. I shall wait until he does, because I have already sent someone there and they did not find him. I think that, if he had received the order, he would have asked us for it.

I am, meanwhile, as I beg you to take care of your health, in the love of Our Lord, in Whose love I am your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

I almost forgot to tell you that I have not received the Bulls. I praise God that you have had them set right; I cannot tell you the joy that gives me.

Addressed: Monsieur du Coudray, Priest, in Rome

¹⁰Jean de Creil, Seigneur de Gournay, was the secretary of the King and the father of Marie de Creil, Madame de Marillac. She was the wife of René de Marillac, the son of Michel de Marillac, the Keeper of the Seals, and uncle of Saint Louise.
Most blessed Father,

In the faubourg Saint-Denis in the city of Paris, there is a certain hospital of Saint-Lazare, called a leprosarium, which was founded and endowed a long time ago by the Provost and the City Magistrates to sustain and care for the inhabitants of the city of Paris who were afflicted with leprosy. In the course of time it acquired the name or title of priory, which it still holds. As its revenue, from the beginning of its foundation until the year 1513 or 1514, was administered by secular or regular priests, or perhaps even by laymen, who were usually appointed and removed by the Bishop of Paris in office at any given time, Poncher, of happy memory, who was then the Bishop of Paris, entrusted its administration to the reformed Canons Regular of the Order of Saint Augustine. He brought them to the said priory with the obligation of reciting the Canonical Hours in the church of the priory, celebrating a sung Mass daily, and receiving any poor lepers who might come to them, supplying them with what they needed. Moreover, he stipulated that he, whom the Bishop or the Bishop of Paris at any given time appointed at his pleasure as prior from among the said religious, was to be the administrator of the priory or hospital and of its revenue with the obligation of rendering an account of his administration to the same Bishop each year.

Recently, however, Adrien Le Bon, an expressly professed priest of the same Order, the present Prior or administrator, who had been appointed at the good pleasure of Henri de Gondi of

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1This letter appears to have been written between those Saint Vincent wrote to François du Coudray on July 25, 1634 (no. 177), and November 6, 1634 (no. 188).

2Etienne de Poncher (1503-1519).
happy memory (during his lifetime), then Bishop of Paris and Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church with the title of Cardinal de Retz, and other religious of the same priory or hospital, devout petitioners of Your Holiness, considering that at present and for a long time now there have been no lepers in the said priory or leprosarium and that, therefore, the revenue bequeathed by the founders no longer serves the uses for which it was intended, reflected that it would be worthwhile to allot that same revenue to those workers who offer food and medicine, if not for the body then for the health of souls afflicted by spiritual leprosy. Among other such institutes, the most conspicuous is the Institute of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, established by apostolic authority in the city of Paris not very long ago. Its members, according to their own particular institute, have taken as their purpose the instruction of country people living in towns and villages in matters pertaining to the salvation of their souls. They do this without recompense for the love of God, expecting a reward for their labors from God alone. It has been recognized that in carrying out this work they have labored and are laboring with such zeal and fervor that thanks to their instruction many who were infected by heresy in different regions and provinces of France, and especially in the diocese of Montauban — as is well known throughout France — have abjured their heresy and embraced the Catholic faith. Therefore, judging that it would not be contrary to the intention of the founders if the revenues in question, which had been destined for those who care for bodily leprosy, were assigned to those who care for leprosy in souls and also to providing bodily nourishment for the latter from the means at their disposal, the petitioners entered into a contract with the humble co-petitioner of Your Holiness, Vincent de Paul, Superior of that Congregation, who, in the name of the same Congregation,

3Henri de Gondi, the first Cardinal de Retz, was coadjutor Bishop to his uncle, Pierre, from 1598 to 1616 when he succeeded in his own right to the See of Paris. He was made a Cardinal in 1618 and died in 1622.
with the good pleasure of Your Holiness, the Apostolic See, and
the Archbishop of Paris, sets and accepts the following terms:

The same Adrien Le Bon, Prior or administrator, and the re-
ligious of the priory or hospital have consented, to the extent of
their right and interest, that the said priory, together with its
church and buildings, and all its property, rights, fruits, appurte-
nances, and dependencies without exception, be given to or united
with the said Congregation. They have surrendered every right
they have on this priory or leprosarium or its competent admin-
istration with, however, the following conditions, reservations,
and agreements: the entire living quarters thus far occupied by the
said Adrien, Prior or administrator, as well as the title of Prior
shall remain his for life, so that he cannot be removed from these
quarters for any reason whatsoever; he remains free to go to the
church or priory or hospital and assist at divine offices in his place
or seat in the chapter or in the refectory, whenever he chooses to
be present; during his lifetime, the estate of Rougemont, a depen-
dency of the said priory or hospital, with all its appurtenances,
shall be reserved to him. Moreover, the priests of the Congrega-
tion shall pay to the same Adrien as his portion, or instead of
pension, as long as he lives, 2,100 livres in the money of these
parts, free of all ordinary and extraordinary tithes, reparations,
pensions for religious, and other burdens and impositions. This
amount is to be paid each year in four installments, namely, on the
feasts of Easter, the Birth of Saint John the Baptist, Saint Remi,
and Christmas, the first payment being due on the first of these
feasts immediately following the taking possession of the said
priory or hospital by the priests. In order to assure this payment,
not only all the property and revenues of the priory or hospital or
leprosarium but also all the property of the Congregation shall

4The farm of Rougement, situated in the forest of Bondy in the commune of Sevran (Seine-
Saint-Denis), covered a vast expanse of woods and cultivated land. Adrien Le Bon donated it to
Saint Vincent, February 11, 1645, "on account of the great friendship and affection" he bore
the gentlemen of Saint-Lazare. (Arch. nat., S 6698, pièces 1 and 2.)
be bonded and, furthermore, your devout servant Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi, priest of the Oratory, shall stand as surety or guarantor. Likewise, all the credits of the said priory or hospital and everything that is, or will be, due to it before the Congregation takes possession shall accrue to the benefit of the said Adrien. He can collect them from his debtors and, for that purpose, he can use all the necessary means, even in the name of the said Congregation. The priests of the Congregation shall be obliged, according to the estimate of experts, to repay him for the provisions and supplies of grain, wine, and wood he had bought in advance for the use of the house, priory, or hospital to the amount that shall be found there at the time of their taking possession.

Adrien himself shall not be liable for the rest of the accounts of his administration from the time when the administration had been entrusted to him to the day of the transfer. Conversely, the priests of the said priory or hospital shall be exonerated with regard to Prior Adrien who, at the time of transfer, will clear the priory of all debts. As regards the revenues or rents bought by Adrien during his administration in favor of the priory or hospital, he shall enjoy them during his lifetime, but, after his death, they shall accrue to the said Congregation.

And since the farm leases of the priory or hospital and the majority of its rents and revenues were paid only on the feasts of Saint Remi and Saint Martin, and in the meantime the said Adrien had to spend large sums and contract debts in order to cover the expenses for the upkeep of the church and the other buildings, and also for the food and the other needs of the religious, it has been agreed that, at the time of transfer, the said Adrien may reimburse himself for these expenses from the above-mentioned leases and rents.

When the Prior Adrien or any of his religious die, the priests shall give them ecclesiastical burial as their benefactors. They shall celebrate three Masses on the day of Prior Adrien's death and on the two following not impeded days. Every year thereafter in perpetuity they shall celebrate on a similar day one anniversary in
the church of the priory or hospital for the repose of his soul. In order to leave to posterity the memory of such an obligation, they shall erect some kind of tombstone or monument in the same church with an inscription of this obligation. They shall also celebrate two solemn services for the founders, benefactors, and religious, one on the first free day after the octave of the Epiphany and the other on the Monday after the feast of the Holy Trinity. For each religious of the priory they shall be obliged to celebrate one service at the end of the year following their death.

The other religious shall also be allowed to stay and live in the same priory or hospital as they did before while living under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop. They shall occupy as their living quarters the apartment overlooking the main road of the faubourg and other suitable places in the priory or hospital. However, the dormitory and the cloister they shall leave entirely free for the priests.

The priests of the Congregation shall also be obliged to pay five hundred livres for food and clothing to each of the religious every year during their lifetime at the aforesaid times or others, as the religious shall wish or their needs may demand. To facilitate the payment of these portions both to Prior Adrien and the other religious, the priests of the Congregation shall allow the religious receiver\(^5\) to continue collecting the revenues until the peaceful possession by the said Congregation. For this purpose they shall submit to him all the necessary powers. If the religious should wish to live in common with the priests, they may do so by paying two hundred livres each for food from the above-mentioned amount of five hundred livres given to each one. The remaining three hundred livres shall be left to them for their other needs.

In the case of illness, either of Adrien or the religious, they shall be cared for in the common infirmary and the priests shall provide them with food, drink, and medicine, and pay for the

\(^5\)The receiver at that time was Claude Cousin.
physician, surgeon, and pharmacist to the amount of two hundred livres, according to the length of time.

The religious shall also be free to live separately and individually in the priory or hospital, or to retire to some other religious house with the Archbishop's permission, without reduction of the above-mentioned sum. In the event that one of the said religious dies, the priests of the Congregation shall be free from paying his portion or pension and no other religious or novice may be received in place of the deceased. In the event of such a death, the furnishings of the deceased shall be put to the use of the surviving religious personally residing in the priory or hospital. After the death of all the aforesaid religious, all the furnishings shall accrue to the Priests of the Mission.

Likewise, as soon as the priests of the Congregation take possession, they have the obligation of residing personally in the priory or hospital, of serving its church, and of diligently celebrating the Divine Liturgy for the glory of God and the peace of their conscience. They shall receive all the vestments, relics, and furnishings, which will be inventoried and handed over to them by the religious. They shall maintain the buildings and the property of the priory or hospital and make the necessary repairs at their own expense, without any contribution by the religious. They shall also receive any lepers who may present themselves, providing for all their needs both corporal and spiritual.

If, however, the priests of the said Congregation should abandon the priory or hospital, unless they do so because of some act or fault of the religious, they shall have no right to demand any return from the said Adrien or the other religious for the payments advanced, for the repairs they have made, or for any other expenses they have incurred in any way. Moreover, in the event of such desertion or departure, this contract shall be null and void, and the religious shall resume their original rights and privileges.

The above-mentioned Superior, Vincent, has accepted, in the name as above, the agreements, conditions, and everything as expressed above, in the event that the same priory with all its
appurtenances and dependencies should be transferred to his Congregation, and he has promised to fulfill these as well as other conditions which are more fully contained in another contract or agreement and in a public document drawn up concerning this matter.

Whereupon your dedicated servant Jean-François de Gondi, present Archbishop of Paris, to whom belongs, as it belonged to his predecessors, as has been said above, the right to appoint and to remove the prior or administrator of this priory or leprosarium, rightly considering that the introduction of the priests of the said Congregation into this priory or hospital and the concession of its properties and revenues and everything belonging to it would result in the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls, fully cognizant of the contract and everything contained in it, and with the consent of the Most Serene Prince Louis, Most Christian King of France and Navarre, as well as the consent of the Provost of Tradesmen and the City Magistrates, founders of the priory or hospital, by his ordinary power granted, united, attached, and incorporated the said priory or hospital with its church and all its buildings, gardens, properties, appurtenances, fruits and proceeds of any kind, along with all its freedoms, franchises and privileges, to the same Congregation, with the obligation of observing the agreements and conventions contained in that contract, under the following conditions:

The aforesaid Adrien shall also henceforth continue to be the Superior of the said religious, and the religious shall render him the obedience they have professed. The Archbishop of Paris at any given time shall have the jurisdiction and the right of visitation in spiritual and temporal things over the priory and the priests of this Congregation living in it at any given time. The priests of the Congregation, one of whom shall be elected Superior by the same Congregation, shall have the obligation of reciting the Canonical Hours in choir in a moderate voice, without chant, the doors of the choir being closed, and of celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass quietly so that they will not be delayed in their work of
going to villages to instruct the people there. They shall fulfill all the foundations of the priory or hospital and receive into the priory the lepers of the city and its suburbs.

There shall be at least twelve members of this Congregation, at least eight of whom must be priests. Their work shall be to go from village to village in the diocese of Paris at the expense of the Congregation. They shall stay in each village for a month or two, according to the needs of the place, and teach the mysteries of faith, hear confessions, especially general confessions, instruct the people in a Christian life, prepare souls for the worthy reception of the Most Holy Eucharist, and reconcile enemies. At the times when Orders are customarily conferred in Paris, they are obligated to receive the candidates for orders from the Parisian diocese who are sent to the said priory by the Archbishop and, for a period of two weeks before the ordination days, to give them room and board with them and prepare them by spiritual exercises, a general confession, a daily examination of conscience, meditations on the change of their state and of their life and on those things which are proper to each order and suited to the clerical way of life, and by the proper performance of the ecclesiastical ceremonies.

Whatever income of the priory should remain after satisfying these obligations, they shall apply to the common needs of the Congregation. In view of this, the same Archbishop Jean-François, acting in his own name and in the name of his successors, has forever dispensed and exonerated the priests of the Congregation from rendering an account of the funds and administration of the priory or hospital and its appurtenances and dependencies, as stated more in detail in the letter of the same Jean-François.

And since, Holy Father, all these agreements have been entered into for the greater glory of God and the said petitioners wish them to be strengthened by the patronage of Your Holiness and the Apostolic See so that they may last, the petitioners humbly ask Your Holiness to act in this matter and, as a special favor to them, to approve and confirm forever by your apostolic authority and to
validate with everlasting and inviolable apostolic stability this contract entered into by the said petitioners concerning the transfer or union of this priory or hospital, of its church and all its goods, chattels, properties, and dependencies made by the said Archbishop Jean-François to the said Congregation of the Mission, and each and everything contained in the said letter, provided they are lawful and honest, with all their consequences. Supply all and each of the defects, of either law or fact, and the formalities, however substantial and required by law, if any of them should be found. Enjoin the petitioners that they are obliged to observe this contract and its contents and that they cannot withdraw from it. Rescind, as far as necessary, all previous contracts. Remove every connotation of a religious order of life, which, on account of the introduction and residence of the religious of the said order, might have attached or seemed to have attached to the priory or the hospital or the administration of the revenues or to any of its parts and appurtenances, not, however, to the persons of the said religious of this order. Suppress and extinguish any connotation of a religious order of life as to its state, essence, dependence, or denomination. Reduce all of these to the secular state and transfer to the Congregation of the Mission the priory or hospital, which is not an ecclesiastical title or benefice but a simple administration, removable at the will of the Archbishop of Paris at any given time. Transfer in the same way the church and all other parts and appurtenances, all its individual burdens, reservations, agreements, and conditions contained either in the contract, in the document, or in the letter of Archbishop Jean-François, which are here fully and sufficiently repeated, so that its Superior or priests may either themselves, or through one or several persons, in the name of the same Congregation, by their own authority take real and actual possession of the priory or hospital, of its church and property, of all its rights and dependencies, and keep them. May they collect, demand, rent, or lease its fruits, income, revenues, rights, proceeds, and perquisites of any kind and, after they have
discharged the burdens and fulfilled the agreements and conditions contained in the contract and document and in the aforesaid letter of the Archbishop Jean-François, may they use the rest for the common good of the said Congregation without asking permission of the diocesan bishop or anyone else. Likewise, by the same apostolic authority, may they permanently grant, assign, or unite, attach, or incorporate them.

May Your Holiness decree as a special favor that the present letter and the reply to it shall not be included in any similar or dissimilar revocations, suspensions, limitations of graces, or contrary dispositions, but that they shall always be excepted from them, so that whenever they may seem to be revoked, suspended, limited or interfered with, they shall always be brought back to their original and perfectly valid state, restated and fully restored, so that all judges, etc., must judge, etc., accordingly and declare null and void, etc., notwithstanding the aforesaid possibilities to the contrary, or your requirement concerning the indication of the value, or the decree of the recently held Lateran Council prohibiting perpetual unions, except in cases permitted by law, as well as other apostolic constitutions or ordinances, the statutes, etc., of the said hospital or priory or Order, even confirmed by oath, etc., as well as the former Indults, Apostolic Letters, etc., and all other things to the contrary, with their pertinent decrees. 6

6One reads at the end of the petition: “Granted as requested. And with the absolution from censures to the effect, etc., and that the original contract and document, as well as the letter of the Archbishop Jean-François concerning this matter, provided they are not contrary to the above, and the true annual value of the revenues of the said priory or hospital, be considered as expressed, as they could be expressed either in whole or in part, and of the perpetual confirmation, approval, addition, suppletion, concession, assignment, union, annexation, incorporation, and other clauses of the broadest sense, and that a better and more accurate account and description of all and everything submitted above may be made in the Letter, even as regards the quality of persons mentioned by name, and others who are necessarily concerned, and let it be committed to the Ordinary with the clause ‘After those who have to be called have been called,’ and at the request of the parties, and the recommendation of the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church in charge of the affairs of Regulars.’

“Given in Rome, at St. Peter’s, on the ides of March, in the twelfth year.”

It was therefore on March 15, 1635, that the petition was approved. After these words, the copyist added: “Taken from the register of apostolic petitions. Verified by me Franciscus Causeo, Superintendent of the register, in the back of book 22, folio 223.”
The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with you forever!

Monsieur de Cordes wanted me to ask you, as I am doing most humbly, to be so kind as to go and drop in tomorrow at the Quinze-Vingts to see the officers of the Charity — in the morning — and to do so every day in the afternoon. He also feels that the presence of Mademoiselle Poulaillon would do no harm and that it would encourage those good women.

There are a few practices in that place which are not to be found anywhere else. The sick must be admitted by order of the directors of the hospital, among whom are Monsieur de Cordes and Monsieur Lamy. Monsieur de Cordes suggested to me today that from now on we should accept the better situated among those who are applying and are offering to maintain the Charity: there are about twenty families. But it is felt that incurables, such as consumptives, those with gout, and other types of sick people,
should not be admitted. It would be well to suggest to those good people that they give twenty or twenty-five hens to the Charity. One of the members could be given charge of them. The purpose of this is to have eggs, which are very expensive in that area.

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

V. D. P.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

181. - TO ISABELLE DU FAY

[Between 1626 and 1635]

Mademoiselle,

Your entrance into Sainte-Marie is put off until tomorrow. I beg you, Mademoiselle, to postpone your act of piety until then, or else go to confession to your own confessor and receive Communion the day after tomorrow at the Visitation. I have to say Mass there tomorrow between seven and eight and, after that, I have to go into the monastery. Before I enter, everyone will be asked to leave the church and the door will be closed. Such being the case, you would be too rushed. I am letting you know this too late. Forgive me, and I shall be, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, your...
183. - TO MADAME GOUSSAULT

[1634 or 1635]

Madame,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I think it advisable to ask Madame Fortia\textsuperscript{2} to come to your officers’ meeting at three o’clock. I shall be coming to it to see what should be done about the difficulty at the Hôtel-Dieu. She knows that house very well, has good judgment, and does what good can be done. Please be so kind also, Madame, as to invite Mademoiselle Poulaillon and Mademoiselle du Fay to come. Please send your carriage to the Madeleine for me about half past two.

In the meantime, I bid you good day and am, Madame, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Monday, at ten o’clock

At the bottom of the first page: Madame Goussault

\textsuperscript{1}This letter was written while Mademoiselle du Fay was still living (before 1636) and after the establishment of the Ladies of the Hôtel-Dieu (1634).

\textsuperscript{2}Probably Anne de la Barre, the widow of François de Fortia, Councillor of the King and Master of Requests for the Hôtel-Dieu.
Mademoiselle,

This is Mademoiselle Brou, the treasurer of Saint-Barthélemy. Since I cannot have the pleasure of talking with her because I am in a hurry, I beg you to do so and to look upon her as a good servant of God, worthy of some good employment for His glory.

V. D.

185. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[1634 or 1635]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Mademoiselle Poulaillon is asking for that good young woman. Please send her with Mademoiselle’s footman. Will she be able to go on foot or, if it is convenient, would you lend her your little horse? The first way would be more edifying. It is nine leagues from here. If she cannot make it in one day, she may do the trip in

Letter 184. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1Before this date, there was no Confraternity of Charity at Saint-Barthélemy. (Cf. Abelly, op. cit., vol. I, chap. XXIII, p. 109.)

2Mademoiselle Brou was probably related to Madame de Brou, who was a member of the association of the Ladies of the Hôtel-Dieu. She called the Daughters of Charity to Bernay, where she supported them through her own generosity. Madame de Brou was a cousin of M. de Vincy.

3A parish in Paris.

Letter 185. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1Probable date of the death of Isabelle du Fay, whose serious illness Saint Vincent is here announcing to Saint Louise.
two. Please have her ready when the footman arrives. I beg Our Lord to bless the young woman.

Mademoiselle du Fay is seriously ill. I am not asking you to offer her to Our Lord; I am sure you will do so.

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

V. DEPAUL

Tuesday evening

I sent word to the footman to come tomorrow morning.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

186. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around 1634]¹

I think, Mademoiselle, that it would be well to recall that young woman who is with Madame de Suivry and to send someone for her. In the meantime, we shall see about what has to be done. I am going to the collège² and shall try to see M. Le Gras. Good Sister Alix brought you one young woman and is talking about another. Did you keep the first one?

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am your servant.

V. D.
i.s.C.M.

Letter 186. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter seems to have been written in the early days of the Company of the Daughters of Charity.

²To the Collège des Bons-Enfants where Michel Le Gras was then living.
187. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Mademoiselle,

Your letter seems fine to me. The evil spirit is meddling in the spiritual assistance project for those poor women. M. Chenevis spoke to me about it again this morning and said that the Chevitanes are taking considerable umbrage at the plan. He also said that they do not belong to the community. Please get more information about it. The worst that can happen is that we may have to give up the idea. If that is the case, well and good. Nevertheless, we must quietly locate the source of the evil and see to the remedies.

I am going to see Madame Goussault, the President's wife. It did not seem to me that you were speaking to her too freely, as you say. Always be quite simple and sincere and ask God to grant me those two virtues.

I am, in His love.

Saint-Lazare, October 29, 1634

188. - TO FRANCOIS DU COUDRAY, IN ROME

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter, of October 8 I think, in which you informed me that Monsieur Le Bret told you that Dom Le Bret, his cousin, wrote to him with regard to your return. Now I must tell you, before God, in Whose presence I am speaking, that I do not

Letter 187. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 33.
Letter 188. - Collection for the process of beatification.

1A Benedictine monk whose cousin, Jacques Le Bret, was an auditor of the Roman Rota and, later, Bishop of Toul.
know anything about it. I have not said a word to Dom Le Bret, to my knowledge, to give him any reason to write that or anything approaching it. Perhaps it is the result of someone from there telling him that you had no more to do in Rome and that you had said you were to leave in two weeks. All I know about the affair is what I am surmising here in telling you this, because that good Father did not tell me anything about what he wrote.

As for what you say he told you before, along the same lines, I tell you that, while I was speaking to that good Father about our affairs in Rome — for Monsieur Le Bret writes to him about everything that is done — while I was speaking, I repeat, about our stay in Ferrara, I expressed to him my worry about the situation, not telling him anything else than what I could say in your presence without giving you offense. It is true that that good Father, because of the zeal he has for us — which is such that I doubt strongly whether my own enthusiasm for the Mission is as great as his — told me that he wanted to write to his cousin to procure the Bulls in your absence. Now, since he said that to me quite simply, I did not pay much attention to it. But having thought it over, I went to see him expressly for the purpose of asking him not to do anything about it because I was afraid it might upset you and because I realized that it was proper for you to take care of it. Nevertheless, I found out later that he had written something about it and I was extremely annoyed.

That, Monsieur, is all I can say concerning the matter, with all the liberty and simplicity in my power. But do not feel that that good Father has any opinion of you except a very good one, thank God, one full of esteem and affection, and certainly with good reason.

That is why I most humbly entreat you not to give rise to any thought contrary to what I am telling you and to put far from you the thoughts, which I see from your letter, that you have formed with regard to me and that good Father. You know that the goodness of your heart has given me, thank God, the freedom to speak to you with full confidence, without concealing or disguising
anything. I think you have been aware of that up to now from my way of acting towards you.

_Jésus, mon Dieu!_ could I be reduced to the misfortune of having to do or say something in your regard against holy simplicity! Oh! may God preserve me from that, Monsieur, with regard to anyone whomsoever! Simplicity is the virtue I love the most and to which, I think, I pay the most attention in my actions; and, if it is permissible for me to say so, I would say that I am practicing it with some progress by the mercy of God.

In the name of God, little Father, reject those thoughts as temptations that the evil spirit is putting into your mind. Believe that my heart is not so much mine as yours, and that you are more a pleasure and consolation to me than I am to myself. That is what makes me hope for your return. But I do not want you to come back in the depth of winter and in danger, but the way I wrote to you in my last letter, that is, around the month of February or March, unless you take passage on the galleys from France which are to bring the Cardinal of Lyons\(^2\) to Rome. He is supposed to leave around Advent, in which case it would be good either to ask Monsieur Gilioli to come and meet you in Rome or to go and get him and wait for the galleys in Leghorn which is the seaport for Florence.

I am not saying anything to you about the Saint-Lazare affair because I have already written asking you to have the petition signed by the Pope so as to put matters in a state to be acted upon fifty years from now, as you wrote us. If the matter could be expedited at some small cost, you should attend to it.

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\(^2\)Alphonse de Richelieu, brother of the Cardinal-Minister. He was going to Rome to help the ordinary Ambassador, François de Noailles, to obtain from the Pope the annulment of the marriage that Gaston d'Orléans had contracted with Marguerite de Lorraine. Negotiations took so long that the minister of Louis XIII became impatient and wrote on October 3, 1635: "It would be well for the King to send to Rome, as extraordinary ambassador, some important person who would by nature be more aggressive than M. de Noailles and the Cardinal of Lyons." (Cf. _Lettres, instructions diplomatiques et papiers d'État du cardinal de Richelieu_ [8 vols., Paris: Avenel, 1853-1877], vol. IV, p. 307.)
Well now, Monsieur, here then is all I shall tell you for the present about myself except that I greet you with all the tenderness of my heart. Please take care of your health. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Saint-Lazare, November 6, 1634

Addressed: Monsieur du Coudray, Priest of the Mission, in Rome

188a. - TO M. DE MONTOLON

[December 1634]2

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am very sorry I did not have the happiness of being here when you did us the honor of coming; I was in a little village nearby. However, I returned a quarter of an hour after you left and found your brother. Mon Dieu, Monsieur, how much I feel the pain that he and the others are giving you. He told me his story,3 and


1Guy-François de Montholon, Seigneur du Vivier et d'Aubervilliers, was born in Paris in 1600. He became an advocate in the Parlement in 1618 and a State Councillor in 1645. He died in 1679.

2This date seems most probable since it marks the beginning of Jean de Montholon's incarceration at Saint-Lazare. Born in 1613, he was twenty-one years old at this time.

3The affair can be reconstructed in this fashion: On July 29, 1632, Jean de Montholon secretly married Jeanne Jeannesson whose social status his family considered beneath his own. As guardian of his brothers since their father's death in 1632, Guy-François, feeling that this was an improper alliance, had the marriage annulled by a decree of Parlement. Jean consulted the Sorbonne which declared the marriage valid (1633). Nevertheless, on September 28, 1634, Guy-François obtained a writ from the Provost of Paris authorizing him to have Jean im-
whatever I contrived to say to him about the fear I have that he has
made a mistake, that he must trust you absolutely and follow the
advice of your relatives, and even something about the family into
which he is marrying, with whom I am acquainted, I only stirred
up his feelings more. I had asked his permission to come and see
you with the Pastor of Saint-Germain, but when I was at Saint-
Merri, I became greatly apprehensive that he might escape. I
came back and found him resting. That is why I have taken the
time to write and ask you to let me know how you wish me to act.

I am looking forward to the honor of seeing you tomorrow so
that I may thank you, as I do most humbly, for the favorable
beginning you have afforded our defense. I have been informed
by two of our counselors that you have worked wonders. I trust,
Monsieur, that the conclusion will be even more favorable and that
Our Lord is reserving a great recompense for you in Heaven. I am,
in His love, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Monsieur de Montholon, advocate at the Court
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

M. de la Salle has written me several times about the fondness Our Lord has given you for our modest way of life, for himself, and for M. Brunet, and about the ardor with which you work for the salvation of the poor, and for us when the occasions arise. Now, for all that, Monsieur, I thank you most humbly and beg Our Lord Himself to be your thanks and reward and to shed upon you more and more abundantly His graces and blessings.

O Monsieur, how my heart is filled with consolation every time the above-mentioned M. de la Salle writes to me about your zeal for the salvation of souls, your diligence in winning them over, the blessing Our Lord is bestowing on you, and the solid virtue you possess! I assure you, Monsieur, all that gives me a joy I cannot express to you and a very special fidelity in asking God to be

Letter 189. - Reg. 1, f° 14 v°. The copyist notes that the original was in Saint Vincent's handwriting.

1Jean de Fonteneil, born in Bordeaux around 1605, was a friend and imitator of Saint Vincent. His outstanding qualities procured for him the highest positions in the diocese. He was appointed Canon of Saint-Seurin in July 1623; special archiepiscopal Vicar General on November 1, 1639; Vicar in perpetuity of the parish church of Sainte-Colombe, then of Saint-Siméon in Bordeaux; Grand Archdeacon; Chancellor of the University of Bordeaux in 1650; and Vicar General of the diocese on September 10, 1655. Like his friend Saint Vincent, he was convinced of the great good that would result from seminaries, missions, retreats, and weekly meetings of priests to discuss matters of theology, discipline, or piety. For this purpose, he founded the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Clergy, who directed the ordinands' seminary in Bordeaux and the seminaries of Aire and Sarlat. They were given the chapels of Notre-Dame-de-Montuzet, and the parishes of Saint-Louis-du-Marais and Saint-Simon-Cardonnat (Gironde). This Congregation was short-lived, surviving its founder by only three years. He died in Bordeaux, March 2, 1679. (Cf. Louis Bertrand, Histoire des Séminaires de Bordeaux et de Bazas [3 vols., Bordeaux: Féret, 1894], vol. I, pp. 207 ff.)

2Messieurs de la Salle and Brunet had only been working in the diocese of Bordeaux for a short time. The faculties for preaching and hearing confessions in the diocese had been given them the preceding October 21. (Ibid., p. 215.)
pleased to continue for you and to increase the same graces within you.

That, Monsieur, is the reward you may expect from us for the many, many acts of charity you incessantly perform for us there. I add to that the offering I am making to you, Monsieur, of the Little Company and its services, and my own in particular, with all the affection and humility of which I am capable. This gives me the confidence to recommend myself to your holy prayers. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

190. - TO MONSIEUR BELIN

December 16, 1634

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The time has finally come when we are going to glean after the abundant harvest Our Lord has reaped through you in that part of the country. I beg you, Monsieur, to continue your charity towards the Company and to advise it of all that is expedient in Domino. You will see new faces on all sides, but what can you expect? That is how Providence subjects us to vicissitude.

I beg you to speak frankly and without reserve to M. Grenu and to any one of them with regard to the advice you feel it advisable to give them in your meetings; otherwise, both they and the most prudent men could make mistakes.

And if you can, will you kindly go to Saint-Nom\textsuperscript{1} or to Les

\textsuperscript{1}Saint-Nom-La-Bretêche (Yvelines).
Clayes to teach catechism and hear confessions? Do so, I beg of you, and take your choice. Are you really unaware that Our Lord has made you a Missionary when it is you who have one of the greatest shares in the conception, gestation, birth and development of the Mission, and that, were it not for the clear signs God has given that He wanted you in Villepreux, you would belong to the Mission completely?

Good M. Pillé is at the Bons-Enfants with a slight stomach ailment; M. Portail is having trouble with his eyes and I with my legs, but all three of us love you dearly with all our heart. Take care, Monsieur, in the name of Our Lord, to ask God to grant us the grace of doing His Will in all things. I am, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Please find a servant to bring in and to prepare the food at Saint-Nom; we shall pay him.

191. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Before 1640]

... If you think it advisable to make a proposal to him about it, do so; if not, say nothing to him. I am sending Madame de Villegoublin's letter back to you; we shall discuss what is in it after your retreat. Well now, how are you doing? Are you bustling

2Jean Pillé, a priest of the diocese of Sens, was received into the Congregation of the Mission around October 1631. He was Superior of the Collège des Bons-Enfants from 1635 to 1638 and died in Paris on October 7, 1642. Saint Vincent related his life and praised his virtues in a long Circular Letter which will be inserted further on (cf. vol II, no. 634). There is a copy of his will in the Arch. Nat. M 211, file 1.

Letter 191. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter. The beginning of the letter has been cut off and lost.

1Since there is no certainty about the date of this letter, it can only be speculated that it was written before 1639. After 1639, Saint Vincent usually added the day of the week, e.g., "Tuesday morning," at the head of the letter.

Saint Louise, while passing through Beauvais, lodged at her home.
around? In the name of God, act gently as you can picture our blessed Father, the Bishop of Geneva,3 doing.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL

Tuesday morning

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

192. - JEAN DE LA SALLE AND JEAN-JOSEPH BRUNET
   TO SAINT VINCENT1

1634

The sermons are well attended in the diocese of Bordeaux. The faithful come from far away. They are so anxious to make a general confession that they wait their turn for weeks at a time without returning home and would rather die than lose this opportunity of making their peace with God. There are some who accuse themselves quite loudly so as to humble themselves more.

193. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1634 and 1639]1

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

3Saint Francis de Sales.


1Abelly says that this letter was written by some Missionaries whom Saint Vincent sent out in 1634 “to work in the diocese of Bordeaux.” We became acquainted with these Missionaries in no. 189.

Letter 193. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1This letter was written at some time between the institution of the Daughters of Charity and the death of Madame Goussault, September 20, 1639.
I talked to the wife of the Keeper of the Seals about the Charity of the Daughters. She gave one hundred écus to Madame Goussault, the President's wife, which she will send you today; and what is more, she would like to go to the country with the rest of you.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

194. - TO CHARLES-CHRETIEN DE GOURNAY, BISHOP OF TOUL

January 19, 1635

Saint Vincent asks Charles-Chrétien de Gournay, who had requested an appointment with him, to kindly wait a few days, because the following day he has to begin the visitation of the Sisters of the Madeleine which he will be continuing for at least a week. Moreover, the following Sunday, the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, he is expected in Montreuil where he is supposed to preach and ascertain the smooth functioning of the confraternity established in that place.

195. - TO N.

[Around 1635]

I fell seriously ill two or three days ago, which has made me think about death. By the grace of God, I adore His Will and

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2Madame Séguiere.


1Appointed Bishop in 1634; died in Nancy, September 14, 1637.


1Abelly says that this letter fragment was written by the Saint more than twenty-five years before his death, which occurred, as we know, September 27, 1660.
acquiesce in it with all my heart. And on examining myself as to what might cause me some anxiety, I found nothing except that we have not yet drawn up our rules.  

196. - TO GUY-FRANCOIS DE MONTOLON

[1635, after March 28]

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I shall tell you, with very great sorrow, that I am unworthy of the honor of your benevolence because I was unable to watch over your brother. He escaped this evening through a little out-of-the-way door which is used by our leper, while I was talking to your clerk whom you had sent to see me about a letter I had written you. I and M. de Saint Lou . . . in, who had come to see me, had just left him in the garden with one of the religious from the house. All I did was accompany my visitor to the door where they

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2Saint Vincent did not begin to prepare them until 1642.

Letter 196. - Bulletin du Bibliophile et du Bibliothécaire, 1872, p. 382. The original, which we have been unable to examine, is the property of the De Montholon family; it is in Quevillon, near Rouen, in the Château de la Rivière-Bourdot.

3On March 28, 1635, Lambert aux Couteaux informed Guy-François de Montholon that for two days his brother had been in a state akin to madness. (Archives du Prince de Montholon de Umbriano. Inventaire des Titres de la maison de Montholon [1200-1900], Paris, 1901, no. 490.)

2Because he had, on July 29, 1632, secretly married Jeanne Jeannesson, whose social rank did not equal his own, Jean de Montholon had been arrested on December 5, 1634. He had been imprisoned at Saint-Lazare at the request of his brother and tutor, Guy-François, after being sentenced by the court of Paris. At the time of his incarceration, he was twenty-one years old. (Archives du Prince de Montholon de Umbriano, nos. 480 and 483.)

3Saint-Lazare was a former leper hospital. In the agreement concluded January 7, 1632, between Saint Vincent and the former religious of Saint-Lazare, it is stated that the house was not sheltering any lepers at that time. The Saint committed himself to receive and lodge free of charge any lepers who might present themselves. As far as we know, this letter is the only document that indicates the presence of a leper at Saint-Lazare after 1632. In his petition to Pope Urban VIII in 1634 (cf. no. 178), Saint Vincent noted that for a long time there had been no lepers in the Priory.

4A religious of the old Saint-Lazare.
told me your clerk was asking for me. I was scarcely with him when someone came to me and said: "That gentleman is running away!" Immediately I went to the garden and from there to the little door by which I was told he had just left and that he was with one of the religious from the house who, I would imagine, had shown him the way to escape. We have no one capable of chasing after him, and besides, the soldiers would most certainly have assisted him.5

I cannot tell you, Monsieur, how distressed I am about this, especially since it is the first favor you had asked of me. How upsetting such poor service is to me, only God knows, and were it not for my hope that your goodness will pardon me and that you will make use of this occurrence to guard him better, I do not know who would be able to console me. So, once again I have recourse to your goodness, Monsieur, and beg you by the love of Our Lord to try to forgive me. Hoping this from your goodness, I am, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, Monsieur, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DE PAUL

Saint-Lazare, Saturday evening6

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5The prison of Saint-Lazare took in the insane and incorrigibles. When Saint Vincent took possession of the Priory, it had only two or three poor people who were mentally ill. Their number increased later on. The good Saint watched over them with the affection of a father. One day, when he was threatened with eviction from Saint-Lazare by greedy competitors, he asked himself what would cost him the most at his departure, and his thoughts immediately turned to the poor mental patients entrusted to his care. "At that moment it seemed to me," he said in a conference, "that it would be not to see those poor people any longer and to be obliged to give up their care and service." (Cf. Abelly, op. cit., vol. II, chap. VI, pp. 305 ff.) The only list we still have of the inmates dates from 1692 to 1734. (Arch. Nat. MM 543.) More than one illustrious name is found there.

6Later, Jean de Montholon legally married Jeanne Jeannesson. He served in the army, became Seigneur des Bordes-Cocherets in 1640, and in 1647 married his second wife, Demoiselle Louise de Chesneton. (Archives du Prince de Montholon de Umbriano, nos. 551, 568, and 605.)
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have received two letters from you since you left, three in fact: one from Brie-Comte-Robert,¹ the other from Lion, and the last one the day after Quasimodo² from Luzarches,³ your first mission. I did not answer your first one because I did not receive it until a week or so later, and I thought my letter would not find you in Lion; I did not answer the second either because I did not think it expedient. So here is my answer to all three.

Let me tell you then, with regard to the first, that I do not think you need any other authorization than the one I gave you; as for the second, how I praise God for what you told me in that little note.

Let us talk about the third. To be sure, Monsieur, it consoled me more than I can tell you because of the blessing God has been pleased to give to your simple catechism lessons, and Monsieur Lucas' sermons, which you tell me are good, and to everything that followed from them. O Monsieur, how good it was for you to have been humbled, first of all because, ordinarily, progress does not come about any other way, and because that is the way Our Lord prepares those whom he wishes to use profitably! And how many times was He Himself humiliated from the very outset of

Letter 197. - Collection for the process of beatification.

¹Principal town of a canton in Seine-et-Marne. This locality had already received a visit from the Missionaries and from Saint Vincent himself. It had had its Confraternity of Charity for four years. Thanks to a foundation established by the Commander de Sillery, a mission was given there every five years.

²Quasimodo Sunday, the first Sunday after Easter. In 1635, it would have been April 16.

³Principal town of a canton in Val-d'Oise.
His mission! Just as *extrema gaudii luctus occupat,* so is it said to
those who labor in anguish and under pressure that *tristitia eorum
vertetur in gaudium.* Let us love the latter and fear the former.
And, in the name of God, Monsieur, I beg you to enter into these
sentiments, and Monsieur Lucas as well, not to claim anything
from your work but shame, ignominy, and ultimately death, if it
so please God. Must not a priest die of shame for claiming a
reputation in the service he gives to God and for dying in his bed,
when he sees Jesus Christ rewarded for his work by disgrace and
the gibbet. Remember, Monsieur, we live in Jesus Christ through
the death of Jesus Christ, and we must die in Jesus Christ through
the life of Jesus Christ, and our life must be hidden in Jesus Christ
and filled with Jesus Christ, and in order to die as Jesus Christ, we
must live as Jesus Christ. Now, once these foundations have been
laid, let us give ourselves up to contempt, to shame, to ignominy,
and let us disclaim the honors people pay us, the good reputation
and the applause they give us, and let us do nothing which has not
that end in view.

Let us work humbly and respectfully. Let us not challenge the
ministers in the pulpit; let us not say, unless it be rarely and in a
spirit of humility and compassion, that they could not point out
any passage in Holy Scripture concerning their articles of faith;
for otherwise God will not bless our work. We shall drive the poor
away from us. They will judge that there was vanity in our behav-
ior, and will not believe us. We do not believe a man because he is
very learned but because we consider him good and love him. The
devil is very learned and yet we believe nothing he says, because
we do not love him. Our Lord had to predispose with His love
those whom He wished to have believe in Him. Do what we will,

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1 *Sorrow takes over after joy.* Prov. 14:13. “Even in laughter the heart may be sad, and the
end of joy may be sorrow.” (NAB)

2 *Their sadness will be turned into joy.* Jn. 16:20. “I tell you truly: you will weep and mourn
while the world rejoices; you will grieve for a time, but your grief will be turned into joy.”
(NAB)
people will never believe in us if we do not show love and compassion to those whom we wish to believe in us. Monsieur Lambert and Monsieur Souffliers, because they acted that way, were considered saints by both sides, and Our Lord did great things through them. If you act in that manner, God will bless your labors; if not, you will produce noise and fanfare, but little fruit. I am not telling you this, Monsieur, because I have heard that you have done the evil of which I speak, but so that you may refrain from it and labor constantly and humbly in a spirit of humility. Therefore, let Monsieur Lucas continue the sermons, and you the catechism lessons.

I greatly doubt that Monsieur Olier and Perrochel will come to see you. The first had already left and the other was supposed to follow him a few days later. But Monsieur Olier was detained by the urgent proposal made to him by the Bishop of Langres that he

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6Saint Vincent knew that Antoine Lucas, Antoine Portail's companion, was of an ardent temperament and given to controversy, for which he was naturally gifted.
7M. Olier regretted not having gone to the help of the two priests of the Mission. He was so upset by this that it almost jeopardized his health. For two years he suffered remorse, constant scruples accompanied by "ardidity and great darkness," tears, and sighs. (Cf. Faillon, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 158, 180, 181.)
8François Perrochel, born in Paris, October 18, 1602, was M. Olier's cousin. He was one of the pious and zealous priests who gathered around Saint Vincent to be animated by his spirit and to work under his direction. He gave missions in several places, especially in Auvergne, in Joigny, and in the faubourg Saint-Germain. He was a member of the Tuesday Conferences and was present at the meetings in which the retreats for ordinands were organized. As Bishop-elect of Boulogne, he was invited to give the conferences for the ordinands at the Bons-Enfants and was so successful that the Queen wished to hear him. Moved by his words, she left generous alms for the Saint to help him defray a part of the expenses incurred by the retreats. François Perrochel was consecrated in the church of Saint-Lazare on June 11, 1645. The episcopate of this holy prelate was one of the most fruitful and glorious known to the diocese of Boulogne. When, worn out by age and infirmity, the Bishop of Boulogne saw that he could not govern his diocese properly, he resigned; this was in 1675. He crowned his career on April 8, 1682, by a death worthy of his life. (Cf. Van Drival, Histoire des évêques de Boulogne [Boulogne-sur-Mer: Berger frères, 1852].)
9Sebastien Zamet, the son of Sebastien Zamet and Madeleine Le Clerc du Tremblay, was born in Paris in 1588. He was consecrated Bishop of Langres in 1615, and died in his château in Mussy on February 2, 1655. Abbe L. N. Prunel published his life (Sébastien Zamet évêque—duc de Langres, pair de France [Paris: Picard, 1912]) and his spiritual letters (Lettres spirituelles de Sébastien Zamet précédées des Avis spirituels [Paris: Picard, 1912]).
take over his bishopric. They are negotiating the matter. The affair is still doubtful because of the conditions. It seems more likely that the matter will be arranged than not.\textsuperscript{10} The above-mentioned Monsieur Olier will perhaps still make a short trip as far as Pébrac to farm out his lease. If Monsieur Perrochel had some companion, perhaps he would not fail to come to see you. We shall see. In the meantime, please write to me often and let me know to whom I should address my letter in Mende.

This evening I sent Monsieur Lucas' letter to Monsieur Tinien, and to Monsieur Olier the one for him, because I received yours just this morning.

What news shall I give you about us? Everyone is well, thank God. Since your departure we have admitted a Limousin gentleman who was a Protestant — a relative of Monsieur de Saint-Angel — and a student from Auvergne;\textsuperscript{11} but, on the other hand, we led Monsieur Flahan to acknowledge that he would do better somewhere else rather than here. He just left about an hour ago. I think that we shall also admit a cousin of Monsieur Meyster;\textsuperscript{12} he

\textsuperscript{10}This letter is the only document that mentions the offer of the Bishop of Langres to Jean-Jacques Olier. Its discovery put an end to the conjectures of the biographers of the founder of Saint-Sulpice. (Cf. Frédéric Monier, op. cit., vol. I, p. 128, n. 3.)

\textsuperscript{11}Annet Savinier, born near Clermont, in Auvergne, was received into the Congregation of the Mission in Paris in 1635 and ordained a priest in March 1637.

\textsuperscript{12}Etienne Meyster was one of the greatest missionaries of the seventeenth century. M. du Ferrier said that he was "the top man in the world as far as missions were concerned," and Father de Condren, that "he was a man to confront the anti-Christ." He was born in Ath, Belgium, in the former diocese of Cambrai. The reputation of Saint Vincent de Paul attracted him and he entered the Congregation of the Mission at the end of 1634 after receiving the subdiaconate. He was ordained a priest in 1635, and left Saint Vincent in 1636 to join Jean-Jacques Olier and to place himself under the direction of Father de Condren. He preached very successfully in various places. The mission given in Amiens was especially famous. He had acquired so much influence over the people, it was said, that he could have turned the city over to the Spanish. Father de Condren wrote one day to M. Olier: "We should venerate him and humble ourselves because we are not worthy of the grace God is granting him. . . . It seems to me that I recognize and honor in him something of the apostolic grace in which I beg Our Lord to give us some share." And further on, he added: "He must not serve as a rule for others." Indeed M. Meyster was not walking along the usual paths. His judgement did not equal his great talent. "He did not have too much common sense and was a real dreamer," wrote Father Rapin (Mémoires du P. René Rapin [3 vols., Lyons: E. Vitte, n.d.], vol. I, p. 50). He was suddenly struck with mental illness in Metz right in the middle of a sermon that he was
was formerly Brother Etienne. Monsieur de la Salle is receiving a great deal of help from God on his mission; so are those who are in Normandy. Some men are about to leave for two or three places in the diocese of Chartres and for two in this diocese. I have told M. du Coudray to come back with Monsieur Gilioli.

And there you have all our news. I have not yet read your letter to the Company; I shall do so tomorrow, with God's help. In His love I greet and affectionately embrace good Monsieur Lucas and you as well, Monsieur, without forgetting good Brother Philippe or the simplicity with which I have spoken to you and am, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Paris, May 1, 1635

Addressed: Monsieur Portail

198. - TO ANTOINE LUCAS

June 28, 1635

The Saint gently reprimands Antoine Lucas for his conduct towards heretics, whom he treats scornfully and provokes to dispute.

preaching outdoors under a burning sun. He ended his days in a wretched state shortly afterwards. Rather numerous bits of information concerning Meyster are to be found in Faillon, op. cit. (cf. Récit véritable de la mort de M. Meyster, Bibl. Nat. fr 22.445, f. 161). Saint Vincent stated in his letter that one of M. Meyster's cousins was seeking admission to the Congregation of the Mission; he was Charles Aulent, born February 1, 1614, in Ath, received among the Missionaries at the end of 1636, ordained a priest in 1640, and admitted to vows December 11, 1644.

13 It was a custom in the Congregation of the Mission to call the clerics Brother and to reserve the title Monsieur for the priests. When M. Portail left Saint-Lazare to give missions, Etienne Meyster was not yet a priest; he was usually called Brother Etienne. Since his ordination, which had taken place a few days before, he had become M. Meyster.

14 Jean de la Salle and Jean Brunet were giving missions in the area of Bordeaux.

15 Both were in Rome or perhaps on their way back to Paris.

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Since my slight fever goes on, I decided to go on with your advice which is to do as I did in the past for it, enjoy some country air. I am going to try, therefore, to visit a few Charities and perhaps, if I feel well, I shall go as far as Liancourt\(^2\) and Montmorency\(^3\) to begin what you will be able to complete later. But strengthen yourself in the meantime, I beg of you. I promise to do the same on my part. I send my regards and am, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble [servant].\(^4\)

VINCENT DEPAUL

Tuesday, at one o’clock

198b. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Yesterday I received your letter, which touched me a little when I learned from it of the slight indisposition which obliged you to

Letter 198a. - Archives of the Mission (Paris), a copy made from the original in the possession of M. Corregio of Saint-Colombe (Loire). The original is in the Saint’s own handwriting. While Coste originally assigned 1633 or 1634 for the date of this letter, he states in a footnote in vol. XIV, p. 631, that this letter belongs, without any doubt, to the year 1635. In this edition it has been placed in correct chronological order and has been renumbered no. 198a.

\(^2\)A locality in Oise, renowned in the seventeenth century for the magnificent château of the Duc de Liancourt. The Duc and Duchesse founded an establishment of the Daughters of Charity there and a seminary which Adrien Bourdoise personally directed for several years.

\(^3\)A large commune in Val-d’Oise, formerly celebrated for its château, its park, and “the Hermitage,” the residence of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

\(^4\)The copy has “principal,” a title to which the Saint had the right but which he does not use in any of his letters. Without doubt, the copyist misread this word.

Letter 198b. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 35.

\(^1\)Coste originally assigned 1634 as the date for this letter, previously no. 168, and also for
go to bed on your arrival. I beg God, Mademoiselle, to strengthen you so that you can serve Him in the work for which He is sending you.

Here are your rules from Saint-Nicolas and Saint-Sauveur, but please use in Beauvais the ones from that locality and try to put into practice there as elsewhere the things that are not being done.

198c. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I did tell you, Mademoiselle, that you would find great difficulties in the Beauvais affair. Blessed be God that you have made such favorable progress! When I set up the Charity in Mâcon, everyone made fun of me and would point at me in the streets, but

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nos. 169-170, 171, 172, 173 and 174 (now nos. 198c-g). In his corrections and additions listed in vol. XIII, he assigned 1635 as the date for these letters. Finding the original of letter no. 198c, which bears an exact date, enabled him to make this correction. It seems likely that Saint Louise received these letters in the course of her journey in the diocese of Beauvais, April-July 1635.

2Rules for the Confraternity of Charity for each of these parishes (cf. vol. XIII, nos. 140 and 141). Saint Vincent had devised a general rule for the Confraternity of Charity and would then adapt it to meet the specific needs of a particular parish or locality.

Letter 198c. - According to Coste, the original autograph letter was held by the Fathers of the Company of Jesus in Aix. The present location of the letter is unknown. This letter was published by Coste as two separate letters, nos. 169 and 170 (vol. I, pp. 239-241), taken from the Saint Paul manuscript, p. 35. He later published the original letter (vol. XIII, pp. 823-835), which added a number of paragraphs to those appearing in vol. I. This original letter had an exact date, which necessitated the changing of dates on other letters (nos. 198a-g) and the repositioning of these letters chronologically.

It was around 1621 that the Saint was passing through Mâcon and was struck by the great number of poor. He realized that their spiritual poverty was far greater than their material poverty. There was some good to be done so he stopped there. The men and women of the well-to-do class, responding to his appeal, formed two distinct confraternities. To the men he entrusted the assistance of the poor; to the women, the care of the sick. The Bishop, the Canons, and the Lieutenant General helped him as best they could. Rules were drawn up (cf. vol. XIII, nos. 133-135) and put into practice. The Saint contributed the first alms and then withdrew, acclaimed by the gratitude of all. (Cf. Abelly, op. cit., vol. I, chap. XV, pp. 61 ff.)
when the deed was accomplished, everyone wept for joy. The town magistrates paid me so much honor on my departure, that not being able to stand it, I was compelled to leave in secret to avoid the applause; and that is now one of the best established Charities. I hope the embarrassment you had to suffer at the beginning will be changed into consolation and that the work will be more stable because of it.

I approve of your suggestion to set up the confraternity and to arrange it like the others in the diocese and for that reason I sent your letter to the Bishop of Beauvais this morning. He is leaving this very day and could be in Beauvais on Saturday. Speak to him about the matter and be sure to take care of the little bit of health that you have. I am very much afraid that your great weariness may incapacitate you.

M. Durot, who left the day before yesterday, told me that he was hoping the Ladies of Basse-Oeuvre would be able to attend to Sainte-Marguerite. See who can do so more conveniently, either they or the Ladies from Saint-Martin.

Yesterday I saw your son conversing very seriously with an old Jesuit Father, but I was not able to speak to him. I do not know how that happened; perhaps he did not see me and left while I went into a chapel. He is in good health.

Mademoiselle Poulaillon is leaving today for Villers. As you are in Liancourt, if you write to her or choose to go and rest at her home in Villers, she will be quite pleased and happy to do whatever you wish. Villers is only two or three leagues from Liancourt; it is near Saint-Leu. She has visited Montreuil. I am sending you her letter to entertain you a little.

I feel urged by the alms from the wife of the Keeper of the

2Augustin Potier.
3Perhaps Nicolas Durot. Born in Oisemont (Somme), Durot was received into the Congregation of the Mission in August 1633 and ordained a priest in December 1636. In 1639, he was preaching around Toulouse. In August 1640, we find him in Paris. He returned to Richelieu in 1642, left the Congregation in 1645, and, thanks to Saint Vincent, was made Canon of Saint-Martin in Angers.
Seals⁴ to do what can be done to set up the Charity in Saint-Laurent,⁵ but I shall wait until you are here to work on it.

I sent your letter to Mademoiselle Guérin and I saw Marguerite⁶ from Saint-Paul. She is finding the burden of that parish unbearable because of its great size, the large number of sick, and the fact that the Ladies do not make their visits.

I greet with all my heart and am the most humble servant of Madame de Villegoublain, your good and charitable hostess, whom Providence led to Beauvais for the express purpose of doing the good she is doing there. Oh! how I wish her better health and a very long and happy life!

Take care of your own health, Mademoiselle, I repeat it once again, I who am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Saint-Lazare, July 21, 1635

198d. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Thank you for the information you so kindly gave me about the condition of the Charity in Beauvais. The Bishop of Beauvais is supposed to go there to give a mission in October. Perhaps at that time we shall be able to prevail upon more people to take a hand in the Charity. The above-mentioned Bishop of Beauvais is leaving to give the mission in Liancourt; perhaps you will be there before him; however, do not hurry for the sake of avoiding him. Follow

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⁴Madame Séguiier.
⁵The name of the parish in which the house of Saint-Lazare was located.
⁶A Daughter of Charity.

Letter 198d. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 36.
the order of Providence. Oh! how good it is to let ourselves be guided by it!

Take good care of your health and spare nothing in order to eat properly during your hard work. I still think that you do not eat enough.

I beg you to remember me very affectionately to good Mademoiselle du Coudray and all the good sisters of the Charity in Bulles, not forgetting good Mademoiselle Toinette in Clermont, if time allows you to see her.

198e. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN LIANCOURT

I am really astonished, Mademoiselle, that you did not receive two of my letters. I gave one to the Theologian of Beauvais and sent him the other, so that he would deliver them to you personally. Now, he told me that he had sent you the first one; as for the second, he said that you had already left for Bulles and that he would try to send it to you. Indeed, I cannot help thinking I do not know what! Ah well, it is nothing — we must bow to all encounters with Providence.

With regard to Gournay, if the president is there, which I do not nor cannot know, it is too late to send someone there. I say, therefore, that in the event she is there, she will need at least two days. Please give her as much time as you think advisable.

1Saint Vincent referred to the women who made up the Confraternity of Charity as sisters. The context determines whether he is referring to a Lady of Charity or a Daughter of Charity.
2In Oise.
Letter 198e. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.
3In Oise.
2Gournay-sur-Aronde (Oise). René de Marillac, Saint Louise's first cousin, had married Marie de Creil, the daughter of the Seigneur de Gournay.
3Probably the president of the Charity.
Monsieur de la Salle saw the woman whom Madame de Longueville⁴ has had locked up in Creil according to the wish of Madame de Liancourt.⁵ Please tell the aforesaid lady that he could obtain no reparation from the woman except that she will do anything they want, as long as she has her freedom and that she will not fall into evil ways again. With regard to those kept in confinement, the above-mentioned Monsieur de la Salle feels that she will never agree to that.

I send my humble greetings to the above-mentioned lady and am her servant.

I received the letter and the keys that Madame de Longueville sent me.

As for the difficulty you have had and which you mention at the end of your letter, we shall talk about it.

My greetings to Mademoiselle Poulaillon.

Madame Goussault, the wife of the President, returned two days ago.

I am your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, in Liancourt

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⁴Louise de Bourbon, the sister of the last Comte de Soissons and the wife of Henri II. Duc de Longueville. She died September 9, 1637, leaving one daughter, Marie d’Orléans, Demoiselle de Longueville.

⁵Jeanne de Schomberg, the daughter of Marshal Henri de Schomberg and the wife of Roger de Liancourt du Plessis, was a pious and talented woman. We have a booklet of hers entitled: *Règlement donné par une dame de haute qualité à Madame* ** [the princess of Marsillac], her granddaughter, edited by Abbé Jean-Jacques Boileau, Paris, 1698. The Château de Liancourt was famous for its beautiful gardens and admirable fountains. It was truly a princely residence and well-known to high society. More than once the Duchesse de Liancourt had received Saint Louise there. She used to call her, her dear friend. She helped Saint Louise considerably in her charitable works, encouraged the zeal of Adrien Bourdoise, and took under her patronage the Daughters of Providence, Pascal, Arnauld, and Le Maistre de Sacy finally succeeded in completely winning over to Jansenism both her husband and herself. She died in the Château de Liancourt on June 14, 1674, at the age of seventy-four. Abbé Boileau wrote her biography at the beginning of the above-mentioned booklet. A sketch of her life is also found in the Jansenist work of Abbé Leclerc, *Vies intéressantes et édifiantes de religieuses du Port-Royal et de plusieurs personnes qui leur étaient attachées*, 1750-1752, 4 vols., vol. I, pp. 411 ff.
Blessed be God, Mademoiselle, for the blessing he bestowed on you in Beauvais and in Bulles and may His Goodness be pleased to continue to bless you where you are now.

The suggestion concerning the establishment of the Charity seems good to me but I fear that the house may ruin it. Before long, the sisters of the Charity will withdraw from the responsibility of going to visit the sick in their homes and will be content to bring the food to the Hôtel-Dieu. The nurses will make a contribution to the food in order to rid themselves of the same bother so that, with both groups contributing to such a disorder, it will soon come about. The experience we are having in Joigny gives me good reason to fear this.

What can be done for the present is to found the establishment and to try to find some young women. I would approve of your leaving Marie there to begin with, were it not that you need her. If Madame could give you someone suitable for this, or Mademoiselle Pavillon, then you could leave her there and train here the young women Madame is able to give you, or the sister of the schoolboy whom the nurses at Saint-Nicolas are supporting. She came to see me and offered to come whenever she is needed. She seems to me to be a fine young woman.

I shall send you Monsieur de la Salle who will be arriving in Liancourt Saturday evening or Sunday morning. Meanwhile, discuss with Madame what will be best, but you must not forget to get permission from the Bishop of Beauvais for the establishment, if he has not already given it. If he has told Madame that he has no objection, that suffices. If Madame does not have this permission

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Letter 198f. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1The Duchesse de Liancourt was insisting that there be a house for common use in which food and medicine would be distributed. Home visiting would have suffered from this.

2The Duchesse de Liancourt.
and writes to the Bishop of Beauvais and he chooses to send Monsieur Duchesne\(^3\) to do the preaching on Sunday, M. de la Salle will take care of the rest and the preaching as well in the event that Monsieur Duchesne has started his treatments. But because M. de la Salle has some kind of sciatica in his thigh which prevents him from walking, Madame will please be so kind as to send a horse here for him by tomorrow evening.

As for what remains to be done in Beauvais, I think you will have to go there again, and while you are there, ask the Theologian for the letter I wrote to you at his address last Sunday, if he has not sent it to you. That is all I have to say to you for the present except that M. de la Salle will bring you news of your son.

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

V. D.

Saint-Lazare, Friday, at two o'clock

198g. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Mademoiselle,

I am apprehensive about the house\(^1\) if Madame is putting those young women\(^2\) there now. In a short time she will think it advisable for her to have the sick brought there. The season is scarcely opportune for establishing the Charity in several places. If the Duchesse is not satisfied with Liancourt for the present, I think it unwise for her to make establishments anywhere except in two or three neighboring villages only.

\(^3\)Jérôme Duchesne, the Archdeacon of Beauvais.

Letter 198g. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

\(^1\)See the preceding letter, note 1.

\(^2\)The volunteers who were to assist the Ladies in their works of charity.
The Bishop of Beauvais wants us to discuss thoroughly the union of the Charity with the Rosary throughout his diocese. Then Madame will be able to establish and combine the Rosary and the Charity in accordance with what has been decided. The aforesaid Bishop has asked me to send him my opinion and, in the meantime, he will discuss the matter with the Prior of the Jacobins. Perhaps we shall have to get together about this because the Fathers of that city are objecting to it.

All things considered, I think that it is not advisable for you to return to Beauvais at present. When you have finished in Liancourt and, if necessary, in Gournay — as Mademoiselle Poulaillon may invite you there — if you see fit, a little rest will be needed. When you are here, we shall work on the rules for Beauvais. I even think it is unwise to draw up the ones for Liancourt right now because of that house and those young women, but send them the general set of rules unsigned, for experience will perhaps show that something should be added or curtailed. Since Our Lord has given the law of grace to man without writing it, let us do the same here for a time. I am, meanwhile, your servant.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

199. - TO SAINT LOUISE

(Now 207a.)

200. - TO SAINT LOUISE

(Now 207b.)

3The Confraternity of the Rosary was widespread in the towns and villages at that time. Saint Vincent had established it in Clichy when he was Pastor there. (Cf. Abelly, op. cit., vol. 1, chap. VI, end, p. 27.)

4The Dominicans, the directors of the Confraternity of the Rosary, were not generally in favor of associating this confraternity with any others.
201. - TO SAINT LOUISE

(Now 207c.)

August 10, 1635

Please tell our Brother Philippe that I am very happy to learn that he is so zealous in instructing the poor people insofar as he is able. And indeed, Monsieur, it is true that what you wrote me about him has greatly consoled me, especially what you told me about having sent him to a little village where he saw a shepherd high up on a mountain and went up to visit and catechize him. Now then, may God be blessed since it can be said that: Idiotae rapiunt caelum!1

What can I tell you about us? At present, almost the entire Company is gathered together here. We are going to make our retreat and then start practicing controversies and preaching again. As for the younger members, perhaps we shall have them read the Master of the Sentences.2

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Letter 202. - Reg. 2, p. 196. The copyist notes that the original was in Saint Vincent's own handwriting.

1The ignorant are seizing heaven. It appears that Saint Vincent has taken a term found in various places in the New Testament — the ignorant, the uninstructed, the uninitiated — and combined it with the thought contained in Mt. 11:12 - "... the kingdom of God has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force." (NAB)

2Sententiarum libri IV, a work of the renowned Peter Lombard, Bishop of Paris.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I really think it advisable to begin telling that young woman from the Hôtel-Dieu about her fastidiousness and elegance. But how will you broach the subject? Making her change her manner of dressing seems to me neither feasible nor expedient. I think it would be well to rid her of the desire of appearing well dressed and for her to be a little less careful about herself in that regard. You will see to it.

As for the Hôtel-Dieu, it is not expedient to be there all the time, but it is advisable to come and go. Do not be afraid of undertaking too much of what you can do without coming and going; but fear only the thought of doing more than you are doing and more than God is giving you the means to do. Offer yourself to His Divine Majesty never to do anything except what you are doing. Any idea to the contrary makes me tremble with fear because it seems to me a crime for children of Providence. I praise His Divine Goodness that you relieved me of that worry yesterday. I shall see your Daughters individually and then all together, and you can tell me whatever you want as soon as I am able to come.

Do not worry about that long trip. It seems to me that there is less chance of it. Perhaps I shall be able to take one for just three or four days to go to see two farms twelve leagues from here.

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Letter 203. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1Reference to the farms in this letter prompts us to assign this date.

2The contract is dated July 23, 1635. Madame de Herse was giving two farms to the house of Saint-Lazare: one in Mespuits, the other in Fréneville, a little village in the commune of Valpuiseaux (Essonne). In return, she asked that a mission be given in perpetuity on her estates every five years, and that two Missionaries be placed at her disposal or that of her second son, Félix Vialart, the Prior of Bu. These priests were to work in the localities indicated to them for three months every four years.
which good Madame de Herse, the President's wife, let us have.
In the meantime, pray to God for me.
I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

204. - TO JEAN DE FONTENEIL

August 29, 1635

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
I cannot express to you, Monsieur, how conscious Our Lord makes me of the infinite number of obligations I have towards you for such great affection as you have shown to Messieurs de la Salle and Brunet and for such great assistance as you have given them in all the business matters we have had there.
I am also overwhelmed by the charity you have extended and keep on extending to my poor brother. Because you have done all

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3Madame de Herse, née Charlotte de Ligny, was the daughter of Jean de Ligny, the Seigneur de Ranticey, Master of Requests. She was also the mother of Félix Vialart, the Bishop of Châlons, as well as a relative of Jean-Jacques Olier. Her late husband was Michel Vialart, Seigneur de la Forest de Herse, Counselor to the King in his Parlement court, President of Requests of the palace, then Ambassador to Switzerland. He died in Soleure, October 26, 1634. Madame de Herse was dear to Saint Francis de Sales, who had consented to being her son's godfather. She enrolled in the company of the Ladies of Charity and became one of Saint Vincent's chief auxiliaries. She gave a great deal to the poor of Paris, Picardy, and Champagne, generously supported the works for ordinands and for abandoned children, and established the Daughters of Charity in Chars (Val-d'Oise). During the wars that ravaged the capital, the Queen Mother entrusted to Madame de Herse and some other ladies the distribution of her personal alms. Madame de Herse died in 1662.

Letter 204. - Reg. I, f° 5. The copyist notes that the original was in Saint Vincent's own handwriting.

1Either Bernard, Saint Vincent's older brother (the oldest, Jean, had died before 1626), or Gayon, younger than the Saint.
this for the love of God, and because gratitude for so many kindnesses is beyond our power, I beg Our Lord, Monsieur, to be Himself both your thanks and your reward. I assure you that there will never be a day in my life on which I do not preserve the memory of your kindness and seek opportunities to honor and serve you. Look upon us then from now on, Monsieur, as men over whom you have acquired an absolute and sovereign power, and make use of us accordingly. Grant us also the favor, in the name of Our Lord, of using our house when you come to this city in the fall.

If, in the meantime, you wish us to send back the money you furnished for us there, or to pay it here, just give the order, Monsieur, and we shall obey you in this as in all things. And if you wish to advance what my poor brother needs there for the fine imposed on him, his share of the expenses, and his return journey, I shall repay you including the amount left over. And because I have been told that he has some idea of coming to this city to see me, I beg you, Monsieur, to dissuade him from that plan, partly because of his advanced age\(^2\) and also because, if he should come, I would not be able to give him anything, having nothing whatever at my disposal that I could give him.

I am speaking to good M. de Fonteneil as to the heart of my heart and as to one whom I cherish more than I can say. I am, in the love of Our Lord and of His holy Mother, his most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

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\(^2\)It might be speculated that Bernard is the brother about whom this letter is written since he was older than the Saint, who would hardly speak of a younger brother being of "advanced age."
205. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Mademoiselle,

*Mon Dieu*, what a gallant woman you are to have done all that you tell me! Well now, you must not stop in mid-stream. If the objections people are raising materialize and prevent success, you may have to give up the work. There is no obligation at all under pain of mortal sin, or venial. The poor, meanwhile, will have had this relief and the individuals who have assisted them, the merit. I would gladly have us part of that blessed company and I thank you for providing us with people for it.

206. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1632 and 1650]

Mademoiselle,

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

Blessed be the suffering Jesus Christ for restoring your health! Yes, certainly, Mademoiselle, I shall help you to do the Will of God in this, by means of His grace and the good use you will have to make of it. I think, in fact, that it will be good for you to go to the country when you are a little stronger to put the finishing touch on strengthening yourself while you are doing good.

We have thirty-five or thirty-six non-resident ordinands and retreatants here.\(^1\) I hope we shall have at least one small room left in which to lodge your son, and we shall have him purged and bled on Monday; for, as far as the Bons-Enfants is concerned,

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Letter 205. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 41.
Letter 206. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.
\(^1\)Dates of the entrance of the Priests of the Mission into Saint-Lazare and of the marriage of Michel Le Gras.
\(^2\)At Saint-Lazare.
there are three young men making their retreat there and they are occupying all the beds.

We have a young Lutheran girl here from Germany, dressed like a footman. She was sent to us from the mission of Gonesse with the consent of a gentleman who was supporting her. She wants to change her ways and her religion. . . .

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

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206a. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

I am returning to you the rules for St-Sauveur; I had not seen them. It seems to me that the first part makes the whole confraternity dependent on the pastor. I do not know if that would be advisable. It certainly is true that the Beauvais pastors would be quite pleased with that, but it would immediately prompt them to be no longer willing for anyone to know what was going on in each confraternity. I do think, however, Monsieur, that it is necessary for the officers to inform them about the admission of the sick, at least telling them which ones they will accept.

It should be mentioned in the rules that the votes shall be collected by them for the election, and that the treasurer shall give her report in the pastor's presence, without mentioning the vicar general at all, as had been stated in the rules. There must also be a fixed number of ladies, and the vacancies shall be filled by those whom the company approves, and afterwards, they shall be presented to the pastors for their reception and blessing.

With regard to the procurator, I do not know how easy it would be to put one in each confraternity, for they will never resign themselves to having him write down the collections. As for making out the accounts, I think the sisters will be able to do that themselves. There remains nothing more for the procurator to do except to see that the legacies are

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3 In Val-d'Oise.
4 The rest of the letter has been cut off and lost.

Letter 206a. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

Saint Louise often refers to the members of the Confraternity of Charity as sisters.
executed, if there are any for the benefit of the confraternities. In that case, it is probable that a single procurator could suffice for everything. I mean that only for Beauvais, Monsieur, since for Liancourt the ordinary rule is good, especially that which recommends friendship among themselves and the larger confraternities, because of both the morning and evening exercises and the remembrance of the presence of God during the day; also vacancies should be filled in the manner mentioned above. There are good procurators everywhere.

Please let me know, Monsieur, whether you will include some special article for that officer who so earnestly asks to be admitted in order to obtain the benefit of the confraternity, and whether the rule will mention that there will be two young women named by Madame de Liancourt to nurse the sick. The young women will live in the house provided by this lady, and will be obligated to prepare and bring the medicines to the sick in Liancourt, and in La Bruyère, Cauffry, and Rantigny as well. They will have the duty of visiting the above-mentioned sick at least twice a week, and of doing everything laid down by the establishment and foundation in this regard.

In those places, the collection is taken up at people's homes on Sundays, and in the churches on big feast days. The procurators keep a register and write down the amount of each collection, and the treasurer does likewise. The coffers have only two locks. I think it must be stated that the said guardians shall be from the membership of the confraternity. I believe, Monsieur, that it would be most fitting for each coffer to have a ledger in it like the one I left you, so that everything that goes on in the confraternity may be found there. In the front of the book, I think the act of establishment should be written, next the rules, then the names of the sisters and the election of the procurator and the officers. Subsequent elections could be entered after that.

Near the middle of the book, make a note that they must write down the names of the sisters who die and those who will replace them. In the other half of the book, charitable legacies and extraordinary gifts should be registered, and in another place the furnishings belonging to the poor. The book I brought is the one from La Bruyère, because the act of establishment was fully witnessed.

I think the superioress should keep a book in which she has someone record the names of the sick poor, the dates of their admission and death, or the date on which the Charity terminates its assistance to them.

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2Small communes in the canton of Liancourt.

3Elected president of a Confraternity of Charity.
If you had not ordered me, Monsieur, to make this report, I would not have dared to consider it. I do not know how I delayed it so long, except that I am well aware that my mind is very slow to do good, both for others and with regard to my own practices.

Good Sister Jeanne from Saint-Benoît⁴ has just brought me three young women from Colombes;⁵ they are very pleasing in appearance and have a strong desire to serve the poor wherever we wish to send them. I think they will be coming to see you one of these days.

I greatly regret having lost the day you wanted to give me; I think that is partly my fault. I really do feel the need of a few days to reflect a little on myself, in order to be renewed somewhat. I think, Monsieur, that when the time comes to inspect the Charity at Saint-Laurent, if you wish to do me the honor of using me for that purpose, I will need to spend a few days there. I could make use of that opportunity if you think it appropriate. But, for the love of God, Monsieur, ask His mercy to make my needs known to you; otherwise, I shall think that He wants to abandon me entirely since He is allowing you to feel that way.

I am sending you the report of what was done at each meeting in Beauvais. I think it would be a good idea for the rules you are drawing up to be for Saint-Sauveur. And when you send them, give instructions that they be lent to the others to have copies made.

If you wish to take the trouble to reread the letter I sent you from Liancourt, you will perhaps find more information in it than what I am sending you. Please pardon my lack of organization. I would almost like to excuse myself on account of my poor memory, but you know what I am and that I shall always be, Monsieur, your most humble daughter and most grateful servant.

L. de Marillac

September 4, [1635]⁶

The collections are being taken up every Monday in Beauvais, but I

⁴A parish in Paris.
⁵In the suburbs of Paris.
⁶According to a note added long ago on the back of the original, this letter would belong to 1627, but that date is certainly incorrect: Saint Louise began her work with the Charities only in the course of the year 1629 and the Confraternity of Saint-Sauveur was established in 1629 (cf. vol. XIII, nos. 139 and 140). Coste noted that this letter (formerly no. 179) was closely connected with the letters now numbered 198b-g. Since he altered the date he had originally assigned to those letters, as noted in no. 198b, n. 1, it seemed logical to change the date on this letter to 1635 as well and to reposition it accordingly.
think it would be advisable to have them in church on big feasts. I think that, by making the establishment right after the mission that the Bishop of Beauvais wants to have given there, it will be easy to get all that can be desired for the good of the confraternity. I have not done anything at all about suggesting this collection.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

207. - TO CLEMENT DE BONZI, BISHOP OF BEZIERS

[September or October 1635]!

Your Excellency,

I learned from M. Cassan, the brother of a priest from your town of Béziers, that you wanted to know three things about us. Now, since I was unable to have the honor of answering you at that time because I was leaving for the country, I decided to do so now.

I shall tell you, first of all, Your Excellency, that we are entirely under the authority of the bishops to go to any place in their diocese they wish to send us to preach, catechize, and hear the general confessions of the poor; ten to fifteen days before ordination, to teach all about mental prayer, practical and necessary theology, and the ceremonies of the Church to those about to be ordained; and to receive the latter into our house, after they are priests, for the purpose of renewing the fervor Our Lord has given them at ordination. In a word, we are like the servants of the centurion in the Gospel2 with regard to the bishops, insofar as when they say to us: go, we are obliged to go; if they say: come, we are obliged to come; do that, and we are obliged to do it. We

Letter 207. - Reg. 1, P. 13. The copyist notes that he had before him a rough draft in Saint Vincent's own handwriting.

1Reference to Clément de Bonzi in a dated letter to Antoine Portail (no. 209, dated October 16, 1635) prompts us to assign the months and the year in which this letter might have been written.

2Mt. 8: 5-9.