The priests of the Community of Saint-Nicolas, having seriously examined the proposal and concession above and considered the whole of it maturely, praised M. Bourdoise for his fervor and great desire to advance in virtue, indeed, to render himself more suitable for the establishment of the seminary and of the community. In the same way, they also recognize the continuation of the benefits, favors, and kindnesses which the gentlemen of the Mission have bestowed on them at all times, for which they are most grateful. In return for this, they accept the man or men whom the gentlemen of the Mission choose to send to Saint-Nicolas and to whom the Community may be of use in any way whatever. And moreover, they offer them anything they feel the Community can do for their good.

As for the carrying out of the aforesaid proposal, the priests of the Community have humbly requested M. Bourdoise, their dear confère and honored treasurer, to be content with making a visit to Saint-Lazare, be it for one or several days, without its being apparent or serving as a precedent for M. N. or others, and to communicate from there with the said seminary, according as the gentlemen of the Mission will be pleased to permit.

Drawn up in the assembly Room of the Community, the...

GUILLAUME COMPAING
Priest and Secretary of the same

Letter 374a. - Copy made from ms. 2453 of the Bibliothèque Mazarine. This letter is the response to no. 374. The text was published in the Annales (1952), p. 231 and reprinted in Mission et Charité, 19-20, p. 21.

'Courtin, the author of ms. 2453 and a contemporary of Adrien Bourdoise, assigned the date to this letter which is the response to no. 374.

M. Bourdoise wanted to resign from his office in the Community of Saint-Nicolas. He wanted to retire to Saint-Lazare for a rather long time. Saint Vincent admitted him to a retreat and arranged to send him back to his Community.

One of the first members of the Community of Saint-Nicolas. He died in 1656.
375. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Wednesday, at noon
[Between September 1638 and September 1639]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

We acted upon your judgment concerning the Foundlings: the work will be joined to that of the Hôtel-Dieu if the Ladies approve. Consequently, we shall have the same officers we need for each of the works, with the exception of a treasurer.

I cannot understand what you told me about the little girls.

Since you think Nicole may have mended her ways, fine; try her again, and try Henriette in Saint-Germain. However, I think you should allow a few days to go by before you do it.

M. de Cordes has not yet come back from the country. When he does, I shall speak to him about that good married woman.

I am going to Grigny to see Madame Goussault, the President's wife, and Madame Le Roux at her retreat. I hope to be here next Saturday for a little meeting on Sunday.

Please do what you can to stay well, for the love of Our Lord.

I am in His love, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

The Chancellor's wife gave me three écus for a goat. I seem to remember that Mademoiselle du Mée is the one to whom we are supposed to give them. It is for the foundlings.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

Letter 375. - The original autograph was made available to Coste by M. Honoré Bouquillard, a notary in Nevers.

1Reference to the beginning of the work with the Foundlings (1638) and to Madame Goussault, who died on September 20, 1639, prompts us to assign the dates between which this letter was written.

2Henriette Gesseaume was to be sent to Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

3Madame Séguier.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Yesterday evening I received your letters of the fourth and twelfth of last month. The first relieved me of the great anxiety I was suffering lest my package, whose receipt you acknowledged in your letter of the fourth, had been lost. May God be blessed that it has not and may He also be blessed for what you told me in your letters! Here is the reply to all your points.

(1) I praise God for the permission you obtained to hear confessions and for the use you are making of it with regard to the poor, the prisoners, and the people of the countryside.

(2) I admire that Congregation’s2 care for the missions and I pray the sovereign Shepherd and Master of the missions to draw glory from it. Is there any harm in your just simply telling them about the one here? Could you not by that means get an establishment for that purpose? I wrote to you about the little chapel outside the Vatican. It is more tempting to me than the parish. What if you were to offer to scour the countryside for His Holiness or some bishop? I would send you someone from the Company to go with you. I spoke to you about Cardinal Bagni,3 because I consider him one of the greatest prelates in the Church. I have a very deep affection for him and for serving him. He told me long ago that he would do us the honor of making use of us. I have never had a picture of any prelate except of him. His wisdom, his

Letter 376. - Collection for the process of beatification.

1Louis Lebreton was born in Saint-Jean-sur-Erve (Mayenne) in 1591. He entered the Congregation of the Mission on May 8, 1638, and was sent to Rome at the beginning of 1639 to further the affairs of the Company at the Roman Court, especially the question of the vows. He gave several missions in the Roman countryside, where he was very successful. His career as a Missionary was short but full. He died in Rome, October 17, 1641. The biographical notes dedicated to him in volume II of the Notices, pp. 205-222, do not give any details other than those contained in Saint Vincent’s correspondence.

2The Propaganda.

3Giovanni Francesco Guidi di Bagno, the former Nuncio in France (1627-1630).
goodness, and the affection with which he honored our Little Company here have been for me the image of God’s wisdom, His goodness, and the regard with which His Divine Majesty so kindly honors our Little Company.

(3) What shall I say to you about the way to act with those priests on the mission, except that charity and candor should always hold the upper hand and that the mentality of the country calls for caution.

(4) You are right in not eating out and in accepting remuneration for the Mass. In the meantime, there is humility in acting thus and prudence in living that way until you are known, but I think you would do well to distribute the remuneration to the poor.

(5) I am waiting anxiously, not to say impatiently, for the reactions to your mission and the way it is accepted on your return.

(6) Guillard was born of a Catholic father and mother. He is the one who fell into heresy and remained in it for three years. Now he is one of the most fervent men in the Company. We have sent him to Lorraine to assist the poor corporally and spiritually; he is the sixth one. He is not yet forty years old and is neither a doctor nor a nobleman. Does not the work he is doing in Lorraine merit an extra tempora? Monsieur Parisos obtained one for Lescar who has none of these three qualifications.

(7) The church in Richelieu has Notre-Dame as its title or patron.

(8) I shall repay the one hundred livres and the exchange for Monsieur Marchand’s security here or I shall send it by Monsieur Lumague if I do not receive instructions as to whom to give it here.

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4Except for what Saint Vincent writes here, no reference to Guillard, a cleric, can be found, either in Coste or in the Notices. It would appear that he did not persevere in the Congregation.

5Privilege of being ordained on days other than those fixed by Canonical regulations.

6The Bishop of Poitiers had established the parish in Richelieu by a decree dated May 27, 1638, and Urban VIII had given his approval, but certain difficulties delayed the recording of the Bull at the registry of ecclesiastical appointments in Poitou until 1645.

7A wealthy banker with whom Saint Vincent often transacted business.

8André Lumague, one of the most important bankers of the time, to whom Marie de Médicis
(9) As for the Toul affair, we are in the midst of a lawsuit here. I shall try to send you the documents you requested; we need them for evidence. I shall see if I can have a copy of them put together.

(10) With regard to the Saint-Lazare matter, we were established by a decree of the Parlement. The Archbishop of Paris always had the power of appointment. At the last vacancy, there was one person who received a commission from the King and another from the Archbishop; he is the Prior today, but that stopped with him. It is true that this was effected by an agreement between President Janin, who requested it of the King, and Monsieur Le Bret, the State Councillor, who obtained it for the Prior from the Archbishop of Paris. Since then, to strengthen himself against his commission or the ad nutum dismissal provision, the Prior has had a letter of appointment sent from Rome. Outside of that, no other person has ever held a letter of appointment that I know of, except some bishops of Paris. Moreover, those were commissions ad nutum, and the Prior used to give an account to the Bishop of Paris every year.

What if you wrote to Monsieur Gilioli to apologize if you have not gone to see him? I told you I would be very happy if you would stop in Ferrara to see him, to assure him that he still holds the same place of esteem and affection in the Company’s heart as before, and to give him news of us.

It is considered doubtful here that the privileged altar His Holiness so kindly granted us for Saint-Lazare is valid, because it sometimes happens, though rarely, that only three or four Masses

and Cardinal Richelieu had recourse more than once. In 1616 he was charged with negotiating the purchase of the principality of Monaco for the Queen, but he failed in that mission.

9See no. 293, n. 1.

10The decree of the Parlement for the recording of the Letters Patent confirming the contract of union of Saint-Lazare was dated September 7, 1632. The Holy See had given its approval March 15, 1635, but the Bulls were not sent until April 18, 1655. The prelates of the Roman Court, in spite of the proofs furnished by Saint Vincent, were still reluctant in 1639 to believe that the conferring of the priory depended on the Archbishop of Paris.

11Julien Le Bret, Seigneur de Flacourt, Counselor in the Parlement in 1635, then State Councillor, died in April 1688.

12Adrien Le Bon.
are said there in one day. I repeat, rarely. Nevertheless, we think it
would be well for His Holiness to be so kind as to decrease the
number from seven Masses a day to three or four. Please discuss
this.

I sent your indulgences to Jouy. I shall say nothing about your
business for now, I mean the one for which you went, except that,
all things carefully thought out and weighed, I think you should
aim at complete establishment, for reasons that I shall tell you.
Here is a very urgent one. I have just now seen a member of the
Company, one of the best of all, among the most devoted, and a
very gentle spirit. Nevertheless, he has been determined for about
a week now to leave. He has not given me any particular reason
for it, no matter what remonstrance, entreaty, or humiliation I
have been able to use with him. And what is the most strange is
that his vocation seems to come entirely from God. He is an
excellent example to the Company and has confirmed his mem-
bership in it the way several individuals and older members have
done, as you know, that is, by vows.13

After that example, I would not know anyone of whom we
could be sure. I am not giving you his name, because I have not
yet told this to anyone here.

With the help of Our Lord, we have undertaken the assistance of
the poor people in Lorraine14 and have sent Messieurs Bécu and

13We cannot guarantee the exactitude of these last two words. The copy is illegible.
14War, plague, and famine were wreaking havoc on the unfortunate inhabitants of Lorraine.
Bands of brigands were multiplying to such an extent that the village people had to seek refuge
in the fortified towns. The fields lay fallow and food prices were prohibitive. Almost eighty
small towns and villages were emptied of all their inhabitants. A woman was known to kill and
eat her mother, and young women to slaughter children and feed on their flesh. In several
places, human flesh had become food. Religious women had to emigrate like the others, so as
not to die of hunger. A good number of people from Lorraine came to Paris, counting on
fighting destitution more easily there. "To be able to describe a similar state of desolation,"
wrote Digot, "one would have to go back to the war of the Jews against the Romans and to the
sack of Jerusalem by the soldiers of Titus." (Cf. Auguste Digot, Histoire de la Lorraine [2nd
ed., 5 vols., Nancy: G. Crépin-Leblond, 1880], vol. V, p. 277.) Saint Vincent's heart was
touched by so much suffering. He begged everywhere for the poor people of Lorraine, at
Court, in the palaces, in middle-class homes. He sent his priests and brothers to them with
bread, clothes, tools, and money. He offered safe shelter to young girls and religious women,
Rondet,15 and Brothers Guillard, Aulent,16 Baptiste,17 and Bourdet18 there, two to each town: Toul, Metz, Verdun, and Nancy. I hope to provide them with two thousand livres a month.

Yesterday we completed the mission we gave in La Chapelle, near Saint-Lazare. We gathered together there all the poor from Lorraine who are in the city and gave a loaf of bread to each one every day for a week. There were about three hundred of them.19

Well now, that is all. I conclude by recommending myself to your Holy Sacrifices in those holy places. I hope to write to you from now on by each mail and I trust that our Lord will make use of you in many good works, if you take care of your health, as I beg you to do. I am, in His love and that of His holy Mother, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

Paris, May 10, 1639

_Addressed:_ Monsieur Lebreton, Priest of the Mission, in Rome

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whose virtue was especially in danger. Thanks to his initiative, an association among the wealthier class was formed, whose only aim was to come to the assistance of the ruined nobility of Lorraine through monthly dues. Abelly dedicated an entire chapter of his book to an account of what Saint Vincent did to help Lorraine (cf. vol. I, chap. XXXV).

15 Should not the name be Bourdet? The name Rondet appears only here and is not to be found in the personnel catalogue.

16 Charles Aulent was born in Ath, a town in Hainaut (Belgium), on February 1, 1614. He entered the Congregation of the Mission at the end of 1636, was ordained a priest in 1640, and pronounced his vows on December 11, 1644. He directed the house in Toul from 1646 to 1647, the year he died.

17 Jean-Baptiste Deleste, born in Bar-le-Duc, entered the Congregation of the Mission, April 1, 1637, at the age of twenty-two.

18 At that time, two students of the Mission had this name. Jean Bourdet was born in Saint-Babel (Puy-de-Dôme), May 14, 1614, entered the Congregation of the Mission at the end of 1636, was ordained a priest in 1640, and pronounced his vows in 1643. He was Superior in Troyes from 1642 to 1644 and in Saint-Méen from 1645 to 1646. Etienne Bourdet was born in the same locality as Jean, on April 27, 1615, entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 9, 1638, and was ordained a priest, June 2, 1640. He was Superior in Toul from 1641 to 1642, and pronounced his vows on June 10, 1648.

19 Abelly, who recalls the two missions given in La Chapelle during Lent in the years 1641 and 1642 on behalf of the poor of Lorraine who had taken refuge in Paris (op. cit., vol. I, chap. XXXV, p. 166; vol. II, chap. XI, sect. 1, p. 386), seems to be unaware of the mission of 1639. The Missionaries were assisted by wealthy people who came to distribute alms.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter four days ago, but I lost it and cannot remember everything you wrote. Here is what I do recall: (1) that your work is being blessed; (2) that I failed to answer two points in your next to last letter; (3) that you judged it wise [not] to suggest to the Archbishop what I wrote you about renting the house and about the ordinands who will be directed to you by the Archbishop; about going to Saintonge.

Now, I shall say in response to the first point, that I praise God for the blessing He is bestowing on your missions and I beg Him to strengthen your body more and more for your work, and your soul so that you may love Him better.

(2) I am very sorry for having forgotten those two points in my next to last letter. I most humbly beg your pardon and hope that Our Lord will grant me the grace to mend my ways.

(3) All the reasons you sent me for not having made the suggestions concerning the lodging and the ordinands should not have prevented you from making them. They are only natural products of the human mind which usually reasons according to its predispositions. The matter in question here is not a desire to establish ourselves, as you say, but to do the good I proposed to you, which the adorable Providence of God suggested to a good soul who wishes to be responsible for the expenses. We should not expect fewer blessings there than the goodness of God is bestowing on the ordinands here, even though they are high-minded and usually scorn ordinary things. It would have been good for the Archbishop to decide and for us to respect his judgment and
wishes and submit ourselves to it, as I am submitting in this matter to yours. However, I tell you quite frankly, Monsieur, that no one in the Company has ever raised objections about anything I have written to him. One man who did write his objections still did what I had told him. Another, who in his own opinion had an objection to signing an agreement I had made, sent me a number of reasons and excuses and had others write to me about it. Because of that, we are involved in a serious lawsuit at the Council, which we can pursue only at the risk of losing an establishment\(^4\) and with shame.

O Monsieur de Sergis, how important a matter is submission of spirit to a superior! I admit that the knowledge you have of my miseries and the gravity of my sins destroys your confidence; but He who said: *quaecumque dixerint vobis facite*,\(^5\) no doubt obliged Himself by that to offer sufficient light to those whom He requires to obey. I think that I have never seen or heard that the subject failed by obeying the superior in matters which are not evil, but that is indeed the usual result for those who disobey them. You intended to take Saint Francis Xavier as your patron. In the name of God, Monsieur, do so particularly with regard to obedience. Do not imagine that Our Lord is less pleased with the obedience you render to a poor miserable sinner than that which he rendered to a saint. Do it, as he did, for the love of God Who is happy when things go that way and Who is displeased with the contrary.

We shall discuss this in greater detail when I have the happiness of seeing you there. I hope to come soon with the Bishop of Alet\(^6\) who is waiting for his Bulls and expects to leave shortly afterwards. That is why I am asking you not to leave the Archdiocese

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\(^4\)This is probably a reference to the establishment in Toul and to Antoine Colée who was Superior there from 1637 to 1638.

\(^5\)Do whatever they tell you. Jn. 2:5. "His mother instructed those waiting on table, 'Do whatever he tells you.'" (NAB)

\(^6\)Nicolas Pavillon. He was consecrated on August 22, 1639, and entered his diocese shortly thereafter.
of Toulouse to go to Saintonge or anywhere else, which is the last point in your letter.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL

Paris, May 13, 1639

377a. - TO PIERRE DU CHESNE, IN JOIGNY

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Yesterday evening I received your letter of the twenty-fourth of this month, consoled that it was from you and sorry about the state of our good Monsieur Lucas's illness. I had been told that he was quite well. O Monsieur, how that touched my heart! I willingly commended him to our Little Company three days in a row and, of course, I think that each one has fulfilled his duty in that regard. I am sending him good Monsieur Chiroye, who is quite fond of him and will take very special care of him, while you, Monsieur, you will go back to Troyes for the ordinands' retreat. I beg you, Monsieur, to embrace Monsieur Lucas in spirit for me. I enfold him in my arms with the same love Our Lord alone would manifest and, from his embrace, I shall come to you and do the same. I cannot tell you what a good account I have had of both of you. Courage, in nomine Domini, Who will bring about in you and through both of you what He wishes you to do for His glory and

Letter 377a. - Archives of the Mission (Paris), photocopy. The whereabouts of the original is unknown.

1Jacques Chiroye was born in Auppegard (Seine-Maritime) on March 14, 1614, and entered the Congregation of the Mission on June 25, 1638. He served as Superior in Luçon (1640-1650, 1654-1660, 1662-1666) and in Crécy (1660-1662). He pronounced his vows on March 9, 1660, and died January 7, 1689.
for the salvation of souls. What else can we do? We must keep going: caritas Christi urget nos.²

I am afraid that good Monsieur Lucas has not been bled enough. I beg you, Monsieur, to make known quite gently to the doctor that, from a lack of bleeding during a serious illness I had in Joigny, I had some difficulties which are still with me. The people from that region do not need bleedings as much as those from Paris where we are formed to them from long habit. I approve; I also think that good doctor from Troyes is right when he says: "qui bene purgat bene sanat."³ I hope our Missionaries, to whom I am asking you to tell this for me with all the respect and . . . ⁴ that you can, will pay attention to it.

I sent a letter to Monsieur Lucas — it will be a week ago tomorrow, Tuesday. I do not know if he received my letter. I am being forced to end this one, but nothing in the world will ever make me lessen the tender affection I have for good Monsieur Lucas and for you. I am for both of you and shall be all my life, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Saint-Lazare, May 30, 1639

²The Charity of Christ urges us. 2 Cor. 5:14. "The love of Christ impels us who have reached the conviction that since one died for all, all died." (NAB)
³He who purges well thoroughly restores to health.
⁴This word or phrase is illegible.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I was not able to give you a reply yesterday because I had been bled, or this morning because I had taken some medicine.

I shall tell you quite briefly, with regard to your son's lodging, that I am thinking, all things considered, of placing him with M. Rebours if he remains and does not change his room. But if he does change, I see nothing better than M. Coqueret. Being with other priests would be difficult or useless for him. I know you have many things against the latter, which I have taken into consideration. Nevertheless, this is my thinking. M. Rebours will not leave his room so soon. Even though he should leave it, enjoy the time there is; then we shall see about later. It would be wise, in the meantime, for you to allow him to come back to you, if you wish the correction you gave him these past few days to do him any good.

I am sending you Madame Goussault's letter which I just received. Let me know what you think about the situation of your Sisters, both with regard to that area and to the Auvergne region.

If you were a strong woman, you would lay aside your little distractions and maternal affections and you would strengthen

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Letter 378. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

For this letter Coste utilized the Pémartin edition (vol. II, p. 3) and, for the last line, the Saint Paul manuscript, p. 69. In 1942 the original of this letter was found in the hospital in Tarbes and published in the Annales (1941-1942), p. 559. Although the differences between Coste and the original are said to be slight (cf. Mission et Charité, 19-20, p. 15), a photocopy of the original has been used here instead of the Coste text.

1This letter was written during Madame Goussault's lifetime, at a time when it looked as though Michel Le Gras was ready to give up a career in the priesthood.

2Father Hilarion Rebours, a Carthusian, was a first cousin of Saint Louise's husband (cf. Gobillon, op. cit., p. 21). Father Rebours was involved in the discussions concerning Michel Le Gras' vocation (cf. no. 379).
your body and mind at the sight of so many opportunities of doing
good. Do so, in the name of God, Mademoiselle. God knows
what I am for you and what you are for me. I am your most
humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Please answer me this evening.

379. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN LA CHAPELLE

[Between 1635 and 1639]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Blessed be God that you are over your serious illness and that
you took care of yourself today and did not go to Mass! I entreat
you for the love of Our Lord to look after your health and spare
nothing in that regard.

If you need any money, send me word; perhaps we even owe
you some. I shall find out from M. Dehorgny and from you,
please.

I saw that young woman and do not know what to tell you,
except that I think your plan to see her three or four days before
she enters is a good one. With that in view, I gave her half an écu
to live on.

Your husband's cousin, M. Rebours, came here yesterday. We
still agree that your son's happiness lies in the ecclesiastical state
and, secondly, that his temperament seems more inclined to that
than to the world. Thirdly, perhaps that young man got his mind
all confused about the matter, which in turn revived his little

Letter 379. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph
letter.

1Period of Michel Le Gras' indecision concerning his vocation.
aversions for the Saint-Nicolas community. However, when matters have been set before him clearly, he will come to his senses. There is danger of encouraging his whim by giving him a short suit, unless it is for going to the country; even then it will have to be modest. If after all that, he perseveres, in nomine Domini, we shall have to consent. But I do not judge it advisable to go and consent easily to the reversal of the dispositions he has shown all his life towards being a priest, on account of the change that young libertine has brought about in his mind. Therefore, please be at rest on that point, Mademoiselle. Our Lord will take care of the whole affair. Do not be afraid and let us not be in a hurry.

I am well enough, thank God, and I am, in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, in La Chapelle

380. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1636 and 1639]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am delighted that Our Lord is strengthening you in retreat but, in the name of God, let us not tempt him. Finish this evening and add to your confession what has happened since, and do so briefly.

¹Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet.

²This could be the Comte de Mauny, who had a bad influence on Michel Le Gras. Saint Louise complained about him in one of her letters (cf. Ecris spirituels, L. 152), subsequent, it is true, to this one by a few years.

Letter 380. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

³Before 1636, Saint Louise was not in La Chapelle and after 1639, Saint Vincent would not have written “Thursday morning” at the end of the letter.
You take a little too long at it; I hope you are teaching your Sisters to confess more quickly. It is sufficient for them to accuse themselves of three or four faults which cause them the greatest shame. I imagine the poor young women are not committing any mortal sin, thank God, and it is enough to accuse oneself of two or three venial sins, or even of one, because that is sufficient and not necessary matter for confession.

I did not receive your package until yesterday evening because I slept at the Bons-Enfants the night before; therefore I have not been able to look over your meditations as yet. I shall do so with pleasure as soon as possible. As for your confession, I shall come to La Chapelle next Saturday, if I can.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I wish you a heart entirely filled with that of Our Lord and I am, in the love of the same Jesus Christ, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

V. D. P.

Thursday morning

I think you would do well to wait until after the retreat to see about the faults of your Sisters and admonish them for them. We must think about a chapter.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

381. - TO SAINT LOUISE

I cannot give you any reason for your illness other than God's good pleasure. Adore it then, that good pleasure, without asking

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1Abelly prefaced this letter with these words: "This same lady being ill one day wrote to ask him to admonish her of the evil in her soul, which was causing the distress in her body." Although Abelly does not name the lady, there is no doubt that it is Saint Louise, always ready to see the punishment of past faults in the trials and sufferings God sent her.
why God is pleased to see you in a state of suffering. He is
sovereignly glorified by our abandonment to His direction, with-
out our discussing the reason for His Will, except to say that His
Will is His reason itself and His reason is His Will. Therefore, let
us take refuge in it as did Isaac in the will of Abraham and Jesus
Christ in the Will of His Father.

382. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN LA CHAPELLE

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I cannot tell you how sorry I am to hear about the pain you are
again suffering from the return of your headache. Mon Dieu,
Mademoiselle, could it be the air in La Chapelle that is causing
your illness? Please consult a doctor and, if that is the case, leave
there as soon as possible and get a house in our faubourg, if there
are any for rent — or in the city. If you cannot find any for rent at
present and if Mademoiselle Poulaillon’s is still in good condition,
see if she would be willing to lend it to you for a time while you
look for another. Please see to this as soon as possible,
Mademoiselle, and do all you can to get well.

Mon Dieu, how reluctant I was to leave without seeing you and
how sorry I am to be staying longer than I expected. Oh well! you
will forgive me this fault as you are accustomed to bear with so
many others. In the meantime, be as cheerful as you can and
neglect nothing whatever for the good of your health, out of love
for Him Who loves you so much that He gave His life for you.

I shall be here another week or so, after which I hope to be in
Paris as soon as possible. I am going to celebrate Holy Mass so

Letter 382. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph
letter.

1The Saint had gone to Troyes to make the visitation of the Missionaries’ house.
2Saint Vincent was still in Troyes on July 28.
that, please God, I may find you completely cured and in very good spirits, so that you may serve Him for a long time in the work to which His goodness has called you.

I am a little worried about the health of Madame Goussault, the President’s wife. Please write me a few lines to tell me how both of you are. I am in His love, Mademoiselle, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DE PAUL

Troyes, July 4, 1639

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, in La Chapelle

383. - TO SAINT JANE FRANCES, IN ANNECY

Troyes, July 14, 1639

Most dear and most worthy Mother,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Having come to this city of Troyes with the Commander de Sillery to visit the little family we have here in this diocese, I saw, in the letter he received from you, the answer you gave him concerning his proposal for an endowment fund for two men from our Little Company to work among the poor country people in your diocese. Now, I shall tell you, most worthy Mother, that I

3Madame Goussault and Saint Louise.

Letter 383. - The original autograph letter is in the Visitation monastery of Annecy. A photocopy is also filed in the Archives of the Mission (Paris).

1It was once again thanks to the generosity of Commander de Sillery that the establishment in Annecy was founded. By a contract dated June 3, 1639, he gave Saint Vincent forty thousand livres to be taken from the Melun taxes for the upkeep of two priests and a brother who were capable of giving missions, plus five thousand livres for the purchase of rosaries and devotional leaflets and booklets. The Missionaries were to be on duty by September 15, and were to work gratuitously for eight months of the year in the parishes the bishop would assign to them, and every five years from 1641 on, in Brie-Comte-Robert (Seine-et-Marne). (Cf. Arch. Nat., S 6716.)
received with inexpressible consolation the Commander's proposal to me concerning that foundation. It will give us the means of working in the diocese of the saints and it is under the protection and direction of our worthy Mother. Therefore, we have reason to hope that Our Lord will bless the holy intentions of the good Commander and the humble labors of His Missionaries.

And because you wish to know what constitutes our humble way of life, I shall tell you then, most worthy Mother, that our Little Company is established to go from village to village at its own expense, preaching, catechizing, and having the poor people make general confessions of their entire past life. We try to settle the disagreements we find among them and do all we can to see that the sick poor are assisted corporally and spiritually by the Confraternity of the Charity, composed of women, which we set up in the places where we give the mission and which desire it.

To this work, which is our principal one, and in order to perform it better, the Providence of God has added that of taking into our houses ten days before ordination those who are to take orders. We feed and support them and during that time teach them practical Theology, the ceremonies of the Church, and how to make and practice mental prayer according to the method of our blessed Father, the Bishop of Geneva. We do this for those who belong to the diocese in which we are established.

We live in the spirit of the servants of the Gospel with regard to the bishops. When they tell us: "Go there," we go; "Come here," we come; "Do that," we do it; and that is how we act in what concerns the functions mentioned above. As for the internal discipline of the Company, that depends on a superior general.

Most of us have made the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and a fourth to devote ourselves all our life to the assistance of the poor common people. We are seeking to have them approved by His Holiness and are asking permission to

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2Saint Francis de Sales.
3Urban VIII.
make a fifth vow, that of obedience to the bishops in whose dioceses we are established, in what concerns the aforesaid functions.4

We practice poverty and obedience and try to live in a religious manner, even though we are not religious. We get up at four o'clock in the morning and take half an hour to get dressed and make our bed. We make an hour of mental prayer together in the church and recite Prime, Terce, Sext, and None together. We then celebrate our Masses, each in his own place. When that is done, everyone retires to his room to study. At ten-thirty, we make a particular examen on the virtue we are trying to acquire. We then go to the refectory where we have dinner with individual portions and reading at table. After that, we go to adore the Blessed Sacrament together and say the Angelus Domini Nuntiavit Mariae, etc. Next we have an hour of recreation together, after which everyone returns to his room until two o'clock when we recite Vespers and Compline together. We then return to our rooms to study until five o'clock, at which time Matins and Lauds are recited together. Another particular examen is made at that time. We have supper next and then spend an hour in recreation. When that is over, we go to the church to make the general examen, say evening prayers, and read the points for the next morning's prayer. After that, we retire to our rooms and go to bed at nine o'clock.

When we are on mission in the country, we do the same, except that we go to the church at six o'clock in the morning to celebrate Holy Mass and to hear confessions after the sermon which a man from the Company has just given following the Holy Mass he has said beforehand. We hear confessions until eleven o'clock, then go to eat dinner and return to the church at two o'clock to hear confessions there until five o'clock. Following that, one man teaches catechism and the others go off to say Matins and Lauds so as to have supper at six o'clock.

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4This project never materialized.
It is our maxim not to preach, catechize, or hear confessions in cities where there is a bishopric and not to leave a village until all the people have been instructed in the matters necessary for salvation and until everyone has made his general confession. We go to few places where there is anyone left who fails to do so. When we have finished in one village, we go to another where we do the same thing. We work from around the feast of All Saints until that of Saint John; we leave the months of July, August, September, and a part of October to the people so that they can take care of the harvest and the vintage. And when we have worked twenty days or thereabouts, we rest for a week or so and then go back to work. It is not possible to continue such labor for a longer time without that respite and without a day off each week.

We have our days of solitude every year. We hold chapter every Friday morning, during which each one accuses himself of his failings, receives a penance from the Superior, and is obliged to carry it out. Two priests and two brothers ask the Company for the charity of being warned of their failings and, after them others do so, each in turn. In the evening of the same day we have a conference on our rules and the practice of the virtues. Everyone there shares the thoughts Our Lord gave him in prayer on the topic being discussed.

We never go out without permission and always two by two. Upon returning, everyone goes to see the Superior and gives him an account of what he has done. We neither write nor receive letters unless the Superior has seen and approved them. Everyone is obliged to agree to having his faults charitably reported to his Superior and to try to accept from and give to others the admonitions needed. Silence is observed from evening until the end of dinner the next day and from after the morning recreation until the one in the evening.

We spend two years in the seminary, that is, in the novitiate. The training there is rather strict, by the mercy of God, so that for a number of reasons the seminarians do not communicate with the priests without permission.
The said Congregation is approved by His Holiness and established in the city and in the faubourg of Saint-Denis in Paris, and in the dioceses of Poitiers, Luçon, Toul, Agen, and Troyes.

There you have our humble way of life, most dear and most worthy Mother. Please do us the charity, for the love of Our Lord, of telling us your reactions to it. You may be assured, dear Mother, that I shall accept them as coming from God, from Whose love I request this charity of you...

I shall not say anything to you about your dear daughters in Paris except that I think they are advancing more and more in the love of their Divine Savior. I have a great pardon to ask of you because I have not visited them for a long time. The Sisters here also have a good reputation and live fervently, and certainly with good reason. You could not believe, dear Mother, how greatly the spirit of Our Lord is evident in both the Mother and the déposée, or how well the rest of the house is doing, considering the difficulties it has had in the past.

Well now, dear Mother, permit me to ask if your unparalleled goodness still reserves for me the happiness of enjoying the place it gave me in your dear and most lovable heart? Certainly, I choose to hope so, even though my miseries render me most unworthy of it. In the name of God, dear [Mother], please continue to grant

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5We deeply regret not being able to decipher three lines which were deliberately inked out on the original letter.

6In Troyes.

7Françoise-Madeleine Ariste, elected May 20, 1638. Saint Vincent had known her at the first monastery in Paris, where she had begun her religious life, and at the second monastery, where she had followed Mother de Beaumont in 1626. This pious Visitandine died in Troyes on June 10, 1667, after governing that house for twelve years.

8The name given to the Superior who leaves office. The Sister concerned here is Mother Claire-Marie Amaury, who had directed the monastery for a little more than six years, from July 6, 1631, to May 20, 1638. She was reelected in 1641 and died on October 10, 1651. In the first year of her entrance into the first monastery of Paris, Mother Amaury remained for seven months in the grips of a horrible temptation, which Saint Vincent himself related at the process of beatification of Saint Francis de Sales. (Cf. Abelly, op. cit., vol. II, chap. VII, pp. 331 ff.; Annales Salésiennes (December 20, 1907), p. 213; Année Sainte, vol. X, p. 225.)

9A word left out of the original text.
me that favor. Trusting that you will, I am your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Most worthy Mother de Chantal, Foundress of the Order of the Visititation Sainte-Marie, in Annecy

383a. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Troyes, July 18, 1639

Mademoiselle,

Blessed be God that you are better! O mon Dieu! how that consoles me! Please continue now to strengthen yourself and spare nothing in that regard.

Mon Dieu! Mademoiselle, how difficult it is for me to be away so long! But who can hurry or delay the order of adorable Providence!

Here is a letter from the Duchesse d’Aiguillon with regard to replacing little Jeanne.¹ Please do so as soon as possible and send her a stronger girl; I could not tell you whom. God will make known to you the one he has chosen for that purpose, if He so desires.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

Letter 383a. - Autograph letter. According to Coste, the original was at the home of the Pastor of Saint-Nicolas-de-Gaulène (Tarn). Coste published this letter in vol. XIII, p. 842, no. 3319. It is placed here in proper chronological order.

¹Jeanne Lepeintre.
Monsieur,

I have received two of your letters since I have been here, one by way of Paris and the other from this bearer on the first trip he made to see you. The last letter says very little; the first shows me your diligence in sending my letters. I thank you equally for both of them, as also for what you told me about the difficulty we are having with good Monsieur Fleury. I have nothing to say about that other than what I wrote to the President, except that it is to be hoped that you and I might have a little more regard for the maxims of the Gospel than we do. Please make your meditation one day on these words: "To him who takes away your cassock, give also your cloak"; and on these: Inquire pacem et perseverare eam; and another on these words: quaecumque dixerint vobis facite; and on these: qui vos audit me audit, et qui vos spernit me spernit. Please send me the thoughts Our Lord gives you concerning them, followed by the resolutions you will take. I shall be consoled to see them.

I am, meanwhile, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, Monsieur, your . . .

1To Toul, where Léonard Boucher was.
2The uncle of François de Fleury, future chaplain to the Queen of Poland, Marie-Louise de Gonzague.
3President de Thélon, Commander de Sillery’s nephew.
4Mt. 5:40. “If anyone wants to go to law over your shirt, hand him your coat as well.” (NAB)
5Seek peace and follow it. Ps. 34:15. “Turn from evil, and do good; seek peace, and follow after it.” (NAB)
6Do whatever they tell you. Jn. 2:5. “His mother instructed those waiting on table, ‘Do whatever he tells you.’ “ (NAB)
7He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me. Lk. 10:16. “He who hears you, hears me. He who rejects you, rejects me. And he who rejects me, rejects him who sent me.” (NAB)
8The Congregation of the Mission was involved in a lawsuit with the Order of the Holy Spirit.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I was worried; they had sent me word that you were a little worse. Yesterday, Monsieur Portail wrote me the opposite and your letter proves it to me. I praise God and pray that He will restore you to perfect health. Please do all you can to get well, Mademoiselle, for the love of Our Lord.

What steps can be taken to prevent the reduction of your revenue to the rate of five and a half percent? . . . With regard to M. Arnaud, I do not see any at all since the Prince has so ordained it. You could also, by similar means and opportunity, increase it by buying some stock in salt; but you know the risk. . . . Honest people will pay you well. I see no possibility of supplementing it otherwise.

When I return, I shall be most pleased to hear what you have to tell me about your thoughts with regard to Providence. I am likewise pleased that you sent the honor of your remembrance to Saint-Sulpice.

Thank you for the news you gave me about Madame Goussault. I hope to see both of you around the end of this coming week and I am forever, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Letter 385. - Gossin, op. cit., p. 438, from the original letter made available to Coste by Abbé Dumesnil, Canon of Saint-Louis in Versailles. Unfortunately, the text of the letter is incomplete because in two places M. Gossin was unable to decipher Saint Vincent's handwriting.
... Jeanne, dismiss her and tell her it is because she struck her companion. Give her something and let tomorrow's feast go by. She will be all right with the Sisters at Saint-Sauveur until she can find work. Tell the others that this is not the first time she has hit someone, that we had forgiven her the rest, but that the scandal would be too great if it were said of the Daughters of Charity that they fight like cats and dogs. Say a word about it to Madame Goussault, the President's wife, and give some thought as to whether it would be advisable to mention it to the other officers.

I shall try to notify M. Renar without mentioning your name. You are right about the medals. Please use them the way you mentioned to me.

If I do not remember to send Saint Bridget\(^2\) back to you some day this week, please remind me.

Please receive Communion tomorrow for a serious matter, so that, please God, two people do not get into an argument over the Charity in which Our Lord has bound them together.

I bid you and also your little patient a good day. I am not telling you that you must take care of her, because you [will not neglect to do so, since you see Our Lord in her. In His love] and in that of His holy Mother, I am your most humble servant.

V. D. P.

*Addressed:* Mademoiselle Le Gras

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**Letter 386.** - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

\(^1\)Nos. 386, 387, and 388 go together. They precede the death of Madame Goussault (September 20, 1639) and come after the foundation of the work of the Foundlings (1638). The place given to the words: "Saint-Lazare. Thursday morning" at the beginning of no. 388 shows us that it is from 1639 at the earliest. Therefore, all three should be placed in 1639. The beginning of the original of no. 386 has been cut off and lost.

\(^2\)The life of Saint Bridget.
The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

You seem depressed. You are afraid that God is angry and wants none of the service you are rendering Him, because He is taking your Daughters away from you. Far from it, Mademoiselle. His acting that way is a sign that He cherishes it, for He is treating you as His dear spouse, the Church. At its beginning, He not only had the majority die by natural deaths, but also from torture and torments. Who would not have said on seeing that, that He was angry with those holy young plants? Therefore, do not believe that any longer, but rather the contrary.

Since you agree, I shall send for that young woman, Jeanne, or, if you know where she is, please send her to me. I told Madame de Herse who she is.

Hubert did not go to Picardy. I doubt whether I shall send him there so soon. He will visit his sister before he leaves.

I shall get nowhere with that priest; you will do more with him than I.

It is strange that you fear my departure as you do. Set your mind at ease; my journey is broken up. The longest part I can foresee is the trip to Pontoise tomorrow.

In the name of God, Mademoiselle, love your poverty and be at peace. It is the greatest honor you can render right now to Our Lord, Who is tranquillity itself.

Could you not go to the home of Madame Goussault, the President’s wife, today? I would be very happy if you could. It would

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Letter 387. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1As stated in no. 386, n.1, this letter goes with nos. 386 and 388 and is, therefore, from the same year, 1639.

2Madame de Herse had sent Jeanne to Saint Louise.

3Hubert Bécu, a coadjutor brother.

4Marie Bécu, a Daughter of Charity. She was at the Motherhouse at that time.
give you a little relaxation from your continuous work. I am, meanwhile, in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

388. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Thursday morning [1639]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
I do not know who told your Sisters that I am not well. By God’s mercy, I am feeling fine. May it please His goodness to grant me the grace of making good use of the health He is giving me!

I think you would do well to write and tell that good Sister we are consoled that Our Lord has allowed her to recognize her fault in having listened to that temptation. She must make good use of the grace God has given her. She should be well convinced that all good people are obliged by God to suffer temptation, and that neither this one nor others can ever weaken her if she is faithful to God. No matter where she is or what she is doing, she will always be tempted and distressed; that is her cross. If she wishes to follow Jesus Christ, she must carry it.

The meeting² could not take place tomorrow. We scheduled the one concerning the Foundlings³ for tomorrow at Mademoiselle Viole’s house.

Letter 388. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.
¹Date indicated by the content and context of this letter and by the placement of the day of the week at its beginning, a practice Saint Vincent adopted sometime in 1639.
²The meeting of the Ladies of Charity.
³The meeting of the Ladies involved in the work of the Foundlings.
Last night I informed the stout Jeanne that she must leave and that I gave you the fifty livres she sent me by way of Madame Forest. I think there were fifty-two livres; she said eighteen écus.4 We shall have the remainder given to her. She thought Madame de Herse had given me one hundred francs belonging to her, which she says that good lady is holding. I told her to ask her for them. I think it is well for you to act cautiously in this matter, but firmly and effectively.

Your waters will come today.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

388a. - SAINT JANE FRANCES TO SAINT VINCENT

[End of July 1639]

Most honored and dear Father,

From the letters and reports the Commander has sent us, we have learned his feelings, those of the Bishops of Sens2 and of Bourges,3 your

4Eighteen écus would equal fifty-four livres.


The content of this letter and other letters written by Saint Jane Frances at this time enabled Devos to assign this plausible date. The newly consecrated Bishop of Geneva, Juste Guérin, came to Annecy on July 17, 1639. Saint Jane Frances herself tells us (Archives of the Visitation of Annecy, Chantal [Ste J.-F. de], Série Oeuvres, B, No 11, p° 4-5 v°) that one of the first acts of the new Bishop was to visit her monastery and discuss the Apostolic Visitor.

2Octave de Saint-Lary de Bellegarde. Born in Brouage (Charente-Maritime) in July 1587 of César, Duc de Bellegarde and Governor of Saintonge, and Jeanne de Lion de Châteauneuf, Bishop Bellegarde enjoyed a rapid and brilliant ecclesiastical career. Having already been made Abbé of Saint-Germain in Auxerre and customary chaplain of Henri IV in 1607, he became Bishop of Consersans in 1612, and on November 14, 1621, he was named Archbishop of Sens. He promoted the reform of the old religious orders and brought into his diocese a variety of new foundations. He also presided over several Assemblies of the Clergy of France. He died in Montreuil, near Paris, on July 26, 1646.

3Probably André Frémiot, Bishop-emeritus of Bourges. Born in Dijon on August 26, 1573, he was the son of Benigne Frémiot, Seigneur de Thosté, presiding judge in the Parlement of Bourgogne and Councillor of State, and Marguerite Berbisey. Saint Jane Frances Frémiot de
thoughts, dearest Father, and those of Father Binet concerning an extraordinary visitor. I am quite certain that, if our blessed Father were in the world, he would receive them with respect and acquiescence.

I proposed them to the Bishop of Geneva and to our spiritual Father, both individuals of great piety and prudence. They likewise received them with honor; they see how useful the plan would be for maintaining conformity and holding each to its obligations, especially several monasteries which are neglected for want of prelates and which, in the end, might decline. But, dearest Father, we see clearly that, if the request for a visitor were to be made in the name of our Institute, our prelates and the
majority of our monasteries would greatly object for the reasons which I wrote at length to the Commander. I think he will pass them on to you with the report, therefore, I shall not repeat them here. But I entreat you, dearest Father, to devote your prayers and reflections before God to knowing His divine Will concerning the direction and carrying out of this plan. May it be for His glory and the good of our Institute and may things be done with all possible gentleness and so as to preserve the respect due to our prelates. The Bishop of Sens possesses the spirit of God; he is the one whom Our Lord has inspired with this thought, as you told our most virtuous and dear Father, the Commander, who wrote it to me.

I think it would be well to meet one more time to consider every aspect of the affair. The question is very important and demands great secrecy until it is settled. Dearest Father, please take this matter to heart a little. I say that to you, certainly not with any shadow of distrust regarding your affection, but because I fear your continual and important occupations do not allow you the leisure to take the time required for this one. But, dearest Father, make an effort in that regard, I entreat you, because God inspires in me a very special sense of support and peace regarding your judgment. Weigh everything well, I beg you once again.

389. - SAINT JANE FRANCES TO SAINT VINCENT

Live Jesus!

[Annecy, 1639]

... Moreover, dearest Father, it is a boundless consolation for me to hope to have your dear sons here as our good and dear father, Commander de Sillery, has promised. Is he not incomparable in his charity and we deeply obligated to Divine Providence for having given us such a support? May He be blessed eternally! Let us know, dearest Father, all

had been discussing with Saint Jane Frances the feasibility of an Apostolic Visitor to insure a uniformity of spirit among the various monasteries. The Gallicanism of the French bishops and the independence of individual bishops were among the obstacles which had to be addressed.

Letter 389. - Saint Jeanne Frémont de Chantal, sa vie et ses œuvres, vol. VIII, p. 163, letter 1633. This letter fragment may have been the closing section of the newly published letter of Saint Jane Frances to Saint Vincent (no. 388a).

'Date of the Annecy foundation. No. 390 seems to be the response to this letter.
that will have to be done and known for the consolation of that good servant of God.

I beg His infinite tenderness to preserve you for a long time for His glory and the service of Holy Church. Keep me in mind before God and in your paternal affection, since I am with all my heart, although unworthy, etc.

Dear Father, when I consider the fruits those two good workers will bear in this large and populous diocese, I am delighted. I am also sure that, because of your piety and zeal for the Divine Glory, you will have this establishment founded on so solid a basis that it will never decline through any shortage either of men or of resources which might come about in your Congregation. Let us know also what the beds and other necessary furnishings for your priests should be like.

390. - TO SAINT JANE FRANCES, IN ANNECY

Dearest and worthy Mother,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your undated letter which the Commander delivered to me, without a date, and you can imagine, most worthy Mother, with what reverence and affection I did so, since it was a letter from my excellent Mother and was filled with the fragrance and sweetness of her spirit. Jésus! dear Mother, it has filled my poor heart with that fragrance! Well now, blessed be the One for love of Whom your goodness has offered to receive us and find and furnish a house for us!! I am not thanking you for that, dear Mother,

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Letter 390. - Original autograph letter at the Visitation Monastery in Annecy. A photocopy is also filed in the Archives of the Mission (Paris).

1By the contract of June 3, 1639, Commander de Sillery had promised the Annecy Missionaries that he would procure a furnished lodging for them. He had not as yet kept his word. The following January 26 the Missionaries released him from his promise on payment of two thousand livres tournois, which along with another one thousand livres were to be used for the purchase of a house. In the beginning, they lived in a house given, prepared, and furnished for them by Saint Jane Frances.
because I am unworthy to do so, but I pray to God that He Himself may be your thanks and your reward. . . .

As for what you told me about the mission's being established in such a way that it might not fail hereafter for lack of men or money, well, allow me to tell you that as far as men are concerned, dear Mother, the consolidation of the Company which we are negotiating in Rome — as I wrote to you from Troyes — is consolidation in the particular places where it will be established with the help of God, which I beg you to ask of Him for that purpose. As for assets, the Commander did me the honor of telling me that, if he sells some property, he will give us the capital of the revenue he has given us. We shall invest in your area as much of the inherited capital as is necessary for the support of the two Missionaries and a brother. That being the case, if Our Lord is pleased to grant His blessing to that good work, it will not fail for lack of men or want of money. The Commander seems unwilling to stop at that number. May the Holy Name of God be blessed for that!

I have told you a great number of favorable things about this Little Company. Indeed, dear Mother, that frightens me. Therefore, I beg you to discount many of them and not repeat what I said to anyone. Too good a reputation is very harmful and, by a just judgment of God, that is usually why results do not meet expectations, either because we become conceited or because the public attributes to men what is due to God alone. Therefore, I most humbly entreat you once again not to entertain the ideas that what the Commander tells you about us might give you and, still less, to talk about them to others. Alas! worthy Mother, if you

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2Forty lines of the original letter are omitted here because they contain so many crossed out words. Perhaps these lines dealt again with the question of an Apostolic Visitor, the discussion of which had to be treated "with great secrecy" according to Saint Jane Frances. It is regrettable that so much trouble was taken to obliterate these passages.

3On February 26, 1640, he made a second donation so that they might raise the number of priests to four and brothers to two. (Cf. Arch. Nat., S 6716.)

4Saint Vincent felt that he had spoken too well of his Company in his letter of July 14. He is trying here to belittle it in order to punish himself for having spoken about it too complacently.
knew our ignorance and the little virtue we have, you would greatly pity us! However, you will see that in reality in the two men we are sending. That consoles me, because you will pray to God for us with greater compassion for our misery. Because I am saying this to you with tears in my eyes, in view of the truth of what I am telling you and the abominations of my poor soul, I beg you, dear Mother, to offer to God my embarrassment and the confession I am making of it in the presence of His Divine Majesty. Forgive me if I am abusing your patience by telling you my poor feelings this way. I am for my most worthy and excellent Mother, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, most worthy Mother, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Worthy Mother, the Commander has requested me to send you a list of the humble furnishings we need, which he is supposed to provide for us.

Addressed: Reverend Mother de Chantal, Foundress of the Order of the Visitation and Superior of the Annecy Monastery, in Annecy

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3Bernard Codoing and Pierre Escart. The latter was born in 1612 in the canton of Valais, Switzerland, entered the Congregation of the Mission on March 6, 1637, and was ordained a priest the following year. He was stationed in Annecy at the time of its foundation and later sent to Richelieu. At the beginning of his sojourn in Annecy, he made a good impression on Saint Jane Frances who said of him, "M. Escart is a saint." He was indeed virtuous, zealous, and very austere. He would have continued to please Saint Jane Frances if he had known how to preserve moderation in his zeal, to tolerate more patiently the defects of others, and to judge his confreres, especially his Superiors, with greater fairness. His temperament carried him to extremes. In a fit of temper, he killed one of his friends and, some time before 1659, he died in Rome where he had gone to beg absolution for this murder. (Cf. vol. II, no. 460.)
391. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[August or September 1639]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I just saw Madame Goussault; she is not gravely, but critically ill. She realizes it and told me so. We must pray to God for her. Her heart is still rooted in the Will of God. I left the Chancellor's wife there. She told me she would send you her carriage tomorrow. I shall give you a paper before you leave.

If there were sufficient housing, we would have to settle that matter, but since there is not, we need to think it over; we shall talk about it. In the meantime, I wish you a good evening and I am, in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, at her house

392. - TO MOTHER DE LA TRINITE, IN TROYES

Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris, August 28, 1639

Dearest Mother,

May the spirit of union by which the Son of God united mankind to His Father be always with you forever!
I offer you a million thanks, dear Mother, for the ardent charity with which you do me the kindness of writing to me. And because it is God who moved your dear heart to do so and inspired you with all that you told me, I embrace it with all the affection and reverence I can. I promise you, excellent Mother, that I shall accomplish exactly everything you chose to recommend to me. It is true, dear Mother, that I am rather afraid my wretchedness has given our very dear and most amiable Commander a much cause for pain. But what else can come from a miserable sinner except failures and faults in every matter? However, it is certainly completely unintentional because, since I have had the honor of being acquainted with him, and for a very long time before that, I have never had any other intention than to honor and respect him as a great servant of God, whom I am unworthy to approach. And because I have no other way of making reparation than by having recourse to his goodness, I am doing so, dear Mother, through your own goodness. I most humbly beg his pardon, prostrate in spirit at his feet and yours and, indeed, with streams of tears brought to my eyes by the warm affection of my heart.

And because he is so good as to comply with my request concerning the Bishop of Troyes and to approve of his having a room in the house, I most humbly thank him. I also entreat him, in the name of Our Lord, to bear once more with my weakness on the other point pertaining to the consent of the town, and to be so kind as to discuss it with them himself since you do not judge it advisable to write to them about it, for, dear Mother, they will not tolerate us there without objection. I have been told that the wife of a magistrate said to someone: "They had better not try to establish the Priests of the Mission in the faubourg; they will not be tolerated there!" How displeased the Commander would be,
dear Mother, if he were to see himself thwarted in the work of his hands! If we are rejected while doing in simplicity what depends on us, fine, the Will of God will be known to us; we shall settle down as best we can on the outskirts of the town and its faubourgs. If they approve, as I hope they will if the Commander himself talks to them about it, it will be a great consolation to us to have entered that establishment through the door of deference, submission, humility, simplicity, candor, and charity. If this shocks your sensibilities, dear Mother, or those of the Commander, I most humbly ask your pardon and his also and beg you once again, in the name of Our Lord, to bear with me in this wretchedness. To say that his presence will prevent any violence being done — I would like to believe that, but I have no doubt that, as soon as he turns his back, people will act otherwise.

I realize quite well, dear Mother, that Saint Teresa acted differently in some of her foundations, but then, she was a saint inspired by God for that purpose. But also, dear Mother, I do not know if she would have acted that way with regard to people who had an aversion for new establishments and had shown it on several occasions. That is why I once again entreat your boundless charity to accept what I am suggesting to you with all possible humility and respect and to propose it to the Commander. Tell him also that I most willingly approve of his taking the forty-five hundred livres which are in the hands of our dear Sisters of Sainte-Marie where the good Bishop of Troyes suggested we place them. I am writing to Monsieur Dufestel to that effect, telling him to have the said sum handed over to the Commander upon his request.

Concerning the increase in the Geneva foundation, indeed, dear Mother, I cannot tell you how grateful Our Lord has made me. Because I am so ungracious that I cannot express it well when

5Convent of the Visitation in Troyes.
6Annecy was in the diocese of Geneva. By contract with Commander de Sillery, Saint Vincent was undertaking the establishment of a house there for two priests and a coadjutor brother of the Congregation of the Mission.
I meet people, I most humbly beg you, dear Mother, to help me thank him for it and assure him of my obedience. And in your regard, dear Mother, since I am not worthy to give you proper thanks either for all the benefits we incessantly receive from you, I beg Our Lord, dear Mother, to do so Himself and to be our thanks. I am, in His love and that of His holy Mother, dearest Mother, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Reverend Mother de la Trinité, Superior of the Carmelites in the faubourg of Troyes, in Troyes

392a. - TO N.

[August 29, 1639]

... A grain of charity suffices to calm many anxieties and ease many differences. ... 

393. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Wednesday morning [1639]

I was consoled to see the letter from Angers and feel we should not put off sending the Sisters, although the contract is not drawn up. In any case, we shall always be ready. But I am worried about what you wrote concerning the rest. O Jésus! Mademoiselle, this


Letter 393. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1The Sisters missioned to the hospital in Angers left Paris in November. This letter precedes their departure by a short time.
is not the time. *Seigneur Dieu!* You create too much need in the world! In the name of God, do all you can to stay well and treat yourself better. If I can, I shall have the happiness of seeing you this evening, or else tomorrow, with the help of God.

Your son told me last evening that he was going to see the Pastor at Saint-Nicolas for the examination. He seems definitely to have made up his mind. He did not come to see you because his long cloak got torn as he was walking along somewhere; he will have it mended. Perhaps he does not want to come and see you until he is bound to the Church, as he wrote to you. Be very cheerful, in the name of God. I am, in His love, your servant.

V. D.

I think you made a good choice with regard to those young women from Lorraine, and that the other older one you mentioned to me will do well.

*Addressed:* Mademoiselle Le Gras

394. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1636 and 1648]

Your remedy, Mademoiselle, produced its effect on me nine times. Waters have never done me any good during my fever in Forges or here. We shall try them, nevertheless. We have some here in the house for you, if you need any. My slight fever is, as you say, double tertian, but you know that at this season I usually have it double quartan and have already had it that way this fall.

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2Diocesan regulations prescribed that the ordinands take their examination from the priests of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet. (Cf. Schoenher, op. cit., vol. II, p. 550.)

Letter 394. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1Dates of the entrance of Madame Turgis into the Community and of her death.
You would do well to send for Madame Turgis.
Please let me know how many little girls are still left. And what
are you doing for your headache? I really think that perhaps you
still need to be purged a little.
I am very pleased with what you told me about your little
suffering. Courage, Our Lord will be your consolation, as I beg
Him to be with all my heart. Please do all you can in the matter.
I am, in His love, your most humble servant.

V. D. P.

395. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1636 and 1641]¹

I have to come to La Chapelle shortly. If there is any need for
me to come to your house, please let me know. Otherwise, I
would be happy not to come there at all, according to the decision
we made in that regard in the beginning.

396. - TO NICOLAS SANGUIN, BISHOP OF SENLIS

Paris, September 13, 1639

Your Excellency,

The charity with which you are pleased to honor our little
Congregation of the Mission gives me the confidence to request
you most humbly to be so kind as to grant a dimissorial letter _ad_

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¹Dates of Saint Louise's stay in La Chapelle.
Letter 396. - Reg. 1, f° 63 vo. The copyist notes that the original was in Saint Vincent's
handwriting.
omnes ordines\textsuperscript{1} to Michel Dupuis,\textsuperscript{2} an acolyte of your diocese who is also a member of our Congregation. He is taking his course in philosophy and has studied theology. By the grace of God, he is of good moral character and hopes to serve God usefully among the poor country people. It is that, Your Excellency, which gives me the confidence to present you this most humble petition, with all the humility and respect in my power. I here renew the offering of my obedience and am, in the love of Our Lord, Your Excellency, your . . .

The young man has only a title worth one hundred or fifty livres. I hope to have him accepted with that.

397. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Good evening, Mademoiselle. Please reflect on the points I should cover tomorrow\textsuperscript{1} and send them to me between now and eight-thirty this evening. Let me know also the state of your health.

I most humbly thank you for your gift. Please let me know which of the two rosaries was the one used by the late wife of the general.\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{1}For all orders. Saint Vincent was requesting one dimissorial letter to cover all the various Orders which Dupuis would receive in the future.

\textsuperscript{2}Michel Dupuis, born in Ver (Oise), was received into the Congregation of the Mission on March 29, 1639, at the age of twenty-three. Although he was still a simple cleric in 1646, Saint Vincent was using him in the seminary of Cahors. It was a common practice for Saint Vincent to employ seminarians in various works of the Congregation. It appears that both a shortage of personnel and a need for practical experience on the part of some of the clerics necessitated this practice.

The Notices contain no information about Dupuis' ordination to the priesthood or his death.

Letter 397. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

\textsuperscript{1}In the conference that was to be given to the Daughters of Charity.

\textsuperscript{2}Françoise-Marguerite de Silly, wife of Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi, former General of the Galleys.
398. - TO SAINT LOUISE

... I wish you a good day, while my heart is still filled with consolation from the conference of our good Daughters of Charity. It seems to me that never have I more admired God's goodness or His guidance than I have done and am doing on this occasion. O Mademoiselle, who will grant us enough humility to consider our place at the bottom of hell if we are not faithful to His eternal designs by serving Him as He wishes, and if we do not abandon ourselves entirely to His most admirable and most amiable guidance!

399. - TO SAINT LOUISE

If you wish me to have the happiness of seeing you during your illness, let me know. I have imposed on myself the law of not coming to see you unless I am summoned for some necessary or very useful matter.

400. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Friday morning

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever! I have never seen a mother so much a mother as you; you are hardly a woman at all in anything else. In the name of God,

Letter 398. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.
Letter 400. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.
Mademoiselle, leave your son to the care of His Father, Who loves him more than you do or, at least, do away with your anxiety about him. I am going to send someone to the Bons-Enfants, as if nothing had happened, to find out how the matter stands, and I shall let you know.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

401. - TO MOTHER DE LA TRINITE

Dearest Mother,

The grace of the union of the hearts of Jesus Christ be with you!!

I received the letter you were pleased to send me and most humbly thank you for it and for all the kindnesses your dear soul chooses to exercise towards my own, which is so wretched, and towards this poor Company. I beg Our Lord, Who has given you such an abundant share in His spirit, to increase it infinitely in you as your recompense. I am sorry, dearest Mother, for the pain I have given you reason to have on the occasion of this difficulty. But then, charity is patient. O dear Mother, what reason you have to expect a beautiful jewel in your crown for the patience you are practicing towards us in this matter! That is also the prayer, dear Mother, that I offer to Our Lord; and of you, I ask that you not grow weary of bearing with us in the suffering you are experiencing on our account.


1In the French text the sentence does not make sense; the copyist evidently read it incorrectly. The original may have read: "The grace of the union of hearts in Jesus Christ be with you" or "The grace of the union of the hearts of Jesus Christ and of Mary be with you."
M. Dufestel sent me word that the Commander, in his goodness, is setting aside his own feelings to accommodate himself to my wretchedness; I am to have the Attorney General write and he will speak to the Magistrates immediately. I entreat you, dear Mother, to thank him for me, as I do with all the humility in my power. Tell him that I rank this favor among the greatest I have ever received from him. Tell him also that in two or three days I shall have the happiness of going to see the Attorney General in the country, where he is at present. I shall ask him to write the way the Commander directed M. Dufestel to have the letter written.

Our Missionaries assigned to the Geneva diocese are beginning to gather together, I mean one of them, from the illness from which he is recovering. I hope he will be able to leave at the latest around the tenth of October.

I entreat you, dear Mother, to express our apologies to the Commander for the delay. Be assured that my soul is filled with gratitude for our obligations to you and that you will be, dear Mother, in time and in eternity, and I as well, in the love of Our Lord. Your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Paris, September 27, 1639

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2 The Commander de Sillery, at first reluctant to ask the city to allow the establishment of a house of Missionaries in the faubourg of Troyes, finally yielded to the Saint's reasons and insistence.
3 Mathieu Mole.
4 This sentence is unintelligible due to a poor reading by the copyist.
5 According to the foundation contract, Saint Vincent was to send two of his priests to Annecy before September 15. It is evident here that circumstances beyond his control delayed their departure.
Mademoiselle,

We must act against what is painful and either break our heart or soften it to get it ready for anything. It seems that Our Lord wants to take a hand in the Little Company. It belongs entirely to him, I hope, and He has the right to use it as He pleases. As for me, my greatest desire is to wish only the accomplishment of His holy Will. I cannot tell you how far advanced our patient\(^1\) is in that practice, and that is why it seems Our Lord wants to put him in a place where he can continue it more happily for all eternity. Oh! who will grant us the submission of our senses and our reason to that adorable Will! The Creator of the senses and of reason will do so, if we make use of them only in Him and for Him. Let us pray that you and I may always have one and the same will and non-will with Him and in Him, since such is an anticipated Paradise beginning in this life.

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**Letter 403.** - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

\(^1\)This letter was written either the day of Jean de la Salle's death, or the day after.
fever is tertian; this is the third attack. It came upon me the evening I had the pleasure of seeing you, because I went down to the refectory immediately after vomiting the little remedy I took. The first attack left me completely sleepless. The day after and from then on I have induced sweating, which has caused the attacks to diminish, and I have been bled twice, so that the attack I am having now is very mild. Our doctor thinks I should be purged next Wednesday. Please have the dose prepared for us. The one you sent recently had no effect — not the one M. Blatiron took; he has left with the Bishop of Alet, for he was much better from it.

Thank you for notifying me about the infirmary and for sharing our sorrow. I recommend our Brother Alexandre to you; he will receive Extreme Unction this evening, along with the Prior’s servant. The others are well, thank God.

I was most consoled yesterday to learn that you are feeling better. I beg God to restore the strength you need for all the work Our Lord is preparing for you.

I shall say just a word to you about the loss we have experienced in the late M. de la Salle and the one we are in danger of suffering. By the grace of God, my heart is at peace about it, seeing that it is God’s good pleasure. I am sometimes a little afraid that my sins

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2Etienne Blatiron, Priest of the Mission, was born in Saint-Julien-Chapteuil (Haute-Loire) on January 6, 1614. He was received into the Congregation of the Mission on January 6, 1638, ordained a priest in 1639, and placed in Alet (1639-1641), Saintes (1641), Richelieu, Rome (1644-1645), and Genoa (1645-1657). He especially distinguished himself in the latter position where as Superior of a new house he had to organize everything. Saint Vincent considered him one of the most competent of his Missionaries and “a very great servant of God.” (Cf. Abelly, op. cit., vol. III, p. 70.) Etienne Blatiron died in Genoa, July 24, 1657, a victim of his dedication to the plague-stricken. His biography was published in vol. II of the Notices, pp. 151-203. In the Lyons manuscript there is a report on his virtues addressed to Saint Vincent.

3Nicolas Pavilion was consecrated Bishop on August 22 in the church of Saint-Lazare. Saint Vincent had promised to accompany him to his diocese but was not able to do so. The new Bishop left Paris on October 8, accompanied by Etienne Blatiron, who was to direct his seminary. E. Dejean describes the events of this trip (cf. op. cit., p. 17).

4Alexandre Véronne.

5Adrien Le Bon.
are its cause, but seeing even in that the good pleasure of God, I accept it with all my heart and am, in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

404. - TO LOUIS LEBRETON, IN ROME

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter of September 13 and a few others before that, which I have answered since my return from Troyes. I repeat to you in this one that I have asked the Pastor of Saint-Leu, who compiled the French martyrology, to give me the notes he has on Saint Veneranda. Before this letter leaves, I shall have someone see him again to ask him to send me what he has and I shall send it to you by the same means.

As for the expenses of the missions, please take care of them when you go on one, even for that good priest from Siena as well, unless he insists to the contrary.

With regard to the litanies of Jesus, I would like you to get

Letter 404. - The original autograph letter was made available to Coste by M. Gloutier, vice-president of the hospitals of Langres.

1André du Saussay, born in Paris around 1589, was a doctor in both laws, a talented controversialist, a renowned orator, a prolific writer, and the Pastor of Saint-Leu and Saint-Gilles (1624-1656). He found favor with the King who made him his counselor and preacher. He became ecclesiastical judge and Vicar General of Paris (1643-1655). Proposed by the Queen Regent as candidate for the episcopal see of Toul in 1649, he was not approved by the Pope until 1656. He governed his diocese wisely and died on September 9, 1675, after merit standing his tomb: vir clero et populo amabilis [a man beloved by the clergy and the people]. (Cf. Martin, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 236 ff.)

2Martyrologium Gallicanum. Paris, 1638. 2 vols., a work of no historical value.

3Saint Veneranda was beheaded in Rome on November 14 during the persecution of Antoninus.
permission to say them in common in the morning *media voce sine cantu*⁴, as we are accustomed to do.

When I spoke to you about sending you some Missionaries, it was just a mere proposal. It would be impossible for us now that we have increased the number of Missionaries in Aiguillon,⁵ have given four to begin the foundation in Alet, and are also going to send another four to the Geneva diocese where Commander de Sillery has made a foundation. And besides the Missionaries in Toul, we have sent men to Nancy, Verdun, and Bar-le-Duc, and are going to send others to Metz to assist corporally and spiritually the poor country people who have been given refuge in those cities. We are assisting them corporally by distributing five hundred pounds of bread to them a month in each town; that amounts to twenty-five hundred livres which we must find every month. By the grace of God, it has not been lacking up to now and so I hope we shall not fail to have it; at least we have enough funds for this year. We are assisting them spiritually by teaching them everything necessary for salvation. We have them begin by making a general confession of their entire past life and then continue to confess every two or three months.

Brother Mathieu,⁶ who is working wonders in that regard by a very special grace Our Lord has given him, thought it would be well to bring as many of those people as possible into France. He brought in a hundred last month, among whom were forty-six young women — some from good families, and others. He fed them and accompanied them right into this city where the greater number have already been placed. In the meantime, they are being fed in a house where the city foundlings used to be cared for. A few good ladies⁷ are doing marvels to assist us in this.

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⁴*In a medium tone of voice and without chant* — spoken, not sung.
⁵Or rather La Rose, near Aiguillon.
⁶Brother Mathieu Regnard was working in the Duchy of Lorraine (Nancy, Metz, etc.), which at this point of history was neither within the national boundaries of France nor part of the French nation.
⁷Especially the Duchesse d'Aiguillon.
Given all these circumstances, you can see quite well, Mon- sieur, that we cannot possibly send you any assistance at present; when we can, we shall do so. We are going to send twelve or thirteen to those parts.

That news will console you, but here is some that will greatly sadden your dear heart: hearing about our good deceased M. de la Salle's passing away. He went to God on the feast of Saint Denis between three and four o'clock in the morning as a result of purpura. During his illness, he was so attached to the Will of God that he never departed from it, so that it can be said his death was an echo of his life. The day before he died, in order to die naked, he took off his shirt with so much decency that everyone was astonished that a body which had not stirred for two days had been able to do it. In fact, I asked him why he had stripped himself and he gave me an inarticulate answer that I could not understand. M. Dehorgny told us that he thought he had done it in imitation of Saint Francis or, rather, of Our Lord, because last year he had seen him greatly moved by that gesture of Saint Francis the day we were reading his life.

Our Lord seems unwilling to stop there because, while I am writing this, we have two of our brothers at the point of Extreme Unction, one of whom is our dear and admirable Brother Alexandre. I commend to your prayers the dead and the living and beg you to hurry to obtain that privileged altar for us with the dispensation from the stipulated number of nine Masses. Usually fifteen to twenty are said, but it sometimes happens, when people go on missions, that only five or six priests are here. The Cardinal just sent someone here to the house to find out if we have one, with an order to have Masses said on it for the late Cardinal de la Valette.

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8October 9.
9Saint Francis of Assisi.
10Brother Alexandre Véronne. He recovered and lived until November 18, 1676.
11Cardinal de Richelieu.
Mon Dieu, Monsieur, how long it is taking to present that petition!\textsuperscript{12} I beg you, Monsieur, to hurry it; and, whatever that good prelate and a number of others may say, \textit{standum est proposito}.\textsuperscript{13} I just discussed the matter with good M. Callon who thinks, as I do, that the matter is absolutely necessary. He told me such favorable things on the subject that my heart was quite touched. Among others, he mentioned the argument of Saint Thomas: \textit{quae appellantur primo et ultimo debent esse immobilia}.\textsuperscript{14} The good M. Callon is a doctor in Theology who works constantly on the missions near Aumale. See to it, therefore, Monsieur, I beg of you. I do not know whether it would have been desirable for you to have applied to Cardinal Antonio\textsuperscript{15} in the first place, or whether the individual you know does not intend to make a milch cow of the matter so as to get more money or some equivalent service. Would to God you had some other means at hand to attain our goal; that is M. de Cordes' thinking, provided it could be done without spoiling anything! This is said for your ears alone and never for anyone else. But if you think it risky to change means, \textit{in nomine Domini}, hold on to the one you have. You see, Monsieur, we are mortal. I cannot go on with this for long because next April I shall enter my sixtieth year.\textsuperscript{16} Add to that the mishaps that may occur. The doctor just left me; he just told me M. Dehorgny has a fever. As for the one I have at present, it is my usual one.

\textsuperscript{12}This petition pertained to the organization of the Congregation of the Mission, into which the Founder wanted to introduce the practice of vows.
\textsuperscript{13}Let the plan remain as it is.
\textsuperscript{14}What is applied to the first and the last must be unchangeable.
\textsuperscript{15}Antonio Barberini, nephew of Pope Urban VIII, was only twenty when he entered the Sacred College in 1627. He was placed in charge of several legations. Since the steps he took to prevent the election of Innocent X were unsuccessful, he came to France, obtained the bishopric of Poitiers in 1652, and became Archbishop of Reims in 1657. He died in Nemi, near Rome, on August 3, 1671.
\textsuperscript{16}Saint Vincent would therefore have been born in 1581, five years later than the date previously accepted by most of his biographers, and his age would not be that engraved on his tombstone. We shall not attempt here to elucidate the historical problem which this discrepancy raises; we shall simply note that the Saint was never inconsistent. If we take into account the fact that, when he spoke or wrote, the current year was always considered completed, his divers statements on this matter (we count twelve of them) are all in perfect agreement. (Cf. the
I am more touched than I can say about your fortunate meeting with that good priest from Siena. O Monsieur, how thoroughly so I would be if the goodness of God were pleased to unite him to you in spirit! I say that positis ponendis; I think Our Lord grants me the mercy of not wanting men except when His Providence draws them. Alas! Monsieur, how vain and blameworthy our desires are! I beg Our Lord, however, to bestow His blessing on the new life you are about to begin together in your house and on the mission where I am confident you now are. I dare to take the liberty of greeting him most humbly, with all the respect and reverence I owe him, and I recommend myself to his holy prayers. I likewise greet the other good priest you mentioned who will perhaps make the third in your group.

You have spoken to me about Father Garanita in almost every letter and about all the good he is doing, but I do not know if you told me to what Order he belongs. Be that as it may, I can only praise God for the grace He is bestowing on you and also for the kindness shown you by that good prelate who runs the priests' academy. I beg Our Lord to shower more and more blessings on them.

Jésus! Monsieur, how consoled I am by the report you presented in order to obtain the faculty for working and for the indulgences for the Company! Please send it to me as soon as you receive it. O Monsieur, how moved I am by the favor Cardinal

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I letter of July 25, 1640, to Pierre Escart; of November 21, 1642, to Bernard Codoing; of September 17, 1649, to Etienne Blatiron; of April 27, 1655, to Pope Alexander VII; of July 15, 1659, to Cardinal de Retz; of August 24, 1659, to François Feydin; the repetition of prayer on November 3, 1656; and the conferences of January 6 and June 15, 1657, to the Daughters of Charity.) On April 17, 1628, consistent with his belief, he told the judges appointed to inquire into the virtues of Saint Francis de Sales that he was almost forty-eight years of age and on March 31, 1639, in his written statement concerning Saint-Cyran, he stated that he was almost fifty-nine. Those around him were of the same mind since, at the end of 1659, Father de Gondi speaks of his being seventy-nine years old (cf. letter of the Chandenier brothers to Saint Vincent, September 10, 1659—vol. VIII, no. 2973) and his secretary, Brother Louis Robineau, in a manuscript compiled after 1660 (Arch. de la Mission, p. 85), calls him "an old man of almost eighty."

With due reservation.
Bagni did for you in that regard, and how I beg God with all my heart to preserve him for many long years! I shall tell you two things about him: first, I have never seen a goodness more closely approaching that of Francis de Sales, the Bishop of Geneva, than his; second, I deeply cherish his portrait and have no other than his and that of our blessed prelate. I entreat you, Monsieur, to assure him of my obedience, to take care of your health, and to assist me by your prayers to obtain mercy for myself before His Divine Majesty. Ask Him for the grace to live better in order to die well as did Madame Goussault, the President's wife. She made a holy use of the long and painful illness which preceded her death and died with joy and jubilation.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL

Paris, October 12, 1639

Addressed: Monsieur Marchand, Banker at the Court of Rome, to be kindly delivered to Monsieur Lebreton, Priest of the Mission, in Rome

405. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

[October 1639]

Courage, Monsieur, raise your heart to God and receive in acquiescence to His good pleasure the sad news I am about to give you. It has pleased the Divine Goodness to take to Himself good Monsieur de la Salle. He died of purpura on the feast of Saint Denis, between three and four o'clock in the morning on the

Letter 405. - Lyons manuscript.
1Month and year of Jean de la Salle's death.
2October 9.
fourteenth day of his illness. His death corresponded to his life. His acceptance of the good pleasure of God was constant from the beginning of his illness right to the end, without any contrary thought at all. He had always feared death, but, as he saw from the start that he was contemplating it with delight, he told me that he was going to die with pleasure because, he said, he had heard me say that at the end God takes away the fear of death from those who have feared it during their life and who have practiced charity towards the poor.

I cannot tell you the devout sentiments he has left in the Company. We were in retreat then and, at the sharing of prayer, each man told what he had heard him say that was most edifying and spoke of the virtues he had seen him practice, all of which gave us reason to hold conferences on the same subject. We held the first the day before yesterday and will continue next Friday. You cannot imagine the effects of that conference. I had objected to it, but, whereas it is the mind of the Church that we converse about the virtues of those who have died in the Lord, and whereas for that purpose she has established notaries to collect and make known the combats of martyrs and the holy deeds of confessors, the funeral orations given in Paris for the great and for all sorts of people in Provence and Languedoc — in some places over the grave at one's burial, or on a Sunday, or after dinner the day of the funeral — I thought we could do the same with profit and I am consoled by it. I even want the practice continued in humility and Christian charity. I think there is reason to hope that some people will correct their failings and others will be encouraged in virtue. One of those who spoke the day before yesterday said that, by the grace of God and by the prayers and example of the deceased, he had made up his mind to do something important for which he had no inclination before. I think, Monsieur, that you would do well to hold a conference at your house. The first point could be the reasons for our conversing about the virtuous words and good deeds we have observed in the deceased; the second point, the words you heard him say; the third point, the deeds.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I most humbly thank you for your good remedy; I took it yesterday and it worked three times. Our doctor thinks that I should take a dose again tomorrow with some rosepale syrup. I most humbly ask you to do me this second favor and to send me another dose this evening.

I still have my slight fever. Our Brother Alexandre gives us some hope, and the other brother as well. The first still has a little to fear tomorrow, which is his fourteenth day. Monsieur Dehorgny is ill with a colic and a little fever.

This slight indisposition will give me the means to reflect a little more on our concerns about the Charity. Afterwards, if Our Lord grants me life, we shall work at it in good earnest. Your letter the day before yesterday let me see some slight reluctance in your mind about it. Mon Dieu! Mademoiselle, how fortunate you are to possess the antidote for eagerness! The works God Himself is accomplishing are never spoiled by the inactivity of men. Please trust in Him and that I am, in His love, as much as Our Lord wills, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

V. D. P.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

Letter 406. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1This is the date which follows from the comparison of this letter with no. 403. The Saint says here that he took the medicine the day before. He wrote on October 9 or 10: "Our doctor thinks I should be purged next Wednesday." The following Wednesday was the twelfth, therefore, he must have written this letter on Thursday, the thirteenth.

2An astringent syrup.

3Alexandre Véronne. He recovered completely.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

God's Providence has cast His eyes on you to go and serve Him at Notre-Dame de La Rose, in the diocese of Agen,¹ where Messieurs Brunet and Savinier are at present.

I am sending you a secret report which you shall communicate to no one but M. Lambert.

The newness of the duty will give you cause for apprehension. Remember that Our Lord will be your guidance and your guide and that you can do all things with Him. Jeremiah was a child who knew only how to say to God: *Domine, nescio loqui,*² and yet God intended to make use of him in the most important plan His Majesty had at that time for His people. You have reason to hope for the same graces bestowed on him if, like him, no matter what people do, you respond to your vocation in his spirit of humility. I hope for this from His goodness and from the recognition you seem to have of your unworthiness and inadequacy. I am, in His love and that of His holy Mother, your most humble and most obedient servant.

Vincent Depaul

M. Bécu,³ who in Nancy is called M. de Montigny,⁴ is well and is working wonders for about four hundred poor people whom he

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Letter 407. - The original autograph letter is in the Archives of the Mission (Paris).

¹The foundress of the house established at Notre-Dame de la Rose was none other than the Duchesse d’Aiguillon. By a contract of August 18, 1637, she had given a sum of twenty-two thousand livres to support four priests. They were to give a mission in the cities, towns, and villages of her duchy at the time of the four principal feasts of the year and assure a daily Mass in their chapel for her and her family. (Cf. Arch. Nat. MM 584.)

²"Ah, Lord God!" I said, "I know not how to speak," Jer. 1:6. (NAB)

³Jean Bécu.

⁴There is no available information to explain this statement of Saint Vincent.
is nourishing corporally and spiritually. Brother Hubert keeps on doing better and better.

Your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

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408. - TO LOUIS LEBRETON, IN ROME

Paris, November 15, 1639

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter and the formula for your petition. Having reflected upon it together with the present dispositions of their Excellencies, our prelates, we thought it advisable to accord to them the right to correct any errors the Missionaries make with regard to the people while they are giving missions. We shall also likewise accord them the rights of visitation and correction of any houses which become scandalously irregular, after they have notified the General about it two or three times, pointing out the scandalous irregularity which is to be corrected, and have given information concerning the irregularity. And because we are afraid that you may have difficulty obtaining the favor dimittendi incorrigibiles, we thought it advisable to request that solemn vows not be made. Those who have completed their two years in the seminary will make the four simple vows and those who have completed their first year in the seminary will make a good resolution to live and die in the Company in poverty, chastity, and obedience to the bishops circa missionis and to the Superior General

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Hubert Bécu.

Letter 408. - The original autograph letter is at the Provincial House of the Daughters of Charity in Lille.

1 Of dismissing incorrigibles.

2 First wording: solemn vows and obedience to the bishops only after several years and that those who have...
The latter may withdraw or be dismissed only after making a retreat. The others may likewise withdraw or be dismissed only after making use of every imaginable means to avoid coming to that end, only with the authority of the Pope or the General, and only in the cases which I shall indicate, as I shall everything that is contained in the present letter, in a report I hope to send you within three days. Therefore, please defer presenting the said petition. I shall answer in my next letter everything you asked me in yours. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Monsieur Marchand, Expeditionary Banker at the Court of Rome, to be given, please, to Monsieur Lebreton, Priest of the Mission, in Rome

409. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Richelieu, November 24, 1639

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The dysentery in this district is becoming contagious. The town magistrates just sent for M. Lambert, their Pastor, to see about the order to be maintained in the town with regard to the plague. It has broken out in three locations. That gives me good reason for asking you to postpone your trip, even though I sent word to Abbé de Vaux, the Vicar General of Angers,1 that you could be there

3 . . . obedience to the bishops regarding the missions and to the Superior General regarding the discipline and direction of the society.

Letter 409. - The original autograph letter is at the Provincial House of the Daughters of Charity in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Guy Lasnier died on April 29, 1681, at the age of seventy-nine. He was one of the most remarkable ecclesiastics of Anjou during the seventeenth century. For a long time his only
around the beginning of next month.² Please wait, therefore, until we get back, Mademoiselle, and we shall see about it.

I have been in this town for two days and have seen Sister Louise in passing at the church. She is overjoyed at the hope of seeing you. I have not seen our Sister Barbe³ as yet. Things are going better, thank God.⁴

I hope to leave this town in three or four days⁵ and be in Paris around the tenth or twelfth of next month. I am, meanwhile, in the hope of seeing you there, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

The Sisters have stopped the visiting of the poor.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras.

ambition was to satisfy his vanity and his passion for hunting and other worldly amusements. On February 29, 1627, he was appointed to the abbey of Saint-Etienne de Vaux in Saintonge; in 1628 he was named Vicar General of Angers, then Canon of Notre-Dame de Paris. In spite of the obligations imposed on him by these dignities, he continued to lead a very worldly life. In 1632, like many others, he was anxious to satisfy his curiosity as to what was going on in the convent of the Ursulines in Loudun. [It was rumored that some of the nuns were possessed by devils; Richelieu ordered the exorcism of the nuns and the execution of the Pastor, Urbain Grandier, for the practice of witchcraft.] He had cause to rue the day. It is alleged that one of the nuns, penetrating his interior life, revealed, to his great confusion, faults that he had never mentioned to anyone. From then on, he was a new man. In 1635 he came to make a retreat at Saint-Lazare and there he met Saint Vincent de Paul, with whom he remained in contact. He also had dealings with Saint Jane Frances de Chantal, Jean-Jacques Olier, Father Surin, and Baron de Renty. In his city, Angers, he established a convent of the Visitation, richly endowed the seminary, and founded the ecclesiastical conferences in his diocese. The Daughters of Charity of the hospital in Angers had no protector more dedicated or counselor more enlightened than the Abbé de Vaux. He gave hospitality to Saint Vincent, Saint Louise, and Jean-Jacques Olier.

We have only one of the letters Saint Vincent wrote to him (cf. vol. I, no. 416), but there are many from Saint Louise, about one hundred of them. (Cf. François Charmand, Les vies des saints personnages d'Anjou [3 vols., Paris: Lecoffre, 1863], pp. 279-303.)

²For the foundation in Angers.
³Sister Barbe Angiboust and Sister Louise Ganset had been in Richelieu since October of the preceding year.
⁴One of Saint Louise's letters (cf. Ecrits spirituels, L. 11) informs us that Barbe and Louise did not get along. Sister Louise was too independent and Sister Barbe was not cordial enough towards her.
⁵Saint Vincent was delayed in Richelieu until December 5. (Cf. no. 411.)
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I cannot answer your entire letter; I lost it. Since Our Lord is urging you to go to Angers, go, in nomine Domini; what He protects is well protected.

Besides, Madame Traversay is still having difficulty. That has made me think that perhaps Our Lord wants the work to be done by itself and for itself without mixing it with another.

If you choose the Châteaudun coach, you will pass through Chartres and can make your devotions on the way. From Châteaudun you will have eleven leagues to Orléans and perhaps less to Notre-Dame de Cléry, where the river passes, or nearby, it seems to me. That way, you will avoid the cobblestones, except for three or four leagues near Orléans, where I advise you to go and pay a call. To get there, you will have to rent a trap in Châteaudun. The coach will not cost you anything for the trip; it belongs to this house.

I told our Brother Louistre to give you the places you request. He will leave on Tuesday. See if you can make it that day.

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**Letter 410.** - The original autograph letter, found among the papers of Jean-François Daudet, Priest of the Mission, after his death in 1807, was given to the Daughters of Charity of 80 rue de Vaugirard, Paris. The letter now forms part of the collection in the Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity.

1In his letter of November 24, Saint Vincent announces to Saint Louise his recent arrival in Richelieu and his intention of remaining there three or four more days. In this letter, written on a Wednesday, he speaks of his approaching departure. Since November 24 was a Thursday, there is no doubt that the above letter was written on the thirtieth. The Saint was no longer in Richelieu the following Wednesday.

2At that time the plague was ravaging Angers and Richelieu and, for that reason, the Saint had originally advised Saint Louise to delay her trip.

3Perhaps the work of the Foundlings.

4Saint Vincent and Saint Louise both had great devotion to Notre-Dame de Chartres; they made this pilgrimage many times to commend their works to Mary.

5Principal town of a canton in Loiret.
We have talked enough about the way to deal with those gentlemen, about who is responsible for changing the Sisters, and that there will be no one else with them. I shall write to the Abbé de Vaux about it; he is the Vicar General who is handling the matter.

On your return, you will really have to visit the Charity in Richelieu, which is eight leagues from Saumur where Notre-Dame des Ardilliers is located. From Richelieu, take the coach to Tours, which is a good ten leagues from Richelieu. As soon as you arrive in Orléans, send someone to the port to find a boat, but do not take the express. In Angers, lodge at the address M. Grandnom will give you. Have him and Madame Lotin write to her relatives and friends in Angers who will go beyond the wishes of the late Madame Goussault; she strongly enjoined them during her illness to assist you. Also go to see the Sisters of Sainte-Marie for me.

I am sending you the little rule; have a good copy of it made and change whatever is necessary. Perhaps I shall see you on your way back, in Tours or somewhere along the way. I beg Our Lord, meanwhile, to lead you by the hand Himself, to bless your journey, and to bring you back in perfect health. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL.

Richelieu, Wednesday morning

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6One of the problems at the hospital of Saint John in Angers revolved around who had the power to assign Daughters of Charity to, and change them from, this establishment.

7Remi de Grandnom, intendant of Madame Goussault.

8The Superior of the Monastery of the Visitation in Angers was Mother Claire-Madeleine de Pierre. She entered the Visitation in the first monastery in Paris where she was professed on May 28, 1623. She left this monastery in 1626 to enter the second monastery in Paris at the time of its foundation. She later was head of the convents in Angers, Tours, and Saumur, where she died in 1674 at the age of seventy-four.

9The Daughters of Charity have in their archives two drafts of this rule, the second written in Saint Vincent's own handwriting (cf. vol. XIII, no. 143).
Write me, if need be, by the express messenger in Fréneville. I shall be there, or around there, for two days. If there is any reply that is urgent, I shall send it to you at the Sisters of Sainte-Marie in Orléans.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

411. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[December] 12, 1639

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I arrived quite late last night and read your letter from Saumur, the first of many. O Mon Dieu! how worried I am about you and your Daughters! I was expecting to find you here because of the cold you told me you had caught. We shall understand in heaven why Providence has treated you that way. In the meantime, I beg you, above all, to take good care of yourself amid the great dangers you will encounter in Angers.²

Here is the answer to what you asked. I would rather you lodged in the town than in the house³ and I think it advisable for you not to accept anything for your journey. Our Lord will provide for it, if He wishes. It would be most desirable for the Sisters to be alone in the hospital; it is to be feared that the presence of that young woman might cause some difficulty. I was not told about that. We would have stipulated otherwise if I had known. However, it will

Letter 411. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹The text says “November.” There certainly must have been some distraction, which is obvious in comparing this letter with no. 409.
²The plague was taking many lives there.
³Perhaps at the hospital where she was to install the Sisters.
be difficult to make her leave now that she is there. What can be
done? Your prudence will act as it judges best.  

I am very pleased that you took along little Sister Jeanne. If
you need some other Sister to return with you, you can send word
to Sister Barbe to come and see you in Saumur, Chinon, or Tours
with Sister Louise, and to bring you the good young woman who
introduced herself to me there so that she might belong to the
Charity.

I am a little worried about your going to Richelieu because of
the disease there. Our dear Sisters have stopped the visiting of the
sick and the schools. The Monday I left, a little girl who had been
at their school the preceding Saturday died. If you do go there,
please stay only one day.

Your letter worked wonders for your Daughters; they are happy
at present and content, provided they see you. We left one of our
priests and a brother there, off by themselves, to help the plague-
stricken.

I think it is very good for Sister Barbe to visit the Sisters in
Angers and I promise you, with the help of God, that I shall visit
the ones in La Chapelle and, if I can, the Foundlings also. I have
not been able to see your son yet; I shall do so at the first oppor-
tunity. You may rest assured that I shall act on your opinions,
provided you take good care of your health, which I commend to
Our Lord with all my heart, being in His love, Mademoiselle,
[your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL]

4Saint Louise looked for another situation for the young woman outside the hospital, and she
probably succeeded. (Cf. Ecrits spirituels, L. 12.)
5Jeanne Lepeintre.
6Barbe's companion in Richelieu.
7Barbe and Louise. On October 26 Saint Louise had addressed a letter of reproach and
advice to them (cf. Ecrits spirituels, L. 11), which Monsignor Baunard reproduces almost in its
entirety. (Cf. Baunard, op. cit., p. 245.)
8The Sisters at the Foundling Home.
I received your letter from Toulouse and thanked God for leading you there. I arrived in Richelieu two or three days after your departure and was very sorry not to find you. I made the visitation and looked into the state of affairs and what has happened there up to now. I entreat you, Monsieur, in the name of Our Lord, to return to the spirit He had given you at Saint-Lazare. No one has ever given greater edification in that house. I beg God to grant you the grace of giving as much where you are. M. de Sergis wanted you to the exclusion of everyone else, which should make you realize the esteem and affection he has for you. He sent me word that he would live like a brother with you. I entreat you, Monsieur, to honor the guidance of Our Lord in his person, to hold him in esteem, to have affection for him, and to obey him in that capacity. Oh! how sweet is the guidance of those who love and esteem us and what a great attraction that is for us to enter into their views! If we were truly mortified, we would be indifferent on that point. According to the rule of God's Will, we should prefer those who are most exacting to those who subscribe to our moods. Since I have seen you very fondly attached to the happy practice of the divine Will, I hope that, when your nature finds no benefit in the exactitude of a director, the faithful practice of the Will of God will help you, for love of Him, to bear with all the little difficulties which may come your way. They shall never be lacking, no matter with whom or where we may be. If we are often at odds with ourselves, how can we avoid little aversions, encounters, and alienations with anyone else? One of the principal acts of charity is bearing with our neighbor. We must hold as an irrefutable maxim that the difficulties we have with our neighbor arise more from our immortified moods than from anything else.
I am saying only this to you, Monsieur, although I could tell you many other things about holy charity. It is such a perfect state that he who has the happiness of possessing it is destined to live as in a little paradise in this world and to possess eternal glory in the next, etc. . . .

413. - TO BROTHER JEAN DUHAMEL, DEACON

December 15, 1639

Dearest Brother,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Since I cannot have the happiness of coming to see you as I had informed you, I am asking you in these lines not to yield to the temptation which is trying to dissuade you from taking the holy order of the priesthood. To attain it you have done almost everything you have done since you came into the world. Therefore, please prepare yourself for it so that you may receive it at this ordination. If you put it off any longer, you will deprive God of the glory He would receive from it, the blessed of the consolation they would have from it, the souls in Purgatory of the relief they would receive from it, and the entire Church Militant of the graces you would obtain for it by your adorable sacrifice. What is worse, you will delight the devil because he will have had the power to dissuade you from doing all that good. To think you would be more fit some other time — O Jésus, you must not expect that. Never to

Letter 413. - Autograph letter. The original is in the library of Châlons-sur-Marne, ms. 742 (Garinet file 405). The Coste text, citing Reg. 2, was incomplete and faulty. The original was first published in vol. XXXII (1935) of Mémoires de la Société des Sciences et des Arts de Vitry-le-François. It was later reproduced in the Annales (1936), pp. 696-697, and reprinted in Mission et Charité, 19-20, pp. 22-23. This edition uses the text of the last-named source.

Jean Duhamel was a member of the Congregation of the Mission. Ordained a priest shortly after this letter was written, he was placed in Annecy and left the Congregation in 1640. His will, dated April 18, 1643 (cf. Arch. Nat., M. 211, fo 1), reveals that he keenly regretted his departure from the Congregation of the Mission and his errors (cf. vol. II, no. 461).
go through with it — God keep you from having to answer for that before God. That would be burying the talent Our Lord has placed in your hand, in which case Holy Scripture threatens you with a horrible punishment. To say that you are not fit and never will be — I admit that, Monsieur, considering the infinite holiness of the work, but with regard to our wretchedness, trust, Monsieur, that Our Lord will be your competence just as He Himself will be the sacrificer with you. As for the rest of your difficulties, we shall discuss them later. I am, meanwhile, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

414. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN ANGERS

Paris, December 17, 1639

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Last night I received your letter written on the feast of Saint Nicolas. It brought me great consolation after my worrying about the place where you might be and the state of your health. May God be blessed that you are in Angers and lodged in good Abbé de Vaux's house. I shall not reply in this letter to everything you asked me because I have not been able to see your Sisters in La Chapelle yet and the messenger is going to leave soon.

I wrote to you this week in answer to your letter from Saumur. I

Letter 414. - The original autograph letter formerly belonged to the Daughters of Charity in the parish of Saint-Projet in Bordeaux. It is now in the keeping of the Priests of the Mission at the Berceau, near Dax. The Coste edition cited Pèmartin and the Saint Paul manuscript, but these editions contained some errors. The text of the original was published in the Annales (1928), pp. 254-256, and was reprinted in Mission et Charité, 19-20, pp. 23-25. This edition uses the latter text.

December 6.
addressed my letter to Abbé de Vaux, to whom I allowed myself the honor of writing.  

Today is Ember Saturday, which obliges me to go and say Mass at Notre-Dame for the Charity. After dinner, with God’s help, I shall go to La Chapelle, speak to Madame Turgis, and begin to give the order for the Sisters you requested, but I feel we should not consider Marie from Saint-Germain or the one from Saint-Paul. I shall try to send you the others as soon as possible and shall give some thought to Madame Turgis. There is much to be said pro and con.  

Alas! mon Dieu! what shall we do about Nancy; we need to send some Sisters there as soon as possible. Yesterday I gave the Duchesse d’Aiguillon reason to expect someone. As for Henriette, I still know nothing at all.  

With respect to the articles, I think you answered well; there is no need to add any more of them. We shall look them over in a little while, during which time we shall give God’s good pleasure a trial. You would do well to talk about the matter that way, it seems to me, and even to show their little rule of life to M. de Vaux and to anyone else he judges suitable. You would also do well in particular to strengthen the Sisters in their determination to keep the rule well and to obey the administration in the way set down in the said rule. Inculcate, both in those gentlemen and in the Sisters, the gravity of making any changes in it. The Duchesse d’Aiguillon mentioned that to me just recently.  

Yesterday, Saturday, I went to La Chapelle where I saw all your Sisters. They are doing quite well, by the grace of God. Madame Turgis is very pleased with them.

2Cf. no. 411.  
3Madame Turgis was taking Saint Louise’s place in La Chapelle.  
4Marie Joly from the parish of Saint-Germain-l’Auxerrois.  
5Marie from the parish of Saint-Paul.  
6The Saint could not send any until 1646.  
7Probably Henriette Gesseaume.  
8Begun on Saturday, December 17, the letter was continued on Sunday, the eighteenth. Meanwhile, Saint Vincent had gone to La Chapelle.
Henriette is still at home. Her brother\(^9\) came to say that, before she went to Saint-Germain,\(^10\) she would come to La Chapelle. It is not advisable for her to go there. Someone else should be sent to Saint-Germain and she should be kept here in order to bring her to a realization of her fault.

I have some objection to sending you Madame Turgis.\(^11\) I think it would be good to send you Geneviève\(^12\), who was with you when you were near here, or Marie\(^13\), who was at the Foundlings. If we send you the latter, the former will be sent to Saint-Germain, or vice versa. I shall try to have them leave within three days.

Your son is fine; I still have not spoken to him because of the quandary I am in. I am going to send for your Sisters this afternoon so as to have them leave the day after tomorrow, with God’s help. I am, in His love, provided you take good care of your health, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

**Vincent Depaul**

*Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, at the home of Abbé de Vaux, in Angers*

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\(^9\)Sister Henriette Géseaume had a brother, Claude (possibly the one referred to here), who entered the Congregation of the Mission in Paris on December 6, 1643, at the age of twenty-eight (cf. *Notices*, vol. I, p. 498).

\(^10\)Saint Germain-en-Laye (Yvelines). The Daughters of Charity had been established there since 1638.

\(^11\)Saint Louise had asked for her.

\(^12\)Geneviève Caillou. She was one of the first Sisters sent to Angers. One of Saint Louise’s letters (*Ecrits spirituels*, L. 19) tells us that she fell ill after three or four months there. She was recalled in 1644.

\(^13\)Perhaps Marie Matrilomeau, who was among the first Sisters assigned to the hospital in Angers.
414a. - G. PLUYETTE TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

Please continue to give to the present Etienne Pluyette the money which is due on the first day of the year for the Pluyette scholarship. He was pleased to receive six months ago what was due at that time. That is gratifying to us, as are you in not failing to pay him. I shall remain, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

G. Pluyette

Fontenay, December 26, 1639

415. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN ANGERS

Paris, the last day of the month and of the year 1639

Mademoiselle,

So you are unwell by order of God's Providence. May His Holy Name be blessed! I hope that His goodness will be glorified again in this illness as it has been in all the others; that is what I am having people ask Him unceasingly, both here and elsewhere, wherever I am. Oh! how I wish Our Lord might let you see how willingly everyone is doing that and how moved the officers of the Hôtel-Dieu Charity were when I told them about it at a little meeting the day before yesterday!

I entreat you, Mademoiselle, to do all you can to recover your health and above all to spare yourself nothing. If you need money, good Abbé de Vaux will not refuse you while you are waiting for me to send you some, as I shall do if you let me know. As for your return, it will have to be in a litter; we shall try to send you one when you are able to travel.

Letter 415. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 58.
Your son came here yesterday to bring me your letter. It was a consolation to me, as you can imagine, because of what I had been told about you.

You now have in Angers, Madame Turgis, Barbe,¹ and Clé- mence,² I hope; they left here the day before Christmas eve on the Orléans coach.³

Things are going fairly well in La Chapelle according to your order. I send greetings to your good Sisters and I am, in the love of Our Lord. . . .

416. - TO GUY LASNIER DE VAUX

Paris, the last day of the month and of the year 1639

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I cannot thank you warmly or humbly enough on the part of Mademoiselle Le Gras and on my own for the unparalleled charity you are extending to her and to her Sisters. I most humbly thank you to the best of my ability, Monsieur, and beg Our Lord, for Whose love you are doing all of that, to be Himself your thanks and your reward. I offer you all that I can do on earth for heaven and every act of gratitude in my power before God and the world.

¹Barbe Toussaint. She was recalled from Angers in 1644.
²Clémence Ferre. She left the hospital of Angers at the same time as her companion, Barbe Toussaint.
³The Daughters of Charity found the hospital in the most complete destitution. One of them wrote a short report which is still extant (cf. Archives of the Daughters of Charity); here are a few lines from it: "The poor in the hospital were so badly off that the townspeople would not be taken there. And if any of them were there because they had been forced to go, they would have white shirts brought to them from their homes or from their friends, for at that time there were thirty or forty patients, both men and women, and for that number three dozen shirts in all. . . . It was pitiful to see so much disorder and waste at the expense of the good of the poor."

Letter 416. - This letter, taken from the original which was then at the Hôtel-Dieu in Angers, was published in the Revue de l'Anjou (1854), vol. 1, p. 211.
So that good woman has fallen ill. *In nomine Domini!* We must adore therein the wisdom of Divine Providence. I do not commend her to you, Monsieur; your letter reveals to me how solicitous you are towards her and that is what she wrote to me as well. I would like to be there to free you from the care your goodness is taking of her and from her concern about it. Our Lord wishes to add the jewel of that merit to the crown Our Lord [sic] is fashioning for you.

I am writing her a note. Please send her my letter, Monsieur, and look upon me as one whom Our Lord has given you and who is, in His love and that of His holy Mother, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
No that good woman has fallen ill. In answer to a letter I wrote, she speaks to me of her health, and how she says she is better. I hope that she is. My dear friend, I am writing to you because I want to let you know how much I care for you. I am writing to you because I want to let you know how much I care for you. I am writing to you because I want to let you know how much I care for you. I am writing to you because I want to let you know how much I care for you.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]
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This index proposes to facilitate reference to the biographical data used in this volume and to the explanation of places and terms which recur frequently in the text and which have been explained in the footnotes when first used. Names of persons are in bold print, those of terms or places appear in italic. The accompanying numbers indicate the letters to which the reader should refer for the desired information.

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