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 Gospel\(^2\) 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.

\(^1\)Reference 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.

\(^2\)Mt. 8: 5-9.
are, moreover, subject to their visitation and correction just like country pastors and curates, although for the preservation of uniformity of spirit, there is a Superior General whom the Missionaries obey in matters of internal discipline.

That, Your Excellency, is how we conduct ourselves with the bishops. Now as to whether we can send you two priests, that, Your Excellency, is where the difficulty arises, because we are few in number and possess little virtue. You may be sure, nevertheless, Your Excellency, that if we could do this for any prelate in the kingdom, it would be for your Most Illustrious Lordship, as much because of the exemplary life you lead in the Church, as for the need that I imagine your poor mountain people have of them.

As for the third question, Your Excellency, my response is that, since we go along without taking anything from the poor or from ecclesiastics for our living expenses or clothing, we would need, I think, eight hundred to one thousand livres for the maintenance of two priests and a brother.

These, Your Excellency, are the replies I can give to your Most Illustrious Lordship regarding the things you wish to know. If I were fortunate enough to be able to render you some service, Your Excellency, I would certainly consider it a special blessing from God.3

Your Most Illustrious Lordship may make full use of me, if he so desires, as of one who is, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble and most obedient servant.

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3A priest who had been dismissed from the Bons-Enfants or from Saint-Lazare, having heard of the request of the Bishop of Béziers, went to that city saying that Saint Vincent had sent him, and succeeded in deceiving the prelate, who employed him. His disedifying conduct gave Clément de Bonzi a poor opinion of the Missionaries. (Cf. vol. IV, no. 1436, the letter of December 21, 1651, to Achille Le Vazeux.)
TO SAINT LOUISE

[October 1635]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Yesterday, I spoke to the priests’ group about what Madame Goussault had told me concerning the situation at the Hôtel-Dieu. However, in the end it was decided to postpone the matter again for a few days. It is better to let everybody talk than to expose so many people, when the unfitness of a single one of them could destroy the work completely. And then, they say that those good young women are not too much to be believed in the matter.

Mon Dieu! how worried I am about your poor Sister Barbe and about the other one who is a patient at the Hôtel-Dieu, as is good Madame Mussot! I am in no way recommending them to your care; you have enough worries. However, I am especially concerned about your telling me that you are able to do so little that it is a pity. I am afraid that you yourself are ill. Let me know about this, please, and if that is the case, do not go back to the Hôtel-Dieu. Marie will take your place during your absence. If not, I think you will do well to go there tomorrow, perhaps sleep there,


1This letter, as well as the one immediately following, was written shortly before no. 207c which is from October 1635. In his corrections in vol. XIII, Coste reappraised the date he had originally assigned to no. 207c (formerly no. 201). Therefore, the letters previously numbered 199 and 200 have been repositioned accordingly as nos. 207a and 207b.

2Barbe Angiboust occupies an important place in the first twenty-five years of the history of the Daughters of Charity, undoubtedly the most important after Saint Louise. She entered the Community on July 1, 1634, at the age of twenty-nine and was admitted to vows March 25, 1642. The Holy Founder placed her at the head of the houses founded in Saint-Germain-en-Laye (1638), Richelieu (1638), Saint-Denis (1645), Fontainebleau (1646), Brienne (1652), Bernay (1655), and Châteaudun (1657), where she died December 27, 1658. In 1641 she was in charge of the Sisters employed in the service of the galley-slaves. Nothing is more edifying than the conference on her virtues held at the Motherhouse, April 27, 1659 (cf. vol. X, no. 109).

3Marie Joly.
and come back the following day to Saint-Nicolas in order to get Marie used to those young women little by little, and them to her.

But what shall I tell you about Mademoiselle Laurent? She appears to have good judgment but her age worries me. Nevertheless, if you think it advisable to have her come to the Hôtel-Dieu, spending two or three days with her, and after that to have her come and go from one house to the other until it is the right time to go to the country, then do so. She can observe and you can observe her. But make it quite clear to her that this is just an experiment, and to your heart that I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

207b. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[October 1635]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Monsieur Holden did not come to have dinner here; let me know why; I was expecting him.

Letter 207b. - According to Coste, the original autograph letter was at the house of the Picpus Fathers of Braine-le-Comte (Belgium). (Since 1954, the Picpus Fathers [the Priests of the Sacred Hearts] have had their Generalate in Rome.) The present location of the letter is unknown.

1The passage referring to Marie leads us to place this letter after no. 207a.

2Henry Holden was born in Lancaster County in England in 1586 and came to France at the age of twenty-two. He spent five years at the Collège Anglais de Douai and from there went to the Collège de Navarre where he finished his theology. Michel de Marillac, Keeper of the Seals and Saint Louise's uncle, received him into his house as chaplain in 1626 and entrusted to him the direction of his conscience. Henry Holden obtained his doctorate in 1636. He died March 14, 1662, in the community of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet. We have his annotated edition of the Novum Testamentum (1660, 2 vols.), a rational compendium of the Catholic religion
I shall speak with your son. He must not give up the clerical state without due consideration. If he does, there might be cause for regret. However, God, Who does everything for the best, would find His glory in it. We must be resigned to His Divine Will in all things. He is more God’s child that yours; He will do what is best. Therefore, be prepared for any outcome and do not readily acquiesce in this instance. If he gives up the clerical state, people will laugh, even at that college; if he goes elsewhere, he will be lost or at least will be running a great risk.

I have spoken to Madame Goussault. She is not surprised at the suggestion. She says that Marie would neither pray the way it has been done, nor make repetition. But do not insist on that. You will be able to look into it now and then.

In the meantime, I recommend myself to your prayers and am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

207c. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[October 1635]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

You think about yourself too much. You must go along in a

entitled *Divinae fidei analysis* (Paris, 1652), a conference on grace (Frankfort, 1656), and two letters to Antoine Arnauld, combating his doctrine.

Madame Goussault had sent her to Saint Louise.

Letter 207c. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

In vol. XIII Coste corrected the date he had originally assigned to this letter, from July 13, 1635, to October 1635. His reevaluation of Saint Jane Frances’ visits to Paris necessitated this change. The altered date required a repositioning of the letter to comply with the principles of chronology.
simple and ordinary way. You have not said anything to me recently contrary to charity; in fact, you would have acted badly in doing otherwise, considering the person and the matter involved. Let us go along in a little more simple and ordinary way, I beg you, and do not be afraid of anything in that regard.

I received your package by way of the lady you mentioned but I did not give it back to her, judging it better that way.

I do not know what to tell you about the Charity, whether it began the same year or not. I shall find out from Madame de Chantal, who will be here within twelve days, in what year they stopped the practice. This one, I believe, began in 1617. We shall settle that and talk about the matter at the first opportunity, if it is a source of edification.

Madame Goussault is going to have the note written for good Madame Lagault. Oh! how ashamed I am that I have not seen her, or Madame Mussot, who is feeling better! But what are the grounds for your abjection in this work? Courage! Our Lord allows whatever feelings He chooses in His servants.

What shall I say to you about the good Mademoiselle Laurent? I

2Saint Jane Frances made four trips to Paris: one on April 6, 1619, to found the first monastery of the Visitation there; and again in January 1628; July 25, 1635; and October 4, 1641. The trip mentioned here can only be the third one. In 1641, Madame Goussault was dead. In 1628, Saint Louise did not have "good Barbe" with her. The year 1619 is obviously too early; at that time Saint Vincent did not even know Saint Louise. The third trip itself poses a slight problem, for by July 21, 1635, Saint Louise had been in Beauvais for a rather long time (cf. no. 198c), and her absence was prolonged because of her visit to the Charities in Oise. Now the above letter is addressed to her in Paris. Here is the solution which seems to be called for: Saint Jane Frances left Paris early in September to visit several of the Visitation monasteries and came back around All Saint's Day. It is to this return of the Saint that we can apply the words in the letter: "I shall find out from Mme de Chantal, who will be here within twelve days."

3It was, in fact, in 1617 that Saint Vincent, then Pastor of Châlillon-les-Dombes, established the first Confraternity of Charity.

4It would be difficult to determine to what the Saint is alluding here. We know that, in the beginning, visiting the sick was one of the aims of the Institute of the Visitation. However, Denis Cardinal de Marquemont, Archbishop of Lyons, ordered the Visitation nuns to stop visiting the sick. Monsignor Baudard (op cit., p. 276) assumes that Saint Louise had asked Saint Vincent on what date the Daughters of the Visitation had given up that work and that Saint Vincent was answering her question.
do not know. I fear some encounter. Madame Mussot confided in M. Messier of Beauvais and told him the day before yesterday that she is leaning in that direction. Now then, please think about what should be done and let me know your opinion concerning the matter.

I send greetings to our good Barbe\(^5\) and am delighted that she is feeling better. Our meeting is about to begin; that is why I am in a hurry. Good-bye, then, Mademoiselle. I am in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

V. D.

*Addressed:* Mademoiselle Le Gras

208. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Before 1640]\(^1\)

I ask your pardon for not having been able to come and see you yesterday because of the straits in which I found myself; I shall come some day this week, God willing. It often happens that, at Sainte-Marie, they keep their annual confessions for me for more than a month. There is one again who has reserved hers for me for that length of time. I hope your heart will do me the same charity.

I shall look over your papers today and send them to you tomorrow. Good day, Mademoiselle. I am, Mademoiselle, your servant.

V. D.

Sunday morning.

*Addressed:* Mademoiselle Le Gras

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\(^5\)Barbe Angiboust.

Letter 208. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

\(^1\)After 1639, the Saint would have written the words "Sunday morning" at the beginning of the letter.
Monsieur,

I beg Our Lord, Monsieur, to continue in you the spirit of holy meekness and also of toleration for whatever is not evil or contrary to our little rules; in that case, meekness would be cruelty. But in order to remedy those very situations, a spirit of gentleness is needed.

The Bishop of Mende has expressed great satisfaction to me for your services. The Bishop of Béziers has written to me requesting workers like you, Messieurs, but how can I give him any? The Bishop of Viviers also came to see us for the same purpose. Only God can be everywhere.

The Company is getting along fine, thank God. God imparted many graces to it during the spiritual exercises, and everyone came out of them full of fervor. Since your departure, six people have joined us. O Monsieur, how I fear large numbers and expansion. What reason we have to praise God for allowing us to honor the small number of the disciples of His Son, in Whom I am...
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Jesus Christ Our Lord be with you forever! I thank you most humbly for the trouble you took to let me hear from you, and I beg Our Lord to strengthen you more and more. Your letter found me still in bed with some slight fits of sweating which kept me from answering you, as did also a medicine they made me take afterwards. Likewise, the visitors who dropped in on me prevented me from answering you yesterday.

Now let me tell you with regard to your son, Mademoiselle, that I think there is no objection to his presenting theses to your closest friends and near relatives. But I am of the opinion that, in order to honor the humility of Our Lord, they should be read to few people and only so as to free him from a great deal of anxiety. When he is in theology school, it will be a different matter.

As for that good young woman you mentioned to me yesterday, please keep her if you think she has good judgment. That entering and leaving religious life indicates some instability; you will have to be careful about that. If there is reason to admit her in order to look into her vocation for a little while longer, please discuss the matter with Madame Goussault.

With regard to the young Italian woman, it would be a good thing to send her to Villers,² to the mother of Mademoiselle Poulaillon. Mon Dieu! how I wish your Sisters would make an effort to learn to read and that they might really know the catechism you are teaching! Poor Germaine is wrong not to stay with you. She would lighten your burden a great deal in that regard. But, in the name of God, recover your health before you work around them.

Letter 210. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹The duration of Jean de la Salle's stay in the South of France.
²Villers-sous-Saint-Leu.
My slight fevers have not yet left me; you know they last a little while. But we have poor Monsieur de la Salle seriously ill in Bordeaux. I recommend him to you, but I entreat you above all to take care of your own health.

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

V. D.

211. - SAINT JANE FRANCES TO SAINT VINCENT

Although my heart, very dear Father, is indifferent to everything but sorrow, never will it forget the charity you showed it on the day of your departure; for, very dear Father, it found itself comforted in its pain and even strengthened in the circumstances which are present, which indeed arise on all sides.

I prostrate myself in spirit at your feet, asking your pardon for the pain I have given you by my immortification, from which comes the humiliation I love and dearly embrace. But to whom can I expose and make known my infirmities, if not to my only Father who will know how to put up with them? I hope your goodness will never grow weary of doing so.

212. - TO SAINT LOUISE

I praise God for this change, Mademoiselle, and beg Him with all my heart that it be lasting and that He perfect you and sanctify your soul more and more in these sufferings. Moreover, I thank you for letting me know about it; your doing so greatly relieved me, for who would not feel the pain which is weighing upon a person so active yet suffering. Certainly, it cannot be otherwise.

I wish you a good evening and am, in the love of Jesus and of His holy Mother, your most humble servant.


Letter 212. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have returned in fairly good health, thank God, but I am worried about yours. I shall come to see you as soon as possible — today, if I can. In the meantime, do all you can to stay well, I beg of you. I cannot tell you how much the poor have need of your living a long time and I have never seen this more clearly than at present.

That good young woman\(^1\) seems to have a fair amount of common sense and good will. The only problem is that she has been in a religious community. However, she told me that, although she was persuaded to enter that community, her heart was with the Charity. Therefore, I do not think there is any harm in letting her try. As for the good widow accompanying her, she strikes me as uncouth, very gloomy, and vulgar. I think we shall have to send her away very gently and tell her that we shall have to think it over for a long time.

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

V. DEPAUL

*Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras*

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**Letter 213.** - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

\(^1\)Perhaps the one mentioned in no. 210.
214. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Palm Sunday [March 16, 1636]

Mademoiselle,

Four or five lines, no more. I have been intending each day to come and see you to talk with you, but business has prevented me from doing so. It is about your lodgings. Discuss the matter with Madame Goussault, the President’s wife.

My heart is moved by the consolation I imagine Our Lord will bestow on both of you during your journey and good works. Meanwhile, until I have the happiness of seeing you tomorrow or the day after, here or at the Bons-Enfants, I am your servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

215. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[1636]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I had planned to come and see you, but not being able to do so earlier because of some difficulties, I am asking you to let me know if you have decided upon a place to live and where it is. You may perhaps think that I have some reason which involves you on account of which I think it unwise for you to live in this neighborhood. Oh! no, that is not the case at all I assure you. The


The fact that the Saint mentions a change in lodging indicates that his letter is from 1636.


The change of lodging mentioned here leaves no choice other than the years between 1636 and 1641. The first date is more in keeping with the contents of the letter.

Near Saint-Lazare.
reason, rather, is this: we are among people who watch everything and pass judgment on everything. They would not see us go into your house three times without finding the opportunity to talk, to draw conclusions which they ought not to draw, and to repeat them wherever they go. It is not that we have been watching them, but only the one who has the power to do so. When I have the happiness of seeing you, I will speak to you about the matter in greater detail.

In the meantime, tell me: when will you be able to go to the country to visit a few of the Charities? Please let me know and, if you can do so conveniently, come for a walk this far one of these mornings. Meanwhile, honor the holy cheerfulness of Our Lord and that of His holy Mother. I am, in their love, your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

216. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

You were wise to send for that good young woman. In Sucy-en-Brie, there are four who are older and strong. M. Renar has spoken to me about them. I shall show you the petition they presented to him for that purpose. You must try to have them learn to read as soon as possible.

I cannot tell you anything about that good young woman’s letter

Letter 216. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity. original autograph letter.

1This letter was written a few days before no. 218.

2A place in Val-de-Marne.
except that I have not been able to read it yet. I am in such a hurry that I cannot do so now in order to give you an answer about it. I am going to the Madeleine to hold the Chapter there today. Offer this action to God, I beg of you, as with all my affection, I ask God to be the heart of your heart. I am, in His love, your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

217. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The house to which Madame Goussault was referring is not the one I mentioned to you. The first is more beautiful and is priced at forty or fifty thousand livres; the second costs about seven or eight. The first one would be scandalous for poor girls and the second is too far from the Church. You will see. I find no difficulty in honoring the prudence as well as the simplicity of Our Lord but there is less harm in failing in the latter practice than in the former, especially for you.

I shall willingly do for your son as you request.

This is the young woman; take her on trial.

Do you have any money? An unexpected matter has come up for which we need fifteen hundred livres. If you have it, we shall

Letter 217. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1This letter was written a short time before the transfer of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity to La Chapelle.
return it to you in a short time; if you do not, please do not worry about it.

Good day, Mademoiselle, I am your servant.

V. DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

218. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Shortly before May 1636]

Mademoiselle,

I glanced over what you wrote me about M. Massé. Nevertheless, I have proposed him along with M. Caignet, M[adame] Gous[sault]’s confessor, but I do not know whether either one will be chosen. One of those gentlemen suggested another man to me at the same time; I am talking about those gentlemen from Notre-Dame. This is confidential.³

I find your proposal concerning your son very good, provided you merely suggest it to him and leave him free to act as he sees fit.

We just have to give up those girls from Sucy. Nevertheless, the latter and her mother wanted you to extend your kindness to the girl from La Retaux until Pentecost, not so much so that she might devote herself to your Charity, in which she will, nevertheless, do whatever work you ask of her; her wish is to learn something so as

Letter 218. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter was written shortly before the Daughters moved into their new Motherhouse in La Chapelle, then a suburb but now one of the neighborhoods in Paris.

²Antoine Caignet, Doctor in Theology, later Canon, Chancellor, Theologian, and Vicar General of Meaux, and a renowned preacher who died in 1669. He is the author of two reputable works: L'Année pastorale (Paris, 1659, 7 vols.) and Le Dominical des Pasteurs ou le Triple emploi des curés (Paris, 1675, 2nd ed.).

³There was talk of organizing a group of chaplains for the sick of the Hôtel-Dieu.
to become qualified in time to teach the children in Sucy. So please extend to her the kindness of trying it, Mademoiselle, and we shall see that you are given what you need for that purpose. I forgot to mention this matter yesterday to the wife of the Keeper of the Seals.⁴

If you come with your Sisters next Tuesday morning, we shall go to La Chapelle, a village nearby on the way to Saint-Denis, but you will have to remind me about it on Monday evening.

God willing, I shall not regret what I have said to the Sisters! I think you had better go and visit the ones at Saint-Paul. I would also like you to be able to see those in this parish.

I am, meanwhile, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

V. DEPAUL

Saturday, at nine o'clock

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

219. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I beg you to forgive me for not seeing you before I went off to the country for four or five days. Your son has made a very good beginning. M. de Sergis took charge of him on his return from the country and is at his service during his retreat. He told me that he has ruled out a military career; that leaves the clerical state and the bar. He will weigh the two and try to make up his mind.

⁴Madame Seguier.

Letter 219. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

²Shortly before the move to La Chapelle by Saint Louise and the Sisters.
I wrote Madame Goussault, the President's wife, that I think you would be wise to go and see the house in La Chapelle and find out how much rent they want for it. That will give you a diversion as well. She feels, as I do, that the country air is good for you. Meanwhile, remain cheerful and take care of your health.

Please send news of us and our apologies to good Mademoiselle Viole and tell her that I hope to see her on our return. Oh! how consoled and edified I am by that good woman!

I bid you good day and am your servant.

V. D.

I saw that good young woman from Sedan; she is living in our faubourg. Mon Dieu! how weak and fickle she seems to me!

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

220. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

[1636] I do not know whether I wrote to you about the afflictions with which God has been pleased to visit our poor Little Company. M. Bourel died during the mission in Mesnil, and did so in a holy manner, just as he had lived. Everyone says that no imperfection was ever remarked in him, not even by M. Boudet, his Novice Master.

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2Mademoiselle Viole, born Madeleine Deffita, widow of Jacques Viole, Counselor in the Châtelet of Paris, would later be the treasurer for the Ladies of the Charity at the Hôtel-Dieu. Her name appears quite frequently in the correspondence of Saint Vincent, who greatly appreciated her charity, intelligence, and activity. She died in Paris, April 4, 1678.

Letter 220. - Lyons manuscript.

1Mention of the death of Etienne Bourel allows us to assign to this letter the year in which it was written.

2Etienne Bourel, born in Savoy, was received into the Congregation of the Mission in July 1635 and died in 1636.

3Jacques Boudet, a Priest of the Mission born in Epinay-sur-Seine, was received into the
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have never seen a woman such as you for feeling so guilty about certain things. Your son’s choice, you say, is a proof of God’s dealing with you according to your deserts. Certainly you are wrong in yielding to those thoughts and even more so in expressing them. I have already asked you at other times not to talk that way anymore. In the name of God, Mademoiselle, correct yourself of this and realize, once and for all, that these bitter thoughts come from the evil one and that those of Our Lord are sweet and gentle.

Remember also that the faults of the children are not always imputed to the parents, especially when they have had them educated and have given them good example as you have done, thank God. In His admirable Providence, Our Lord allows holy fathers and mothers to suffer anguish from their own flesh and blood. Abraham suffered because of Ishmael, Isaac because of Esau, Jacob because of the majority of his sons, David because of Absalom, Solomon because of Rehoboam, and the Son of God because of Judas. By the grace of God you have not reached that point; rather, on the contrary, you have reason to praise God for what M. Holden has told you, because he told you the truth. Your son came to see M. de Sergis yesterday, went to confession to him, and told him that he is fully determined to serve God in the ecclesiastical state, and a few other things which greatly consoled

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Congregation of the Mission in 1634 and ordained a priest in 1635. He gave missions in Brittany with M. Olier (Faillon, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 219), in the Toulouse area, in Champagne, and elsewhere. Saint Vincent used to say, “He is a holy soul.”

Letter 221. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

Reference to La Chapelle permits us to assign to this letter the year in which it was written.
me, but I do not remember right now what they were. So thank
God for that and be very cheerful.

Yesterday Madame Goussault told me that she signed the con-
tract for the house. You will have to see us in order to decide
whom you will take there. I think it very wise for you to put off
that good young woman until then. I do not know the other one
you mentioned, who is not at your house yet.

I doubt whether I shall be able to come to your neighborhood
on Sunday, and whether, when I do, I should speak to you in the
chapel which is such an unhealthy place. We shall have to try to
meet at Madame Goussault’s home, although, however, it seems
advisable for me to see you privately before then.

Courage! I wish you the peace of Our Lord and am your
servant.

V. D.

We must also postpone the proposal concerning your house. I
remember what you said about subletting it by private agreement.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

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2The house of La Chapelle was rented, not bought. Gobillon tells us (op. cit., p. 74) that
Saint Louise and her Daughters moved there in May 1636. Perhaps the following lines of the
Foundress refer to that change of residence: "Go to the new lodging with the intention of
honoring Divine Providence who is leading us there, and put on the disposition of doing there
whatever that same Providence will permit us to do there in the future. By this change of
house, honor that of Jesus and Mary from Bethlehem to Egypt and later to other places, not
wishing, any more than they, to have a permanent dwelling place on earth." (Ecrits spirituels,
A. 15.)

3Probably the house that the Sisters were going to leave in the move to La Chapelle.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I shall have an outline made of the subjects of meditation, the exercises, and the order of the day and send it to you.

You will have to have the visits in the parishes stopped during this period and have them taken up again, if that young woman has the time, after it has passed. Do not let her do anything during this time. A slight fever I have will prevent me from hearing the good young woman. I shall send you someone for that purpose, if you notify me the evening before.

You certainly may write to me about your son. He was at the Bons-Enfants not long ago. I sent word to M. Pille to have him leave calmly but promptly because M. Doignon’s man had a mishap there.

You were wise to send that good young woman in place of the sick one.

I am about to celebrate Holy Mass and shall pray for you and your good intentions. I commend myself likewise to your prayers and am your most humble servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

Letter 222. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1This letter was written while Jean Pillé was directing the house of the Bons-Enfants (1635-1638). It seems to have been written a few days before no. 223.
2The visiting of the poor in the parishes of Paris.
3The Saint seems to be referring to a fresh outbreak of the plague.
4Probably a case of the plague.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

It is true, I am leaving this morning for Pontoise and Beauvais, but I can well assure you that it is with regret at not having seen you or your new home. You would be much more useful in Beauvais than I and I shall give the ladies of the Charity the hope that you will be coming there, for I am not planning on assembling them.

The reason for my trip is without a justification which satisfies me; I am going to visit the Ursulines. O Mademoiselle, how this annoys me and seems like time wasted for a man who owes all of it to the poor! But what can I do! For at least eight months the Bishop of Beauvais has been urging me to do this. Because I have put it off so long, he no longer comes here when going back and forth as he used to do, nor does Monsieur Messier write to me. That leaves only the Sisters, from whom I received just two letters last week concerning this matter. Let us change the subject and say: Mon Dieu! Mademoiselle, how worried I am at seeing you go for such a long time without getting out to get some air and working continuously as you do at the Hôtel-Dieu!

I have not seen the superioress of Saint-Sauveur with regard to

Letter 223. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1The "new home" mentioned by the Saint can only be the accommodations of Saint Louise in La Chapelle.

2Collet says that Saint Vincent visited the Ursulines in Beauvais twice: in 1634, before the first meeting of the Ladies of Charity of the Hôtel-Dieu, over which he presided on his return (op. cit., vol. I, p. 232); and in 1641 (ibid., p. 337). Either he made a mistake in the date or he forgot about the visit in 1636.

3Augustin Potier.

4Louis Messier, Archdeacon of Beauvais.

5The Ursulines.

6The president of the Confraternity of Charity established at Saint-Sauveur.
getting the reply for Marie. However, could you not go to Grigny for a week or so and leave Marie in charge of the Sisters? She is exact and serious enough for that. Do this during my absence, please. I shall tell Madame Goussault, who is coming to Pontoise, to pick you up. Mademoiselle Poulaillon can also look after your Sisters now and then.

If this is agreeable, it would be well for you and the President's wife to go and visit the Charity in Villeneuve-Saint-Georges in order to encourage them and to reverse the decision Madame Guérin had them make, after my departure, of not going to visit the sick when there is only one patient. Her reason is that she cannot understand how a good broth can be made with five ounces of meat. That good lady is clever and haughty in her words, and is meddling in this matter, even though she is not a member.

If, in passing through Grigny, you wanted to pick up the things you bought for that place at the Bons-Enfants, that would be fine. No, rather, tell the treasurer to give someone charge of picking them up; [that] should be done by the boatman.

I am returning the Sisters' rules to you. They are so [good] that I did not want to add anything. Read them to the Sisters soon then, unless you think I should be there, in which case, I promise you that it will be one of the first things I do on my return, God willing. It would be well for the Sisters in that parish to be present at the same time, so that they may be uniform.

Well now, I conclude by begging you to honor the peace and tranquillity of Our Lord's soul and I commend myself to your prayers being, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

-- 318 --
I am not saying anything to you about Madame de Liancourt, except that, if she takes you just for a week or so, do as you like; but since important people never know what is going to happen to them, if she has not seen you, you would be wise to take the opportunity of going to Grigny during that time.

224. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Mademoiselle,

I am sending this messenger purposely to get news of you, in the hope that what he brings back will be good. In the name of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, do all you can to this end. You have reason to complain that I did not answer the letter you wrote me on your departure for Gournay. But what can you expect? That is one of my customary faults. I hope Our Lord will grant me the grace of improving in this regard, if you will be so good as to forgive me.

Now then, let us talk about your ailment. Do you need a doctor? If so, let me know and I shall send you someone. You have one in Senlis, a very skillful man; he is the King's doctor and often goes to Liancourt because of the trust that His Grace and Madame de Liancourt place in him, and rightly so. Do not spare anything to get him, or to have yourself taken care of well. Perhaps you did not take enough money with you. If that is the case, let me know and I shall send you some.

Letter 224. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

Saint Louise was in Gournay-sur-Aronde (Oise) on May 18, 1636, the feast of the Holy Trinity. On that day, she held a meeting of the members of the Charity in the château of the lady of the locality, enquired about the observance of the rule, proceeded to the election of officers, received new members, among others Madame de Gournay, and resolved some difficulties, especially with regard to the choice of the sick whom the confraternity should assist. The report she compiled of this meeting has been preserved. (Cf. Écrits spirituels, A. 47.)
Your son spent a day here during these holidays and went to be purged at the Bons-Enfants. He is very well, thank God. Madame Goussault has gone to Grigny and from there to visit some of the Charities recently established near Etampes.

Your Sisters at the Hôtel-Dieu are doing fine. Only Henriette is still unwell. Marie says it is because of your absence. That has prevented her from going to Saint-Nicolas and Barbe to Saint-Sulpice. Isabelle is feeling better. The only thing wrong is that Mademoiselle Viole’s girl, whom they placed with her, is scandalizing them because of the way she behaves with some young men who come to see her; her mistress dismissed her on account of them. She is that girl from Normandy on whose account you wrote to Mademoiselle Viole to ask Madame Goussault to take care of her; she has a troublesome and dangerous disposition. I sent for her yesterday to tell her not to bring young men into the house, but she did not take it well and told me she would rather leave. We must remain at peace after we have done all we can in such cases.

So much for the news that concerns you. But now let us ask you: when are you coming back? O Mon Dieu! I almost forgot to tell you about Madame Mussot. I am waiting for her this morning in order to find out when she is really going to leave.

Madame de Liancourt sent word that she would come to see me, but I have found out, since I wrote the above, that there has

3Henriette Gesseaume, a very intelligent and resourceful Daughter of Charity, but too independent. A clever pharmacist, she was of great assistance at the hospital of Nantes, where she remained from 1646 to 1655. Two of her nieces, Françoise Gesseaume and Perrette Chefderville, also became Daughters of Charity. One of her brothers and a nephew, Claude Gesseaume and Nicolas Chefderville, entered the Congregation of the Mission; both were coadjutor brothers.

3Barbe Angiboust.

4Marie Joly and Barbe Angiboust were in charge, during Saint Louise’s absence, of the Sisters working in the confraternities of these parishes.

5Isabelle or Elisabeth Martin was among the first Daughters of Charity and one of the most talented. Sister Servant at the hospital of Angers in 1640, in Richelieu in 1641, and at the hospital of Nantes in 1646, she returned to Richelieu in 1648 and died there the next year. Her health always left much to be desired.

6Saint Vincent interrupted the letter at this point and did not get back to it until the next day.
been a misunderstanding. Since in my present difficulty I cannot undertake such a long trip, I am going to write and ask her to pass by here on her return. Madame Mussot assured me yesterday that she was leaving at the end of this week. The Prior is talking about going with her and becoming one of the Liancourt chaplains, together with another priest. 7

Yesterday, because I was being hard pressed by Madame de Combalet 8 to send her the Sister, and since it was for her, I spoke

7 As early as 1606, the Duc and Duchesse de Liancourt had planned to summon some chaplains to live on their Liancourt estate. There were to be three of them who would live in community in a house built for them near the church and help the pastors of Liancourt and of nearby parishes dependent on the estate. Since the remuneration offered was minimal, no one came forward. A few priests from Provence finally accepted. After two years they withdrew. Adrien Le Bon, of whom Saint Vincent is speaking in this letter, did not carry out his plan. The Duc turned to Saint Vincent and to Georges Froger, the Pastor of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet, and both men sent him to Adrien Bourdoise. Bourdoise allowed himself to be won over. He left Paris on September 1, 1642, and worked so well in Liancourt that in a short time he gathered a whole community around him. (Cf. Darche, op. cit., vol. II, p. 184.)

8 Marie de Wignerod de Pontcourlay was born in 1604, in the Château de Glénay near Bressuire, of René de Wignerod and Françoise de Richelieu, the eldest sister of the great Cardinal. While still very young, she married, in the chamber of Anne of Austria, the nephew of the Duc de Luynes, Antoine de Beauvoir de Grimoard du Roure, chevalier. Seigneur de Combalet, whom she had never seen and did not love. During the two years that this union lasted, the couple lived together only six months. The Marquis de Combalet, kept from his home by the necessities of war, died in battle at the siege of Montpellier on September 3, 1622. A widow at the age of eighteen, the Marquise de Combalet left the court and withdrew to the Carmelite convent in Paris. She was admitted to the novitiate and, after a year of enclosure, received the religious habit from the hands of M. de Bérulle and pronounced her first vows. Richelieu, who loved her a great deal, did everything he could to bring her back to the court. It was at his request that the Pope forbade the young Marquise to enter the cloister, that Marie de Médicis chose her, on January 1, 1625, as lady of the bedchamber, and that the King elevated her estate of Aiguillon to a duchy-peerage on January 1, 1638.

On that day, the Cardinal had her take up residence in a small mansion prepared for her in the rue de Vaugirard, one of the dependencies of the Petit Luxembourg Palace where he himself lived. The Duchesse d’Aiguillon made noble use of her immense wealth and great influence. She frequented and protected men of letters and placed herself at the head of all works of charity. She established the Priests of the Mission in Notre-Dame de La Rose and in Marseilles, where she entrusted them with the direction of a hospital which she had had built for sick galley slaves. The houses of Richelieu and Rome lived on her generosity. It was she who had the consulates of Algiers and Tunis given to the Congregation of the Mission. She contributed to the foundation of the general hospital and of the Society of Foreign Missions, took under her protection the Daughters of the Cross and the Daughters of Providence, and was a great benefactress of Carmel. She was president of the Confraternity of Charity established at Saint-Sulpice and replaced Madame de Lamoignon at the head of the Ladies of the Hôtel-
to Marie Denyse about it. She seemed to me better suited for the situation, but she gave me an answer worthy of a girl with a vocation from God to the Charity, which was that she had left her father and mother to give herself to the service of the poor for the love of God, and she begged me to excuse her if she could not change her intention in order to go and serve that great lady. After that, I spoke to Barbe, the older one, without telling her for whom or why, and sent her to wait for me at Madame de Combalet’s house. There I told her that this good lady would employ her part-time in her service and part-time with the poor of the parish. She began to cry, but since she consented, I placed her in the hands of one of the ladies-in-waiting of that great lady. However, I was quite astonished when immediately afterwards she returned to Abbé de Loyac’s house where I was, just opposite. She told me that she was startled to see such a grand court, that she could not live there, and begged me to take her away. She said that Our Lord had given her to the poor and she entreated me to send her back to them. It really astounded the Abbé to see such contempt for the grandeur of the world, and made me tell that fine Sister to go back to the lady’s house and that, if she did not feel

Dieu. The Duchesse d’Aiguillon must be placed, along with Saint Louise, Madame de Gondi, and Madame Goussault, in the first rank of Saint Vincent’s collaborators. No one perhaps gave him more; few were as attached to him. She watched over his health with a maternal solicitude. The carriage and horses which the Saint used in his old age came from her stables. The death of the servant of God grieved her deeply. She had a silver-gilt reliquary made in the shape of a heart surmounted by a flame to enclose the Saint’s heart. The Duchesse d’Aiguillon died April 17, 1675, at the age of seventy-one, and was buried in the Carmelite habit. MM. Bresacier and Fléchier preached her funeral oration. (Cf. Comte de Bonneau-Avenant, La duchesse d’Aiguillon [2nd ed., Paris: 1882].) Le Long mentions, in his Bibliothèque historique de la France (Fontette ed., 5 vols., Paris: Héritissant, 1768-1778), vol. III, no. 30.854, a manuscript collection of her letters, which has been lost.

9Barbe Angiboust.

10Jean de Loyac, Protonotary Apostolic, honored the clergy by his virtues and talents. He was councillor, almoner, and ordinary preacher of the King. He would have occupied the See of Toulon at the death of Auguste de Forbin, if Richelieu had not kept the Bulls from being sent. He wrote the life of Pierre de Sacjan, Prior Commander of the Order of Saint-Antoine in Paris, and that of Saint John of God.
comfortable there, she might return to Saint-Nicolas in four or
five days.

What do you think of that, Mademoiselle? Are you not de-
lighted to see the strength of the spirit of God in those two poor
young women and the contempt that He has given them for the
world and its greatness? You could not believe the ardor that this
has given me for the Charity, or the desire I have for you to return
soon and in good health so as to work at it in good earnest. Do all
you can, therefore, to stay well, Mademoiselle, I beg of you, and
bring along those good young women if you think they have a
vocation and aptitude.

Well now, I conclude by begging God to restore you to perfect
health, for which I hope from His goodness. I am, in His love and
that of His holy Mother, Mademoiselle, your most humble and
obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Saint-Lazare, Tuesday morning, May 27, 1636

Yesterday I saw your Sisters from the Hôtel-Dieu; they are
doing well. If you need my service, I shall leave everything and
come; but I truly hope that you can do without it.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

225. - TO LAMBERT AUX COUTEAUX, SUPERIOR IN TOUL

June 13, 1636

Urged by Charles-Chrétien de Gournay, the Bishop of Toul, to autho-
rize priests from the house in that town to hear the confessions of the
Dominican nuns who were having difficulty finding confessors because
of the disturbances in Lorraine, Vincent de Paul begs the Superior of the
establishment to go and cast himself at the feet of the prelate to make him
understand how much this service is contrary to the ends of the Company.

He who has God, has everything.  
Jesus, Mary, Joseph.

Gentlemen,

I cannot be absent from your company any longer without giving you the account I am obliged to give of my actions. Let me tell you, Gentlemen, that we spent eleven days en route to Saint-Ilpize,\(^1\) where we were to give the mission. The favor of Heaven was so great that during that time we never had two hours of sun or rain, but were always walking under the shelter of the clouds and, by the grace of God, we all arrived in good health.

We opened the mission the Sunday after the feast of the Ascension, and it lasted until the fifteenth of this month, the feast day of their Saint Ilpize. They wanted me to say good-bye in the evening in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. This was done with all reverence for the majesty of God Who was presiding, and also with so many tears and sighs that I think, Gentlemen, you would have had to be present to believe it. May God be blessed for everything!

Almost the same thing happened during the children's procession and at their Communion, which was carried out with all the reverence imaginable. The crowd then was so large, as it was on the other feast days as well, that we had to keep giving out wine in the church to the weak, one of whom had been ill for more than three weeks.

The people, at first, came as we would wish them to come, that is, as many as we could manage for confession, but they received this sacrament with such grace, Gentlemen, that on all sides it was easy to know where the priests were hearing confessions, because the penitents could be heard sighing and sobbing everywhere. May Jesus Christ be praised for all this!

However, towards the end, the people pressed upon us so eagerly and the crowd was so large, that sometimes (namely on all the feast days) we needed twelve or thirteen priests to respond to the ardor of their zeal. We would see them go from dawn to the midday heat, which was extraordinary, up to the last sermon, without eating or drinking.

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Letter 226. - Archives of Saint-Sulpice, an old copy.

\(^1\)A commune in the district of Brioude (Haute-Loire).
Sometimes, on behalf of the outsiders, we had to give two hours or more of catechism, from which they emerged as eager as when they entered. This really overwhelmed us. We had to give the instruction from the pulpit since there was no room in the church and the area surrounding the cemetery was completely filled, the doorways blocked, and the windows jammed with people. The same thing would happen at the morning sermon and at the one in the evening, called the senior catechism.

After this I can say nothing except: Benedictus Deus! Benedictus Deus! He communicates so freely with His creatures but especially with his poor. For we have remarked, Gentlemen, that this is where He dwells and asks the assistance of His creatures in completing that which He is not accustomed to carry out alone, namely, the instruction and total conversion of His people.

Gentlemen, do not refuse Jesus this assistance. The glory of working for Him, of contributing to the salvation of souls and to the glory He will necessarily draw from this throughout eternity is too great. You began auspiciously and your early examples drove me from Paris. Continue this divine work because there is truly nothing like it on earth.

Paris, Paris, you are detaining people who might be converting a number of worlds! Alas! how many good works without fruit, how many false conversions and holy sermons lost for want of the dispositions that God is pouring out elsewhere! Here, one word is a sermon and nothing seems useless to us. Here, the prophets have not been murdered; I mean that their preaching has not been despised as in the cities. That is why, Gentlemen, all these poor people with so little education can be seen filled with the blessings and graces of God. That is what I can hope for, since I am, Gentlemen, in His love, your most humble, most obedient and grateful confrere.

Olier

Vieille-Brioude,² feast of Saint John,³ 1636

²A commune in the district of Brioude.
³June 24.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Blessed be God for all you tell me about Madame Turgis. I shall be able to come and hear her confession Saturday after dinner, God willing. Please give her the meditations on the birth and life of Our Lord between now and that time. Then continue with the Passion and some of the apparitions, and do not forget to give her [the] holy Beatitudes two or three times. If you cannot give her all of these, give her the ones that can be done [within] the time she is to be in her retreat.

I would not know what to tell you about those girls from Saint-Victor [or about] M[other] Gabrielle, except that I am begging God to remedy the whole situation.

I do not know if I shall be able to see that good young woman who they tell me is coming to introduce herself. I shall do so, if I can; if not, I beg you to excuse me and to remember me in your prayers. I also recommend to you the Mother Superior of Sainte-Marie in the city; she is very ill.

Letter 227. - According to Coste, the original autograph letter was owned by the family of the Marquis de Pierre in Aulteribe (Puy-de-Dôme)

1Madame Turgis entered the Community during this year.
2Elisabeth Le Goutteux, the widow of M. Turgis, left a high position in the world to consecrate herself to God in the Company of the Daughters of Charity. She was Superior of the hospital in Angers (1639-1640, 1644), at the Foundlings (1642), in Saint-Denis (1645), in Chars near Pontoise (1645, 1647) and in Richelieu (1646-1647). She died in Chantilly in October 1648, after a long and painful illness.
3A word left out of the original letter.
4This word is missing due to a tear in the original letter.
5The original is torn in this spot.
6If the word "Mother" is correct, the text is referring here to Mother Gabrielle de Condren, a Carmelite, the sister of Father de Condren.
7Mother Hélène-Angélique Lhuillier.
Good day, Mademoiselle. I am your servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Thursday, at ten o'clock

228. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I find quite appropriate all that you tell me about the service of the poor, the Hôtel-Dieu, the room, and Mademoiselle Viole; also about discussing with you at length some means of establishing perfect charity among your Sisters.

As for Madame Turgis, it will be well first of all for you to ask her to see fit to observe everything the Sisters do, to do as they do, and for you to treat her like one of them. Have her also make a novitiate of a few months: 1) both to honor the childhood of Our Lord; 2) and to give an example to these Sisters of behaving properly and to those who come hereafter, of whatever social class they may be, of acting in like manner, so that in the end the Sisters may have greater respect for her when she is given some charge of them. With this end in view, let her take whatever place is available among the Sisters at table. That is how Our Lord willed to adapt Himself to the poor in order to give us the example of doing likewise.

Letter 228. - The original autograph letter is at the second monastery of the Visitation in Paris, 110 rue de Vaugirard.

1The year Sister Elisabeth Turgis entered the Daughters of Charity. Let us add that the letter seems to have been written after the transfer of the Motherhouse to La Chapelle.

2Most likely the Sisters' room at Saint-Nicolas.

3The word "authority" came first to the Saint's pen, but upon reflection he preferred the word "charge."
If possible, I shall come early on Saturday to hear your Sisters’ confessions so as to get them into the habit of going to confession, which I have mentioned to you.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

229. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1634 and 1639]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

So our very dear Sister is about to depart. Blessed be God for willing to free her from so many sufferings and to reward her for all the services she has rendered Him! A little indisposition I have prevents me from coming to say a final adieu to her; I shall do so from the altar, where I hope to see her more perfectly in Our Lord than at your house.

Having considered and reconsidered your suggestion about the disposition of her body, I think it inadvisable to bury her here; I shall tell you why. Honor in this the difference between the sepulchres of Our Lord and the holy Virgin, and please be consoled in your submission to the adorable good pleasure of God. I admit that this is easy to say but the tears of Our Lord over Lazarus prove how difficult it is. If you weep, let it be little; but after that, be strong. I sometimes admire the unshaken composure

Letter 229. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1This letter was written after the foundation of the Daughters of Charity.

2After 1639, Saint Vincent would have written the words “Saturday morning” at the beginning of the letter, not at the end.

3At Saint-Lazare.
of good religious men and women upon the death of their own. Oh! would that we be given a share in the holy Virgin's dispositions at the death of her Son! I am going to ask a share in them for you at the holy altar.

If her condition is such that the Little Company can be recommended to her prayers, I beg you to do so — I mean the Sisters' Company and our own insignificant one, myself especially, who am more in need of her prayers. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Saturday morning

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

230. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1634 and 1639]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I really feel sorry that I cannot come to see you because of the people we have here and others whom I am expecting. I beg you to excuse me and not to give way to your grief. This is the good pleasure of God, Whom you love so much. O Dieu! what better motive is there than God's pleasure! And what better motive yet again than the thought that this good Sister is now enjoying the happiness of His glory! Concentrate on these thoughts, Mademoiselle, and do not depart from them, I beg of you.

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Letter 230. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

'This letter was written in the period between the institution of the Daughters of Charity and the death of Madame Goussault, who died on September 20, 1639. It appears that the Daughter mentioned in no. 229 as dying finally passed to her reward.
I shall send you four priests to assist at the funeral and shall try to see Madame Goussault and to tell her the news in the way you pointed out to me. I hope, God willing, to come to see you tomorrow morning. You would give me great consolation if you would consent to rest in bed these two days.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am your most humble servant.

V. D. P.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

231. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[August 1636]

Mademoiselle,

Here I am back again in better health, thank God; but here we are in the midst of the weapons being distributed in the house to the soldiers. If someone brings those poor young women from Liancourt, I see no objection to your receiving them into your house for the time being, along with that good widow — so you can train her. After that, Madame de Liancourt can place them somewhere else. That seems the better thing to me. What do you think?

I have no answer to your complaint about my journey and my stay in La Chapelle without seeing you, but I have recourse to

Letter 231. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 68.

1This letter and no. 232 were written on or about the same date.

2News that the Spaniards, who had taken over a few fortresses in Picardy, had entered Corbie on August 5 had terrified the endangered inhabitants. The country people fled to the towns with their possessions, and men and women religious left their monasteries. Paris took in a large number of unfortunates who had fled their homes in haste and whose destitution was pitiful. The King hurried to prepare another army and to set up a defense of the capital. He himself set out for Picardy at the head of his soldiers and, in a very short time, recaptured the places that had been lost. Corbie surrendered on November 14. On November 21, Louis XIII made a triumphal entry into Paris.
your charity for the second time and hope that it will not wait for the third occasion to forgive me. I hope we shall have the honor of seeing you in two or three days. I am, meanwhile, in the love of Our Lord. . . .

232. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL, IN PEBRAC

Paris, August 15, 1636

Far from being advisable to call Brother [Philippe] back here, if he were already here, he would have to be sent elsewhere, because Paris is expecting a siege by the Spaniards. They have entered Picardy and are pillaging it with a powerful army whose vanguard extends to within ten or twelve leagues from here. As a result, the people from the plains are fleeing to Paris and Paris is so terrified that many are running away to other cities. Nonetheless, the King is trying to assemble an army to fight that of the Spaniards because his own troops are either outside the kingdom or at its borders; and the place where the companies are being trained and armed is here in our house. The stables, woodshed, halls, and cloisters are full of weapons, and the courtyards filled with soldiers.

This feast of the Assumption is not exempt from the noisy commotion. The drum is beginning to roll already although it is only seven o'clock in the morning. That is why they have been able to drill seventy-two companies here in the past week. Now, although this is the situation, our entire Little Company is continuing to make its retreat, with the exception of three or four men. They will be leaving to go and work in distant places, so that, if the siege does come, most of them will be free from the risk run in similar circumstances.


1It appears that this is the same Brother Philippe mentioned in no. 202. There is no further information concerning him.
I am writing to the Abbot that I shall be able to send him four or five priests from the Company and am asking him for alms for that purpose. I shall send another group to the Bishops of Arles and Cahors and hope to have them leave as soon as possible, before things get more unsettled. I have had orders from our Superior to act in this way and our friends approve of it. They could not be put to work in this area, which is in such turmoil at present. Now, make your decision and have that good brother decide from there whether it is advisable for him to return.

I agree with you and have always suspected that he is lazy by nature and is tempted by the demon of idleness; he may recall that I have told him so. I beg you to encourage him to resist, but do so with gentleness and persuasion and not with firmness as we are accustomed to do. Sick minds need to be cared for more delicately and charitably than people who are physically ill.

As for the aversion M. Le P. is exhibiting for the exercises of the Mission, you must honor the meekness, patience, and humility of Our Lord with regard to those who disliked His person and teaching, and act the same way He did.

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233. - TO MONSIEUR DE SAINT-MARTIN

Monsieur,

I am sending you, through M. Touschard who is on his way to Dax, the little picture I asked Monsieur Brentel to paint for you.2

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2Jean-Jacques Olier, the Abbot of Pébrac.
3Jean Jaubert de Barrault (1630-1643) and Alain de Solminihac (1636-1659).
4Most likely the Archbishop of Paris, Jean-François de Gondi.

Letter 233. - Archives of the Mission (Paris), copy made from the original, which was written entirely in the Saint's own hand.

Jean de Saint-Martin, counselor of the presidial court of Dax, brother of Canon de Saint-Martin.

2Following is the description given by Firmin-Joussemet, who had the picture before him ("Lettre de saint Vincent de Paul sur sa captivité à Tunis" in the Revue des provinces de
The gift is of little consequence, but I hope you will consider it of some worth, coming from a person who has for such a long time been so obligated to your family. When you look at it, do not forget in your prayers the most humble of your servants.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Paris, August 16, 1636

234. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[August 1636]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I learned of your illness upon my return. It has saddened me. I am begging Our Lord to restore you to that perfect health which made me so happy the last time I saw you. Well, you are a daughter of the Cross. Oh! what a happiness! Please tell me if this slight relapse has you a little worried.

l'Ouest, September 1856, pp. 230 ff.): "This very delicately painted picture was executed on parchment by an artist named François Brentel. It depicts the Flight into Egypt. The Virgin, seated in the shade of some large trees, is nursing the Child Jesus, while Saint Joseph contemplates them. Farther away, the donkey is grazing. In the background there is a town with some fine buildings, built in the middle of an austere looking site. The top section of the picture is occupied by two angels at prayer, borne upon clouds. The picture has a gold and black border with a purple band at the bottom on which is printed in Roman letters: 'Love God and Your neighbor,' an inscription which summarizes the teaching of the donor. Below is the artist's signature and the date 1636. The picture measures fourteen centimeters by ten. Perfectly preserved, it is especially remarkable for its exquisite touch. It seems to be a copy of a work by an artist of the Carraccio school." Arthur Loth reproduced it in his fine work Saint Vincent de Paul et sa mission sociale (Paris: Dumoulin, 1880), p. 74. The man whom Firmin-Jousset calls François Brentel is probably none other than Frédéric Brentel of Strasbourg, who died in Augsburg in 1651. He was a very talented artist, with accurate drawing and brilliant, pleasant coloring. He painted several historical scenes, some portraits, and made a number of engravings and the miniatures for a manuscript entitled: Officium B. Mariae Virginis, 1647. (Bibl. Nat., f. 1, 10.567 - 10.568.) (Cf. Schreiber, Das Münster zu Strassburg, Karlsruhe, 1828.)

Letter 234. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 77.

"The allusion to the Spanish army calls for this date."
There is no good reason to keep yourself in that constant state of alarm. It is better for you to leave there. That will not prevent you, if things calm down, from going back to where you are now in order to enjoy the good air. I do not fear the Spanish army but some incident similar to the one that has happened. I thank you, meanwhile, for the care you take of us and beg you to look after your own health, which I am asking God to send you, being, in His love, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

235. - TO ROBERT DE SERGIS, IN LUZARCHES

September 1, 1636

The Chancellor wrote me the day before yesterday by special messenger to ask me to send twenty Missionaries to him in Senlis today or tomorrow. He said he would give us the instructions we would have to follow and that he would take care of us. I informed him that we could not supply him with such a large number of men, but rather twelve or fifteen, and that I would send someone to get his instructions and give them to the others. I plan to send M. du Coudray there the first thing tomorrow morning. Please

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2 He probably means: leave La Chapelle and return to Paris.


1 The regiment for which Robert de Sergis was chaplain was encamped in that locality.

2 Pierre Séguier, son of Jean Séguier, Seigneur d’Autry, and Marie Tudert de la Bournalière, was born in Paris on May 29, 1588. In 1633, he was named Keeper of the Seals and then Chancellor in 1635. In 1649, the Seals were taken from him only to be returned to him in 1656, at the death of Mathieu Molé. He retained them until his death in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, January 28, 1672.

3 Abelly relates (op. cit., vol. I, chap. XXXIII, p. 154) that Saint Vincent himself went to Senlis to offer his services to the King and left one of his priests there to transmit the King’s orders to the other Missionaries with the army. He also had a tent, furniture, and food sent to them. Abelly has preserved for us the rule that the Saint drew up for them on that occasion. A few Missionaries returned after six weeks: the others remained with the army until the end of November.
write me immediately. I have been told that you are to move out tomorrow morning.

The enclosed will give you news of M. Lambert and how he acted with the Capuchin Fathers! Oh! how Christian that was and how I hope that everyone will act in the same way!

The fine people of Clichy are clamoring for their sons who are in your regiment. They are offering men or money to their captain, to whom I am writing about this. His name is M. Morin. I have made the same request to M. Piscot.

236. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

[Between September and November 1636]

May God be glorified for the blessing He is bestowing upon your work! O Jésus! Monsieur, how great it seems to me! Just think! You personally have already procured the state of grace for three hundred soldiers who have received Holy Communion so devoutly — soldiers who are going off to death! Only one who knows the severity of God in hell or who knows the value of the blood of Jesus Christ shed for a soul can understand the grandeur of that good work. Although I have a poor realization of both one and the other, it nevertheless pleases His Goodness to grant me some small enlightenment and an infinite esteem for the good you have done for those three hundred penitents.

Last Tuesday, there were already nine hundred confessions heard in all the other army missions without counting yours, in addition to what has since been done. O Dieu! Monsieur, how far that is beyond my hopes! You must humble yourselves, praise God, continue with courage, and proceed, unless you have received some other order.


*Period within which some members of the Congregation of the Mission functioned as chaplains to the French army.*
Monsieur,

Madame Traversay asked me yesterday to notify you that the Ladies would assemble on Thursday — you know the place — and that the Chancellor’s wife would also be there.

I was sorry I could not tell you about Father d’Attichy’s proceedings during the visit he paid to the Duchesse concerning my son. He had been planning it for a very long time without my knowing anything about it. When I met him at the Carmelites, where the Comtesse de Maure had sent me on some business for her, he asked about the assets my son had and reproached me for not doing anything for him. And Madame de Maure also told me that I know Monsieur de Noyers well enough to have already spoken to him. All I did was to write two days later to Father...
d’Attichy to tell him that the only maternal duty in which I was aware of having failed my son was in not having told him that my late husband had consumed everything, his time and his life, in the care of his family, entirely neglecting his own. In order to repair that fault, I was entreating him, since he was determined to exert himself on my son’s behalf without my knowledge, to take the trouble to tell the above-mentioned lady that Monsieur de Noyers knew me because he had often seen me at the home of Monsieur de Marillac, the Keeper of the Seals. I also thought that you would give information about my son if anyone mentioned him to you.

Before God, that is all I have contributed to this affair. I most humbly entreat you to believe it. I would have done nothing had it not been for my meeting with those people — unexpected with regard to this matter — and my son did not even know about it. I entreat our good God to let you know His will concerning this affair and to make you realize that I would rather die than deceive you in any way, since I am, Monsieur, your most grateful servant and most humble daughter.

L. de Marillac

Tuesday

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

238. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Before 1645]

I shall try to go to the Sisters’ room on Thursday, with God’s

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1Michel de Marillac, uncle of Saint Louise, was born in Paris on October 9, 1563. He helped Madame Acarie to establish the first Carmel in France; his influence, purse, and time were at her service. Five members of his family entered Carmel.

Named Keeper of the Seals in 1629, he drafted the Code Michau, which Parlement did not wish to register. Cardinal Richelieu accused him of conspiracy and imprisoned him in Caen, then in Châteaudun, where he died August 7, 1632. His heart was given to the Carmelites of the rue Chapon, while his body was buried in the chapel of the Carmelites in the faubourg Saint-Jacques. Cardinal Richelieu also accused of conspiracy his brother, Louis de Marillac, Marshal of France (1573-1632), and had him beheaded.

Letter 238. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original letter.

2This letter is the reply to no. 237.

3Most likely the room which the Sisters had reserved for themselves in their former residence in the parish of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet.
help. I do not know why you are examining what you have done for your son, as if it were not reasonable for a mother to procure the good of her child. Would to God that I were able to do it myself! His Goodness knows how wholeheartedly I would do so, I who am your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

239. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL

Paris, September 20, 1636

It is impossible for us to send you so soon the Missionaries you are expecting. The ones we had prepared have been ordered to accompany the regiments that were in Luzarches, Pont,¹ Saint-Leu,² and La Chapelle-Orly,³ and to live in camp with them within the army. Four thousand soldiers have already gone to confession with much shedding of tears. I hope that God will have mercy on many through this humble assistance and that perhaps it will do no harm to the success of the King’s armies.

240. - TO MADAME GOUSSAULT, IN ANGERS

Madame,

Thanks be to God for the blessing He has given your mission and for your having to come back because that chance incident

¹Pont-Sainte-Maxence (Oise).
²Saint-Leu-d'Esserent (Oise).
³La Chapelle-Orly (Oise) now makes up two separate districts: Orry-la-Ville and La Chapelle-en-Serval.

occurred! You will not be lacking work in these parts. Here is a job for you to do along the way: stop in at Estival,¹ that abbey about which you wrote telling me that the abbess is on bad terms with her religious and her mother. Try to bring her to an amicable settlement. There is a priest who is leading her astray and thus causing her to get along badly with her mother. It would be desirable for her to be out of there through some exchange of posts from her abbey to another. People are ruined by lawsuits and proceeding with them would make the reform impossible. This exchange is not for you to suggest, unless she mentions it to you — just the settlement. If you could actually prevail upon her to go through with it, that would be a good deed. Madame Borrain, her aunt, spoke to me about the affair with much feeling, but you must not mention this.

I conclude, awaiting you with great affection. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Madame, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris, September 20, 1636

Addressed: Madame Goussault, the President's wife, in Angers

241. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[1636]¹

Mademoiselle,

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

The President's wife, Madame Goussault, has not been in Beau-

¹Estival-en-Charnie (Sarthe). There was in that locality a Benedictine abbey in which Saint Vincent had the reform introduced. (Cf. Paul Piolin, Histoire de l'Eglise du Mans [Paris: Julien, Lanier et Cie, 1851-1871], vol. VI, p. 248.)

Letter 241. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter was written before no. 253.
vais. She has been back in Neufchâtel² and I think that she is now in Groslet³ with her mother, so that she would not be able to do what you wish with regard to Liancourt. I am ashamed that we have not yet drawn up the rules for that place. We have to work on them, with the help of God.

As for the Saint-Nicolas house,⁴ I beg of you to be patient and to pay the entire rent from the common fund; you may perhaps need it for your Sisters.

What shall I say to you about that good young woman who is with M. Lhoste,⁵ except that it is a fine act of charity. However, we must be careful not to make a practice of it. Would it not be better, since you are bound to it, to put Jeanne there along with that poor Suzanne? Two would live better together and perhaps it will do them no harm.

I sent my apologies to Madame de Ligin,⁶ who is feeling better; so am I, thank God. And you, Mademoiselle, what was that little relapse you had? Oh! how true it is, Mademoiselle, that the world is full of misery! Courage! We must put up both with our own and with that of others as long as God pleases. Alas! good Madame Mesnard!⁷ O Dieu, how happy I believe her to be and how I beg her with all my heart to pray to God for me! Surely I can hope for this from her goodness. I beseech your heart not to be saddened on her account or on any other, except from the pure love of God.

I am, in this same love, your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

²Neufchâtel-en-Bray (Seine-Maritime).
³We have purposely retained the original spelling, not knowing whether it is Groslay in Val- d'Oise or Grosley in Eure.
⁴The house the Sisters had just left the preceding May for La Chapelle.
⁵Perhaps Jean-Marie Lhoste, who, after having been a lawyer in the Parlement, became administrator of the Hôtel-Dieu and the Incurables, as well as of the general hospital and Saint-Jacques aux Pèlerins. He died February 17, 1672.
⁶A Lady of Charity.
⁷Perhaps Anne Le Roux, the wife of Antoine Mesnard, Seigneur de Toucheprès and other places.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

There is no possibility of your making your little retreat right now. Get well first and then we shall see. Make your Jubilee, however, but do not fast; you are ill. The Pastor will give you a dispensation. You can go to confession and, if you would like it to be since your last general confession and for me to be of service to you in that regard, I do not plan to leave on a little seven or eight day trip until next week.

I have sent Jeanne de But away. I am really afraid, like you, that there is something wrong. If that were not the case, they would not have left her such a long time without sending her to visit or without letting me [know] about it. We have to make amends to her for a little while.

Madame Goussault is supposed to come back as soon as she can. Your son talked to me last Saturday about the place where he is to study. I refused to approve distant universities for him, in which he acquiesced quite willingly because I think it corresponded to his own opinion or because you had told him that it corresponded to yours.

I saw Monsieur de Liancourt last night.

Get well and take good care of your health. I am, in the love of Our Lord...
Monsieur du Coudray has sent me word that only one member of the Company need go to the army on horseback, with a servant, in order to be with M. Lambert in the cavalry. M. Grenu thinks that God could make use of you in this way. Please do this, Monsieur and, as soon as you get this message, leave with Brother Alexandre, whom I am sending you. He is bringing you some old clothes which I was told you would need. Take M. Callon’s mule or our own and take along with you the one hundred livres I told them to give you. The good God, Who has ordinarily provided you with everything at the right moment, will not abandon you on this occasion. In the vanguard of the cavalry you will find M. Moulan, whom you know. He will give you good advice.

When you meet Monsieur Grenu, defer to him, speak to him about getting M. d’Argenson’s instructions, and give him the enclosed. He is living with the said Sieur d’Argenson and has about fifty livres; however, if he needs more money, give it to him and I shall send you more.

Well now, Monsieur, here you are then, called by Providence to an act of charity greater than any other, since it is a matter of assisting your neighbor in dire need. You can see how fortunate you are that Providence had you in mind for this work, and the blessing you may hope for therein. Go therefore, in nomine Domini, in the spirit in which Saint Francis Xavier went to India, and you will win, like him, the crown Jesus Christ has merited for you.


1Alexandre Véronne, a coadjutor brother, born May 15, 1610, in Avignon, was received into the Congregation of the Mission, July 22, 1630. He was infirmary at Saint-Lazare and was so dedicated and capable that he won the esteem of all, particularly of Saint Vincent. His death on November 18, 1686, was announced to the whole Company in a circular from the Superior General. Brother Chollier wrote his life, which was published in the Miroir du frère coadjuteur de la Congrégation de la Mission (Paris, 1875), pp. 145 ff., and which also served as the basis for his biography which appeared in the Notices, vol. III, pp. 528-548.

2Rene de Voyer d’Argenson, Intendant of Picardy. He became Superintendent of Justice in Provence, April 4, 1646; Ambassador to Venice, June 24, 1650; was ordained a priest on February 24, 1651; and died on July 14 of the same year at the age of fifty-four. By his wife,
by His precious blood, and which He will give you if you honor
His charity, zeal, mortification, and humility.

I embrace you wholeheartedly with what affection you can
imagine. Take some linen for yourself and for M. Grenu from
what is in Pont;2 it had been sent for the Company. Take also the
Mass furnishings for yourself. I beseech Our Lord once again to
be your consolation, your strength, your example, and your glory.

244. - TO ROBERT DE SERGIS, IN ROYE

Monsieur,

May the holy name of God be blessed, Monsieur, because His
Providence detained you with the Chancellor1 as a result of the
idea he had of asking me to send someone to accompany him! O
Monsieur, how adorable and admirable are the ways of God!
Joseph was going to Egypt to undergo the miseries that accom-
pany slavery and there he found his own happiness and that of his
family. You were going off to war to endure its calamities and Our
Lord engaged you in the service of the Chief Justice of the king-
dom, one of the finest men alive. May it please Our Lord to have
you find there a distaste for the things of the world through the
greater knowledge you will acquire of their vanity. May you also
be able to share this with us on your return, for it is certainly a
good to be more esteemed than all the honors and possessions of
earth! Stay there then, Monsieur, since you are not the one who
put yourself there; it is plainly Providence which has arranged
things in this way.

I do not quite understand what your position is, whether it is to

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1 Hélène de la Font, who died in 1638, he had a son named Marc-René, author of the Annales de
la Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement, published in 1900 by Father H. Beauchet-Filleau.
2 Pont-Sainte-Maxence.

Letter 244. - Collection for the process of beatification.

1 Pierre Séguiier.
act as his chaplain in the absence of M. Peleus or to assist the soldiers in his retinue. If it is the first, I have nothing to tell you regarding confession, Holy Mass, or the saying of grace. You know what to do in the first two cases and will find out what is to be done in the third; except that, with regard to the first, what honest people tell us is sufficient without our seeking information, for, as a great man has said, *quod supra nos nihil ad nos*.²

There are a few ceremonies at the end of Mass when it is said in the presence of the great: one turns around and bows to them at the end of Mass after taking off the chasuble. I have seen our blessed Bishop of Geneva³ make this act of reverence to the General of the Galleys.⁴ Your status is far below that of this great and holy prelate. I think, moreover, that one brings them the corporal to kiss and goes to give them holy water after the Mass. I have never done this and know nothing about it, so make some inquiries. If you eat occasionally at the majordomo’s table, always try, Monsieur, to have the least important place there. Majordomos never give up their place and in most localities noblemen precede chaplains at table, even in the residences of prelates.

I used to hold it as a maxim to consider the General in God and God in him, and to obey him as God, and his late wife as the Virgin, and not to put myself forward unless they called me or for some urgent and important matter.⁵ In the name of God, Monsieur, act in like manner. As for the servants, you must pay them great honor and treat them kindly, cordially, and most respectfully. Above all, you should say something to them about God now and then and take great care not to ask for information about the household or about the State.

If you are there in the second capacity, see if you can give a few catechetical instructions in the church on certain days of the week.

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² *What is above us is not our concern.*
³ Saint Francis de Sales.
⁴ Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi.
⁵ Saint Vincent discharged the functions of chaplain in the family of the General of the Galleys from 1613 to 1625.
Remember what Saint Francis Xavier used to do on the ship during his voyage to the Indies. Try to imitate him and to do what you think before God he would do if he were in your place. Please take him as your special patron.

The Pastor in the town is the one you visited at the Bons-Enfants. Write to Monsieur Grenu often to comfort him and send him about six écus. Let me know what you need and how you are getting along and I will provide for you with the help of God whom I am entreating to give you a share in His Son’s humility and zeal for souls. You know the Chancellor’s instructions with regard to the sick. You may point out that you have never been more in need than right now.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL

September 29, 1636

It has occurred to me to send you also these two proverbs on the back of this letter; with regard to the master: ut in igne sit cum principe; and with regard to the servant: nimia familiaritas parit contemptum.

Addressed: Monsieur de Sergis, Priest of the Mission, in Roye

6Roye (Somme).

7Let him be with the leader as towards a fire. A famous proverb of Socrates mentioned in its Latin form by Lactantius in his Divinae Institutiones, bk. II, chap. 20, and popularized in the Adages of Erasmus (ed. H. Estienne, 1578, p. 215). Saint Vincent seems to be paraphrasing the ancient advice to approach a leader as one would approach a fire — with caution.

8Too much familiarity breeds contempt. This proverb first appeared in Saint Thomas, Commentarium in Joannem, chap. IV, lect. VI, no. 2.
I was consoled at receiving a letter from you and likewise distressed, seeing the danger in which you feel yourself to be. In the name of God, Monsieur, take every precaution your work will allow, trusting that He Who from all eternity has chosen you to assist the poor in that area will preserve you as the apple of His eye insofar as His glory and your welfare require it. After that, who would want to live or claim anything on this earth? Who, conscious of conflicting feelings within himself, would not mortify them, realizing that our days are numbered and that we cannot add a moment of life to the last one God has determined for us? That being so, Monsieur, let us abandon ourselves to Divine Providence. It will know quite well how to procure what we need.

Speaking of Providence, are you not aware that it takes such care of you that it seems to be concerned about you in a special way? If that were not the case, why would it have chosen you from among so many holy souls in the army to give you one of the greatest employments for the glory of God and the good of the poor? We are lost in admiration, every one of us, at seeing how Providence thinks of your concerns and provides for all that you need. Please let all of this be then a motive for entrusting yourself to it entirely.

You say that the almsgiving is falling off! Oh! how that message grieves me! Grace is necessary to begin and we need more to persevere to the end. Let us beg God to give it to those who are obliged to meet so many needs. M. Desclaux, the Cardinal's

1Pierre Desclaux, born in Mugron (Landes), died October 7, 1637.
2Armand Jean du Plessis, Cardinal Richelieu, was born in Paris on September 9, 1585, the youngest of five children of François du Plessis and Suzanne de la Porte. As Bishop of Luçon he acted as a spokesman for the clergy at the Estates-General of 1614. Raised to the cardinalate in 1622, he entered the Council of the King (1624) and quickly became its head. His guidance of foreign affairs helped to raise France to the highest rung among the European powers. In the administration of French internal affairs Richelieu imposed useful reforms in finances, the
confessor, can be a great help in that regard and is most benevolent in such matters. If you see him, please remember us to him and assure him of our obedience.

246. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I think that you would do well, Mademoiselle, to see Madame Fieubet, if she is in the group at the Hôtel-Dieu, and tell her what you told me. I am really afraid that the Sisters are a little to blame, at least indirectly. We must give our attention mainly to the poor villages, because as far as the towns are concerned, it will never be any different. We are deluding ourselves by dallying in them. I embrace and cherish these contradictions; and do not think that this is discouraging me — I mean the plans for the villages. I am in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

V. D. P.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

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army, and legislation (Code Michau). He was the author of royal absolutism: he destroyed the privileges of the Huguenots and of the Provinces; he reestablished the authority of the intendants throughout France. He died on December 4, 1642, attended by, among others, his niece, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, and King Louis XIII, who followed the Cardinal's death-bed advice in appointing Mazarin as Chief Minister.

Letter 246. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1 Probably Claude Ardier who died August 29, 1657. She had married Gaspard de Fieubet, Seigneur de Launac-en-Guyenne and other places, secretary of the King. He died while State Treasurer, August 12, 1647, at the age of seventy.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

A little dose of medicine that I took yesterday prevented me from sending you an answer. Today, then, I shall tell you that, if you take the trouble to come to your Sisters’ room at Saint-Nicolas tomorrow after dinner, I shall have the happiness of seeing you there — in the event that I do not see you tomorrow morning at La Chapelle or do not send you word to the contrary. Therefore, borrow the carriage to come, if you need it. I shall let you know about that tomorrow, as early in the morning as I can. Please forgive me for speaking to you with such uncertainty; it is because of various circumstances which may come about at any moment.

I am worried about our poor Sister who is ill at Saint-Louis1 and about what has become of the others, because they are not in their room. Please tell me what you know about them. We had a mishap almost like that at Saint-Lazare.2 I still have not gone there to talk, without much ado, to a few people with whom I have business.

I just had the thought that, if you could come tomorrow around nine o’clock to your Sisters’ room at Saint-Nicolas, I could see you and you could have dinner there.

In the meantime, I wish you a good day and am, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

V. D.

Collège des Bons-Enfants, October 21, 1636

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras


1This was the hospital to which the plague-stricken were brought.

2A case of the plague.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am writing to you from Fréneville on my return from Orleans. I received your letter at the house that Madame de Herse, the President's wife, gave us. It consoled me more than I can say when I read about the decision that you told me your son has made. May God be forever blessed for giving you this consolation and for giving it to me also. I was dreading in every way any other station in life for him! Let him study theology then; that is fine. I pray God to give him a share in the zeal for saving souls that He has given to his mother and in the grace He has imparted to her for that purpose, poor and weak as she is. I thank Our Lord, moreover, for having preserved for you your good Sister who was ill at Saint-Louis. You would not believe, Mademoiselle, how relieved I am.

What shall I say about M. Drouard's suggestion? I certainly think that it is full of piety and that it is to be hoped it will succeed, if there are any priests to be found who have such zeal. As for the funds they need for their support, I am sure the officers of the Hôtel-Dieu Charity will agree that what they need be taken from what little there is, while awaiting the Ladies' meeting. Please mention this to Madame Goussault, the President's wife. I

Letter 248. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.


In the period preceding the French Revolution, it was accepted court practice to use the title Monsieur, standing alone, to refer only to the king's next younger brother. Until the birth of Louis XIV (1638), Gaston, Duc d'Orléans was heir to the throne of Louis XIII.

2This is referring most likely to the plan of placing two priests at the Hôtel-Dieu for the
may perhaps stop by Grigny in two or three days, if I go a little out of my way. If she is there, I shall speak to her about it.

In the meantime, I conclude with a heartfelt desire that you stay well. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

V. DEPAUL

With the help of God, I hope to be in Paris in eight to ten days.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, in La Chapelle

249. - TO ROBERT DE SERGIS, IN AMIENS

November 1636

All our sick men are over the fever and no mishap has occurred here since, by the grace of God. Everyone is well in the four places where missions are being given and here also, so it seems that Our Lord will take pity on this Little Company through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. With that end in view, we have sent M. Boudet to pay a visit to her at Chartres. However, everything is in the order of Providence which perhaps will see fit to dispose of things otherwise. May His Holy Name be blessed! He is the Master and does all for the best. Let us leave the care of everything to Him.¹

I wanted to tell you this before anything else, because I think it is the news that will please you most. I confess that what you say in your letter has made me see clearly how much you have taken this mishap to heart. It seems to me I have never been more aware of the deep roots that charity towards the members of the Commu-

¹The plague had broken out at Saint-Lazare in October of that year. (Cf. no. 247.)
nity has implanted in you than on this occasion, and I cannot tell you how much it has touched me.

Now then, may God be blessed for everything and for having willed to provide the cement that has bound you more closely to the Company and through it to Him. I thank Him with all my heart for the work He is giving you and for the manner in which I am convinced you are accomplishing it, especially for the way you are handling the affair of those good religious to be reformed. They can indeed be reformed through the council and the order the Cardinal² has established for that purpose in Paris. Let me say just this much to you about that. In such cases, we must be satisfied with suggesting the good to be done to those on whom it depends without persuading ourselves that, because we have undertaken it, we have to make it succeed. The good angels are satisfied with offering suggestions and leaving the rest to be done by God and by the individuals entrusted to them.

I greet M. Grenu and you as well with all the tenderness in my power. . . .

250. - TO SAINT LOUISE

How are you, Mademoiselle, after your difficulty this morning? Would you like to send someone to visit your son? If so, I shall send you a man this evening. Just let me know your wish, please, and be as lighthearted as you can in union with the cheerfulness of the Blessed Virgin in similar circumstances.

Your son is well, I hope, and I am your servant. I shall come to see you if this messenger does not tell me that you are fine.

Adieu, then, Mademoiselle. Be very cheerful in Our Lord.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

²Cardinal Richelieu.

Letter 250. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

So now, that good young woman has left without saying a word. Blessed be God! Oh! what a noble crown she is losing! We shall have to replace her. What do you think, Mademoiselle, of taking Sister Geneviève from the Hôtel-Dieu for that work, and of putting in her place Madame Pelletier² or Madame Turgis. We need someone who is respected in that spot because of the meetings that take place there on the children’s³ behalf and the necessity of welcoming the ladies. I think the first, Madame Pelletier, would be more appropriate in the duty, first of all because she will be highly suited for both tasks, and also because that is Madame Turgis’ neighborhood, which might be a temptation for her. If that is agreeable to you, I beg you to tell Madame Pelletier about it for me and that I, along with you, am asking her to render this service to God in that place.

I would have come to see you, were it not for a slight indisposition I have. If I can do so, I shall come to visit you after dinner. Waste no time in any case, and convey the decision to Madame Pelletier so that she can go as soon as possible to render service to God in that area. The members of the Charity are fortunate

Letter 251. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹The remark concerning Sister Geneviève [Poisson] seems to demand that we place this letter near no. 225, which must have followed closely upon it. Sister Geneviève manifested great talent and prudence in working with the foundlings, especially during the civil wars and the Fronde. In 1657, the office of treasurer of the Community was confided to her.

²Could this not be Catherine Vialart who, on August 10, 1632, had married Madame Goussaut’s nephew, Nicolas Pelletier, Seigneur de la Houssaye and Master of Accounts, who entered the priesthood after his wife’s death? If it is she — and everything seems to indicate this — the Saint made a unique exception for her by accepting her among his Daughters of Charity, where, moreover, she did not persevere. Catherine Vialart was the daughter of Madame de Herse.

³The foundlings brought to the Hôtel-Dieu and then sent to the Couche.
enough to resemble Our Lord by going, like Him, now to one place, now to another, to assist their neighbor. O Mademoiselle, what a happiness to have this conformity with the Son of God, and what a blessed sign of their predestination the Daughters of Charity possess in this! May Our Lord be pleased to grant to all of them the dispositions they need for it! I hope for this from His goodness and I am, in His love, Mademoiselle, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

252. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Since you have brought your ladies to accept the loss of Geneviève, please send her then; but as for going on foot, indisposed as she is, it is to be feared that she might pick up some illness. That is why I think it advisable to have her go in the Senlis coach, which leaves tomorrow, or in the Clermont cart. If she takes the Senlis coach, she can go from there to Verneuil, which is the direct route, and from there to Liancourt; she will have to walk three leagues. If she takes the Clermont cart, she can have them let her off across from Liancourt. I am sending you an écu for that purpose, and I beg you to nourish yourself well with all your own

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Letter 252. - The original autograph letter belongs to the Priests of the Mission at the Provincial Secretariat, 4 Cabra Road, Dublin 7.

1Letters 241, 252, and 255 have some points in common which allow us to place them close together. There is no doubt that no. 241 belongs to the year 1636.
2In Oise.
3In Oise.
wealth because, in truth, I am convinced that your indispositions occur only from lack of food. Please do as I ask then, for the love of God.

As for those young women, I do not know what to say about them, because I have not seen them. I shall make good Marie\(^4\) understand the importance of preferring those who are most suitable, and I shall communicate to Mademoiselle de la Bistrade, when she returns from Burgundy, the way you are testing their ladies, provided you will forgive me for not having been able to work on our rule for Liancourt. I shall do so at the first opportunity in accordance with your report.

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

**VINCENT DEPAUL**

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**253. - TO SAINT LOUISE**

[1636]\(^1\)

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

That good little Marie from Péronne indicates that she would rather belong to the Charity than go to serve that good lady. She is supposed to come and see me tomorrow morning or the day after. If she perseveres and you trust that she will do well there, keep her, if you see fit.

People are only paying eight to ten sous for the grinding of a

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\(^4\)Marie Joly.

**Letter 253.** - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

\(^1\)The reference to Madame de Ligin indicates that this letter was written after no. 241 and must have followed closely upon it. Reference to Michel Le Gros' studies also permits us to verify that this letter was written in 1636.
sétaire de wheat. When you notify me, I shall send you the man who has charge of the mills here in the house.

If your son has no difficulty defending theses on general philosophy, there is no harm in letting him do so. That will oblige him to study harder and to gain more confidence in debate. The good use you must make of your health at present is to preserve and fortify it so as to be able to do something else in time, since those are the doctor's orders.

It would be well to have that good young woman, Isabelle, eat some eggs. Mon Dieu, how sorry I feel for that fine young woman! I send her my heartfelt greetings and intend to celebrate Holy Mass for her tomorrow with God's help.

Mon Dieu, how happy I would be to see you, were I not prevented by a certain difficulty! Rumor has it that the Hôtel-Dieu brought about Madame de Ligin's death.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

253a. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[1636]

Mademoiselle,

May Jesus Christ, Who is our joy in heaven and our life, be with you forever!

2 An ancient measure which varied according to the country and the matter being measured (approximately eight pints or four-tenths of a liter).

3 Michel Le Gras finished his philosophy in 1636. In November of that same year he was preparing to enter theology. (Cf. no. 248.)

4 Elisabeth Martin.

5 The frequenting of the Hôtel-Dieu, where she used to go to visit the sick.

6 The bottom of the letter has been cut off and lost.

Letter 253a. - Autograph letter. According to Coste, the original was at the house of the Priests of the Company of Jesus in Aix; however, its present location is unknown. Coste printed this letter in vol. XIII, second supplement, p. 841, no. 3318, and linked it with no. 253.
May God be praised because He humbles and refreshes, because He has brought you so low, and because you are now in a better state of mind. I earnestly beg Him to let you feel the joy in my heart with as much tenderness as I experienced because of your letter. Certainly, it is not that any thought came to me that Our Lord intended to dispose of you with this blow, because I could not have seen you in that state and not run to you, whatever might be the condition in which a slight tertian ague has placed me. May God be praised once again! I could not say that to you enough, or tenderly enough, to my liking.

You wish then to receive Holy Communion. Very well, do so, Mademoiselle, while I celebrate the Holy Sacrifice for you and your son. As for him, I think you would do well to allow him to give the sermon being suggested to him without worrying about presenting theses to people. Let him present them only to Our Lord and the holy Virgin. Have him let me know the day and I shall come or send someone.

I am grateful to you for being reluctant to leave your Sisters in that condition. I see that it is also for them Our Lord is preserving you. Strengthen yourself then to raise them to the degree of virtue He asks of them and take some nourishment. The wife of the Keeper of the Seals told me a little while ago that you do not eat enough. You shall not be in want.

As for the good young woman who is asking to go to Liesse, take care that you do not let her. O Jésus! Mademoiselle, she must be made to understand that the virtue of a Daughter of Charity does not consist in that!

The meeting has been postponed because the doctor wishes me to be bled tomorrow and then purged.

I wish you, meanwhile, the joy of Our Lord in the depth of your

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The letter has been inserted in its present position according to the indication given in the *Annales* (1937).

1Village of Notre-Dame de Liesse in Aisne, a pilgrimage site.
heart, and I am, in His love, more than I can express it, in His love, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

254. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[1636]¹

I really wish, Mademoiselle, that you could persuade that poor Nicole to go and stay at Saint-Benoît or somewhere else. If she agrees, you will have to write to Mademoiselle Viole to accept her. Yesterday I met the young woman from that parish;² she is asking for someone else. Oh! what a good deed you would be doing if you could manage that! But I think it inadvisable for us to proceed authoritatively; that would have unfortunate consequences. To speak to her, I cannot. I am about to begin the visitation at Sainte-Marie in the faubourg.³ I have been putting it off for two years.

As for Saint-Jacques, I will let you know. I believe that the young woman from Fréneville whom I had mentioned to you will not be coming. I shall do whatever Madame Goussault desires with regard to her daughter.⁴ If the work is going to begin at the Hôtel-Dieu and you are going there, I beg God to keep you in perfect health and to bless your work.

Madame Bourdin from Villepreux has written to me two or

Letter 254. - The original autograph letter, a gift of Bishop Rivet, at one time the Ordinary of the diocese, belongs to the major seminary of Dijon.

¹This is the date suggested by the resumption of the Sisters' work at the Hôtel-Dieu.
²Saint-Benoît.
³Second monastery of the Visitation nuns, which had been established in the faubourg Saint-Jacques in 1626.
⁴Madame Goussault was thinking about arranging a marriage for her daughter, Marie-Marthe. She married Nicolas Lotin, Seigneur de Martilly.
three times and has told me through her brother, the Capuchin, that she feels inclined towards the suggestion I offered her. I did not give her any written reply, but I told her brother that she must look into it and we must see her. Please give this matter a little thought, and take care of your health.

I am, Mademoiselle, your servant.

V. D.

Tuesday morning

255. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[1636]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Our men have urged me to go to the country on account of my slight fever. I think it is a little green to be cured so soon. We shall see what Our Lord wants. I am both deeply sorry and ashamed for leaving without seeing you. Your usual charity will forgive me and you will please take care of your health for the love of Our Lord and the work He has entrusted to you.

Your Geneviève may be ill, and your other Sisters as well. Perhaps you should send her to Hersé. I may go there before my return or shortly after, please God. She was saying that a little wine now and then would be good for them. However, I think it would be unwise for you to get her used to that.

As for Liancourt, I have given the rule to Monsieur de la Salle.
to be drawn up. It would be good for you to see that widow from Villepreux,⁴ if you have not already done so. Aside from that, I do not know whom to send you. Look into the matter. If Barbe⁵ were set to work at it, she might possibly make a success of it. The only thing that upsets me is the change.⁶ Make use of her as Our Lord inspires you.

As for your son, if he wants to come here because no other place suits him better, arrange for it. And be very cheerful in Our Lord.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL

Monday morning

256. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[December 1636]¹

Monsieur,

Madame de Beaufort has notified me that now is the best time to work at establishing the Charity at Saint-Etienne.² The Pastor greatly desires it, and he thought it advisable that she and another lady take up the collection for that purpose on these holy days, which they have done.

I most humbly entreat you, Monsieur, to take the trouble of letting me know how I am to proceed. I had thought of telling her, if you think it appropriate, that the ladies who are the most eager for this holy work should go to visit the Pastor and tell him that, in order to begin well and to persevere, they need a large number of people joined together for this holy work, both of high rank and of humble circumstances. Some will

⁴Madame Bourdin.
⁵Barbe Angiboust.
⁶Of Barbe Angiboust.
Letter 256. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.
¹The year is indicated on the back of the original.
²A parish in Paris.
contribute more; others will devote themselves more willingly to visiting
the sick poor, each on her own day. And so that no one be inconve-
nienced, they should see whether it would be useful to divide the parish
into two sections. But, in order to work effectively, it would be necessary,
first of all, to entreat the said Pastor to take the trouble of having a full
report drawn up by some priest who knows his parishioners and, after-
wards, to have a sermon given in his church for that purpose. At the end
of the sermon, all the ladies named could be assembled and an announce-
ment also made at the Mass, that anyone of any condition of life who
would like to be a member could come to the meeting. At the meeting, the
rule observed in the other parishes will be proposed.

I am sending you all this, Monsieur, in order to cut short the time.
These good ladies have been trying for such a long time to get the
courage for this, that I think we should strike while the iron is hot. But,
please tell me anything else apart from what I am suggesting to you,
because you are well aware that it must be done this way.

I most humbly thank you, Monsieur, for your kindness. The good God
knows well that I needed the help. That is why He has provided me with
the address of a dairymaid who has been supplying us with milk for three
days now.

Here we are, near the end of the year. If God grants me life to begin the
next, I greatly desire that it be of a kind that is fit for His service. Please
say a few good words to me in that regard. Poor people are content with
little, which little I shall regard as a great deal, since I have given myself
to God through you, of whom I am, Monsieur, the most humble daughter
and servant.

L. DE M.

Monsieur, all your Daughters take the liberty of [recommending] themselves to you.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent
My most honored and dear Father,

I entreat the divine Infant of Bethlehem to fill your soul abundantly with the graces and blessing of His holy Nativity. It is a long time since I have given myself the honor of writing to you. However, I have no fear of your forgetting me before God, and beg you to grant me one of your Masses, for I am extremely poor. This life would weigh heavily upon me, if I did not see in it the good pleasure of God, which is consolation enough for me. That is all I can tell you about myself, dear Father, not knowing what else to say.

Our dear Sister Superior in the faubourg Saint-Jacques in Paris shared with me the advice you were pleased to give us concerning our union. It is good and sound, but still, in my heart, I have not been able to accept it. I say this to you with such frankness because your goodness has given me the confidence to do so. Our spirit could not bear any authority


1The editor indicated as recipient "a priest of a religious order"; it is undoubtedly the Superior of the monasteries of Paris, Saint Vincent de Paul.

2The first sentence of the letter clearly indicates the season, while the reference to the recent sojourn of Saint Jane Frances in Paris limits the choice of year to 1628 or 1636. The passage referring to the Visitor lends more weight to 1636 because this issue was not widely discussed in 1628.

3Mother Marie-Agnès Le Roy, born in Mons in 1603, was, through her mother, the niece of Philippe de Cospéan, Bishop of Lisieux. In 1624 she entered the first monastery, which she left, at the request of the Marquise de Dampierre, to join the group of Sisters who were sent to the monastery in the faubourg Saint-Jacques at the time of its foundation. She became di-rectress there and then assistant. The votes of the Sisters entrusted to her the duty of Superior three times: from June 11, 1634, to May 24, 1640; from May 27, 1646, to May 13, 1652; and from June 6, 1658, to 1664. She went in person to inaugurate the monasteries of Amiens and Mons, where she remained three months, and founded that of Angers and the third monastery in Paris. She also took a prominent part in the establishment of the monastery in Warsaw. She died May 18, 1669. (Cf. *Année Sainte*, vol. V, p. 547.)

4Saint Vincent was among those who feared that the absence of a moral bond among the convents of the Visitation, which were autonomous and dependent on the local Ordinaries, might in time lead to a profound deviation in the primitive spirit and to a regrettable diversity. To ward off this danger, they saw nothing better than the appointment of Visitors who, at regular intervals, would make canonical visitations of the monasteries in order to check the abuses and watch over the preservation of the traditions of the Order. For her part, Saint Jane Frances, who had originally rejected the idea as an infringement on the authority of the local Ordinaries, finally accepted the suggestion. (Cf. Devos, *op. cit.*, 48 [1972], pp. 453-476.)
over us except that of our prelates, or any secret from them. If we wish to
have our minds at rest, we must deal with them in complete trust and
simplicity. Otherwise, we shall no longer be daughters of our blessed
Father, who left us this affection engraved on our hearts. Moreover, we
possess a certain inclination and reverence that lead us to our superiors.
This can only proceed from His grace and makes me hope for great
blessings from that way of acting. That is why, most dear Father, seeing
all the means of union proposed to us running counter in a certain sense
to this authority, we could not accept any one of them. I trust that God
will accomplish what cannot be done by means of formalities or by
human prudence.

Up to the present, His Providence has directed and maintained us in
perfect union and conformity. I hope that it will lead us to persevere in
them by the same means. Our bond of holy charity will have more efficacy
and strength in its meekness and holy liberty than in all the laws and
obligations which could be prescribed. Such is my opinion, Reverend
Father, which is in complete conformity with that in which our blessed
Father left this life. Tell me whether I should not remain at peace in this
respect.

I am writing to our Sisters about this matter, exhorting them, as best I
can, to persevere in the path on which God has placed them, and to
maintain their spirits in union and conformity hereafter through the same
means they have practiced until now, which have kept them united and
bound together. I am thinking, dear Father, only of preserving the mem-
ory of our communication, and of alerting the Superiors to be rather
careful not to change or initiate anything in our institutions and customs,
and to maintain holy union in every way they can with the other houses
and especially with that of Annecy, the mother and mistress of all the
others. By doing so, we shall conform in everything that it received from
its holy founder as has been practiced up to now. If you find this profit-
able, most dear Father, you could tell our Sisters to carry it out.

But please tell me your opinion of our Sisters there. I found them very
much to my liking when we passed that way. May God grant them the
grace to walk along their path with sincerity and simplicity and to render
you their most humble obedience according to this spirit. Be always a
true father and protector for us, I beg you, and, through your paternal

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Saint Francis de Sales.

These last two sentences, forming but one in the original, were either incomplete or poorly
expressed.
care, see to it that the wishes of the One Whom you honor in heaven are faithfully observed on earth by His daughters. That is the only good I wish for them; and for you, dearest Father, I wish the highest degree of holiness that can be acquired in this world.

Grant me the honor of considering me always (for such I am forever) your most humble... .

258. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN LA CHAPELLE

May God bless you, Mademoiselle, for having gone to station your Sisters at the Hôtel-Dieu and for all that has ensued! But, in the name of God, take care of yourself. You see the need people have of your weakness and what would become of your work without you.

I thank Our Lord, moreover, for the blessing He is granting your Sisters of being so good and generous. It seems that His goodness is making up for what you say are your deficiencies in their regard. I do not know any here who are suitable. I shall find out whether two or three young women — or any one of them — who are two leagues from here and who have been living in a most exemplary way for about a year or so, would like to dedicate themselves to that way of life.

As for what you tell me about your son, I think that you should not pay any attention at all to the suggestion about his leaving Paris. It is unimaginable how many incurable vices are contracted there by most of those who do so, unless the parents themselves send them for some special motive, as for the sake of a Jesuit relative or a doctor in the area. You must try gently and patiently to have him spend his time and do his studies industriously. However, I submit what I am telling you to your better judgment.

Letter 258. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

"Although they had been working at the Hôtel-Dieu for some time already, the Daughters of Charity were not yet living there. They took up residence in December 1636 in an apartment beside the hospital rented for them by the Ladies of Charity."
I beg you to take care of your health, being, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Fréneville, December 30, 1636

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, in La Chapelle

259. - TO JEAN DE FONTENEIL

(Now 290a.)

260. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Friday, at five o'clock [Around 1637]

Mademoiselle,

Please let me know if you have any Sisters so that you may send two of them to the Pastor of Saint-Germain. He wants them for his parish and earnestly requests that he may have them as soon as possible. I entreat Our Lord to send you some very good ones.

VINCENT DEPAUL


1The Charity of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, a parish in Paris, is mentioned for the first time in no. 278 which is dated 1637.

2Pierre Colombet was Pastor of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois from March 16, 1636 to July 1657.
Monsieur,

Mlle Lamy considers it inappropriate to have two servants at the beginning. It is sufficient for us to have one good one so as not to give cause for complaint to those who thought it would ruin the Charity, insofar as there are only five or six sick people at present. However, in a little while, when the matter is well settled, we shall add a companion according to your orders. If there were some way to have her right away, it would help us a great deal. Nevertheless, it would be better for us to wait so that we might have a really good one.

If there is need to send someone to La Villette, please send this messenger and tell him what you want him to do.

I wish you a good day. I recommend myself to your prayers.

Next Sunday we shall have M. Pavillon preach a sermon concerning the Charity in order to let everyone know what it is and to put an end to the rumors. I beg you most humbly to recommend the matter earnestly to God, and to let me know whether you consider this sermon appropriate. I am, Monsieur, your most humble and most obedient servant.

COLOMBET

Letter 260a. - Autograph letter. The original was in the possession (1931) of the Abbé Lorenzo of the Paris clergy. Published in the Annales (1932), pp. 5-6, it was reprinted in Mission et Charité, 19-20, pp. 13-14. The latter text was used in this edition. There is a typed copy in the Archives of the Mission (Paris).

Saint Vincent passed this letter on to Saint Louise, writing a few lines below the text. (Cf. no. 260b.)

The year the Confraternity of Charity was established at Saint-Germain-l’Auxerrois.
2Servants of the poor or Daughters of Charity.
3Then a village in the suburbs, now a district in Paris.
4Sermon on the subject of the Confraternity of Charity.
The Pastor of Saint-Germain wrote me this letter.
I gave a note to that good young woman whom you sent to me for Mme Goussault.
Your son is doing well, and I am your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

February 10, 1637

Two weeks ago we held the fourth of our missions, during which more than two thousand general confessions were made although there were only six of us working, and towards the end, eight. We were overwhelmed by the people who arrived from six or eight leagues away in the country, notwithstanding the severity of the cold and the inconvenience of the place, which is a real desert. Those good people brought their provisions for three or four days and retired into the barns. There one could hear them conversing together about what they had heard at the sermon and the catechism instruction. And now, one can see the peasants and their wives giving the mission themselves to their families, and the shepherds and plowmen singing God’s Commandments in the fields and questioning one another about what they learned during the mission. In fact, the nobility, for whom it seemed we were not speaking, using so coarse a language as we were, after having discharged their duty in a Christian manner, felt moved to ask us questions. We began to arrive in six or eight leagues away from the missions.

Letter 260b. - Autograph letter written at the bottom of M. Colombet’s letter. (Cf. no. 260a.) It was published in the Annales (1932), p. 6, and later reprinted in Mission et Charité, 19-20, p. 15. This edition uses the latter text. There is a typed copy in the Archives of the Mission (Paris).

1In 1636 Jean-Jacques Olier, a few zealous priests, and some members of Saint Vincent’s Community began to give missions on the estates of the Abbey of Pébrac. In a letter addressed to Saint Vincent and the priests of the Tuesday Conferences, Olier related the successes of a previous mission (cf. no. 226). The letter inserted here is the second known account of this type.
and exemplary manner, were not able to let us leave without bursting into tears.

Five Huguenots abjured their heresy during this last mission. Four of them who had been avoiding us earlier came themselves to seek us out. And that, Gentlemen, to teach us, as you have often taught me, that the conversion of souls is the work of grace. We often place an obstacle in its way by our own spirit. God always wishes to work either in nothingness or through nothingness, that is, in those and through those who recognize and acknowledge their powerlessness and uselessness.

261. - TO SISTER MARIE-EUPHROSINE TURPIN

My very dear Sister,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The Commander and our dear Mother Superior in the city have done me the honor of proposing to me the idea Our Lord gave them of your rendering useful service to God at the Madeleine. Having considered the matter in all its details, I shall just say I think they are right [to wish] that, after you have weighed the matter before God, you might feel some inclination for it. Here are the reasons that prompt me to this opinion.

First of all, the work itself is very holy. It consists in lending a

Letter 261. - The original autograph letter belongs to the Visitation of Amiens, 384 rue Saint-Fuscien.

1Assistant and directress at the Visitation of Angers. Sister Marie-Euphrosine Turpin, born in Paris in 1605, left the world at the age of nineteen, despite her father’s opposition, to live enclosed in the first monastery of the Visitation, where she was professed on February 22, 1625. She was one of the Sisters who went to the monastery in the faubourg Saint-Jacques at the time of its foundation. “Our worthy Mother,” we read in the book of professions from the first monastery (Arch. Nat. LL 1718, p. 6), “conceived such great esteem for her during a journey that she made to Paris, that she adopted her as a daughter of our holy source and chose her to work under her direction on the completion of the custom book, consulting her about the difficulties found in it.” Sister Turpin did not leave the monastery of Angers until 1640 when she went to found that of Amiens, of which she became the first Superior. She died there on December 20, 1651, at the age of forty-six. (Cf. “Abrégé de la vie et des vertus de la très honorée Mère Marie-Euphrosine Turpin” in Année Sainte, vol. XII, pp. 395-414.)

2Noël Brulart de Sillery, an outstanding benefactor of the Visitation.

3Hélène-Angélique Lhuillier.
hand to souls who are being lost, who are incessantly dishonoring
God and filling up hell, in order to withdraw them from the mass
of perdition and help them live according to God. In a word, it
consists in acting as their second redeemer, leading them, as it
were by the hand, into the glory Our Lord has acquired for them
by His precious blood, a work so great before God that He consid-
ered it worthy of His Son and the only one capable of drawing
Him down to earth.

Secondly, this thought occurred to a great servant of His, to
whom He gave the grace for your holy Order and for the
Madeleine, and to our dear Mother, whom you know, although
perhaps not as well as I do, both of whom esteem you and have a
singular affection for you.

Thirdly, it seems to me that Our Lord has given you a sufficient
share in His spirit for you to realize the importance of this work,
to have a predilection for it, and to devote yourself to it effectively.

Fourthly, I think that the work of your vocation there, as you
described it to me, does not seem so important to the glory of God
as the work here.

I am putting down for you only these four reasons why you
should pay great attention to this proposal, although I could give
you many others.

Now, I understand, I think, the contrary reasons which may
make you question whether God wishes this:

Firstly, it is your Superior who is sending you to another who is
requesting you. To that I reply that you are a daughter of this
house and not of the faubourg, although you reside there. This
house has the right, it seems to me, to recall you in its need. When
an obedience from your Superior intervenes, you are obliged to
come back. In the second place, the good Mother of the faubourg

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The servant and Mother referred to here are Saint Francis de Sales and Saint Jane Frances Frémiot de Chantal.

Mother Marie-Agnès Le Roy, Superior of the second monastery, from which Marie-Euphrosine Turpin had been sent to Angers.

The first monastery, where Sister Turpin had made her novitiate.
has told the Commander that she approved; that she would write to you about it herself — which she is doing; and that, although you are being asked for there, you are no less desired here.

Secondly, you will tell me that the work of the Madeleine seems unsuitable for the Sisters of Sainte-Marie, to which I shall reply that working for the salvation of souls is natural to the children of God. Since Our Lord judged the care of Mary Magdalen to be worthy of His goodness and that of the Blessed Virgin, there should be no question as to whether it is suitable for the Sisters of Sainte-Marie.

Thirdly, you will point out to me that maybe you are necessary in Angers. I shall respond that someone else will be provided who perhaps will not be less agreeable and useful there than you.

Fourthly, it will occur to you that perhaps you will not have enough intelligence to be of use in the direction of such a large and difficult house. My answer to that is that there will be two of you for the work, Our Lord and you, and with Him you can do all things.

Fifthly, your relatives will come to mind; perhaps they will not approve. But my reply is that we shall know that before the duty is explained to you. Even though there may be some repugnance, I think you should rise above it as you did so generously with regard to your journey to Angers.

Sixthly, if the thought of the world’s esteem were to choose to attack you, which I doubt, reply to it, dear Sister, that far from people’s having esteemed Sainte-Marie less as an establishment, or the young women who are there to devote themselves to the care of the house, I have, on the contrary, never heard so much good about your holy Order or about the young women who are at the Madeleine, than I have since they have been taking care of those poor creatures. We should consider as honorable everything Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin did. Since both devoted themselves to the care of Mary Magdalen, you can honorably assist in the salvation of these girls in the sight of God and of the world.

Such, dear Sister, are the objections that I think flesh and blood,
the world and the devil might put before you. The answers to them seem to me so reasonable and consonant with God’s pleasure, that were I Sister Marie-Euphrosine and someone held for me the place I hold for you, and had as much charity for me as I have esteem and affection for you, I think I would bow my head and agree to this proposal. That, dear Sister, is what I hope you will do, unless Our Lord lets you know clearly that He wishes the contrary. In that case, I assent to whatever you do about it, as wholeheartedly as I am, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, dear Sister, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

I beg you to present our most humble regards to our dear Mother Superior of Orléans7 and to help me thank her for the charitable welcome she extended to me some time ago at her house.

Paris, eve of the feast of Saint Matthias,8 1637

Addressed: Dear Sister Marie-Euphrosine Turpin, religious of Sainte-Marie

262. - TO SAINT LOUISE

February 24 [1637]9

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

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7Claude-Espérance Jousse. She was Superior for two consecutive three-year terms, from May 21, 1634, to May 24, 1640, and took up office again at a later date.
8February 23.
9Letter 262. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.
10Internal evidence, especially the reference to the Hospital for Incurables, prompts us to assign this date.
I most humbly beg your pardon for two things: first, for not having come to see you because of all the business I have; second, for not having the fireplace built for M. Le Gras, your son, through forgetfulness. See my wretchedness. If your heart did not have so much charity for me, where would I be? I hope you will forgive me. I have told Monsieur Soufliers to put him in a warm little room near one that M. Morennes, one of the religious from this house, keeps heated. He will be able to get warm there.

Yesterday, I saw that good young woman about whom you wrote to me. I forgot to talk to her about her reading and sewing. She did not seem as rustic as the young woman who came with her. Please let me know what you said to them.

I told Mademoiselle Desbordes, the treasurer at Saint-Leu, that Barbe needs to have a companion, at least as long as there are so many sick people in that parish. You will have to reflect on whom you can give her, and remember the Incurables. Madame Fortia told Madame Goussault that they want the Sisters on condition that they be subject to you and can be changed.

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3Claude de Morennes, a religious from the old Saint-Lazare.
4She was perhaps related to M. Desbordes, Commissioner of Audit in Paris, with whom Saint Louise and Saint Vincent kept in contact. (Cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 267 and L. 272.)
5A parish in Paris.
6Like many of the first Daughters who died before 1660, the family name of this Barbe is unknown to us, nor are there any facts concerning her life available.
7This hospital, founded by Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld on November 4, 1634, for the incurably ill, was nearly completed in April 1637. The plan to summon the Daughters of Charity there was never carried out. Pierre Camus, Bishop of Belley, spent the final years of his life there in the exercise of charity. He willed his possessions to the hospital and was buried there in 1652. In 1802, the men were transferred to the old convent of the Recollets in the faubourg Saint-Martin; the women left in 1870 to take up residence in the new hospice for incurables in Ivry. After standing empty for eight years, the hospital was transferred to Public Welfare and came to life again under the name of Laennec Hospital. (Cf. Felibien, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, pp. 98 ff.; Lebeuf-Bournon, *op. cit.*, vol. VI, p. 255.) The Laennec Hospital is across the rue de Sèvres from the present Saint-Lazare and abuts the garden of the present Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity on the rue du Bac.
I am sending the letter you misunderstood back to you. I promise to come and see you as soon as I can. Meanwhile, I bid you good day and am, Mademoiselle, your servant.

V. D.

Feast of Saint Matthias

263. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1636 and 1639]

I am quite pleased about the retreat Madame de Liancourt wishes to make at your house. Mademoiselle Lamy wants to do the same. I would like her to meet Madame Goussault, the President's wife, there.

264. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1636 and 1639]

Madame Goussault, the President's wife, and Mademoiselle Lamy are coming to make their little retreat at your house. Please assist them in doing so. Give them the schedule I gave to you and indicate to them the subjects for their meditations. Listen to the account of their good thoughts, which they will make for you in one another's presence, and see that they have reading at table.

Letter 263. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 70.

1Dates of the installation of the Sisters in La Chapelle and the death of Madame Goussault. According to Gobillon (op. cit., p. 78), the retreats for the ladies began at La Chapelle.


1Dates of the installation of the Sisters at La Chapelle and the death of Madame Goussault.
during their meals. Afterwards, they may entertain each other in a cheerful and modest way. The subject can be things that have happened to them during their retreat or that they have read in the Bible. If it is a nice day, they can go for a little walk after dinner. Except for these two times, they should observe silence.

It would be good for them to write down the principal perceptions they have had during meditation and for them to prepare their general confession for Wednesday. They can take their spiritual reading from the *Imitation of Jesus Christ* by Thomas a Kempis, stopping to reflect a short time on each sentence. They can take as well something from Granada relating to the subject of their meditation. They can also read a few chapters of the Gospels. But it would be well, on the day of their general confession, for you to give them the meditation from Granada’s *Mémorial*, which is of a nature to excite contrition. For the rest, take care that they do not drive themselves too hard during these exercises. I beg Our Lord to give you His spirit for that purpose.

265. - TO SAINT LOUISE

(*Between 1636 and 1639*)

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am afraid that Madame Goussault may become ill from sleeping above the street. I think I heard her say that she is indisposed


1Dates of the installation of the Sisters at La Chapelle and the death of Madame Goussault.

2Madame Goussault was making her retreat at Saint Louise's home.
when that happens. Furthermore, it is to be feared that her relatives, especially her mother, might take it amiss.

There is no hurry for your retreat. It has not been very long since you recovered from an illness. I would be afraid that it would be too soon to expose yourself to that work. In the name of God, Mademoiselle, let us go slowly.

I am really afraid that I cannot come to your house and I am sorry to give you the trouble of getting a carriage to come here. However, if you can come tomorrow around eight or nine o’clock, you will be most welcome. But, in the name of God, do not rush.

As for those young women, I do not quite understand what you are telling me about them. We shall discuss the matter at our first meeting. At that time, please take the trouble of returning our rope. In the meantime, be cheerful and careful of your health. Remember that I am, in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

V. D. P.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

266. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1636 and 1642]

Mademoiselle,

It seems to me that you could not begin your retreat at a more suitable time. Most men and women religious are making theirs right now. Please begin then tomorrow, Monday. Three half-
quarters of an hour per day are sufficient for your mental prayer, half an hour for each meditation, two in the morning at eight and ten thirty, and another at four o'clock.²

I shall most gladly hear your confession in La Chapelle. Will you be able to get a carriage? If not, I shall try to go to Saint-Victor,³ but it will not be done without some difficulty because of the place. End on Saturday evening; go to Mass every day. Have people told that you are busy, and put off those who need to see you until immediately after dinner and be brief. Go to Holy Communion next Thursday, and draw only on the subjects of meditation which the Bishop of Geneva⁴ puts at the beginning and the end of his Introduction.⁵ Divide them so that they will be sufficient for you and do all of them. You will be able to do some of them twice according to the attraction Our Lord may give you. Read the New Testament in addition to the other readings I suggested to you. Every other day, write to me briefly about what is taking place and about your disposition of body and spirit. Above all, try not to rush around, but do everything gently as you can imagine the good Bishop of Geneva did.

I am not asking you to remember me in your prayers, because I have no doubt that, after little Le Gras,⁶ you put me in first place; not that I deserve it, but the knowledge you have of my need for prayers and the charity Our Lord has given you for me lead me to hope that you do so.

Adieu then, Mademoiselle. Take care of yourself in such a way during this retreat that you will allow us the possibility of advising you to make others.

I almost forgot to tell you not to overburden yourself with rules of devotion, but persist in doing well those you have, your daily

²Such is the text of the original letter. The sentence does not make any sense unless we read three half hours instead of three half-quarters of an hour.  
³Probably at the Bons-Enfants, rue Saint-Victor.  
⁴Saint Francis de Sales.  
⁵Introduction to the Devout Life.  
⁶Saint Louise's son Michel.
actions, your work; in a word, let everything revolve around doing well what you are doing. And do not entertain either those thoughts of singularity that bothered you before. That is the evil spirit trying to mislead you.

Well now, I shall end here with the prayer I am offering to Our Lord that He Himself may be your guide during your retreat, and His holy Mother as well. I am, in their love, your most humble servant.

V. D. P.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

267. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN LA CHAPELLE

Mademoiselle,

May the devotion of Our Lord's disciples assembled to pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit be impressed on your heart forever! I would have been quite happy to hear that good young woman from Saint-Benoît, but how can I, considering the trip I have to make? Please assure her that I shall pray for her and recommend me to her prayers. I think it would be good for you to have her heard by an extraordinary confessor. M. Lambert or M. Soufliers could render her that service. If you send her to M. Lambert, M. Pillé could hear the confession of that good poor man from Picardy when one of the above-mentioned priests comes to hear her. May God return to you the charity you are doing her!

Isabelle would do well at Saint-Paul, but if that good priest has to bring the Pastor of Saint-Paul to understand what you are

1The letter was written on the Sunday preceding the feast of Pentecost.
2A parish in Paris.
3Elisabeth Martin, a Daughter of Charity.
4Nicolas Mazure, a Canon of Coutances, born in the diocese of Avranches, ordained a
telling me, you must wait until I return. In any case, from what he told me, there is no hurry.

I am consoled by your charity for Marie, but please do not go and endanger yourself. Could not that good young woman Isabelle do what is necessary?

If the ordinands come to Saint-Lazare, M. de la Salle will be teaching the lesson and will be very busy; if not, he will be able to work on the establishment of the Charity in La Chapelle. In his absence, M. Lambert can give the sermon, unless you prefer to postpone it until Corpus Christi.

Exercise your authority and be quite cheerful. Be assured that everything you told me is temptation, and that I am within and without, now and for eternity, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Sunday evening, May 24, 1637

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, in La Chapelle

268. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around May 24, 1637]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have just arrived and am about to leave for Pontoise, returning

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priest, April 17, 1632. He replaced his uncle, Guillaume Mazure, who died March 12, 1633, as Pastor of the parish of Saint-Paul. In 1664 he exchanged his parish with André Hameau, a Doctor of the Sorbonne, for the Abbey of Saint-Jean-en-Vallée in the diocese of Chartres. He died June 25, 1685, as Dean of the Faculty of Theology.

Letter 268. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

It would seem that this letter should be placed near no. 267 because of the reference to some problem at the parish of Saint-Paul.
tomorrow evening and setting out again the next day for a place near Dourdan. 2 I hope to be back from there Thursday or Friday of next week. I commend myself, meanwhile, to your prayers.

You can recall Marie 3 without saying anything about it to the Ladies. It would be wise to postpone the Saint-Paul matter. Please answer Madame Pelletier for both of us.

The pen is being taken out of my hand. Adieu, Mademoiselle. I am your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

269. - TO ANTOINE COLEE, SUPERIOR, IN TOUL

1637

I have heard that your bread was not well made. Please have it done by a baker, if you can find one, for the most important thing is to have good bread. It would also be well to vary the food sometimes... to relieve the strain on poor nature which tires of seeing the same things all the time. You would also be wise to recommend cleanliness and neatness to the brothers, both with regard to the kitchen and to the refectory.

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2Principal town of a canton in Essonne.
3Marie Joly.


In speaking of this letter, Collet says: "This is how the Saint wrote in 1637 to M. Barry, who had recently been appointed Superior of the house in Toul." Now in 1637, M. Barry, who was never Superior in that town, was neither a priest nor a member of the Congregation of the Mission. The Superior in Toul at the time was Antoine Colée. He was born in Amiens, October 28, 1610, entered the Congregation in 1630, and was ordained a priest in 1635. He was Superior of the house in Toul from 1637 to 1638 and left the Company in 1646.
Madame,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I just this minute received your letter. It gave me consolation because it allowed me to see the state of your health and of the mission. I thank God for both and for your willingness to add to your other good works that of welcoming M. Le Roux and Mademoiselle Le Gras. If the latter is able to come and see you, I think it will be time well spent. I shall write to her about it.

As for the office of bailiff, the Prior wants it for a nephew of his, who is a capable and upright man. You may believe that, if the matter were solely up to us, you could have anything you might want.

M. Cuissot put something in his letter that makes me wonder whether the Missionaries are supplying their own food. Bon Dieu! Madame, could you have done this wrong to the Mission and could M. [Cuissot] have become negligent in that regard? I am writing to him and asking him, upon receiving my letter, to begin


1The words, "he is still new," referring to Gilbert Cuissot, leave no doubt about the year.

2The affair in question is the position of bailiff at Saint-Lazare. According to the terms of the contract of January 7, 1632, Saint Vincent could confer the position of bailiff "only in the presence and with the advice and consent . . . of the Prior." The Prior was Adrien Le Bon.

3Gilbert Cuissot, born November 5, 1607, had been a priest for six years when he entered the Congregation of the Mission on May 14, 1637. After directing the house of Luçon, he was appointed Superior in La Rose (1640-1644), then at the Collège des Bons-Enfants (October 14, 1644-1646), where he made his vows November 11, 1644. We find him next at the seminary of Le Mans (1646) and at Saint-Lazare (1646-1647). He was director of the Cahors seminary from 1647 to 1662, and in charge of the Richelieu house from 1662 to 1666. He declared in writing that, at the time of the election of Saint Vincent's successor, because he was hesitant about voting for René Alméras whose state of health left much to be desired, the Saint appeared to him and determined his choice. He also declared that in 1662, while exorcising a possessed woman, he drew from the demon precious avowals concerning the Founder's holiness and the reward reserved by God for Missionaries faithful to their vocation. He died in 1666.

4The manuscript reads "Buissot." A correction is necessary because Antoine Buissot had entered the Congregation of the Mission in 1630.
serving our ordinary fare. He is still new and I did not speak to him before his departure. The fault is all mine alone.

We have six or seven sick people here in the house, most of them with dysentery. Please speak to the good God about them.

I am, in His love, so long as you are quite cheerful, Madame, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Paris, feast of Saint Louis

Addressed: Madame Goussault, the President’s wife.

271. - LASCARIS, GRAND MASTER OF THE ORDER OF MALTA,¹

TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

I was notified that the venerable Bailiff de Sillery had chosen you to assist him in making his tour of inspection of the churches and parishes dependent on the great priory. To that task you have already begun to devote effectively your care and toil for the instruction of those who were in dire need of it.² This impels me to express to you by these lines my most affectionate thanks and to ask you to continue this work, since it has no object other than the advancement of the glory of God and the honor and reputation of this Order.

With all my heart I beg the goodness of God to be pleased to reward your zeal and charity with His graces and blessings, and to give me the means of showing you how much I acknowledge myself your.

Grand Master Lascaris of Malta

September 7, 1637


¹Paul Lascaris of the Lascaris family, emperors of Nicaea, was born in Castellar in 1560, elected Grand Master of the Knights of Saint John of Malta in 1636, and died in 1657.

²These visits were accompanied by missions.
272. - TO CHARLES DE MONTCHAL
ARCHBISHOP OF TOULOUSE

(Now 344a.)

273. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around November 1637]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

If you can give one of your Sisters to the Hôtel-Dieu in Henriette's² place, I think you will be doing her no small charity, for I feel that she cannot bear being denied that trip without becoming ill.³ If you do not have anyone to replace her in her absence, God's Will seems to be that she wait, whatever may come of it. But I would be relieved, I think, if she could have this consolation.

Please excuse me for not having been able to see your Sisters. I shall do so at the first opportunity. You tell me nothing about your health. If you have only what you had before, I hope that it will bring you some benefit and that you will be completely cured. I have not been able either to look into that matter concerning the Duchesse de Liancourt.⁴ I shall do so this evening, which I hope

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Letter 273. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter seems closely connected with no. 276, which itself has points in common with nos. 274, 275, and 277. They were written when the Motherhouse was in La Chapelle and during the lifetime of Madame Goussault, that is between 1636 and September 1639. Since no. 275 is dated November 1, and since on November 1, 1636, Saint Vincent was not in Paris, the choice is limited to the years 1637 and 1638. By comparing nos. 272 and 276 with no. 278, which cannot be from 1638, it is easy to conclude that they should be placed together and, therefore, that they are all from 1637.

²Henriette Gesseaume.

³Henriette was asking permission to make a visit to her family.

⁴Probably the matter of the Liancourt chaplains.
will be a good one for you. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Tuesday evening

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

274. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around November 1637]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I was very glad to hear from you and to learn that you are feeling better. I beg Our Lord to cure you completely and I ask you to do all you can in that regard.

Madame Mussot told you the truth about Jeanne’s mistress, but not about that good young woman, who was quite pleased with such an opportunity. Nevertheless, I think it would be wise for you to give good Madame Mussot that satisfaction with regard to Nicole and for you to take the opportunity of sending her, starting today.

But, mon Dieu, what shall we say about that poor Sister who has had a relapse? Nothing indeed, except that we must adore the all lovable Providence of God.

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

V. DEPAUL

Letter 274. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹As noted in no. 273, Coste deduced that Saint Vincent wrote this letter most probably in November of 1637.
I think you would be wise to act in the way you mentioned to me in your letter.

*Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras*

**275. - TO SAINT LOUISE**

[November 1, 1637]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am very pleased with what you wrote to me about those good young women from Liancourt, especially about the one who knows how to make lace. She will be able to teach that to the poor people and it will serve to draw them to spiritual things. Send them, therefore, whenever you wish.

I see no need at present for Madame Goussault to be with you when you speak to Madame Mussot or to that poor woman. If neither one profits from what you say to them, you can call her in, unless you are meeting at her house and send for them to come there. But that will cause a great deal of delay, I fear. However, if the gentleness of your spirit needs a dash of vinegar, borrow a little from Our Lord's spirit. O Mademoiselle, how well He knew how to find a bittersweet remark when it was needed!

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

VINCENT DEPAUL

All Saint's Day, in the evening

*Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras*

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¹As noted in no. 273, Coste deduced that Saint Vincent wrote this letter most probably in 1637.
Letter 276. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1Saint Vincent wrote this letter most probably in November of 1637 as Coste noted in no. 273.

2The problem of chaplains for the estates of Madame de Liancourt was first mentioned in no. 224. Coste appended to that letter a footnote, note 7, in which he gave the history of this question.

3Guillaume de Lamoignon, Marquis de Basville and Counselor in the Parlement of Paris, was a very devout man of outstanding character. In 1644 he became Master of Requests and, in 1658, First President of the Parlement of Paris. When announcing his appointment as First President, Louis XIV said to him: "Had I known a better man, a worthier subject, I would have chosen him." He was a friend and patron of literary men, especially of Boileau, who addressed to him his sixth epistle and wrote the Lutrin at his request. He was a close friend of Saint Vincent and gave hospitality to the Missionaries who fell ill at Etampes while caring for the poor. His mother and sister were very active in the Saint's works. He died December 10, 1677. (Vie de M. le premier président de Lamoignon, Paris, 1781.)
well for you to do this sooner rather than later, while the priest is still sick.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I saw your son yesterday. I think he is more disposed to the ecclesiastical state. Please let me know if you told him what you wrote me concerning Mademoiselle Poulaillon.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL

Last night, I found this letter that I thought I had sent to you; I wrote it three days ago. If I can do so soon, I shall have the happiness of seeing you in La Chapelle.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

277. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Monday morning, at the Bons-Enfants

[Around November 1637]

Mademoiselle,

A number of places ask me for priests quite often, but I know few whom I can give wholeheartedly, especially to Madame de Liancourt, because of the conditions she desires. If M. Bourdoise cannot give her any, I think she would do well to ask the Bishop of Beauvais2 for some, but not the Bishop of Rouen3 for La Roche-Guyon.4 It is difficult to ask any bishop.


1As noted in no. 273, Coste deduced that Saint Vincent wrote this letter most probably in November of 1637.
2Augustin Potier
3François de Harlay de Champvallon.
4The Duc de Liancourt was Seigneur of the estate of La Roche-Guyon (Val-d'Oise), which became a duchy-peerage in 1643.
I am very sorry that I was unable to give you the time you wanted in La Chapelle, and that I shall again be unable to do so if you come to Paris on Wednesday, to the room your Sisters have at Saint-Nicolas. I am leaving this morning to go and visit Madame de Herse, the President's wife, twelve leagues from here. She is ill and is complaining about me. I shall not return perhaps for four or five days. When I get back, you can take a trip to the city, or I shall come to La Chapelle. 

In the meantime, I commend myself to your prayers and am, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your . . . .

I praise God that you got out of that great difficulty so easily. Please take care of yourself for God's sake.

277a. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around November 1637]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I was purged yesterday, which was the reason why I did not send you a reply, that and a little difficulty I had in the afternoon. I saw good Madame Goussault the day before yesterday. She was cheerful enough at the outset of her illness. I inquired about her yesterday and she sent word that she was not in great pain, but that they had bled her with her foot in water. I am going to see her in a little while.

Your indisposition prevents me from telling you that you would be doing her a charity by going to see her. I know very well that your presence would be a great consolation to her and do her

Letter 277a. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

'This letter was written during one of the illnesses of Madame Goussault, who died September 20, 1639. In his corrections in vol. VIII, Coste gave this date and suggested this placement of the letter.
good, but I am afraid you might fall ill if you went to see her. If you could stand the carriage without discomfort, fine! But, in the name of God, if you are ever so little indisposed, please do not go; it would upset her.

I am going to visit Madame de Marillac. If she follows my advice, she will conclude the matter. It will be well suited to her piety to mortify herself in this satisfaction she desires. It will be a source of blessing in the affair on her son’s side. That is what I plan to say to her. But please do not tell her how I feel, until I have seen her and told you the outcome of our interview today. The Bishop of Beauvais mentioned seeing the two of us together about it. We shall see.

Good day, Mademoiselle. Please recommend a matter to Our Lord. I am, in His love, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Sunday, at half past seven

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

278. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around November 1637]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Monsieur du Coudray had nothing to say to you about your son,

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2Marie de Creil, widow of René de Marillac. She later left the world to become a Carmelite.
3Michel de Marillac, Counselor in the Parlement of Paris and cousin of Saint Louise. He was arranging his marriage to Jeanne Potier, niece of the Bishop of Beauvais, Augustin Potier. Their first child, René, was baptized February 18, 1639.

Letter 278. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1In January 1638, François du Coudray was assigned to Toul, while Benoît Bécu was sent to
nor do I, except to find out whether he is pleased with his stay at the Bons-Enfants. The room above the door, which has a fire-
place, is empty and the lady who takes care of guests asked me if we would be taking it for him. And what I am saying to you is said frankly. Let me know then what you wish. M. du Coudray was not asked to talk to you about this or about anything else concerning him. Be assured that he is no trouble for us, but that I would be troubled if he were not satisfied with his accommodations and were to change them, unless it were for the better, which I do not believe to be the case.

A blind girl from Argenteuil, who directs the Charity in that place, came to see me accompanied by a cousin of Barbe from Saint-Leu. She begged me to consent to her joining the religious order recently established there, but I held out firmly against it. Nevertheless, she went over my head. It was her trip to her brother's wedding that did it. Blessed be God! We must accept the order of His Providence and pray for the good young woman, that God may be pleased to grant her perseverance. And we must notify whomever you are sending in her place.

I really think you would do well to send Marie from Saint-Paul to Saint-Germain. In my opinion, we should not keep Nicole of Saint-Sauveur in any one place for very long. But whom will you have for Saint-Leu if Henriette is going off to Villers, as you tell me and as she asked me yesterday?

Richelieu. As noted in no. 273, Coste used this information to establish the dates for nos. 273 to 278.

1A locality in Val-d'Oise.
3The convent of the Bernardines founded in 1635 by Denis Desnault, chaplain to Queen Anne of Austria and Seigneur de Robiolles.
4Perhaps Marie Joly.
5Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois.
6Villers-sous-Saint-Leu.
Today I am sending M. Benoît to see his good sister, whom I greet affectionately. I am a little concerned about that good young woman and about poor Madame Goussault, whom I saw last evening. Her fever persists and her stomach is bothering her. However, she was a little better than the day before, but they tell me that her condition changes frequently. They were to bleed her in half an hour. I am not telling you to commend her to God; I am sure that you do not fail to do so. I told her that your indisposition was keeping you in bed. I beg you to stay there and not even to consider going to see her.

I am not worried about you, by the grace of God. I was thinking of coming to see you yesterday, but I was overwhelmed with company and would have had to break my appointment with two ladies in order to come to La Chapelle. However, I would be very happy to know your present state of health. Mine is better, thank God, and I am planning to go to the country as you advised. Our Tuesday meeting and M. de la Marguerie’s retreat have prevented me from doing so up to now. Did you send me word that you would like to see me before then?

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am your servant.

V. D.

You could not go to Mass today without aggravating your illness. Please hear it from your bed, as the Introduction to the Devout Life teaches, and do so calmly, without protesting. Is it not at your house that Marie Bécu is ill?

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

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8Benoît Bécu, born in Braches (Somme), March 21, 1602, was ordained a priest in 1627 and entered the Congregation of the Mission, May 14, 1637. In 1639 he went to found the establishment of La Rose and returned a few months later to Richelieu, where he was still living in 1646.

9Marie Bécu, a Daughter of Charity.

10Elie Laisné, Sieur de la Marguerie et de la Deurville, Ordinary State Councillor. After the death of his wife, he entered the priesthood, and died October 3, 1656.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Please do not offer me any excuses for having sent your son to the collège;² you have every right to do so. I welcome him, trusting in Providence; and, should it prove necessary, please send him here to this house. Everything is at your disposition and his. I am very happy to see that he is worried about missing his classes. That is a step in the right direction.

I saw M. Holden yesterday. We talked a little about the spirit of martyrdom, but the next time it will be about charity which is so essential to an apostolic spirit.

If Brother Jean's sister³ is suitable, I think the poor boy will consider her fortunate to belong to the Charity. I shall discuss it with her and shall speak to your Sisters tomorrow afternoon here in our house. It would be difficult for me to go somewhere else.

If Barbe wants to enter a religious order, please invite her very calmly to make up her mind about it. She will soon tire of it, or the order of her.

As for that other young woman from the Hôtel-Dieu, it is better to dismiss her sooner rather than later. The longer you wait, the more commotion her exit will cause. Be well informed about the truth of the matter and make it clear to the others that she is not staying and that she has been quite happy to be sheltered for a time so as to enter a religious order. And if Barbe perseveres, let her thank her cousin and tell her, as she has told you, that she has

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Letter 279. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter was written after no. 278, whose date Coste established as November 1637.
²To the Collège des Bons-Enfants.
³Several coadjutor brothers were named Jean. The Saint may have been referring to Jean Jourdain or Jean Houlie, Jean Bécu's brother-in-law.
given herself to God in the person of the poor. I have not been able to talk to Barbe; I am too busy.

I am quite pleased with the report and shall follow it up. I shall send for the Sisters from Saint-Laurent.

I think that the long trip is postponed completely. I shall make a short one — just four or five days — two or three days from now, if Our Lord so desires.

I am, in His love, Mademoiselle, your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

280. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around November 1637]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have an important appointment today around three o'clock, a meeting that may last until dark. I am, however, going to pass by Madame Goussault's house; I have not seen her for three days. Her fever is not so high today. Nevertheless, they bled her this morning. It is a double-tertian fever\(^2\) and today is the most trying day.

I am sorry I cannot come to see good Sister Marie.\(^3\) I shall do so tomorrow, God willing. However, I am being remembered to her by her brother\(^4\) whom I am sending to visit her.

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Letter 280. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1The content of this letter, the illnesses of Madame Goussault and Marie Bécu, prompted Coste to believe that it was written around the same time as no. 278.

2A malarial type fever marked by two paroxysms recurring every three days.

3Marie Bécu.

4Benoit Bécu.
I was afraid that, if you returned to Madame Goussault's, you might have a relapse as you did after your first visit. Increase your strength; you need it, or, in any case, the public does.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

281. - ABBE DE SAINT-CYRAN TO SAINT VINCENT

Dissay, November 20, 1637

Monsieur,

For a month, since the last time I had the honor of seeing you, I have been ill with a persistent indisposition which I think I picked up from a


Jean du Verger de Hauranne, Abbé de Saint-Cyran, was born in Bayonne in 1581. The Abbé de Saint-Cyran had made the acquaintance of Saint Vincent in Paris around 1622 and was not long in striking up a friendship with him. According to his nephew, Barcos, he had supposedly rendered some important services to the Saint, and the Congregation of the Mission was in some measure indebted to him for the possession of the Collège des Bons-Enfants and for Saint-Lazare (Défense de feu M. Vincent de Paul, p. 11), as well as for the Bull of approbation obtained in the Roman court. What is certain is that their meetings, rather frequent while the Saint was living at the Bons-Enfants, became more rare after 1632 and almost ceased from 1634 on. It is easy to guess the reason. As long as the Saint retained some hope of leading Saint-Cyran back to the traditional thinking of the Church, he agreed to listen to opinions which wounded his inmost feelings, but when he became convinced that this drastically twisted mind would yield neither to his entreaties nor to his reasoning, he preferred to meet with him less frequently. In August 1637, almost on the eve of the day when Saint-Cyran was to leave for Poitou, Saint Vincent went to his home to see him and implored him to renounce the four errors being attributed to him. Seeing the emotion aroused by his words, he quietly apologized and asked him to accept a horse for the journey. It was not until November 20, 1637, that the Abbé justified himself in the above letter. A few months later, on May 15, 1638, Saint-Cyran was arrested and imprisoned in the Château de Vincennes. Among the papers found in his home was a copy of the letter of November 20. In his desire to accumulate charges against his prisoner, Richelieu could not overlook the testimony of such a well-informed witness as Saint Vincent. He had him convoked before M. de Laubardemont, Master of Requests; then, upon the Saint's refusal to reply to a lay judge, he himself interrogated him. The Jansenists claimed that the Saint finally appeared before Lescot, the Cardinal's confessor.
dying person I attended one whole night. Not knowing what might be the outcome of my illness, which I was bearing without staying in bed, various thoughts came to my mind in the event that God should be pleased to bring me to the point of death. Because the last conversation you had with me was on my mind at that time, I thought I would write and let you know that, by the grace of God, my heart was in no way burdened by those four things you came to my house to tell me; I had others in my soul of which you were unaware. Because of the latter I have reason to fear God's judgments, which may be mitigated in some way by my professing those Catholic truths which used to pass for lies and untruths among those who preferred the gleam and glitter rather than the light and truth of virtue. Your deep-seated disposition of humility for believing what people would have you see in Holy Scripture makes me quite aware that there was nothing easier than to make you consent, by the witness even of your own eyes, to what you now detest as errors. But, in the wake of your fraternal admonition, when I heard you find fault, and even add to the other four that fifth correction, because in the past I had told you in private that I wanted to do a favor for you and your whole house, I judged that it was not the time for self-defense or for enlightening you, even by tangible and skillful proofs, concerning those matters you disapprove even to the point of boldly condemning them without understanding them. That is why, with the great desire and restlessness I felt inside me to talk to you and make you see the falseness of the things for which you reproached me, I held back as though suspended, so that I might excuse you for having abandoned me in the time of persecution, like a criminal, rather than for any bad opinion you may have had of me. I easily bore that on the part of a man who had long honored me with his friendship and who, in Paris, was considered a perfectly upright man, which belief

They published an account of his deposition, written, so they say, in his own hand. This document, which we believe is authentic, is certainly altered or incomplete. Saint-Cyrane's imprisonment was the personal work of Richelieu. As soon as the Cardinal was dead, Louis XIII allowed the prisoner to communicate with people outside. This measure of clemency was soon followed by a second: on February 16, 1643, Saint-Cyrane was set free. He did not enjoy the royal favor for long; a cerebral hemorrhage carried him off on October 11, 1643. It was said, based on an equivocal sentence of Barcos, that Vincent attended his funeral. The information is incorrect; Barcos himself declared that he had been misunderstood. (Cf. Pierre Coste, Rapports de saint Vincent de Paul avec l'abbé de Saint-Cyrane [Toulouse: A. Nauze, 1914].)

Madame d'Andilly, (Examination of Saint-Cyrane, question 9). Under the examination ordered by Cardinal Richelieu (cf. vol. XIII, no. 33), Saint-Cyrane provides us with the information contained in this and the following footnotes.

His sins. (Examination, question 12.)
could not be shaken without wounding charity. All I had left was the astonishment in my soul that you, who profess to be so gentle and reserved everywhere, had taken the opportunity of a general protest brought against me by a triple cabal and for well-known interests to say things to me that you would not have dared to think before. Thus, instead of my expecting consolation from you, because of the situation, you made so bold as to join the others in overwhelming me, adding over and above to the excesses of the others the fact that you undertook to come and say it to me in my own home, which none of the others had dared to do.

I thought I would be failing in the candor of friendship and even in the charity of the Gospel if, after I had allowed sufficient time to go by to dispel the anger which had me all worked up, I did not make this complaint to you alone, writing from the house of an eminent bishop. He will give quite different testimony of me, if need be, in all Italy where he is known, not to mention France where, by the grace of God, I have no need of it. When the faction no longer exists and when the gross interests—those springs of the intense emotions and the speeches delivered about me—have passed, I shall remain in this matter as spotless and irreproachable before men as I claim to be before God. Since He is the essential Truth, He is especially opposed to all kinds of ignorance and falsehood proceeding from such situations. The Duchesse de Longueville, who had been stirred up against me, gave me reason to say this, without my being deluded by the copious reparation she offered me a month before her death in the presence of an individual of noble extraction who directs several other women who are not unknown to you. After her, Cardinal de la Valette was informed in detail of the accusations; he scoffed at them and, without my saying a word, spoke out so advantageously in my behalf about the things that were being attributed to me, that I would be embarrassed to repeat it. Whenever you wish to know what he said, I would prefer to designate to you one of your friends to

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4 Abbé de Prières, Sébastien Zamet, Bishop of Langres, and the Jesuits, joined by a few Oratorian Fathers. (Examination, question 91.)

5 Saint-Cyran was writing his letter from Dissay, a commune in Vienne, near Poitiers. Louis Chasteigner had a country house in that locality. (Examination, question 94.)

6 Henri-Louis Chasteigner de la Rochesposay, Bishop of Poitiers. (Examination, question 94.)

7 Louise de Bourbon, sister of the last Comte de Soissons, wife of Henri II, Duc de Longueville. A great friend of Port-Royal, she died September 9, 1637.

8 Louis de la Valette de Nogaret had occupied the See of Toulouse from 1614 to 1627; he received the Cardinal's hat in 1621. His military temperament prompted him to accept the command of the King's armies, which he led into Germany, Holland, and Italy. He died in Rivoli, near Turin, September 28, 1639.
whom he said it. I daresay there is not one among the prelates who frequent your house with whom I do not remain in agreement and whom I could not bring to accept all my opinions and sanction them with his approbation whenever I might choose to speak to him about them at leisure. Brilliant men as they are and, through their predecessors, the true fount of all the discipline that must be observed with regard to souls, far from being opposed to my opinions, they would, on the contrary, be delighted with them and thank me. I am telling you this just to let you know with what assurance I speak, having no intention of disturbing the honor they render you or the peace you enjoy in their conversation and company. For, with regard to your house, you believed you were doing it a good turn by preventing the favor I wished to do for it. Far from my being angry about the matter, I thank you warmly for saving me the trouble, without perhaps having diminished for all that the pleasure God knows I took in the willingness He had given me to serve you as much in spiritual as in temporal matters. You are well aware, however, that I offered my service without interfering in the initial steps by which you established yourself in the location where you are. I would not, for anything in the world, have wished to take part in those proceedings. That fact, more than anything else, should make you realize how little attached I am to my own opinion and how little inclined I am to bow with my friends against the judgment of my conscience which would never permit me to do such things. I upheld my convictions in a public debate to the point of bringing about a change of opinion on the part of that man to whom you are deeply obligated. I cite this only out of necessity and on this occasion alone to remind you of my condescension and to bring you to discount the impression others have given you of my inflexibility and severity. For I daresay that so little do I deserve that reputation in the judgment of those who know me and of the truth, that if I were to mention your four or five reproaches to that same person of distinction and his colleague, they would laugh at them and, in that way, without saying a word, they would calm all the anger I have felt because of them. I have great reason, Monsieur, to forgive you for them, and to say to you in my heart some of the words the Son of God said to those who mistreated Him. I trust, and I say it confidently, that those will not be the things that cause me to blush before His judgment. On the contrary, I expect some

9 At Saint-Lazare. It was not that the establishment of Saint Vincent at Saint-Lazare was distasteful to Saint-Cyran, but he made it a matter of principle not to get involved in other people's temporal affairs. (Examination, questions 37 and 108.)

10 Jérôme Bignon, Advocate General in the Paris Parlement. (Examination, questions 111 and 112.)
indulgence from His mercy because of them, if I persist in upholding and adoring in my heart what the succession of the apostolic doctrine, by which we thwart heretics and without which the Church cannot subsist, has been teaching me for twenty-five or thirty years through the medium of that same universal and Catholic Church.

Please believe that, as soon as I could and after a painful infirmity which came upon me in Cléry¹¹ and which I still have, I told you what was rankling in my mind. I wanted to treat you as a friend and a Christian and leave no bitterness in my soul that could alter ever so little the friendship I wish to maintain with you to the end of my life. I have given you evidence of this, since that painful distress, by the letter I wrote to the Bishop of Poitiers, and I would have given you even greater proof, if I had felt death approaching, by drawing up for you some articles concerning the things in your Institute with which I find fault. In that way I might have brought you to understand, at least after my death, my motives for offering you my service. You thought so little of it that you took the simple proposal I made you in that regard as a proof of the four things of which you accused me. Provided God does not accuse me of them, I am quite content. May He accept as His own the charity with which I intended to rid you of certain practices that I have always tolerated in your discipline, seeing how attached you were to them. Your determination to preserve them was even stronger because it was authorized by the advice of important people whom you were consulting.¹² After that, I am not fool enough to mention the thought I had on the matter, that God, in my opinion, does not receive them favorably. For there is only one true simplicity in which they can be done, rarer than the common grace of Christians and so rare that I would daresay of it what one of the blessed of our time¹³ has said of directors of souls today, that of ten thousand who make it their profession, people can barely single out one who can render them excusable before God. Nevertheless, I shall have the patience He Himself has in letting you act and I shall remain in the same willingness I have shown you to serve you in that regard through condescension, though I cannot do so with full approval. I shall leave aside the quality of master to take on that of a most humble and most obedient servant. . . .¹⁴

¹¹A canton in Loiret

¹²The only person intended here by Saint-Cyran is André Duval. (Examination, questions 117 and 118.)

¹³Saint Francis de Sales. (Examination, question 119.)

¹⁴Saint Vincent did not answer Saint-Cyran’s letter but, as soon as he heard of his return to Paris, he went to thank him. (Examination, question 34; cf. also, Barcos, Défense de feu M. Vincent de Paul, p. 16.)
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Germaine wrote to me about the difficulty she is having in going back to her usual confessor. I advised her to change. Mon Dieu, Monsieur, how I pity you! O well, Our Lord will reward you for all you suffer and put up with because of her.

I have detained for seven or eight days one of the two boys who brought her letter. I shall do what I can to find a master for him. If I cannot, I shall send him back. Please let me know what kind of boy he is, whether there is reason to hope that he will do well, and do so as soon as possible.

I am sorry about the two écus I owe you, but do I not owe you more? I did not dare give them to this messenger. I shall give them to the first person I find who can be trusted.

I am, meanwhile, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your.

283. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around November 1637]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

You must patiently put up with your son’s state of mind until Our Lord chooses to have him enter the way of life suited to the one he has in mind. Who will bear with a child if not his mother,

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Letter 282. - Reg. I, f° 64. The copyist notes that the original letter was in Saint Vincent’s handwriting.

Letter 283. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

'This letter was written a few days after no. 278.
and to whom does it belong to call each one to his duty but to
God? Since he is not studying and cannot decide on anything, I do
not see much objection to your thinking about M. de Riez.² It is
not a means to improve him, but to keep him somewhat occupied
and to reduce to some extent idleness, the mother of all vices, so
that it will not get the better of him. But in what capacity will it
be? That is what is holding me back. We must give that some
consideration and recommend it to God and we shall discuss it. I
shall send Madame Moran³ word to give him that room over the
main entrance. As for the rest of what you say, please do not think
of it.

What you tell me about little Barbe’s vow seems unnecessary.
She is entering religion to assist the sick who she will be told are
poor and consequently within the terms of her vow. But if she is
beset by scruples, the Bishop can dispense her from it. Be assured
that she will often have regrets and therefore will be a cause of
worry to those good nuns. And if she were to come back, I do not
know whether it would be advisable to accept her.

I have seen neither Henriette nor Marie.⁴ You must pray for the
Sisters and if you can get strong enough, go to the country.

I am a little worried about your patients. Please feed them well,
cheer them up, and greet both of them for me.

The night before last, Madame Goussault had a serious sweat-
ing attack and has been feeling better since, so I have been told.
Recover a little more of your strength and you will both be
stronger when you see each other. I have told her about your
indisposition at any rate. Mon Dieu, Mademoiselle, with what
calmness and strength she has accepted the Will of God in her

²Louis-Denis d’Attichy, son of Valence de Marillac and first cousin of Saint Louise, was
born in 1593 at the Château d’Attichy. In 1614, he entered the Order of the Minims (community
founded by Saint Francis of Paula), became provincial of Burgundy and was raised to the See
of Riez in Provence (1628). He was then transferred to Autun (1652), where he died of gall
stones, June 30, 1664. He left several works, among others a general history of the Order of
the Minims and a life of Cardinal de Bérulle.

³Housekeeper at the Collège des Bons-Enfants.

⁴Henriette Gesseaume and Marie Bécu.
illness! Her disposition in health is nothing in comparison with her attitude in sickness. But who brings that about? Is it she? Is it not Our Lord? I am, in His love, your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

284. - TO MOTHER DE LA TRINITE, IN TROYES!

My most dear and Reverend Mother,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am most unworthy to thank you as we are doing for the favors you are constantly pleased to do for us. That is why, my most dear and amiable Mother, I am asking the Holy Virgin, to whom you have given me in a special way, to obtain from her Son, that both of them may be your reward and your thanks.

I have considered several priests for your perquisites, but God has not allowed me to find what you need yet. I shall continue to be on the lookout, but I doubt that I shall do so as efficaciously as you watch over our frailty. Nevertheless, I shall do my best.

I shall also have statements drawn up for you about the vener-
ated Monsieur Gallemant\(^3\) by one of his vicars\(^4\) whom we have here in the house and by a priest whom he made use of when he was a little boy during the catechism lessons he used to give wherever he went. I shall also add what I personally know about him. I have not been able to do it since my return because of pressing business.

I am, my most dear and most amiable Mother, your most humble and most grateful servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Paris, November 28, 1637

\textit{Addressed:} Reverend Mother de la Trinité, Superioress of the second monastery of the Carmelites of Troyes, in Troyes

\textbf{285. - TO SAINT LOUISE}

[End of 1637]\(^1\)

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I praise God that you are feeling better. Please eat some eggs, for otherwise it is to be feared that you may have a relapse. As for that poor young woman in Madrid,\(^2\) I shall have a serious talk with

\(^3\)Jacques Gallemant, Doctor of the Sorbonne, first Superior of the Carmelites in France, Pastor in Aumale, then in Aubervilliers near Paris. He died in Besançon on December 25, 1630, at the age of seventy-two. Father Placide Gallemant published his life in 1653. It was probably for him that Mother de la Trinité was seeking biographical information.

\(^4\)The person in question was Jean Pillé, formerly a curate in Aubervilliers. He entered the Congregation of the Mission in 1631.


\(^1\)This letter seems to precede by a few days the institution of the Foundlings.

\(^2\)An old section in the suburbs of Paris, long remembered by the Château de Madrid, which had been built in the area on the edge of the Bois de Boulogne by François I\(^\text{st}\). The ruins of the château were razed in the 1960's and replaced by an apartment building.
the Attorney General\textsuperscript{3} about the matter and about a means of assisting those poor creatures at the Foundlings.\textsuperscript{4} Madame Goussault may perhaps have been able to tell you about the overture made to me in that regard. We shall discuss it with you in three or four days if your health allows you to come here.

I do not know what to tell you with regard to the Sisters from Saint-Paul,\textsuperscript{5} except that you must not expect anything other than trouble and difficulty. We shall talk about it when you come. Do not think, however, that my heart will change in any way with regard to the service you desire of me. Only death could prevent me from being, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

V. DEPAUL

Saint-Lazare, Thursday morning

\textit{Addressed:} Mademoiselle Le Gras

286. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[December 1637]\textsuperscript{1}

You will see from the enclosed, Mademoiselle, how much the Pastor in Rueil\textsuperscript{2} prefers the Sister from Nanterre\textsuperscript{3} to Barbe.\textsuperscript{4} I adore Providence in this. We must put her to work farther away

\textsuperscript{3}Mathieu Molé.
\textsuperscript{4}The foundlings taken in at the Couche, rue Saint-Landry.
\textsuperscript{5}A parish in Paris.

\textbf{Letter 286.} - According to Coste, the original autograph letter was at the house of the Daughters of Charity in Castelsarrasin. This house is now closed and the present location of the letter is unknown.

\textsuperscript{1}After January 1, 1638, Saint Vincent would not have said Madame de Combalet, but rather the Duchesse d’Aiguillon. On the other hand, the date of December 1637 is required because of the presence of Lambert aux Couteaux in Richelieu. (Cf. no. 287.)

\textsuperscript{2}In Hauts-de-Seine. Richelieu had his country house near there.
\textsuperscript{3}Near Paris.
\textsuperscript{4}Barbe Angiboust.
and in a more useful manner. M. Lambert, who is in Richelieu,\(^5\) told Madame de Combalet that a Charity must be established there; two poor women had died there that week without assistance. What do you think, Mademoiselle, of sending Barbe and some other young woman?\(^6\) Oh! how much good there is to be done in that region! If you are a gallant woman, you could go there in the spring, by coach as far as Orléans and then by water as far as Saumur, which is eight leagues farther. Well, all for the best. We shall talk about it.

In the meantime, I send you greetings and am, in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

287. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROMANS\(^1\)

December 27, 1637

For a long time now, I have been hesitant about whether I should ask you to come and work in Richelieu. The Cardinal is

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\(^5\)In Indre-et-Loire.

\(^6\)This plan was not to become a reality until the final months of 1638.


Bernard Codoing was born in Agen on August 11, 1610. He was ordained a priest in December 1635 and was received into the Congregation of the Mission on February 10, 1636. He holds an important place among the first companions of Saint Vincent. He was the first Superior of the seminary in Annecy (1640-1642) and directed the house in Rome for two years (1642-1644). Then he was placed at the head of the Saint Charles Seminary, situated on the grounds of Saint-Lazare (1645-1646). From there he went to Saint-Méen under particularly difficult circumstances (1646-1648), next to La Rose (1648-1649), and finally to Richelieu (1649-1650), always as Superior. He was very successful in his missions in France and Italy. His sermons were so appealing that at one point Saint Vincent considered publishing them. Bernard Codoing would have rendered greater service to Saint Vincent had he been less attached to his own ideas and had he learned to control his tendency to hastiness. We might be tempted to say "Happy faults!", since they merited for us some of the most beautiful letters in Saint Vincent's correspondence.
founding a Mission there, both for that duchy and for the See of Luçon, together with the work for the ordinands and the retreatants of the Poitiers diocese. On the one hand, I considered the needs of the good people where you are and the good use they are making of the grace Our Lord is offering them. But, on the other hand, I felt that the same need and the same good is found among the people of Poitou. People have written to me, and M. Renar, who has just returned from there, told me that they have never seen souls so touched or such crowds coming from every direction.

What has caused me to decide in favor of Richelieu is the obligation we have there, since the foundation is perpetual. That is why, Monsieur, I most humbly entreat you to leave upon receipt of

Sometime between 1651 and 1655 Codoing left the Congregation of the Mission. On July 24, 1654, he was Pastor of Saint-Hilaire in Agen, where he last signed the baptismal register on January 2, 1673. He also acted as Vicar General of the Bishop of Gap. The last reference to Codoing is October 6, 1675, at which time he was at the Seminary in Sens (cf. Annales [1949-1950]).

2The duchy-peerage of Richelieu had been constituted in 1631 along with the baronies of Faye-la-Vineuse, Isle-Bouchard, and Chinon.

3The foundation contract between Cardinal Richelieu and Saint Vincent was signed January 4, 1638, at the Château de Rueil (cf. Arch. Nat. MM 354). The Saint agreed to send seven priests to Richelieu before the month of March and to add three others within two years to take over the pastoral functions in that locality. These priests were to give missions within the duchy and the Sees of Luçon and Poitiers, prepare the ordinands, and receive priests for retreats. The contract further stipulated that, "of these ten, four shall remain in the town of Richelieu to perform the functions of the above-mentioned mission, three shall be sent every five years into every town and village of the duchy of Richelieu to perform the functions of the mission and, after having covered the entire duchy and while waiting for the cycle to begin over, they shall give the mission in the See of Poitiers or other places near the duchy, at his Eminence's pleasure. The other three shall be sent to the See of Luçon for the same purpose. The six sent to the duchy and to the See of Luçon shall be obliged to go to those places four times a year in the most suitable seasons, and to spend six weeks there each time...."

The contract also mandated that "the above-mentioned Vincent binds himself... in perpetuity to receive in the house of the Mission in Richelieu all those in the Poitiers diocese who wish to be ordained and to instruct, lodge, and feed them for the twelve days preceding the Ember Days. He is also to receive throughout the year, in perpetuity, all the priests whom the Bishop of Poitiers and his successors wish to send for retreat and instructions in ecclesiastical functions. He shall house and feed them for two weeks, provided, however, that not more than eight priests be sent at one time, in addition to those who are to be promoted to sacred orders."

For his part, the Cardinal gave the Saint the revenue from the record office of Loudun, valued at 4550 livres, and committed himself to procuring the necessary lodging.
this letter, if you are not on a mission. If you are, let it be immediately after you have finished, without letting it be known until your departure. We must not fail in our obligation to be in the aforesaid Richelieu by January 20 or 25. You can assure the people there that when God is pleased to send us some men to serve them in our vocation, we shall share them, but, in the meantime, absolute necessity obliges us to act in this way.

I had asked M. Grenu to go and work in Aiguillon, which is in the vicinity of Agen, but since then I have asked him to come to Troyes for a special reason. M. de Sergis informed me that all of Aiguillon has gone to confession and that the important people were the first to begin. Only a very few people were left and they were to go the following day. M. Hopille, the Vicar General, sent him four or five pastors from the diocese. They worked with him in Aiguillon for three weeks, except on Sundays when they went to their own parishes. He also told me that crowds of people came in from the countryside to make their devotions, even from as far away as ten leagues. Judge, Monsieur, whether the prickly thorns of our human nature do not produce fine roses; they blossom as soon as the sun of justice sheds the rays of its grace upon them. Even so, I had to say this word to you for your consolation.

Let us get back to your journey. If you are ready to leave with M. Grenu, you could travel together as far as Lyons. From there he will head for Châlons and you for Roanne, where you can take a boat as far as Orléans. From there, you can go to Saumur, where you will be one day from Richelieu. You will find Messieurs Lambert and Perdu in Champigny, about one league from Richelieu.

O Monsieur, how many spiritual needs there are in that locality, where there are so many heretics4 for want of having heard God

4Huguenots, who had espoused the doctrines of Calvinism. They had been granted religious and political freedom by the Edict of Nantes (April 15, 1598). Cardinal Richelieu, fearing the political freedom which made the Huguenots almost a state within the State, successfully waged war against the centers of the Huguenots and their citadel of La Rochelle. The Edict of
spoken of, so they say, in the Catholics' church! It was in that area that the heresy was first spread, diffused, and most obstinately defended. It was from there that it drew its main strength for the overthrow of our holy religion and even of the State, if it had been able to do so. Oh! what a great empire Satan had and still has there! I hope, Monsieur, that Our Lord will make use of you and of good M. Durot to give him a fair fight, certainly not in sublimitate sermonis et humanae sapientiae verbis, sed in ostensione virtutis spiritus, in humilitate et mansuetudine, in patientia et longanimitate.

Go, therefore, Monsieur, in nomine Domini. I entreat His Divine Goodness to grant you His holy blessing together with a greater share in His spirit. I have no doubt that your heart feels as though it is being torn from that locality where you have put down roots of charity in those souls, and that you are experiencing the emotions of Saint Paul when he said his final farewell to that people who wept so much over him. Oh well, it depends only upon a truly apostolic heart to strengthen itself against such feelings, to rise above them, and to go where holy obedience reveals Our Lord calling. Certainly, Monsieur, to be in that state is to

Grace of Alès (June 27, 1629) abolished the political privileges of the Huguenots while leaving untouched the religious guarantees of the Edict of Nantes.

1Nicolas Durot, born in Oisemont (Somme), 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 and 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.

2... in the loftiness of sermons and in words of human wisdom, but in the demonstration of spiritual virtue, in humility and gentleness, in patience and forbearance.

As he often did, Saint Vincent paraphrased the Sacred Scriptures. This text is composed of divers passages from Saint Paul:

1 Cor. 2:1 and 4. "As for myself, brothers, when I came to you I did not come proclaiming God's testimony with any particular eloquence or 'wisdom':" "My message and my preaching had none of the persuasive force of 'wise' argumentation, but the convincing power of the Spirit."

Eph. 4:2. "... with perfect humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another lovingly."

Col. 1:11. "By the might of his glory you will be endowed with the strength needed to stand fast, even to endure joyfully whatever may come." (NAB)
accomplish God's good pleasure and to begin one's paradise here in this world. But what am I saying to a soul who has always appeared quite ready to go to the ends of the earth for the love of God if holy obedience should require it?

I do not know why my pen has run away from me to say all this to you. I do know that it is not because I think you need to be persuaded, since perhaps you need rather to be restrained in the ardor of your zeal. That is something I have to talk to you about and shall discuss with you some day, please God. He knows, He alone, why I have rambled on without thinking.

It would be wise for you take your leave of the Bishop of Valence by a visit or in writing and to thank him for the favor of having accepted your service in his diocese. Tell him that nothing less than sheer necessity could have induced us to recall you and, if God be pleased to give us the means, we shall try to return on another occasion.

Please take leave also of good and very dear Sister Marie and recommend to her prayers this Little Company and the most frail and miserable of all men, myself, I who am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble.

I shall expect no other response than that of your departure. Please let it be as soon as possible. Your brother is awaiting letters from you in response to the ones I sent you from him. I guess Our Lord has cured you of too fond a love for your relatives.
Mademoiselle,

Together we must see about what has to be done with regard to Saint-Leu.¹ At the last meeting,² it was the general opinion that you be asked to experiment with the foundlings to see if there is a way of feeding them with cow’s milk, and to get³ two or three of them for that purpose. I am consoled that Providence is turning to you for this work. I am well aware that there are a number of things with which to find fault. We shall discuss them.⁴


¹A parish in Paris

²The meeting of the Ladies of Charity of the Hôtel-Dieu.

³The original text reads: “cow’s milk, and for that purpose to get...” Saint Vincent obviously forgot to erase “and for that purpose.”

⁴At that time a great number of children were being abandoned in Paris and its suburbs. Saint Vincent estimated that there were about three or four hundred of them. (Cf. Abelly, op. cit., vol. II, chap. 10, 1st ed., p. 362.) Any passerby who came upon one was supposed to notify the chief of police in the neighborhood. He alone had the right to pick up the child. The foundlings were taken to the Hôtel-Dieu and from there to the Couche on the rue Saint-Landry, where a widow assisted by two servants was responsible for their care. The house lacked funds and the wet nurses, devotedness. Death claimed so many victims among the little creatures that Saint Vincent could say in one of his talks to the Ladies of Charity: “For the past fifty years, not one of them has lived, unless someone has been found lately who survived.” The servants used to give them drugs to make them sleep, or sell them for eight sous to beggars who broke their arms and legs to arouse the pity of passersby! Saint Vincent, who was involved in so many charitable works, was familiar with the Couche. He deplored such abuses and was trying to find a solution to the situation. The company of the Ladies of Charity was taking care of the sick at the Hôtel-Dieu. The Paris chapter urged them to assume responsibility for the foundlings as well. After two years of prayer and reflection, Saint Vincent decided to try it. The letter quoted above shows us that the beginnings of the work were very modest: two or three children confided to the care of a few Daughters of Charity and nourished with cow’s milk. This number soon rose to twelve, and four wet nurses were given to them. They were housed on the rue des Beaulangers near the Porte Saint-Victor. This modest effort brought good results. Consequently, in 1640 the Ladies decided to accept all the foundlings who were brought. The King and Queen became interested in the undertaking and in 1642 Louis XIII gave four thousand livres out of his Gonesse estate; in 1644, the gift was doubled. Then the Ladies acquired the Château de Bicêtre where the weaned babies were taken in 1647. Finally, in 1651 the stay at Bicêtre was recognized as harmful to the children’s health. They returned to Paris and were housed at the far end of the faubourg Saint-Denis, and in 1670 in two houses, one opposite Notre-Dame and the other in the faubourg Saint-Antoine. (Cf. Pierre Coste, Saint Vincent de Paul et les dames de la Charité [Paris: Bloud, 1917], pp. 17-34.)

For the history of the Foundlings, one can refer still further to the following: the rules set up
Madame Goussault, the President's wife, does not seem at all strong to me. Take care of your health.

I wish you a young heart and a love in its first bloom for Him Who loves us unceasingly and as tenderly as if He were just beginning to love us. For all God's pleasures are ever new and full of variety, although He never changes.

I am, in His love, with an affection such as His Goodness desires and which I owe Him out of love for Him, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

New Year's Day [1638]

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

289. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[January 1638]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am returning your report and mine. Please insert into mine the words you are adding or changing, and please take the trouble to copy it at your convenience and send the whole thing back to me. I mean even the report you wrote which I am returning.2


*The year the work of the Foundlings began. (Cf. Coste, *op. cit.*, p. 21, n. 1.)

Letter 289. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

*This letter seems to have been written a few days before no. 297.

*We believe this is referring to reports pertaining to the new establishment of the Foundlings.
I sent word asking M. de Cordes to come here to the house today and registered my report about M. de Marillac.3

I find no objection at all to your visiting Madame de Liancourt at your leisure.

Please see about those two young women. The smaller one seems to be just as you described her; if the other one is really called, her own town of Nogent might have need of her in time.4

The parents of the girl who died at the Hôtel-Dieu will want her clothes and rightly so. For anything further, until the matter is settled, we shall look into it. Meanwhile, it is better to leave them where they are. The law must be made before it is put into practice.

I shall most willingly warn you of your faults and shall not let a single one of them go by.

I do not quite understand what you told me about the officers and yourself. What reason do you have for saying that you are not to be mentioned in the matter? You must beware of falling into the vice of singularity because it is rooted in vanity, and vanity, in pride, the vice of all vices. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

V. D.

Today I am going to La Chapelle to hear Mademoiselle d’Atri’s5

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3Michel de Marillac, grandson of the Keeper of the Seals, Seigneur d’Ollainville, Counselor in the Paris Parlement. He died December 29, 1684.

4She proved unsatisfactory. Saint Vincent would later exclaim: “O mon Dieu! how that poor creature deceived me!”

5Marie-Angélique d’Atri, born in 1617, was brought up at Port-Royal where she met Saint-Cyran and revealed her conscience to him several times. In her youth she underwent a terrible crisis about which we shall say more later. Her aversion for the things of God was so great that she was thought to be possessed by the devil and the ecclesiastical judge of Paris commissioned Saint Vincent to exorcise her. Shortly after her cure, she was placed in a Dominican convent from which she soon went to the Benedictines of the newly founded monastery in Picpus-les-Paris. She was already there on June 19, 1638, and was still there in 1639 trying to discern her vocation. On June 19, 1638, she appeared before the tribunal responsible for investigating Saint-Cyran. In her deposition, published by the Jesuit François Pinthereau (op. cit., p. 421), she declared that her melancholy, allied to certain illnesses, inclined her to
confession. I shall not be able to see M. de Cordes until Friday according to what he has just written me.

Enclosed is the Comtesse de Maure's letter.

290. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[January 1638]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever! I have been thinking of coming to see you lately, especially today, but I find myself absolutely prevented from doing so. I shall come as soon as possible. However, let me tell you that I am worried about your fevers at night. Please take care of your health as much as you can for the sake of Our Lord and His work. Still, I think you have been less sick this winter than during others, especially while you were living in the city, and that consoles me somewhat.

Let us talk about three things. About the little foundlings — I am being pressured in an unimaginable way by M. Hardy. He is blaming me for all the delay. Mademoiselle du Mée is in the

scrupulosity. The attraction she felt for religious life, towards which Saint-Cyran was directing her, was hindered by her repugnance to making commitments. In 1639 or shortly after, she returned to Port-Royal and had a small hermitage built near the church where she lived until the dispersion in 1669. She ended her days near Forcalquier where she had sought seclusion. An ardent Jansenist, she consecrated part of her immense fortune to the works of that sect. Her mind was somewhat unbalanced and her will indecisive. Saint-Cyran wrote her several letters from Vincennes.

6Anne Doni d'Attichy, Comtesse de Maure, Saint Louise's cousin.

Letter 290. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1This letter was written before no. 295, during the mission in Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

2Sébastien Hardy, Sieur de la Tabarze, former Councillor of the King and former District Collector of excise and election taxes in Le Mans. On January 27, 1640, he left an income of fifty livres tournois [local measure of money based on the amount of silver or gold in a coin] to the work of the Foundlings. (Arch. Nat., Y180, f° 208 v°.)
country. Would there be any objection to your buying a goat and continuing your experiment further?

The second matter is that we are being asked for a Sister from the Charity for Saint-Germain-en-Laye. The mission is being given there and the Charity has been set up since last Sunday. She is to get those good women started. What do you think of sending Barbe? They have a special reason for wanting her there — because of the soldiers the King wants helped. We shall need a room for that purpose while the court is there. Oh! how I wish you could go! But then, Our Lord is receiving more glory from you as you are. Let us get back to Barbe. Will you be able to give her a companion, or will you send her alone? The first would be better. In that case, will you have someone else for Saint-Jacques?

I do not know what to tell you about the Sister at Saint-Paul, except that I am afraid you may cause some grumbling. Marguerite’s mind wanders sometimes. I wrote to M. de la Salle to let me know if that young woman would be good at teaching school. In any case, it is only for a while; she will be needed for Richelieu.

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3 On Richelieu's advice, the King had chosen Nicolas Pavillon, who had just been named to the bishopric of Alet, to give the mission. The outcome was worthy of note. Louis XIII went to hear the preacher several times. Ladies of the court, maids of honor of the Queen, devoted until then to society gatherings, no longer appeared among the courtiers. A Confraternity of Charity was established, of which they became members. They were to be seen, modestly dressed, taking their turn visiting the poor and the sick. The nobles of the court, annoyed, gave the King to understand that the visiting of the sick by people who came so close to the Queen was a danger to the royal family. The King became alarmed, but the Queen came to the defense of her ladies and maids of honor. Then the nobles tried to discredit Pavillon. They told Louis XIII that the preacher had compared him to the beast of the Apocalypse. For their part, the musketeers, at the instigation of the courtiers, complained that Pavillon had advised them to be satisfied with their salary, without requiring anything else from their hosts. Pavillon had to defend himself, which he did in a long written statement. Since this statement did not suffice, he asked the King to accept the verdict of the Sorbonne, which decided in his favor. (Cf. Etienne Dejean, op. cit., p. 15, n. 2.)

4 Barbe Angiboust.

5 Saint-Jacques-de-la-Boucherie, a parish in Paris. The Charity was not established at Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas until later.

6 A parish in Paris.
The third matter pertains to Marie from Saint-Laurent. Her father has earnestly entreated me to take her back. Do you think that would be a good idea? If so, send her word to speak to me.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am your servant.

V. D.

My greetings to Madame Pelletier. The Chancellor's wife is working for her. Madame de Chaumont is the superior in Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

290a. - TO JEAN DE FONTENEIL, IN BORDEAUX

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I think I answered your last letter and rejoiced with you at the care of His Goodness for you and those good missionaries of your company. I greet them with all possible affection and reverence. I thank you most humbly, Monsieur, for your kindness in having written to our Aiguillon Missionaries. I am informing them that it is not yet time for them to go and see you. They will do so a few months from now. Meanwhile, Monsieur, I beg you to forward the enclosed to M. de Saint-Martin in Dax.

Good Monsieur Nevelet, the Archdeacon of Troyes, died of the plague some time ago. That has somewhat scattered their company, but I hope it will serve to unite them more closely. I made a trip to Troyes during that time, and God knows how many times

7The parish in which Saint-Lazare was located.
8Madame Seguier.
9Marie de Bailleul, lady-in-waiting to Anne of Austria, wife of Louis de Chaumont, Seigneur d'Athieules, and sister of Nicolas de Bailleul.
1Principal town of a canton in Lot-et-Garonne.
good Monsieur Roté, that holy man, did me the honor of thinking it appropriate for us to speak of you.

The priests' assembly\(^2\) in this city keeps on getting better and better, it seems to me. Three bishops have just been drawn from among them: M. Godeau for Grasse,\(^3\) M. Fouquet for Bayonne,\(^4\) M. Pavillon for Alet;\(^5\) and M. Barreau has just been named by

\(^{2}\)The Tuesday conferences.

\(^{3}\)Antoine Godeau, born in Dreux on September 24, 1605, was a frequent visitor at the Hôtel de Rambouillet, where he had been nicknamed "Julie's Dwarf." His poetry was relished there. It earned for him Richelieu's favor and a seat in the French Academy. He was consecrated Bishop of Grasse, December 24, 1636. A stroke carried him off on April 17, 1672. He wrote a great deal both in poetry and in prose concerning history, Sacred Scripture, discipline, and various subjects of devotion. His poetic works fill three volumes. (Cf. Georges Doublet, Godeau, évêque de Grasse et de Vence [1605-1672] [Paris: A. Picard, 1911].)

\(^{4}\)François Fouquet was the son of François Fouquet, Comte de Vaux, and of the devout Marie de Maupeou, who was, among the Ladies of Charity, one of the most admirable for her zeal and her devotedness to Saint Vincent. Fouquet's brothers were Nicolas Fouquet, Superintendent of Finances, and Louis Fouquet, Bishop of Agde. His sister, Louise-Agnès, became a nun in the first monastery of the Visitation. François Fouquet, appointed to the bishopric of Bayonne in 1636, was not consecrated until March 15, 1639. He was transferred to the See of Agde in 1643, appointed Coadjutor of Narbonne, December 18, 1656, and Archbishop of that diocese in 1659. Relegated to Alençon in 1661, he died in his exile on October 19, 1673. He summoned the Priests of the Mission to Agde and Narbonne and established the Daughters of Charity in the latter town. A very zealous prelate, too zealous perhaps, he found Saint Vincent's slowness hard to understand, but he, more than anyone else, admired his virtue. He felt deeply the death of this great servant of God. As soon as he received news of it, he wrote to the priests of Saint-Lazare: "However prepared I may have been for M. Vincent's death, since he was advanced in age, I assure you that I did not hear the news of his passing without surprise and without being moved with a great sorrow, humanly speaking, at seeing the Church deprived of a most worthy subject, the Congregation of its very dear Father, and I myself of a very charitable friend to whom I am so greatly obligated. I think that of all those whom his charity caused him to embrace as his children, there is no one to whom he showed more affection and gave more signs of friendship than to me."

\(^{5}\)Pavillon was deeply grieved at the news of his appointment and fell ill. Consumed by fever, he visibly declined. He considered throwing himself at Richelieu's feet, but his best friends discouraged him from this. He went into seclusion, not wishing to see anyone anymore, not even Saint Vincent. However, the good Saint finally persuaded him to accept his appointment. He went so far as to tell Pavillon that "on the day of judgment he would rise up against him along with the souls of the Alet diocese destined to die to God" if he abandoned them by his refusal. Pavillon made his preparatory retreat at Saint-Lazare under Saint Vincent's direction. One of his friends related: "One morning, I was astonished to see M. Vincent and several Priests of the Mission enter his room and kneel down in a circle. He turned to Monsieur Vincent and, in front of all those men, he confessed the faults he realized he had committed in conversation. He asked their pardon for the scandal he had given them, in such humble terms that I was overwhelmed. In the name of those assembled, Monsieur Vincent responded in
the King as Coadjutor of Sarlat, without the Bishop's consent.

God has called good M. Semusse to Himself. He lived as a saint and died in the same way. And I am, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Paris, January 8, 1638

Addressed: Monsieur de Fonteneil, Canon of Saint-Seurin, in Bordeaux

291. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[January 17, 1638]

Monsieur,

Our procurator from the Charity and the sisters are doing wonders today for the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus. Of their own accord, they wanted me to send and ask you to arrange a sermon for them for Vespers, which are not said before two-thirty. They would really like Monsieur de la Salle, but if that is not possible, they would gladly have someone else. I join with them in asking this favor so that they may be encouraged to perseverance.

I think you know that Sister Barbe is here and that both she and I are in good health right now. I think it would be very good for her to have the
honor of seeing you before she leaves. Should we not be thinking about the little furnishings she will need?

Please do not worry about the wet nurse for the infants; we do not have any of them yet. The nurse we have will be quite adequate for the time you indicate and longer.

I am, in the love of Jesus, Monsieur, your most humble daughter and most grateful servant.

L. de M.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

292. - TO MOTHER DE LA TRINITE, IN TROYES

My very dear Mother,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

This is Monsieur du Coudray, one of our Missionaries, who is coming to see you with the draft of the contract for the foundation of the Bishop of Troyes.¹ The Commander thought it advisable to

Letter 292. - The original autograph letter is at the Carmelite monastery of Troyes in Saint-Germain, 10120 Saint-André-les-Vergers.

¹As early as 1621, René de Breslay, Bishop of Troyes, with the assistance of Adrien Bourdoise and at the insistence of Mother de la Trinité had made an attempt to found a mission house in his episcopal city. In 1637, the Prelate and the Prioress of the Carmelite monastery felt urged interiorly to resume the abandoned project. They mentioned it to M. de Sillery, titular of the Commandery in Troyes, and it was decided that Missionaries would be requested of Saint Vincent. The agreement was concluded October 3, 1637, in the parlor of the Carmel, at a meeting of the Bishop of Troyes, Saint Vincent, and Mother de la Trinité. The new establishment was to open February 17, 1638, at the latest, and was to be staffed from the beginning by six priests and two brothers. Until 1641, the number of the priests could be four, if it was impossible to send more. The Missionaries were to evangelize the places in the diocese to which the Bishop of Troyes would see fit to send them and, every five years, the estates of the Commandery. The Prelate assured them an annual income of 2,000 livres and the Commander, half that amount. This contract was awaiting completion. On January 19, M. de Sillery gave the Priests of the Mission several funds and pieces of property, reserving the usufruct for his own use. Moreover, he promised to give them annually the sum of 100 livres tournois. Bishop de Breslay fulfilled his obligations on March 12 when he presented the Missionaries with a house worth 1,200 livres in revenue, situated in Paris on the important rue du faubourg Saint-Michel, and a sum of 600 livres, of which at first he gave only the interest. It was stipulated in this new contract that the Missionaries would prepare the ordinands for ten days, and would