SAINT
VINCENT DE PAUL

CORRESPONDENCE
CONFERENCES, DOCUMENTS

II
CORRESPONDENCE

VOLUME II (January 1640 - July 1646)

NEWLY TRANSLATED, EDITED, AND ANNOTATED
FROM THE 1921 EDITION
OF
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Archbishop of Baltimore

November 5, 1989
TO

SISTER JACQUELINE KILAR, D. C.
(1937-1988)
FOR
HER SCHOLARSHIP AND SELFLESS DEDICATION
IN THE TRANSLATION OF THE INITIAL VOLUMES
OF THESE LETTERS
OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

On December 7, 1988, Sister Jacqueline succumbed to her final bout with cancer. Despite frequent illness, she had valiantly continued her work on this Vincentian Translation Project. May she rest in peace and may she aid by her prayers those who carry on this work.
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2. Petition of Saint Vincent to the Parlement, March 2, 1645

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Index
INTRODUCTION

The correspondence of Saint Vincent de Paul contains a wealth of information about the man, the Saint, and his milieu. To facilitate the informed reading of Volume II, the editors felt it would be useful to preface the work with some explanatory remarks regarding language, style, and placement. In this way, a fuller image of the multifaceted personality and influence of the Saint will emerge from these pages, giving the reader a broader understanding of his life and the world in which he lived and worked.

In placing new letters within the volume or changing the placement of letters we have relied on Coste's corrections given in volumes VIII and XIII, the listings found in the Annales, the dates on recently discovered letters or, in the absence of a date, on internal evidence. To facilitate research in Coste's work, we have chosen to keep the letter numbers of the original volumes and to indicate material newly added or relocated within each volume by adding a, b, c, etc., to the number of the preceding item. We have also decided to adhere to the span of years assigned by Coste for each volume.

In some cases, the finding of an original has enabled us to join fragments formerly considered separate letters. Such

\footnote{Annales (1937), pp. 234-237.}
combined letters have been assigned a single number followed by a letter to differentiate the whole from the segments as published in the original Coste volume. Where variations of a single letter exist, only the most correct version has been included in the volume. Likewise, although Coste chose to publish letters originally written in Latin both in that language and in French, the present edition bears only the English translation of the original Latin.

Three different types of letters are presented in these volumes: letters from Saint Vincent, letters to Saint Vincent and, at times, mere summaries of letters where the existence of a letter is known but no text is available. The letters written by Saint Vincent appear in regular type, while those addressed to him are printed in italics. Smaller type has been used to differentiate the summaries.

As Coste states in his introduction, almost all the letters we now possess are either in Saint Vincent's handwriting or in that of one of his secretaries. The term original autograph found in the citation of a letter indicates that the manuscript was written entirely in the Saint's hand. If the citation uses the term signed letter, the manuscript was written by a secretary and signed by the Saint. For some letters only a facsimile, a handwritten copy, a photocopy, or a photograph is known. Such indications are given in the citation of the letters for which this information is available.

The citations usually state as well the actual location of the manuscript or copy used for the present edition. Great care has been taken to verify these locations where possible. Letters drawn from other publications and those belonging to special collections, private or museum, have not been checked due to the near impossibility of such a task. However, an attempt has been made to verify all letters belonging to private houses of the Daughters of Charity, the Priests of the Mission, other religious houses, churches, and various religious institutions. In checking these locations and in the search for unpublished letters, we have at times been fortunate enough to locate the
originals of letters for which only copies were known formerly. In these instances as well no mention has been made of the correction—the citation simply states that the manuscript is an original.

We have updated as well the department names given in the footnotes. Several departments have had name changes since the time of Coste, while two others have been subdivided.²

Although the project has undergone many delays, each has contributed in some way to the overall quality of the work. The appearance, in 1983, of the revised edition of Saint Louise de Marillac’s writings¹ has permitted us to check her letters to Saint Vincent and her spiritual writings for any corrections which may have come to light. We have also adjusted all the footnote references to the appropriate indication as given in the new edition.

In any work of translation the question of style invariably arises, so it was not strange that we should be faced with the problem. Should we smooth out clumsy or elliptical phrasing in the interest of producing a more “readable” translation or should we preserve the roughness and stylistic crudities of the original in order to reflect the flavor and spontaneous quality of Saint Vincent’s expression, supplying explanations where needed to make the sense clear? As our response to this question, we have attempted to make our translation as “readable” as possible while adhering closely to the style of each correspondent. For that purpose we have made an effort

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²*Department* is the term used to designate each of the principal divisions of French territory. It denotes a geographical area similar to that of the American *state*. In the names of several departments, the word *maritime*, indicating *near the sea*, has replaced the word *inférieure* of the same meaning: Charente-Maritime, Seine-Maritime, Alpes-Maritime. In 1964, the Department of Seine was subdivided into Hauts-de-Seine, Paris, Seine-Saint-Denis, and Val-de-Marne; Seine-et-Oise became Essonne, Val-d’Oise, and Yvelines.

¹*Sainte Louise de Marillac. Ecrits Spirituels* (Tours: Mame, 1983).
to give as literal a meaning as we could to the expressions used, while still adapting them to modern terminology. We have tried to reproduce even the grammatical constructions used by each correspondent unless the true meaning of the sentence would suffer thereby. Very long sentences have been shortened and short phrases joined together to render thoughts more readily intelligible, though still preserving the sense of the original. The vocabulary and expression has deliberately been kept simple. Saint Vincent's love for and practice of simplicity are no secret to anyone familiar with his life; therefore, it was judged fitting to follow his own simplicity in the choice of words and style unless he himself opted for more elegant forms.

To retain the French atmosphere of the work we have left certain terms and expressions in the original French. General terms of greeting such as Monsieur, Madame, etc., have not been translated, nor have we attempted an English version for expressions such as O mon Dieu!, O Jésus! Land-holding titles which often form part of a proper name—Comte, Duc, Marquis—have also been left in French. Other titles have been translated by the closest English equivalent possible. Proper names are given in the original language unless there is a familiar English form. This holds true for both people and places. Therefore, Sainte Jeanne-Françoise Frémiot de Chantal has been rendered as Saint Jane Frances Frémiot de Chantal, whereas Pierre Séguier remains in French. For places, Brittany is used instead of Bretagne, While Granada, Villedieuve, and similar names remain in the original language. Proper foreign names within the text of the manuscripts have been left as written by the correspondents. However, the footnotes and index present the name in its original language form—Alessandro Bichi for Alexandre Bichi; Giovanni Francesco Guidi di Bagno for Jean-François Bagni.

An attempt has been made to standardize name variations appearing in the original manuscripts: Gondi is always used
in this edition although the form Gondy is often seen in the manuscripts. We have, however, left the variations Pollation and Pouldillon. Although the correct spelling is the former, Saint Vincent always wrote the latter.

We have also standardized the various forms of the phrase used by Saint Vincent after his signature: *unworthy priest of the Congregation of the Mission*. Throughout this edition the abbreviation *i.s.C.M.* (*indignus sacerdos Congregationis Missionis*) has been used.

The word *fille*, meaning girl, daughter, young woman, appears in many of the manuscripts. In the seventeenth century, this word also denoted a woman religious or nun. We have tried to adjust the meaning of *fille* to the context of the various letters and have sometimes rendered the word as *Sister* rather than *Daughter* when referring to a member of Saint Louise's nascent community.

Monetary terms—*livre*, *écu*, etc.—have not been translated for it would be difficult to assign them an equivalent value in modern currency. Several other words and phrases have likewise been left in French—*Parlement, Chambre des Comptes, collège*—since English has no corresponding institution. These terms have been explained in footnotes. For other words of foreign origin used in English and found in English dictionaries no explanation has been given, for example, *faubourg*.

Saint Vincent often makes use of scriptural references which, however, are not always direct quotes. Where he has done so, the translation has been adjusted to flow with the meaning of the sentence. The scriptural quotations given in the footnotes are usually taken from the *New American Bible*, unless a passage cannot be found in that edition or a more suitable rendering of the phrase is found elsewhere. In such instances, the *Douay-Rheims Bible* has been used. In the case of the psalms, both versions have been cited because of the variations.
Coste almost always refers to Vincent de Paul as Saint Vincent or the Saint. In the present edition we have added this title to the names of Louise de Marillac and any other individual who has been canonized since Coste's time.

Generally speaking, in the titles of the letters, Coste gave the location of the addressee only when he was sure of it and when the locality was outside the then city of Paris. We have continued this practice and have attempted to make it more consistent. We have also followed Coste's custom of placing within brackets dates that are uncertain or conjectural. Brackets have also been used to indicate words either missing from the manuscript or inserted by the editors.

The capitalization forms of the original manuscripts have been adjusted to American usage as has the punctuation. Number forms—words versus figures—follow common American practice as well.

In addition to our goal of producing a smooth English translation which is faithful insofar as possible to the meaning and style of the original French, we have also purposed to present a work which is interesting and informative with regard to Saint Vincent, his correspondents, and his times. Both the scholar who may wish to use this work as a research tool and the ordinary reader who may be unfamiliar with the Double Family and the religio-political history of the period have been kept in mind. A great effort has been made to update, correct, and amplify Coste's footnote material. Irrelevant notes have been eliminated and new annotation added whenever this has been deemed necessary or helpful. In the case of new matter, no indication has been given to distinguish Coste's footnotes from the annotation added by our editor.

A biographical sketch of each personage has been supplied throughout the work the first time that he or she appears in a volume. To facilitate reference to this data and also to the explanations of terms and places given throughout the text an index has been added to each book. The index indicates the
number of the letter to which the reader should refer for the information sought. A general index will also be provided as an appendix to the entire work.

All references in the indices and the footnotes have been given by citing the volume and the number of the item rather than the page. Since Coste's volume span and his numbering of items have been retained, this practice should facilitate research in both his edition and the present translation.

In order to enjoy these volumes more thoroughly, the reader would do well to keep in mind that, as now, so then, one correspondent did not spell out to the other details that were already known and understood by both. Reading these letters at a distance of some three hundred years will often arouse a curiosity which in many cases must remain unsatisfied. The allusions made will not always be clear, nor can they be. However, a familiarity beforehand with the life of Saint Vincent will greatly aid one's knowledge and understanding of the situations mentioned and the people involved. The three-volume definitive biography written by Coste provides extensive information, but many shorter versions of the Saint's life can be found. Placed against such a background, these writings take on still more a life of their own and make the Saint vividly present once again. The twinkle in his eyes and the smile or tenderness in his voice seep through the words and we meet the delightful, charming man known to his contemporaries. The severe, ascetic Saint takes on a new personality and somehow becomes more human.

Let us not fail to seek the man beyond these words, the man of compassion, warmth, humor, savoir faire, authority, and, most of all, the mystic whose sanctity was carved amid the bustle and involvement of very human situations. He will

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give us hope that we, too, can find holiness in an ordinary, busy life. May this personal acquaintance with the real Vincent de Paul lead us to encounter the dynamic force behind his life, Jesus Christ, Who, for him, was all things.
Ma chère Mere la gran-de nostre seigneur joste
merci pour jaunai,

juy veu la vostre uergue lui vantant que
nostre seigneur faist de qui une gist augmenté
e qui torn o que li bon myseigneur Jeanne —
ne rappiert que lori membr qui dier s'ma dit —
de la beldet et qui nostre seigneur dona a
vostre seigneur fili que Jujulie among torn
greigret de latiotion qui mine posslie, ajvre
qui d'inhoj Porte de li saunte prest de plus en plus.
Le monsieur de Jux ne fit rencontrer
M. de Chambres pour voir si la première
\textit{et l'autre} de l'arville pour voir à la première.
M. de Brinelle et montrer de voir et montrer
Toujours qui dit qu'il me a promis de Suy, mon
modèle à rentrer à la ferme, mon deux-
ne. Toutes fois qu'on me monterait de demander
a l'offre et à la ferme que vous sauriez que le
bon Dieu me tournier doré pour vous,
et pousser que vous ayez conçu de la ferme
pour un partement de que faire voir en prise

et divinément et finir en ne renoncement au

Tout reconduire dit résumation doré pour un
417. - TO SAINT LOUISE DE MARILLAC,1 IN ANGERS

Paris, January 11, 1640

Mademoiselle,

I received three letters from you this week, which gave me a consolation that God alone can express; He is the only one who can give it to me. However, this consolation is missing now and then because of what you tell me about the state of your illness. I entreat you, Mademoiselle, always to do this and, when you are able, have someone send a litter to bring you home. And do everything you can to get well.

Letter 417. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 60.

1Saint Louise de Marillac was born in Paris on August 12, 1591. Her father was Louis de Marillac, brother of the devout Michel de Marillac, Keeper of the Seals (1626-1630), and the Marshal de Marillac, renowned for his misfortunes and tragic death. She was the widow of Antoine Le Gras, secretary of Queen Marie de Médicis. She had married him February 5, 1613, and lost him December 21, 1625. They had a son, Michel, who at the time of this letter was twenty-six years old. The devout widow had placed her entire confidence in her spiritual director, Vincent de Paul, who employed her in his charitable works, made her his collaborator in the creation and organization of the Confraternities of Charity and, with her, founded the Daughters of Charity. The life of Louise de Marillac, whom the Church beatified on May 9, 1920, has been written by Gobillon (1676), the Comtesse de Richemont (1883), Comte de Lambel, Monsignor Baumard (1898), and Emmanuel de Broglie (1911). Her letters and other writings were copied and partially published in the work entitled: Louise de Marillac, veuve de M. Le Gras. Sa vie, ses vertus, son esprit (4 vols., Bruges, 1886). Louise de Marillac was canonized on March 11, 1934, and on February 10, 1960, she was named patroness of all those who devote themselves to Christian social work. Therefore, in this English edition of the letters of Saint Vincent, Saint has been added to her name in Coste’s titles of letters and in the footnotes. To the
Seeing that those Gentlemen want to communicate in writing, do this, *in nomine Domini*. Have the contract drawn up in your name as Directress of the Daughters of Charity, servants of the sick poor in hospitals and parishes, under the authority of the Superior General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, the Director of the aforesaid Daughters of Charity. And in the place where it is mentioned in their little Rule, that they will depend on the Superiors in Paris, [in whatever does not] concern the hospital, you can indicate the above-mentioned Superior. If they ask you for the letters of establishment of this body, you will say that they have no other than the power which has been given to the said Superior, Director of the Charity, as is done everywhere, especially in that diocese, in Bourgneuf, on Madame Goussault’s estates, I believe, although I am not very sure about it, [and] in Richelieu, in the diocese of Poitiers.

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2The Administrators of the hospital in Angers.

3The Saint Paul manuscript evidently omitted several words; those which we have added give some meaning to the phrase. Moreover, the article of the regulations reads as follows: “They shall obey their Superiors in this city of Paris with regard to discipline and interior guidance, and the Administrators in exterior matters pertaining to the regulations of the hospital for the assistance of the poor; they shall obey the Superior among them in that which concerns the carrying out of the aforesaid regulations and in general in whatever she orders them to do.” (Cf. vol. XIII, no. 143, p. 541.)

4A hamlet in the commune of La Chapelle-Saint-Laud, an *arrondissement* of Baugé (Maine-et-Loire). An *arrondissement* is an administrative district, a division of a *département* (e.g. Maine-et-Loire), administered by a sub-prefect.

5In 1613 Geneviève Fayet had married Antoine Goussault, Seigneur de Souvigny, Councillor of the King and President of the Chambre des Comptes in Paris [sovereign court for the examination, registration, and auditing of taxes]. Five children were born of the marriage. Widowed in 1631, she dedicated herself untiringly to works of charity. She was the first to have the idea of an association of Ladies for the relief of the sick at the Hôtel-Dieu and was the first superior of the group. It was thanks to her that the Daughters of Charity were called to the hospital in Angers. Her name recurs constantly.
You would do well to send for the Sisters in Richelieu, and to do so as soon as possible, because, since the contagion is ending there, they can begin to work again.

People are praying to God for you in many places in Paris. Everyone is interested in your health; you would not believe how much.

418. - TO LOUIS ABELLY, VICAR GENERAL OF BAYONNE

January 14, 1640

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

I thank God for all the graces that His Goodness is granting in Saint Vincent's letters to Saint Louise. She died on September 20, 1639, in the exercise of charity.

6Louise Ganset and Barbe Angiboust. The latter occupies an important place in the first twenty-five years of the history of the Daughters of Charity, undoubtedly the most important after Saint Louise. She entered the Community July 1, 1634, at the age of twenty-nine, and was admitted to vows March 25, 1642. The Holy Founder placed her at the head of the houses founded in Saint-Germain-en-Laye (1638), Richelieu (1638), Saint-Denis (1645), Fontainebleau (1646), Brienne (1652), Bernay (1655), and Châteaudun (1657), where she died December 27, 1658. Nothing is more edifying than the conference on her virtues held at the Motherhouse, April 27, 1659 (cf. vol. X, no. 109).

Letter 418. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, eighteenth century copy taken from the original. The original letter was sent to the Grand Duke of Tuscany on January 20, 1704, by François Watel, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, and is now found in Centro Salesiano, 32, Via Maria Ausiliatrice, Turin.

1Louis Abelly was born in Paris in 1604. From the earliest years of his priesthood he took part in Saint Vincent's apostolic labors. The Saint recognized his worth and spoke so highly of him to François Fouquet, Bishop-elect of Bayonne, that he appointed him his Vicar General. His stay in Bayonne was not long. He accepted a simple village parish near Paris and shortly afterwards (1644) was given charge of Saint-Josse, a parish in the capital, where he formed an ecclesiastical community. He later became Director of the Sisters of the Cross (1650), chaplain of the general hospital (1657), and Bishop of Rodez (1664). In 1666 he resigned from his See for reasons of health and retired to Saint-Lazare, where he spent the remaining twenty-five years of his life in recollection and study. We have almost thirty of his books of devotion, history, and theology. The best known are Sacerdos christianus (Paris, 1656), Medulla theologica (2 vols., Paris, 1652-1653), which earned for him from the author of the Lutrin the nickname "Moelleux" [from the French for medulla - moelle]; and above all, La vie du Vénérable Serviteur de Dieu Vincent de
to the Bishop of Bayonne, which I see from your letter of December 10, and I pray that He will continue to give them to him. O Monsieur, how astonished those people are, in my opinion, to see their prelate living like a real bishop, after so many centuries of being deprived of such a happiness! Of course, Monsieur, I have perfect confidence in the goodness of God, who called the Bishop to the ministry in such an unusual way. He will give him all the graces he needs to continue and to become perfect in the way of life he has begun, and the good corporeal angels He has placed near him will do the same. Alas! Monsieur, what can we not hope for from a prelate who has so well regulated his own life and that of his servants; who has given so many corporal and spiritual alms in his diocese; who takes such care of poor prisoners; who is blessed with the conversion of heretics; who does not admit

Paul. He is not merely the sponsor of this work as has been asserted, but is truly its author. His task was greatly facilitated by Brother Ducournau, who collected and classified the documents. He made a donation to the house of Saint-Lazare of some property he owned in Pantin, which became the country house of the students. Abelly died October 4, 1691, and was buried, according to his wish, in the church of Saint-Lazare, under the Holy Angels chapel. (Cf. Pierre Collet, La vie de St. Vincent de Paul [2 vols., Nancy: A. Lesure, 1748], vol. I, pp. 5 ff.)

François Fouquet. He was the son of François Fouquet, Comte de Vaux, and of the devout Marie de Maupeou, who was, among the Ladies of Charity, one of the most admirable for her zeal and her devotedness to Saint Vincent. Fouquet's brothers were Nicolas Fouquet, Superintendent of Finance, and Louis Fouquet, Bishop of Agde. His sister Louise-Agnes, became a nun in the first monastery of the Visitation. François Fouquet, appointed to the bishopric of Bayonne in 1636, was not consecrated until March 15, 1639. He was transferred to the See of Agde in 1643, appointed Coadjutor of Narbonne on December 18, 1656, and Archbishop of that diocese in 1659. Relegated to Alençon in 1661, he died in exile on October 19, 1673. He summoned the Priests of the Mission to Agde and Narbonne and established the Daughters of Charity in the latter town. A very zealous prelate, too zealous perhaps, he found Saint Vincent's slowness hard to understand, but he, more than anyone else, admired his virtue. He felt deeply the death of this great servant of God. As soon as he received news of it, he wrote to the priests of Saint Lazare: "However prepared I may have been for M. Vincent's death, since he was advanced in age, I assure you that I did not hear the news of his passing without surprise and without being moved by great sorrow, humanly speaking, at seeing the Church deprived of a most worthy subject, the Congregation of its very dear Father, and I myself of a very charitable friend to whom I am so greatly obligated. I think that of all those whom his charity caused him to embrace as his children there is no one to whom he showed more affection and gave more signs of friendship than to me."
women into his house, or *ad proximiora sacri altaris*; ¹ who put together his council as well as he could and is willing to act with its advice? What can we not hope for, I repeat, with regard to the graces and blessings to be granted to such a prelate and to those *quos vocavit in sortem operis ejus*? ² Indeed, there is no good or assistance that you and he ought not to hope for from Our Lord.

Alas! Monsieur, how you embarrass the son of a poor plowman, who tended sheep and pigs and is still in ignorance and vice, by asking for his views! I shall obey you, nonetheless, in the same sentiment as that poor donkey, ³ who on another occasion spoke out of obedience to the man who commanded him to do so, on condition that, as no one takes into account what is said by fools, because of what they say, so neither His Excellency nor you will pay any attention at all to what I shall say, except insofar as His Excellency finds that it is in accord with his own better judgment and yours.

Therefore, first of all, I shall say with regard to religious in general, that I think you would do well to deal with them as Our Lord did with the people of His time. Show them first by example, as He did, how they are to live. A priest should be more perfect than a religious as such, and a bishop even more so. And after speaking to them by example for a considerable time (Our Lord spoke this language to them for thirty years), He spoke to them gently, charitably and firmly, without, however, using suspensions, interdictions and excommunications against them, and without depriving them of their functions. That, Monsieur, is how Our Lord acted. Now, I have complete confidence that a prelate who acts in the same way will be of more benefit to those sorts of persons than all

³Near the sacred altar.

⁴Whom he has called to share in his work.

⁵Balaam's donkey or, rather, mare. Nm. 22:28. "But now the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she asked Balaam, 'What have I done to you that you should beat me these three times?'"
ecclesiastical censures put together. Our Lord and the saints accomplished more by suffering than by acting. That is how the blessed Bishop of Geneva⁶ and, following his example, the late Bishop of Comminges⁷ brought about the sanctification of so many thousands of souls.

What I am saying to you, Monsieur, may seem severe, but what can you expect? I feel so strongly about the truths Our Lord taught us by word and example that I cannot help but see how everything done according to that teaching always succeeds perfectly well, while things done the opposite way have quite a different result. Yes, but they will hold a prelate who acts that way in contempt. That is true, and must be in order to honor the life of the Son of God in all its stages by our person just as we do by our circumstances. However, it is also true that, after having suffered for some time and as much as Our Lord pleases and with Our Lord, He lets us do more good in three years of our life than we would in thirty. But what am I saying? Indeed, Monsieur, I do not think we can accomplish anything any other way. We can make a great many regulations; we can employ censures; we can deprive them of hearing confessions, of preaching, of taking up collections, but with all that they will never mend their ways, and never will the dominion of Jesus Christ be extended or preserved in souls that way. On other occasions God armed

⁶Saint Francis de Sales. He was born August 21, 1567, in Thorens, near Annecy, and died in Lyons, December 28, 1622. He honored Saint Vincent with his friendship. "Many times I have had the honor of enjoying the close friendship of Francis de Sales," said the holy priest at the beatification process of his illustrious friend on April 17, 1628. Saint Vincent spoke of the Bishop of Geneva only in terms of admiration. He considered him worthy of the honors reserved to the saints. On his part, Saint Francis de Sales, according to Coqueret, a Doctor of the Sorbonne, used to say that "he did not know a more worthy or more saintly priest than M. Vincent." (Postulatory letter from the Bishop of Tulle, March 21, 1706.) Also, when it came to appointing a superior for the convent of the Visititation in Paris, his choice fell upon Vincent de Paul.

⁷Barthélemy Donadieu de Griet, Bishop of Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges (Haute-Garonne), died November 12, 1637. (Cf. E. Molinier, La vie de messire Barthélemy de Donadieu de Griet, évêque de Comenge [Paris: Vve Camusat, 1639].)
heaven and earth against men. Alas! what progress did He make by doing so? And was it not necessary at last for Him to be humbled and brought low before man in order to get him to accept the gentle yoke of His dominion and His guidance? And that which a God was not able to do with all His power, how will a prelate do with his? That being so, Monsieur, I think that His Excellency is right in not thundering excommunications against those religious who own property, and even in not stopping so hastily those whom he had once examined and approved, from going to do the Lenten and Advent preaching in those country parishes in which there is no church designated, because that would seem to them to be extremely severe and more. The pastors and the people who are especially fond of them would be annoyed. If someone is abusing the ministry, in nomine Domini, your reasonable manner will be well able to remedy this.

As for the religious who you tell me is necessary in her monastery and who, nevertheless, carries on intrigues and schemes and can thus do harm to the other—I don't know how to answer you there, Monsieur, because you do not explain yourself. If you judge it expedient to write to me about it again, it would be well for you to tell me in what way she is necessary and if she is from an Order in which they transfer the religious.

That, Monsieur, is what I can say to you right now with great haste and in a rambling way. You will excuse the deficiencies in all that I say and will do me the kindness of assuring the Bishop of Bayonne of my obedience and Messieurs Perriquet, Le Breton, and Dumesnil of my services. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and most obedient servant.

Vincent DePaul

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8He was, like Louis Abelly, a Vicar General of François Fouquet, Bishop of Bayonne.
Mademoiselle,

_Mon Dieu_, Mademoiselle, you oblige me to write without a scruple! What! You have sent me no word at all about the state of your illness! I beg of you, Mademoiselle, to let me know exactly how you are so that I can send you a litter when you are able to come home—as soon as your indisposition permits. Oh! how necessary your presence is here, not only for your Sisters, who are doing well enough, but also for the general affairs of the Charity!

The General Assembly of the Ladies of the Hôtel-Dieu was held last Thursday. The Princess¹ and the Duchesse d’Aiguillon² honored it by their presence. Never have I seen the gathering so grand, and at the same time so modest. They decided to take in all the foundlings. You may well suppose, Mademoiselle, that you were not forgotten at the meeting.

I sent you word that it would be well for you to make the stipulation as Directress of the Company of the Poor Village Girls of the Charity, under the authority of the Superior

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Letter 419. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 62.

¹Charlotte-Marguerite de Montmorency, wife of Henri II de Bourbon, First Prince of the royal blood, Prince de Condé, Duc d’Enghien, Peer and Grand Master of France. This charitable Princess, mother of the great Condé, lost her husband on December 26, 1646, and died herself in Châtillon-sur-Loing on December 2, 1650.

²Marie de Vignerod de Pontcoursay was born in 1604, in the Château de Glenay near Breslauire, of René de Vignerod and Françoise de Richelieu, the eldest sister of the great Cardinal. While still very young, she married, in the chamber of Anne of Austria, the nephew of the Duc de Luynes, Antoine de Beauvoir de Grimoard du Roure, chevalier, Seigneur de Combalet, whom she had never seen and did not love. During the two years this union lasted, the couple lived together only six months. The Marquis de Combalet, kept from his home by the necessities of war, died in battle at the siege of Montpellier on September 3, 1622. A widow at the age of eighteen, the Marquise de Combalet left the Court and withdrew to the Carmelite convent in Paris. She was admitted to the novitiate and, after a year of enclosure, received the religious habit from the hands of M. de Bérulle and made her first vows. Richelieu, who loved her a great deal, did
General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, Director of the Congregation of the above-mentioned young women. However, Mademoiselle, I ask you to do that as soon as possible and leave Angers immediately after you have signed the articles, which I entreat you to draw up as soon as you can.

I am writing to M. Lambert to ask him to send you your everything he could to bring her back to the Court. It was at his request that the Pope forbade the young Marquise to enter the cloister, that Marie de Médicis chose her, on January 1, 1625, as lady of the bedchamber, and that the King elevated her estate of Aiguiillon to a duchy-peerage on January 1, 1638.

On that day, the Cardinal had her take up residence in a small mansion prepared for her in the rue de Vaugirard, one of the dependencies of the Petit Luxembourg Palace where he himself lived. The Duchesse d'Aiguillon made noble use of her immense wealth and great influence. She frequented and protected men of letters and placed herself at the head of all works of charity. She established the Priests of the Mission at Notre-Dame de la Rose and in Marseilles, where she entrusted them with the direction of a hospital which she had built for sick galley-slaves. The houses of Richelieu and Rome lived on her generosity. It was she who had the consulates of Algiers and Tunis given to the Congregation of the Mission. She contributed to the foundation of the general hospital and of the Society of Foreign Missions, took under her protection the Daughters of the Cross and the Daughters of Providence, and was a great benefactress of Carmel. She was president of the Confraternity of Charity established at Saint-Sulpice and replaced Madame de Lamoignon at the head of the Ladies of the Hôtel-Dieu. The Duchesse d'Aiguillon must be placed, along with Saint Louise, Madame de Gondi, and Madame Gousséaut, in the first rank of Saint Vincent's collaborators. No one perhaps gave him more; few were as attached to him. She watched over his health with a maternal solicitude. The carriage and horses which the Saint used in his old age came from her stables. The death of the servant of God grieved her deeply. She had a silver-gilt reliquary made in the shape of a heart surmounted by a flame to enclose the Saint's heart. The Duchesse d'Aiguillon died April 17, 1675, at the age of seventy-one, and was buried in the Carmelite habit. MM. Bresacier and Fléchier preached her funeral oration. (Cf. Comte de Bonneau-Avenant, La duchesse d'Aiguillon [2nd ed., Paris: Didier, 1882]) Le Long mentions in his Bibliothèque historique de la France (Fontette ed., 5 vols., Paris: Hérissant, 1768-1778), vol. III, no. 30.854, a manuscript collection of her letters, which has been lost.

3In no. 417 Saint Vincent advised Saint Louise to use these titles and organizational structure in drawing up the contract with the Administrators of the hospital in Angers.

4The contract was signed on February 1.

5Lambert aux Couteaux, born in Fossemanant (Somme) in 1606, had been a member of the Congregation of the Mission since August 1629. He founded the house of Toul in 1631 and remained there as Superior until 1637. In January 1638, he began the establishment in Richelieu (Indre-et-Loire), where he was Pastor and Superior for four
Sisters from Richelieu; but, if everything is arranged for you to come home, do not wait for them. Rather send them a messenger telling them to wait for you in Tours, if you think they will not be able to meet you in Angers.

420. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN ANGERS

Paris, January 22, 1640

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I came back from the country last night and found the letter you wrote to M. Dehorgny on the fourteenth of the month. Your letter makes me think that you are not receiving mine.

...
I have written to you every week and it is only three days since the last time, which makes me think that my letters are not being delivered to you.

Here is the answer to the principal matters about which you wrote to me. First of all, with regard to the stipulations of the Directors of the hospital, it seems to me that you would do well to sign them in your own name, as Directress of the poor Daughters of Charity, under the authority of the Superior General of the Company of the Priests of the Mission, Director of the above-mentioned young women. As for the terms, I do not know what to tell you without having seen them, except that if they wish them to correspond to their regulations and expenses, I think they each need at least one hundred francs or twenty-five écus.

With regard to your return, I ask you to let it be as soon as possible. Hire a stretcher and rent two good strong horses. I would have sent you a litter, but I do not know which you need, a litter or a stretcher. I entreat you, Mademoiselle, to

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and from 1654 to 1659. He was Assistant to the Superior General from 1642 to 1644, and again from 1654 to 1667; Superior of the house in Rome from 1644 to 1647 and from 1651 to 1655; and Director of the Daughters of Charity from 1660 to 1667. In 1640, 1641, 1643, 1644, 1659, and 1660, he made visitations of several houses of the Company and reestablished good order wherever necessary. His sympathy for Jansenist ideas merited for us two beautiful letters from Saint Vincent, who had the joy of seeing him return to sounder beliefs. He lived until July 7, 1667. Still extant are twenty-three of his conferences to the Daughters of Charity and several letters. (Cf. Notices, vol. I, pp. 153-220.)

2The original letter has that and not of. Written in this way, the sentence makes no sense. We could not state positively, however, that our change corresponds to Saint Vincent's thought. It could be that the Saint was distracted and left that part of the sentence unfinished. Following this hypothesis, we would have to leave that and add several words after "the Directors of the hospital."

3The Administrators of the hospital. Saint Vincent sometimes calls them Directors of the hospital or, at other times, Fathers of the poor.

4Throughout this edition the various denominations of foreign money have been left in the French since no adequate, unchanging value in modern currency can be assigned. One écu equals three livres; one thousand livres could support two priests and one Brother for a year on the missions, "and it hardly takes less for those who stay at home" (Cf. Vol. V, no. 1972).
spare nothing and, whatever it may cost, to get what will be the most comfortable for you.

The arrival of a gentleman of rank is causing me to lay down my pen and so I must tell you that I am awaiting you with the affection known by Our Lord and His Holy Mother. I am, in their love, your servant.

V. DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, Directress of the Daughters of Charity, presently at the hospital of Angers, in Angers

421. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN ANGERS

Paris, January 28, 1640

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever! I have been greatly consoled that you sent me word concerning the nature of your illness and I hope that the air will restore you to health. If you take a stretcher, as I wrote you to do, because the coach—especially on the cobblestones—from Orléans to Paris would be too hard on you, it will suffice to have one Sister with you. You can have the others come by water as far as Tours and by coach from there to here.¹


¹When Saint Louise went to Angers, she had taken several of her Sisters with her, without knowing exactly how many would be retained at the hospital. She left only nine of them: Madame Turgis, Elisabeth Martin, Cécile-Agnès Angiboust (Barbe’s sister), Clémence Ferre, Madeleine Monget, Geneviève Caillou, Marguerite François, Marie-Marthe Trumeau, and Barbe Toussaint. Elisabeth Martin held the office of Superior.
As for Madame Turgis, I am of the opinion that she should be left there until the time you indicate and perhaps permanently. What you wrote to me as a difficulty is of no consequence.

I forgot to tell you, with regard to your return, that I would have sent you a coach were it not for three leagues of bad road between Chartres and Le Mans, which are impassable at this season. Added to that besides, we cannot divert the coaches from their ordinary route without raising a public outcry.

I have told you my opinion concerning the stipulations and the status you should assume in them. You would do well to bring along that good demoiselle and the girls you mentioned to me.

What I told you about your son is true. If you let me know the day you can be in Chartres, if you pass through it, he will meet you there; and there, if you are strong enough, you can take the coach.

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2Elisabeth Le Goutteux, the widow of M. Turgis, left a good position in the world to consecrate herself to God in the Company of the Daughters of Charity. She was Superior of the hospital in Angers (1639-1640, 1644), at the Foundlings (1642), in Saint-Denis (1645), in Char’s near Pontoise (1645, 1647), and in Richelieu (1646-1647). She died in Chantilly in October 1648 after a long and painful illness.

3She returned to Paris before the end of the year.

4One league equals approximately 2.5 miles.

5Cardinal Richelieu had given the Congregation of the Mission the income from the Loudun coaches as an endowment for the new house in Richelieu. (Cf. vol. I, no. 293.) Although Saint Vincent was free to divert the coaches from their usual route, he had to take into consideration the interests of the public and not give them cause for complaint.

6In nos. 414, 417 and 419 Saint Vincent discusses with Saint Louise the rules to be followed in Angers and advises her to sign the contract with the Administrators of the hospital under the title of Directress of the Daughters of Charity.

7Probably postulants.

8Michel Le Gras, born October 19, 1613, intended to embrace the ecclesiastical state. To encourage the vocation of her son, Saint Louise had placed him in the seminary of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet, which had been founded and was directed by the austere and virtuous Adrien Bourdoise. Michel, however, caused his mother a great deal of anxiety by the instability of his character. He ultimately gave up his studies for the priesthood at the age of twenty-seven (1640). After ten years of wavering, on January 18, 1650, he married Demoiselle Gabrielle Le Clerc in the church of Saint-Sauveur; Saint Vincent witnessed the marriage contract.
You had better draw the money from there so that you are not caught short on the way. We shall repay here the amount you tell us.

I am hoping to see you in good health, and my desire is that this may be soon, without however rushing you.

Enclosed is a picture that was printed at the Charity. You are the first one to whom I am sending any. It was a painter who had it engraved; it cost him eighty écus.

Your Sisters are in good health, thank God, and are doing good as well. And I, I am, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

*Addressed:* Mademoiselle Le Gras, Directress of the Sisters at the Charity Hospital, in Angers

422. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN ANGERS

Paris, January 31, 1640

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The letter you wrote to me by someone else’s hand, which

The Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity possesses a seventeenth century painting that could well be the work of the painter mentioned here by Saint Vincent. Our Lord has His hands extended as though He is calling people to Him. His bare feet are resting on a globe of the world. Above His head is the inscription: *Deus caritas est.* On the lower left, a priest is giving Communion to a sick woman lying in her bed. On the right, a “sister” from the Confraternity, a glass in her hand, is waiting for the moment to offer it to the patient. Saint Vincent and Saint Louise distributed this picture of the “Lord of Charity.” (Cf. Saint Louise, *Ecrits spirituels,* L. 3.) This picture is the last of those reproduced by M. George Goyau in his book *Les Dames de la Charité de Monsieur Vincent* (Paris: Lib. de l’Art catholique, 1918).

Letter 422. - The original autograph letter is in the Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity.
was delivered to me yesterday and which told me of your
 diarrhea attack, made me quite anxious about the ailment you
 are suffering. May God be blessed for that which is His Will!
 I hope that in His goodness He will restore you to health and
 I am redoubling the prayers for that intention. But what are
 you saying about coming back by water, Mademoiselle! O
 Jésus! You must do no such thing! Please have a stretcher
 hired and rent or, rather, buy two good horses—we will pay
 here what they cost—and come home that way. I did that
 once, and the air did me so much good that in less than three
 days I was so well that I got into the coach of Madame, the
 late wife of the general, so it seems to me. M. Grandnom
 has written about this, to a man of rank in Angers, as you
 will see from his letter.

 M. du Fresne told me, on his own and without my speaking
to him about it, that it would be well for you to send me a
receipt for the two thousand livres he has of yours and some
word in a letter for him by which you direct him to place that
sum in our hands or in those of someone else of your choice.

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1 Françoise-Marguerite de Silly, wife of Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi, General of the
Galleys, was born in 1580 of Antoine de Silly, Comte de Rochepot, Baron de Montmirail,
Ambassador to Spain, and of Marie de Lannoy. Shortly after Saint Vincent entered her
house as her children’s tutor, she entrusted to him the direction of her soul. The Saint’s
influence was not long in making itself felt. The devout woman formed the habit of
visiting and serving the sick and of distributing abundant alms to the poor. She had
missions given on her estates and joined the Confraternity of Charity in Montmirail. She
died on June 23, 1625, after having her saintly director named head of the Collège des
Bons-Enfants, and having provided him with the means of establishing the Congregation
VII-XVIII; Hilarion de Coste, Les éloges et vies des reynes, princesses, dames et
389 ff.; Régis de Chantelauze, Saint Vincent de Paul et les Gondi [Paris: E. Plon, 1882].)

2 Remi de Grandnom, intendant of Madame Goussault.

3 Charles du Fresne, Sieur de Villeneuve, former secretary of Queen Marguerite de
Valois. After the death of this princess, he entered the house of Emmanuel de Gondi,
for whom he was secretary, then intendant. (Cf. Abelé, op. cit., bk. I, chap. V, p. 21.)
He was one of the closest friends of Saint Vincent.
Your son offered yesterday to come and see you in Angers, but I did not judge that to be necessary. Let me know how you feel about it.

Your Sisters are doing well. Anne, the older one, told me that Marie is too strict. Oh! how greatly we need you here for the general running of affairs! I hope that, in God’s goodness, He will bring you back in good health. In the name of God, Mademoiselle, do everything you can to that end and be as cheerful as possible.

I thank God that our dear Sister Isabelle is better, and most humbly thank our dear Mother, the Superior of the Visitation Sainte-Marie for her remembrance of me. I am going to celebrate Holy Mass for her and for her entire holy Community.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I beg you once again to take care of your health. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

I received the two letters enclosed some time ago.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, Directress of the Daughters of Charity of the Hôtel-Dieu of Angers, in Angers

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4 Probably Marie Joly, who had been employed at the Hôtel-Dieu and the Charity of Saint-Paul, and was at this time working in the parish. She was later the first Superior of the Sedan house where she remained from 1641 to 1654. Recalled from that city, she yielded to discouragement and ran away from the Motherhouse. A few days later, she was readmitted at her request and made up for her momentary weakness by exemplary conduct. On August 5, 1672, she was the Superior at Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas.

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

6 Claire-Madeleine de Pierre, previously a religious in the first monastery of the Visitation in Paris, where she had made profession on May 28, 1623, and which she had left in 1626 to enter the second monastery at the time of its foundation. She was placed...
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I just received your letter of January 3 and have seen from it the blessings Our Lord is bestowing on your labors. I am thanking Him for them and asking Him to preserve you for many years for His glory and for the good of this little Congregation. And you, Monsieur, I entreat you to do what you can in that regard. Moderate your labors and eat well. The little indisposition you have just had comes from failing to do that, I fear.

I paid the bill of exchange for the hundred livres you obtained from M. Marchand two months ago or thereabouts, also the fifty livres in exchange, and will do likewise, God willing, for all that you obtain. Please, Monsieur, do not fail to draw what you need.

I praise God that you and the Reverend Father Assistant approve of the last plan I sent you and I respect the modifications you brought to it. I shall examine it more in detail and write to you at the first opportunity.


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 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 on October 19, 1641.

2A banker in Rome.

3Father Etienne Charlet, French Assistant to the General of the Society of Jesus.
I think, Monsieur, that you would do well to work unceasingly at the establishment in Rome and to rent some small lodging or even buy some little house for that purpose, if you can find one, for three or four thousand livres, however small and wherever it may be, *dummodo sit sanus.* What does it matter if it is in one of the faubourgs since we do not wish to carry on any public activities in the city! The district outside the Vatican is not very far away. I have such trust in M. Marchand's kindness; he will see that you receive that amount, which we shall return from here at the appointed time. We must become established there, I mean in the city or in one of the faubourgs.

I am sending your letters to M. de Trévy and, to your cousin, his letter and the three briefs from Rome.

Our Missionaries for the diocese of Geneva, five in number, left three days ago. One of them is to be sent to you if you get the establishment.

With regard to the Bull concerning our consolidation as in the last version, please send me the abridged draft I sent to you. I shall write to you in eight to ten days to tell you whether we should be satisfied with this last version, according to the above-mentioned modifications, without waiting for the brief. I shall likewise send you the order that Providence has followed in the institution of our Company. I was unwilling to have anything written about it until now, but I think it is God's Will for us to act this way since it has been made known to us by such a worthy authority.

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*Provided it is healthful.*

*By the contract of June 3, 1639, Saint Vincent had agreed to provide two priests and a Brother, and by that of January 26, 1640, he had promised to double the number. The five Missionaries in question were: Bernard Codoing, Pierre Escart, Jacques Tholard, Jean Duhamel, and Etienne Bourdet.*
I am, nevertheless, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Monsieur Lebreton, Priest of the Mission, in Rome

424. - TO JACQUES THOLARD,¹ IN ANNECY

Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris, February 1, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever! I received your letter with inexpressibly great joy, and that, for no other reason except that it was a letter from M. Tholard who is dearer to my heart than I can say. However, I was, of course, no less afflicted to read what you said about the cross to which Providence has attached you, certainly not to be the ruin of you, as you fear, but so that, as in Saint Paul, *virtus tua in infirmitate perficiatur.* ² Since the grace God gave him

Letter 424. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter. Coste stated that he omitted certain sections of this letter because of the delicacy of the matter. Thanks to the research of Fr. Thomas Davitt, C.M., in the archives of Turin, these passages have been retrieved and are here inserted as noted.

¹Jacques Tholard was born in Auxerre on June 10, 1615 and was received into the Congregation of the Mission on November 20, 1638. He was ordained a priest on December 17, 1639, and died after 1671. He manifested throughout his life, in Annecy (1640-1646), Tréguier, where he was Superior (1648-1653), Troyes (1658-1660), Saint-Lazare, Fontainebleau and elsewhere, the qualities of an excellent Missionary. During the generalate of René Alméras, he was Visitor of the Province of France and that of Lyons.

²*Your virtue may be made perfect in infirmity.* 2 Cor. 12:9. "He said to me, "My
when his temptations were the strongest was sufficient to bring that about, you have reason to hope that the grace He is giving you is likewise sufficient and is apparent in the purity of intention with which you begin your confessions, in the fear you have of offending God in them, in the remorse you feel when the violence of the temptation has deprived you of your liberty and caused nature to succumb, *vacando rei licitae,* and finally in your constant resolution to prefer to die rather than do evil voluntarily. All of that makes it evident that these happenings are not voluntary nor, therefore, are they culpable, for, as you know, sin is such a voluntary act that, if consent does not enter in, there is no sin at all in actions in which there seems to be matter for sin. That is why the masters of the spiritual life think that these happenings which occur in confession are not sins at all, and do not require in our day that they be confessed. I know a holy priest right now who never or rarely hears confessions without falling into these difficulties; and, although that is so, he never confesses them except in his annual confession. At that time he accuses himself, not of the substance of the act, but of not having sufficiently detested the pleasure that his miserable carcass takes in it and for fear that his will may have contributed to the act in some way. And if you take my word for it, Monsieur, you will never confess any of these failings except at the same time and in the same way as this man who is one of the best and most fervent priests I know on earth and, what is more, he is recognized as such.

Yes, but it is not the same. That man has some sign perhaps by which he recognizes that he was not free when he was
carried away by the violence of nature. However, I am not to that point, for it seems to me that I could help myself. No, Monsieur, do not believe that, because neither that impulse nor its effect depends on your will. It could not prevent them when nature is disturbed. Therefore the act is not voluntary in you any more than it is in him, or in any other.

Yes, but I could get up and leave until the disturbance has passed, or at least not ask the questions that bring me to that point. I shall answer that if this happened to you somewhere else or while you were doing something else that you were not commanded to do or which was indifferent, you should leave the place and stop what you are doing as soon as you become aware of that emotion. But when it occurs while you are performing a holy and divine action, which in our day every priest is obliged to do, you are not permitted to leave the place, neither can you stop what you are doing, nor cease to ask the questions necessary for salvation on account of the emotion or because of the emission which is wont to follow it, because the salvation of the neighbor and your vocation are involved.

Yes, but would it not be better for me to abstain completely from hearing confession? O Jésus! no. God has called you to the vocation in which you are; He has blessed you in it; He has preserved you. You have by this means greatly extended the kingdom of God and have saved many souls and will continue to do so after this with more grace and success, I trust.

O Jésus! Monsieur, and how would you be able to make amends for the chagrin and the prejudice you would bear to the glory of God and the souls whom He has redeemed by His precious blood, if you were to give up what you are doing there? Remember, Monsieur, that roses are not gathered except in the midst of thorns and that heroic acts of virtue

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5This entire paragraph was omitted by Coste.
are accomplished only in weakness. Saint Paul did not give up the work of God because he was tempted, nor do we forsake Christianity because we endure great and horrible temptations within it. And we are not free to give up living because our life lies in the concupiscence of the flesh, in that of the eyes, and in the pride of life. . . .

Yes, but I could suppress the emotion or its effect. You would not be able to prevent the effect in the force of the emotion without endangering your life. One of our Brothers died from doing so and [we] have another one now who is running the risk of doing the same. That is why the masters of the spiritual life forbid the doing of violence to one's feelings in these cases and [enjoin] us to let this distress go as an excrement of nature and continue to hear confessions without being troubled.8

It would be well for you to pass over these matters as lightly as you can. That is the first piece of advice that is usually given, and that one be not troubled when one feels too much pleasure.

The second is to try to turn your eyes away from the faces and the other parts of the body of the female sex that cause the temptation. And when the opposite happens, be assured, Monsieur, that it will be when you are not free and your will is weakened by the strength of the temptation. And do not be troubled when you think that is not so.9

That, Monsieur, is what I must tell you before God and in view of the doctrine and the teaching of the saints.

Do not be troubled by what you say your confessors tell you about this matter. They are not enlightened enough and

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8The sense demands the words "We" and "enjoin," which were obviously omitted by oversight.
9Coste omitted this entire paragraph.
9The last section omitted by Coste extends from the words "when one feels" in the preceding paragraph, to the end of this paragraph.
do not have enough experience. Do not confess it any more except in the way I have told you. I offer myself to answer to God for you. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

425. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN ANGERS

Paris, February 4, 1640

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
You can well imagine the joy my soul experienced on seeing your letter of January 28, but you cannot feel it. O Jésus! Mademoiselle, with what pleasure I am thanking God that you are feeling better and how heartily I am begging Him to restore your strength so that you can come back soon!

Oh! Mademoiselle, we shall be very pleased to receive that fine gentleman among the ordinands. We shall lodge and serve him as well as we can because of the good Abbé de Vaux who spoke to you about him, and in acknowledgement of the obligations you have toward him, and which we all have because of you.

Letter 425. - The original autograph letter is in the Archives of the Mission, Paris.

1Guy Lasnier died on April 29, 1681, at the age of seventy-nine. He was one of the most remarkable priests of Anjou during the seventeenth century. For a long time his only 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 of 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
Monsieur Lambert sent me word that he was going to send your Sisters from Richelieu in the trap belonging to the house. If Our Lord gives you some inspiration concerning Barbe’s taking charge,² make use of her and send someone else in her place.

Our good Sisters here are doing well, thank God. I was comforted by their confessions which I heard three days ago.

I was quite preoccupied this morning during my prayer with a lodging in La Villette.³ I found that it has a great number of advantages. The Pastor is offering us his rectory; we shall see.

What shall we do about the sister of Marie, from Saint-Germain,⁴ who stutters? She seems to be a rather nice young woman, but I do not know how intelligent she is. Her good sister is urging us to accept her.

You said nothing to me about what I wrote you concerning the stretcher.

I must lay down my pen to go to Mass. It is going to be

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The Abbé de Vaux 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 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. 1, no. 416), but there are many from Saint Louise, about one hundred of them. (Cf. François Chamard, *Les vies des saints personnages d’Anjou* [3 vols., Paris: Lecoffre, 1863], pp. 279-303.)

²Saint Louise was considering the appointment as Superior of the hospital in Angers of Sister Barbe Angiboust who was coming from Richelieu. (Cf. no. 481 in this volume and *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 103 and L. 108.)

³La Villette, like La Chapelle, was at that time outside of Paris; today they are two populous sections of the capital.

⁴The future Sister Gillette Joly, sister of Sister Marie Joly.
said at Notre-Dame for the Charity in Lorraine. Good day, Mademoiselle. I am, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, Directress of the Daughters of Charity, presently at the Hôtel-Dieu, in Angers

426. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN ANGERS

Saint-Lazare, February 10, 1640

Mademoiselle,

I received your letter of the twenty-seventh of this past month and it brought me so much consolation that nothing has been able to make me sad since. Blessed be God that you are now in better health and are planning your return! Oh! how welcome you shall be and how eagerly you are awaited! I praise God that the Ladies of that fine town are showing signs of accepting the model of the Hôtel-Dieu Charity and I pray that He will grant success to that holy enterprise for His honor.¹

Did I not send you the reports of the Ladies here, Mademoiselle? I thought that I did and that you had received them by now. If not, we shall send them on your return. Do not fail to put them into practice. We often do it that way for the Charities in the country. The time is short to have a copy made for you; the messenger leaves in four days.

Your Sisters are doing well, thank God. We have admitted two whom we shall be able to place with the others in two

Letter 426. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 63.
¹An association of the Ladies of Charity had been formed in Angers, modeled on that of Paris.
days. I have been putting them off for a long time waiting for your return.

These good young women from Lorraine do not last.

In six hours time I am expecting the daughter of M. Cornuel. He has left a revenue of six thousand livres to the galley-slaves to undertake a way to help them.

I am surprised that you said nothing about your Sisters from Richelieu; they went to see you.

Now then, I shall finish with renewed acts of thanksgiving, which I here again offer to God because, by His grace, we shall be seeing you soon. I am, as I look forward to that precious day, in the love of Our Lord.

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427. - A PRIEST OF THE MISSION 1 TO SAINT VINCENT

Bar-le-Duc, February 1640

At each distribution of bread, clothes were given to twenty-five or thirty poor people.

Recently, I clothed a total of 260 of them. But shall I not tell you, Monsieur, how many I alone have clothed spiritually by means of general confessions and Holy Communions in the space of only one

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2Claude Cornuel, former Intendant of Finances and Presiding Judge of the Chambre des Comptes.

3Saint Vincent took great pains to retain possession of this legacy, which was being contested by the heirs. He begged, insisted, set to work Mathieu Molé, the Attorney General at that time, and finally succeeded in having a capital capable of assuring an income of six thousand livres, to be placed in the hands of the latter and administered by him and his successors in that office. From this revenue were drawn funds necessary to maintain the Daughters of Charity who were placed in the service of the galley-slaves and to provide suitable remuneration for the priests of Saint-Nicolas, who served as chaplains. (Cf. Abelly, op. cit., bk. I, chap. XXVIII, p. 128.)


1Leonard Boucher was at Bar-le-Duc in July 1640 (cf. no. 457 for the letter Saint Vincent addressed to him there); the Saint mentions him also as being at this assignment, in a letter of February 28, 1640 (cf. no. 433). It seems appropriate to presume this letter (no. 427) was written by him.
month? I have counted more than eight hundred. I hope that during this Lenten season we shall accomplish still more. We give the hospital a pistole\(^2\) and a half every month for the patients that we send there; and because, among them, there are about eighty who are more ill than the others, we give them soup, meat, and bread.

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**428. TO ANTOINE LUCAS,\(^1\) IN SAINT-PRIX**

Saint-Lazare, February 21, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Blessed be God, Monsieur, for the grace He gives to you and your Company of working so valiantly that Monsieur de Cuménon\(^2\) has written to me about it! But how are you, Monsieur? Have you somewhat moderated your excessive fervor? I beg you, in the name of Our Lord, to do so. If it should be that you or any of your Company need some remedy after the mission, please come back here. If not, take your rest where you are after the mission. Then go and give the two small missions simultaneously—not all by yourself, as you wrote to me. I shall send you Messieurs Germain\(^3\) and the

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\(^1\)Antoine Lucas, born in Paris, January 20, 1600, had pursued higher studies at the Sorbonne. He entered the Congregation of the Mission in December 1626, and was ordained a priest in September 1628. His zeal, his talent for preaching, and his skill in debate made him much appreciated by Father de Condren and by Jean-Jacques Olier, who one day asked Saint Vincent for him for his personal instruction and for the conversion of a heretic. Antoine Lucas was in the house of La Rose in 1645, directed the house in Le Mans from 1647 to 1651, and was placed then in Sedan. He died in November 1656, a victim of his zeal among the plague-stricken. (Cf. Notices, vol. I, pp. 135-146.)

\(^2\)There is some doubt about the reading of this word.

\(^3\)Richard Germain was born in 1603 in Vaudry (Calvados) in the diocese of Bayeux and entered the Congregation of the Mission as a priest on June 22, 1639. He was stationed in Rome (1642-1643) and died in Richelieu in 1644.
young Guérin, or the first only, in place of M. Teluatz, whom you shall send back after the mission.

Can you find any cod, herring, butter, fruit, and "four beggars" for dessert there? Write and let M. Portail know what you need, please.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL

Please take care of your health, and give M. Louistre charge of whatever remains to be done and set to rights at the Charity. I beg you, Monsieur, to leave that job to him. There are objections to the establishment of this Charity and the Confraternity of the Rosary; and besides, the General of the Jacobins is reluctant to do it.

Our news is that M. Boucher is better, that we had eighteen retreatants yesterday and seventeen today, three of whom are from the Sorbonne house.

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4Jean Guérin was born in 1618 in Remiremont, near Nancy in Lorraine, and entered the Congregation of the Mission on February 4, 1639, at the age of twenty-one. No further information about him is available. He must not be confused with Jean Guérin (born in 1594, entered the Congregation of the Mission on November 7, 1639), who became Superior in Annecy, nor with Julien Guérin (born in 1605, entered the Congregation of the Mission on January 30, 1640), who later exercised his apostolate among the slaves in Tunis.

5There is some doubt about the reading of this word. Neither this name nor any similar name is to be found in the personnel catalogue of the Congregation of the Mission.

6This was a name given to four kinds of dried fruits: figs, hazel-nuts, raisins and almonds. It was the Lenten season; that is why Saint Vincent did not list meat or eggs.

7Jean Louistre was born in Nantes, in the diocese of Chartres, entered the Congregation of the Mission on March 14, 1637, at the age of twenty-four, and made his vows on March 14, 1642. A coadjutor Brother, Robert Louistre, also entered the Congregation in 1637.

8Dominicans. Because their first monastery was situated on the rue Saint-Jacques in Paris, the Dominicans were popularly called the Jacobins.

9Leonard Boucher was born August 29, 1610, entered the Congregation of the Mission on November 12, 1632, and was ordained a priest on September 23, 1634.
Addressed: Monsieur Lucas, Priest of the Mission, in Saint-Prix

429. - JACQUES ROUSSEL TO SAINT VINCENT

Bar-le-Duc, February 1640

You have heard about the death of M. de Montevil, whom you had sent here. He suffered a great deal during his illness, which was long. I can truthfully say that I have never seen a greater, more resigned patience than his. We never heard him say a single word indicating the slightest impatience. His every word manifested an uncommon piety. The doctor told us quite often that he had never treated a more obedient and simple patient. He received Communion very frequently during his illness, over and above the two times he communicated by way of Viaticum. His delirium of eight whole days did not prevent him from receiving Extreme Unction in his right mind. The delirium left him when he was given that sacrament and overcome him again immediately after it had been given to him. Finally, he died as I desire and ask of God that I shall die.

The two Chapters in Bar honored his funeral procession by their presence, as did also the Augustinian Fathers. However, that which gave the most honor to his funeral were six to seven hundred poor people who accompanied his body; each one had a candle in his hand. They wept as much as if they had been at the funeral of their father. The poor really owed him this recognition. He had become ill healing their diseases and lightening the burden of their poverty. He was

10 In Seine-et-Oise.


1Jacques Roussel was born in Nevers on February 2, 1598, and was received into the Society of Jesus on August 5, 1614. He was a professor of grammar, humanities, and rhetoric; was four times Rector, in particular in Bar-le-Duc; he died in Autun on January 20, 1647.

2Saint Vincent received this letter between February 21 and 28. (Cf. nos. 428 and 433.)

3Germain de Montevil was born in Cambernon (Manche), near Coutances; was received into the Congregation of the Mission on April 19, 1638 at the age of twenty-six and died in Bar-le-Duc on January 19, 1640.
always among them and breathed no other air than their stench. He would hear their confessions with such assiduity, both morning and afternoon, that not once was I able to prevail on him to take the respite of a walk. We had him buried near the confessional where he had caught his malady and where he had amassed the many merits which he is now enjoying in heaven.

Two days before he died, his companion fell ill with a persistent fever that kept him in danger of death for eight days; he is fine now. His illness was the result of too much work and too great a zeal among the poor. On Christmas Eve, he went twenty-four hours without eating or sleeping; he left the confessional only to say Mass. Your men are flexible and docile about everything, except the advice they are given to take a little bit of rest. They believe that their bodies are not made of flesh, or that their life is supposed to last only a year.

As for the Brother, he is an extremely devout young man. He has looked after these two priests with all the patience and constant attention that the most difficult sick people could have desired.

430. - A PRIEST OF THE MISSION TO SAINT VINCENT

[Saint-Mihiel, beginning of 1640]¹

When I arrived, I began to give out alms. I find such a great number of poor people that I would not be able to give to all of them. There are more than three hundred in very great need and more than three hundred others in dire poverty. Monsieur, I am telling you the truth. There are more than a hundred who appear to be skeletons covered with skin and who are so ghastly that, if Our Lord did not give me the strength, I would not dare to look at them. Their skin is like bronzed marble, and drawn back so much that their teeth seem to be all uncovered and dry and their eyes and face quite

¹David Levasseur, a coadjutor Brother, was born in Dancé (Orne) in the diocese of Chartres in 1608, and was received into the Congregation of the Mission on January 2, 1638.


¹This letter was written in 1640 by a Missionary who had just arrived in Saint-Mihiel. We already find him at work there in March of the same year. (Cf. Abelly, ibid.)
sullen. In short, it is the most dreadful thing you could ever see. They search for certain roots in the field, cook them, and eat them. I really have been wanting to recommend these immense calamities to the prayers of our Company. There are several unmarried women perishing of hunger, and there are some young ones among them. I am afraid that despair might cause them to fall into a greater misery than the temporal one.

431. - SAINT JANE FRANCES DE CHANTAL to SAINT VINCENT

[Annecy, February 1640]

Very dear Father,

Blessed be our Divine Savior, who fortunately has brought us your dear children for His very great glory and the salvation of many. Everyone is delighted with them in Our Lord, but the Bishop of Geneva and I are indeed receiving an inexpressible consolation from them. It seems that they are our real brothers, with whom we feel a


1Jane Frances Frémyot was born in Dijon on January 23, 1572. Her marriage to the Baron de Chantal produced four children. Widowed at a very young age, she placed herself under the guidance of Saint Francis de Sales, and with him established the Order of the Visitation. The foundation of the first monastery in Paris drew her to that city where she remained from 1619 to 1622. There she became acquainted with Saint Vincent whom she requested of Jean-François de Gondi (Archbishop of Paris) as Superior of her daughters. Until her death in Moulins, December 13, 1641, on her return from a trip to Paris, she kept in close contact with this holy priest, whom she liked to consult for her spiritual direction and with regard to the business affairs of her community. (Cf. Henri de Maupas du Tour, La Vie de la Vénérable Mère Jeanne-Françoise Frémyot [new ed., Paris: Siméon Piget, 1653].)

2The Missionaries from Annecy had left for their destination on January 29 (cf. no. 423).

3Juste Guérin. Born Balthazar Guérin in Tramoy in 1578, he studied law in Turin and Pavia, then entered the novitiate of the Barnabites in Monza on December 10, 1599. He made his profession there on February 24, 1601, taking the name Dom Juste. Ordained a priest on September 24, 1605, he was chosen to collaborate in the foundation of a Barnabite convent in Turin and became the confessor of the young daughters of Duc Charles-Emmanuel I, Marie and Catherine. In 1614 he took possession of the Collège
perfect union of heart, and they with us, in a holy simplicity, openness, and trust. I spoke to them and they to me as though they were truly Sisters of the Visitation. They all have great goodness and candor. The third and the fifth need some help to come out of themselves a little. I shall speak of it to the Superior, who is truly a man qualified for that office. M. Escart is a saint. I have given each of them a practice. I am doing all that, and shall always do it, God willing, with great love and in obedience to you, very dear Father, and for our mutual consolation. Truly there is much to speak of to those dear
souls. The good Father [Duhamel]\(^7\) revealed his difficulties to me with great simplicity. He is virtuous and has good judgment, but it will be hard for him to persevere. I entreated him to think neither of leaving nor of staying, but of consciously applying himself to the work of God, abandoning himself and trusting in His Providence. I would like him to become stronger because he has great promise. In short, they are all affable and gave great edification in this town the three days they stayed here. They do indeed bring to mind the spirit of my very dear Father.

431a. - SAINT JANE FRANCES TO SAINT VINCENT

[Mid-February 1640]\(^1\)

As for the Visitor,\(^2\) it is still the opinion of our Superiors and us that he would be very helpful in the preservation of our Institute. However, we all find great difficulties with the means suggested for establishing him because of the rebelliousness we know to exist in

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\(^7\)Jean Duhamel, a young priest in the Congregation of the Mission, left the Congregation from Annecy in 1640. His will, dated April 18, 1643 (cf. Arch. Nat M 211, f^1^), reveals that he keenly regretted his departure from the Congregation and his errors.


\(^1\)Date of this letter according to Devos.

\(^2\)For some fifteen years, several people interested in the welfare of the Visitation Order, among them Saint Vincent, Bishop Juste Guérin, and Commander de Sillery, had been discussing with Saint Jane Frances the feasibility of an Apostolic Visitor to insure a uniformity of spirit among the various monasteries. They feared that the absence of a moral bond among the convents of the Visitation, which were autonomous and dependent on the local Ordinaries, might in time lead to a profound deviation in the primitive spirit and to a regrettable diversity. To ward off this danger, they saw nothing better than the appointment of Visitors who, at regular intervals, would make canonical visitations of the monasteries in order to check the abuses and watch over the preservation of the traditions of the Order. For her part, Saint Jane Frances, who originally had rejected the idea because she feared the Gallicanism of the French bishops, the independence of individual bishops, and the opposition of some Sisters, finally accepted the suggestion before her death. (Cf. Devos, op. cit., 48 [1972], pp. 453-476; 49 [1973], pp. 355-360, no. 28.)
the spirit of our Sister Superior, N.; ³ it is everything we dread.
I can well see that we shall not succeed in the manner suggested. We must try, if it is deemed advisable, to win over the Prelates and the monasteries by gentleness, adroitly bringing them to understand the matter and to see that it will not run counter to the authority of the Prelates. Likewise, very dear Father, it will be necessary for the Visitor to make tactful use of holy humility and charity, and to keep hidden the authority he has from the Holy See. Otherwise, he will not be able to do anything. I wish that we were already worrying about giving him advice. If God establishes this plan in gentleness, I trust that it will be greatly to His glory. However, very dear Father, your goodness will have to draw up the rules for the Visitor. You have already given so much of your time, which is so dear and precious, to this blessed affair, that I look on in wonder at the way you have been able to find it in the midst of the pressure and urgency of your other concerns. It is the holy love God has given you for us that makes you do the impossible. We shall make no move in this affair until we hear from you. May God direct everything to the end His Providence has ordained!

³Perhaps Saint Jane Frances was referring to this Sister when she wrote to Commander de Sillery: "Sister Superior N. has spoken to M. N. about it in language so harsh and so absolute that he was hardly edified by it. Yet, she is a very good religious and has always shown great affection for me. She asked this good gentleman to find out discreetly whether I was yielding to this scheme and to let her know, and she let slip a number of remarks that made quite obvious her resolution to oppose it. I know of no one in the Institute who can be less flexible than she and who has the ear of Bishop N. and a large share in his inclinations. Now I am convinced that she will not conceal this from him and that she will notify quite a number of the monasteries, if she has not done so already, in order to communicate the same sentiments to them." (Cf. Devos, op. cit., 49 [1973], pp. 217-218, no. 13.)
432. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[February 1640]

We are awaiting you with the affection known to Our Lord. You will come just in time for the business concerning the galley-slaves.

433. - TO LOUIS LEBRETON, IN ROME

Paris, Tuesday after Quadragesima, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever! I have received your letter of January 16. I praise God that you have seen good Bishop Ingoli and that he seems to have scarcely any difficulty with the objection we made to the suggestion his goodness offered us. We shall ardently await the favors he has led us to expect. I am also praising God for the kindness toward you which He has inspired in that good gentleman, the Canon of Our Lady of the Rotunda. I think we shall have to satisfy him in the way he desires, in the matter that you mentioned to me, if it is greatly useful. One gets

Letter 432. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 33. This manuscript adds another sentence that we are omitting because it belongs to no. 213.

1In February 1640, Saint Vincent was awaiting Saint Louise, who was then in Angers, to attend with her to the work of the galley-slaves, which was going to be entrusted to the Daughters of Charity (cf. no. 426, n. 3). No better date can be given this letter than that of the Saint Paul manuscript, which has preserved the above passage.

Letter 433. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

1The Tuesday after the First Sunday in Lent, February 28 in 1640.

2Bishop Ingoli was Secretary of Propaganda Fide from 1622 to 1649. For certain activities within France it was necessary for Saint Vincent to deal with that office.

3The present Pantheon. The Chapter of the Rotunda still exists.
settled as best one can in the beginning. But if the conditions seem detrimental to you, O Jésus! Monsieur, he will not be annoyed with you for telling him simply what we can and what we cannot do.

It would be well to hope that the Saint Bibiana affair succeeds, but the matter is too difficult, and Our Lady of Loretto in the Marches is expensive and, still more, the palace in which Cardinal Bichi resides. I do not know what to tell you about the little church of Saint John, because you did not tell me the price. As for Our Lady of Loretto and the Bichi palace, they are beyond our means and you must not even consider the help you were suggesting for the palace. I return to what I wrote to you about a small, well-ventilated house, not too far from the Vatican where, nevertheless, we can expand in time. Even if it is not so near that holy place and there is no church, it does not matter, for, since we are not working in Rome, we can do without a church. A small chapel will be enough for us, unless there is some indication that in time we may be engaged with the ordinands; but we shall wait and see. At present, we are responsible for all in the Kingdom who are ordained in this city.

I am not mentioning our principal business to you, except that I find myself perplexed about the doubts that occur to

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4A church built in the fourth century on the site that was allegedly occupied by the house of Saint Bibiana, not far from the gate of San Lorenzo.

5A church, north of Trajan's Forum, built in 1507 by the Bakers' Guild. The well-known sanctuary of Our Lady of Loretto is in the Marches, hence the word Marquise used by Saint Vincent.

6Alessandro Bichi was born in 1598 in Siena and died in Rome on May 15, 1657. He was Bishop of Isola (1628), of Carpentras (1630), Apostolic Nuncio in France (1630-1634), Cardinal (Cardinal-Priest of the church of Saint Sabina) (1633), and Legate of Avignon (1634). Mazarin entrusted him with important missions. (Cf. Tamizy de Larroque, _Le Cardinal Bichi, évêque de Carpentras_, vol. VIII of _Les correspondants de Peiresc. Lettres inédites_, Marseilles, [1885].)

7There were several churches of this name in Rome. We think Saint John before the Latin Gate is referred to here; it was built in 772 near the place where, according to tradition, Saint John the Evangelist was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil.
me and the decision to make concerning the last method I suggested to you: whether it would be sufficient to make a vow of stability and, with regard to the observance of poverty and obedience, to proclaim a solemn excommunication against those who have money laid aside in their own keeping or elsewhere. This should take place in Chapter on a certain day of the year (at which everyone would be obliged to be present and to hand over what he had to the Superior). That is what the Carthusians do. The same could be done against the disobedient; or else, whether, instead of excommunication, we were to have them make a solemn oath every year to observe the rule of poverty, chastity, and obedience. I entreat you, Monsieur, to talk this over with the Reverend Father Assistant and, to find out whether the vow of stability by itself constitutes the religious state. Everyone here has so great an aversion for this state that it is a pity. Nevertheless, if it is considered expedient, we shall have to do it. The Christian religion was resisted everywhere in the past and, nonetheless, it was the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ. Happy are those who, confusione contempta, embrace this state.

The secular clergy are receiving a great deal from God at present. They say that our wretched Company has made a great contribution to them by means of the ordinands and the gathering of priests in Paris. There are many people of rank embracing this state right now. M. de la Marguerie, formerly the First President of a Province, became a simple priest just ten days ago. We have among the ordinands a Councillor from the Great Council, and a Master of Accounts, who wishes

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8The French Assistant to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Etienne Charlet.
9Needless of shame. (Cf. Heb. 12:2.)
10Elie Laisné, Sieur de la Marguerie et de la Dourville, Ordinary State Councillor. After the death of his wife, he entered the priesthood, and died October 3, 1656.
11François Voyssin, Seigneur de Villebourg, was born on March 14, 1613, became a member of the Great Council on February 22, 1638, and died of a stroke on April 19, 1660. He left about 100,000 écus to the general hospital.
12Thomas Le Gauffre was born in Grand-Lucé (Sarthe), became Commissioner of
to remain such. They are becoming simple priests out of devotion. M. de Mesgrigny, Advocate General at the Board of Excise, has withdrawn with M. Brandon to Saint-Maur for that purpose. We were not able to receive him into our house for six months, as he was asking, because of the rule we have, with which you are familiar, of admitting among us only persons who wish to become members of the Company, with the exception of the retreatants, who stay for ten days.

What shall I say about the talk you had with the Ambassador, concerning the Italian prelate you mentioned to me, except that we have a rule and, by the mercy of God, are exact in the practice of never getting mixed up in affairs of State, or even discussing them. That is: (1) because quod supra nos

Audit in 1628 and Master-Councillor in 1636, and died in 1645. He was a friend of Claude Bernard, whose charitable works he carried on, and of Jean-Jacques Olier, whom he greatly assisted in the evangelization of Canada.

13Nicolas de Mesgrigny, Prior of Souvigny and Comte de Brioude; later, Canon of Paris.

14Philibert Brandon, Seigneur du Laurent, became a Councillor in the Parlement on February 18, 1622. He left this position after the death of his wife, Marie de Ligny, niece of Chancellor Séguier, to enter the priesthood on the advice of Father de Condren. He was one of the founders of the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice. Brandon had offered his house of Saint-Maur-les-Fossés (Val-de-Marne) to M. Olier and his first companions. It was there that this pious phalanx of apostolic men spent part of the years 1640 and 1641. In 1648 he became Bishop of Périgueux, after having refused the See of Babylon, suggested to him by Saint Vincent. He stayed there until his death on July 11, 1652. His relationship with the Abbé de Saint-Cyran did not affect his orthodoxy. (Cf. Frédéric Monier, Vie de Jean-Jacques Olier [Paris: Poussielgue, 1914], vol. I, p. 254 ff.)

15François-Annibal, Duc d'Estrees, Comte de Nanteuil-le-Haudoin, Peer and Marshal of France.

16Saint Vincent never departed from this practice except when he tried to remedy the numberless evils that arose from Mazarin's politics. Moreover, in the Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission, the first edition of which Saint Vincent distributed in 1655, he stipulated: "No one shall speak against other countries or provinces, since much harm is wont to follow from such actions;" and "In public conflicts and wars that may arise between Christian rulers, no one shall show a preference for one side or the other, in imitation of Christ who was unwilling to arbitrate between two brothers involved in litigation, or to pass judgment on the rights of civil rulers." And, finally, "Everyone shall hold aloof from conversations about matters of state or kingdom, or other public worldly affairs, especially about war and the disputes of contemporary civil leaders, and other such talk of the world. No one shall, as far as possible, even write about these things." (Cf. Common Rules [English translation of 1954 edition], chap. VIII, nos. 14-16.)
nihil ad nos;\textsuperscript{17} (2) because it is not fitting for poor priests such as we to get mixed up with or to talk about things other than those concerning our vocation; (3) the affairs of Princes are mysteries that we ought to respect and not examine minutely; (4) most people offend God by passing judgment on the things others do, especially important people, not knowing the reasons why they are doing what they do; for when one does not know the primary cause of some matter, what conclusions can he draw from it? (5) everything to be done is problematic except those things determined by Holy Scripture; beyond that, no one possesses the dogma of infallibility in his opinions. That being true, as it is, is it not great temerity to judge the opinions and actions of others? (6) the Son of God, Who is the model on which we are to mold our life, always kept silent about the government of princes, although they were pagans and idolaters; (7) He made known to His Apostles that they were not to interfere curiously in matters concerning not only the affairs of princes but also those of individuals. He said to one of them, speaking of another: \textit{si eum volo manere, quid ad te}\textsuperscript{18}

For all these reasons and an infinity of others, I beg you, Monsieur, to keep to our little practice, which is never to talk about, much less intervene in, the affairs of Princes, either by word or in writing, and to inform the Ambassador, if he does you the honor of speaking to you about it, that such is the practice in our Little Company. Entreat him to excuse you if, when he did you the honor of talking to you freely, you reported the opinion of the public concerning the matter about which he spoke to you and went beyond what we ought to do according to our little Rules. And, in order to establish

\textsuperscript{17} Things that are above us are nothing to us.

\textsuperscript{18} If I wish him to remain, what is it to you? Jn. 21:22. \textit{"Suppose I want him to stay until I come,' Jesus replied, 'how does that concern you? Your business is to follow me.'}\textsuperscript{ (NAB)}
yourself more and more in the exact observance of this little rule, I beg you, Monsieur, to make your prayer on this matter, on the day after you receive this letter or as soon as possible, on the points above and to ask God in it to grant to the Company the grace of always being faithful to the observance of this little rule. There will be no need for you to send me a reply about this matter because I am certain that you agree with everything I am saying and that this practice is worth enforcing after this.

As soon as you have your faculty to become established, I shall send you the priest and the cleric you request. If you buy some house at a cost of only three or four thousand livres, send us a copy of the contract, signed and sealed in proper form to be used as a guarantee for those who will be giving us the money. It will serve as a receipt for the letter of exchange you will draw from our account, a month after this letter is received. And as for that Piedmontese boy, we shall accept him and have him study, if you send him to us and think that he has what it takes to be a good Missionary.

I am sending you the power of attorney from M. Dehorgny, Commander of Holy Spirit in Toul, to relinquish the house to the Company *causa unionis*, together with an attestation

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19To understand Saint Vincent’s statement, we must go back to the origin of the establishment founded in that city. In 1238, Néméric Barat, the Master Alderman in Toul, had entrusted a hospital which he had just built for orphans and the infirm to the Order of the Holy Spirit, but in 1635 the only members of that Order who were still in the city were Maître Dominique Thouvignon and two monks. Dominique Thouvignon resigned his benefice in favor of Bishop Charles de Gournay, in exchange for a pension of two thousand livres barrois [local measure of money based on the amount of silver or gold in a coin]. The latter offered it to the Priests of the Mission and Jean Dehorgny became titular by a royal decree in May 1635. Lambert aux Couteaux and Antoine Colé were placed there and carried out the functions of their state: missions, conferences to priests, and retreats. On June 16, by amicable arrangement, the two Holy Spirit Brothers surrendered to Jean Dehorgny all their rights to the house and the hospital in exchange for a pension of six hundred livres barrois and certain privileges. The hospital absorbed a great deal of the Missionaries’ time which they would have liked to devote to the missions. At their request, it was decreed on March 17, 1637, that the Bishop, the King’s
from the Vicar General of Toul, which will serve the same purpose. I entreat you, Monsieur, to work on this matter with your usual prudence and diligence. M. Le Bret\textsuperscript{20} will tell you about the difficulty this affair is undergoing because of the opposition you have reason to fear on the part of the General of Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{21}

I shall end this letter so that I may go to see good M. Renar\textsuperscript{22} who sent for me as he is gravely and critically ill.

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\textsuperscript{20}Jacques Le Bret, Canon of Toul, Auditor of the Rota, and cleric of the Apostolic Chamber, was a native of Paris. He was appointed to the See of Toul on April 24, 1645, and consecrated at Saint-Louis-des-Français. The King of France, who had not been notified through diplomatic channels, refused to recognize him. The dispute was settled by the death of the party concerned; he passed away in Rome on June 15 of the same year. Jacques Le Bret rendered many services to the Congregation of the Mission.

\textsuperscript{21}Etienne Vaius, Bishop in partibus of Cyrene, Grand Master of the Order of the Holy Spirit.

\textsuperscript{22}Among the members of the Tuesday Conferences, Saint Vincent had no one, perhaps, who was a more zealous and useful auxiliary than François Renar, born in Paris on April 25, 1604. This holy priest divided his time between spiritual direction and works of charity. Every morning from six o'clock until noon, he was at the disposition of his penitents, among whom was Jeanne Potier, the wife of Michel de Marillac. He was seen at the Hôtel-Dieu, visiting and instructing the sick. He preached in hospitals and jails, taught catechism to children, and went to proclaim the Gospel in villages, often with the Priests of the Mission. He took part in missions given at the Quinze-Vingts, at the Pitié, at the Refuge, and at La Chapelle where he undertook the teaching of catechism to the poor from Lorraine. Where was he not to be found? He brought the Good News to the people of Poitou, Touraine, Saintonge, Auvergne, Champagne, Burgundy, and to “almost all the provinces of France,” says his biographer. Saint Vincent invited him to give talks to the ordinands at Saint-Lazare. Like so many others, François Renar was curious enough to go see the possessed nuns of Loudun who were being talked about everywhere; he said Mass in their Chapel, constantly distracted by their vociferations and their blasphemies. Toward the end of his life, when his infirmities no longer allowed him the same activity, he became the director of the nuns of Saint-Thomas. Death put an end to his work on January 14, 1653. (Cf. Louis Abelly, \textit{L'idée d'un véritable prêtre de l'Église de Jésus-Christ et d'un fidèle directeur des âmes, exprimée en la vie de M. Renar, prêtre, directeur des religieuses du monastère de S. Thomas} [Paris: F. Lambert, n.d.]; Louis
God has disposed of our good late M. de Montevit, whom you knew at the seminary. His death came in Bar-le-Duc, where he was reputed a saint, at the College of the Jesuits. They did us the kindness of housing him with the other Fathers while he was working for the corporal and spiritual nourishment of five or six hundred poor people. These latter all accompanied him to the tomb, two by two, candle in hand, weeping for him as at the death of their own father. The Reverend Father Rector wrote me noteworthy things about him. M. Boucher replaced him, but he has also fallen ill because of the great amount of work he undertook for the poor. Brother Mathieu returned from there yesterday evening as well as from Metz, Toul, and Verdun, after having sent Nancy its share of the alms. We are continuing to assist those poor people to the amount of five hundred livres per month in each of the above-mentioned towns. But indeed, Monsieur, I greatly fear that we will not be able to keep it up much longer. It is so hard to find twenty-five hundred livres every month.


23Cf. no. 429.

24Brother Mathieu Régnard was born in Brienne-le-Château, now Brienne-Napoléon (Aube), on July 26, 1592. He entered the Congregation of the Mission in October 1631, made vows October 28, 1644, and died October 5, 1669. He was the principal distributor of Saint Vincent's alms in Lorraine and during the troubles of the Fronde. He was a great help to the Saint because of his daring, composure, and savoir faire. His biography is in vol. II of the *Notices*, pp. 29-33.

25Between the Town Magistrates of Verdun and Saint Vincent there was an exchange of letters that we no longer have. On January 21, 1640, the Municipal Council of the town decided to write to “M. Vincent, General of the Priests of the Mission in Paris, so that he might be so kind as to continue the charities and distributions of alms that he has begun in these districts.” (Cf. *Revue de Gascogne* [1908], p. 354.)

26Brother Mathieu made fifty-three trips to Lorraine, each time carrying sums of money varying between twenty and fifty thousand livres. Bands of thieves, who had been alerted to his passage and knew what he was carrying, watched him closely, but he always arrived at his destination with his treasure. His company was considered a safeguard. The Comtesse de Montgomery, who was reluctant to make the trip from Metz to Verdun, decided to do so only after having procured Brother Mathieu as a traveling companion. Queen Anne of Austria used to enjoy listening to Brother Mathieu tell of his adventures.
I recommend our deceased man and our sick man to your prayers, together with the needs of our poor and I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.27

I jotted down what Bishop Ingoli requested but so poorly that I am ashamed to send it to you. I ask you to fix it up, and give it to him, Monsieur, and assure him of my obedience.

Addressed: Monsieur Lebreton, Priest of the Mission, in Rome

Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris, March 1, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter of January 28 here at two o'clock. It told me: (1) about our principal business; (2) about what M. Le Bret achieved with the Vice-Gerent with regard to your establishment; (3) about what you told me of the churches mentioned to you and the lodging; (4) about the offer made

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He left a written narration of eighteen dangers from which he had escaped, but it has been lost. (Cf. Collet, op. cit., vol. I, p. 319, note.)

27*Indignus sacerdos Congregationis Missionis - unworthy priest of the Congregation of the Mission.* Saint Vincent often wrote this phrase in French after his signature, varying it from "priest of the Mission" to "unworthy priest of the Mission." Since it has become traditional in the Congregation of the Mission to append to one's name the Latin of these words, usually abbreviated to *i.s.C.M.*, this edition uses the *i.s.C.M.* wherever Saint Vincent added any form of the phrase.

Letter 434. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

1The matter of the vows.
to you by that good Canon from the Rotunda; (5) about the
dispatches I requested from you concerning marriage impediments; and finally about what happened with Cardinal de
Bagni.²

Now, with regard to the first point, let me say that I think
you would do well to waste no time in our principal business
according to the modification or change that I sent to you in
the letter of December 10, which you mentioned to me.³ His
Eminence⁴ sent me word that, when the situation has changed
somewhat, he will be able to write about it. Nevertheless, do
not fail to propose the matter the way it is and please send
me a rough draft.

As for the second point, I am heartened by what you say
M. Le Bret has accomplished with the Vice-Gerent. I think
you would do well not to waste any time on that matter.

As for the churches and the lodging, we are too poor to
agree to Our Lady of Loretto. I think you should keep to what
I wrote you. Buy some hospice at low price, but with a garden,
nevertheless, and in some place where we can expand with
time.

²Giovanni Francesco Guidi di Bagno, born in October 1578, was the Bishop of Cervia
and Rieti; the Vice-legate of Avignon; Nuncio in Flanders, then in France (1627); Cardinal
in 1629; died July 24, 1641.
³This letter is not extant.
⁴Armand Jean du Plessis, Cardinal Richelieu, was born in Paris on September 9, 1585,
the youngest of five children of François du Plessis and Suzanne de la Porte. As Bishop
of Luçon he acted as a spokesman for the clergy at the Estates-General of 1614. Raised
to the cardinalate in 1622, he entered the Council of the King (1624) and quickly became
its head. His guidance of foreign affairs helped to raise France to the highest echelon
among the European powers. In the administration of French internal affairs Richelieu
imposed useful reforms in finances, the army, and legislation (Code Michaul). He was
the author of royal absolutism: he destroyed the privileges of the Huguenots and of the
Provinces, and reestablished the authority of the intendants throughout France. He died
on December 4, 1642, attended by, among others, his niece, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon,
and King Louis XIII, who followed the Cardinal's deathbed advice in appointing Mazarin
as Chief Minister.
Mon Dieu! what shall we do about the exchange? I shall make inquiries as to whether we can send the money by some ship from Marseilles; you do the same.

I see immense difficulties in the offer of the Rotunda. Warmly thank that good gentleman who offered it to us.

I shall write to you later concerning the dispatches for the invalid marriages.

I entreat you meanwhile, to tell Cardinal Bagni what I had the happiness of telling him before. I hope he will some day approve what we are asking.

In the meantime, I ask you, Monsieur, as I did in my preceding letter, to observe exactly our little rule with regard to never discussing State matters, mortifying the curiosity to know and converse about worldly affairs. One of our Brothers, who goes back and forth, carrying money into Lorraine for the poor, told me that he finds it a great consolation when he is here in this house, never to hear any news. He is very much astonished to see the opposite practice in the religious Communities with whom he stops. M. du Coudray wrote the same thing to me from Toul and said that we must retain this invaluable practice and observe it.

Good day, Monsieur, I am your servant.

Vincent De Paul
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Lebreton, Priest of the Mission, in Rome

5 François du Coudray, born in 1586 in the city of Amiens, was ordained a priest in September 1618, and in March 1626 he was received into the Congregation of the Mission, of which the only other members were as yet Saint Vincent and Antoine Portail. He was gifted with extraordinary intelligence and knew Hebrew well enough to be judged capable of doing a new translation of the Bible.

It was he whom the Saint chose to go to Rome to negotiate the approbation of the nascent Congregation. He remained there from 1631 to 1635. We find him next in Paris;
435. - A PRIEST OF THE MISSION 1 TO SAINT VINCENT

Saint-Mihiel, March 1640

At our last distribution of bread, there were 1,132 poor people, without counting the sick, of whom there are a large number. We assist them with food and appropriate remedies. They all pray for their benefactors with such sentiments of gratitude that a number of them weep with emotion, even the rich, who are touched by these things. I do not believe that these people, for whom so many and such frequent prayers are offered, could be lost. The noblemen of the town have high praise for this charitable work. They say openly that many would have died without this help and voice the obligation they have toward you. A few days ago, a poor Swiss gentleman abjured his Lutheran heresy and, after having received the sacraments, died in a very Christian manner.

436. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

[Before 1642]

To the question addressed to him, as to whether it would be advisable at the end of the missions to request attestations of the work accomplished and the results achieved, the Saint answered:

from there he went into various areas to relieve the poor, to assist soldiers, or to give missions. In 1638, the Saint confided to him the direction of the house in Toul, which he retained until 1641. He was recalled to Saint-Lazare in 1641, spent part of the year 1643 in Marseilles evangelizing the galley-slaves and founding a house in that city, and in 1644 took over the direction of the house in La Rose (Lot-et-Garonne).

Unfortunately, his vast erudition was not accompanied by sufficiently solid theological knowledge. He maintained some unorthodox opinions and persevered in them despite the admonitions given him. The measures that Saint Vincent was obliged to take to prevent him from spreading his errors darkened the last years of his life. In 1646, he went from the La Rose house to Richelieu. There he ended his days in February 1649, in his sixty-third year.


1This letter was written by the same priest who wrote no. 430. He had recently arrived in Saint-Mihiel.

“that they would do well not to ask for any. It was sufficient that God knew their good works and that the poor were assisted, without their wishing to produce any other proofs.”

437. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1638 and 1650]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am afraid you cannot refuse the alms that poor woman is asking of you without some sort of failing in charity toward your neighbor. I do not think that will oblige you to go to any lengths to feed the child. She will have to have it placed at the Foundlings; or if the mother nurses some small infant from a titled family, she can have her own child cared for in the country for half as much. In any case, God will provide for the child and for your son as well, without your giving way to anxiety about what will become of him. Give the child and the mother to Our Lord. He will take good care of you and your son. Just let Him do His Will in you and in him, and await it in all your exercises. All you need to do is to devote yourself entirely to God. Oh! how little it takes to be very holy: to do the Will of God in all things.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL

1Collet noted that Saint Vincent subsequently changed his mind, and to substantiate this he referred to a letter written on January 21, 1642, which letter is no longer extant.

Letter 437. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1Dates of the institution of the work for the foundlings and of the marriage of Michel Le Gras.

2These words and the signature were carelessly cut off when someone wanted to reduce
438. - A PRIEST TO SAINT VINCENT

[Between 1639 and 1643]

Having seen the letters coming from Lorraine, which you sent to M. N., who showed them to me, I must confess that I was not able to read them without weeping and, so copiously, that several times I was forced to stop reading them. I praise our good God for the paternal providence He has for His creatures and I am asking Him to continue His graces to your priests who are employed in that divine exercise. There remains only my regret at seeing those charitable workers winning heaven and helping so many others to win it, while I, in my wretchedness, do nothing but crawl about the earth like a useless animal.

439. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Thursday morning [Between 1639 and 1642]

Mademoiselle,

I did not remember yesterday, when I sent you word that I would come to your house today, that I had orders from the Archbishop to go and see the Duchesse d'Aiguillon in Rueil today with the Pastor of Saint-Leu. See which would

the original letter to the measurements of the frame that holds it.


1The period during which the Priests of the Mission were engaged in relief work for the devastated Province of Lorraine.

Letter 439. - The original autograph letter is preserved at the Provincial House of the Daughters of Charity in Le Mans.

1The position of "Thursday morning" and the simultaneous presence of Jean Dehorgny and François Souffliers in Paris do not allow this letter to be placed at any other time.

2Probably to give a conference.

3Jean- Francois de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris.

4André du Saussay, born in Paris around 1589, was a doctor in both laws, a talented
be better: either tell the Sisters not to come or let Monsieur Dehorgny or M. Soufliers speak to them, and decide which of the two. Meanwhile, I wish you a good day and am, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

_Addressed_: Mademoiselle Le Gras

440. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Friday at noon [Between 1639 and 1651]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

For several days I have had five hundred livres which I am sending you by this messenger because we owe it to you. Now the Prior has asked me for some three thousand livres he gave 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 having merited the epitaph engraved on 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.)

François Soufliers, born in Montmirail in 1606, in the diocese of Soissons, was received at the Bons-Enfants in August 1629, was ordained a priest in September 1631, and made his vows on the feast of Saint Matthias [February 24], 1642. He was Superior of Notre-Dame de la Rose from 1642 to 1644. Saint Vincent recommended that his manner of dealing with heretics be imitated.

_Letter 440._ - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1The position of the words “Saint-Lazare” does not allow the letter to be placed prior to 1639. Moreover, this letter antedates the death of Adrien Le Bon, the Prior of Saint-Lazare.

2Adrien Le Bon, Canon Regular of Saint Augustine, was born in Neufchâtel
us about three months ago without our asking him, to be returned when he wished. And although he gave us silver money, he is asking us for louis or weighted coin, which is the reason, it seems, for which he gave us that sum. Now, we are caught a bit unawares. Mademoiselle, could you lend us that amount? We shall return it to you when you wish and try to convert it into money of standard weight—I mean the three thousand livres I think you still have. There is nothing in the world that you can be more sure of, by the grace of God.

The meeting\(^1\) has been postponed until Monday. If you think it advisable to reprove Sister Marie Monique, do so.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am feeling better, thank God, and am your most humble servant.

**VINCENT DEPAUL**

*Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras*

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**441. - TO SAINT LOUISE**

Saint-Lazare, Monday at noon [Between 1639 and 1641]\(^1\)

Mademoiselle,

You did not send me word as to where the Abbé de Vaux is staying. Do you not think it fitting for us to ask him to

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\(^1\)Before 1639, the Sisters were not yet in Richelieu; in 1641, Sister Perrette was already a member of the Community.
come to dinner here? I would like you to be able to make the arrangements for Thursday; if you cannot, I shall try to go and visit him at his lodging.

It would be well to send word to that good Sister in Angers to come right home. She may not find the Sisters in Richelieu ready or they may have left.

I saw our Sister Henriette's niece yesterday. Since things have happened the way they have, I think it will be well to give her a try and for me to write to the Bishop of Beauvais in case she is brought to justice.

I no longer have any congestion or fever, since God is so pleased. I am about to go out right now and shall try to have the happiness of seeing you one day this week. I am your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

Henriette Gessaume was one of the first Daughters of Charity. She was very intelligent and resourceful, but too independent. Her first years in the Company were spent in the environs of Paris. A clever pharmacist, she was of great assistance at the hospital in Nantes, where she remained from 1646 to 1655. She returned to Paris in 1655 and worked in the parish of Saint-Séverin; she also nursed wounded soldiers in Calais in 1658 and later ministered to the galley-slaves. Two of her nieces, Françoise Gessaume and Perrette Chefdeville, also became Daughters of Charity. One of her brothers and a nephew, Claude Gessaume and Nicolas Chefdeville, entered the Congregation of the Mission as coadjutor Brothers.

Perrette Chefdeville was born in Villiers-sous-Saint-Leu and entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity in 1640 or 1641. She served the poor in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, in Fontenay, and then in Serqueux. In 1653 she assisted the war victims in Châlons (cf. Ecrits spirituels, L. 526, n. 1). "She is a very good young woman," Saint Louise wrote of her, "never was there such submission, at least none greater." (Ibid., L. 328.)

Augustin Potier, Seigneur de Blancmesnil, consecrated in Rome on September 17, 1617, renewed his diocese with the help of Saint Vincent and Adrien Bourdoise. He summoned the Ursulines to Beauvais and Clermont, had missions given in which he himself took part, established a seminary in his episcopal palace, and multiplied the Confraternities of Charity. He became Grand Almoner of the Queen, and was a member of the Council of Conscience. Named Prime Minister at the death of Louis XIII (1643), he was going to receive the cardinal's hat when Mazarin's influence prevented this. He
Among the people who made general confessions, I can assure you that there were more than fifteen hundred who had never made a good one. Moreover, for the most part, they had wallowed in quite grievous sins for the space of ten, twenty, and thirty years; they frankly admitted that they had never confessed them to their ordinary pastors and confessors. Great ignorance was to be found there, but still more, malice. They were so ashamed to make known their sins that some of them could not make up their minds to reveal them even in the general confessions they made to the Missionaries. But finally, strongly impelled by what they heard in the sermons and catechism lessons, they yielded and confessed their faults frankly with wailing and tears.

TO LOUIS ABELLY, IN BAYONNE

Paris, April 26, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of our Lord be with you forever!
I am writing to the Bishop of Bayonne to say a word about the subject you did me the honor of mentioning in your letter,

  "An ecclesiastic of importance and virtuous life, who had assisted and even worked," says Abelly, in the mission whose fruits he is here describing, a mission being given in a large and important town of Anjou.

Letter 443. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.
  François Fouquet.
which is that the deceased Monsieur Fouquet did not agree for many years with everything the above-mentioned Bishop thought about the establishment of women religious in Bayonne. He told me some very important reasons for his disagreement, although I do not think I have ever made known to him my opinion of the matter, which is quite in conformity with that of his father. The disadvantages are considerable and the good to be hoped for far less than the expectations you wrote to me. Nevertheless, the Bishop is the one in charge, and I am too bold in daring to tell you what I have told you. It rests with the Bishop to identify the Will of God in this affair, as in all things, and it is my responsibility to submit to it. That is what I am doing and I submit to everything that you, Monsieur, will advise him. I do so with all the humility and affection in my power, I who am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

I had the happiness of meeting your brother during the course of an arbitration with M. de Cordes. O Monsieur, what a comfort it was to me!

Addressed: Monsieur Abelly, Vicar General and Officialis of Bayonne, in Bayonne

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2François Fouquet was the father of the Bishop of Bayonne and of the Superintendent of Finances, Nicolas Fouquet. He died on April 22.

3Denis de Cordes, Counselor at the Châtelet. It was at his request and that of M. Lamy that Saint Vincent had established the Charity at the Quinze-Vingts when the members of the Tuesday Conference gave a mission there at the end of 1633. (Cf. Abelly, op. cit., bk. I, chap. XXIII, p. 109; also, Antoine Godeau [Bishop of Grasse], L'idée du bon magistrat en la vie et en la mort de M. de Cordes, conseiller au Châtelet de Paris [Paris: A. Vitré, 1645].)

The Quinze-Vingts was a hospice founded by Saint Louis, King of France, for three
Madame,

Messieurs de Liancourt, de la Ville-aux-Clercs, de Fontenay, and several other persons of rank met here yesterday to begin working for the nobility of Lorraine who are in this city. You would not believe, Madame, the blessings they all hope for you, because of the great good you are doing for the hundred [quinze(15) times vingt(20)] blind poor people. In 1779, Cardinal de Rohan transferred the hospice from the rue Saint-Honoré to the Hôtel des Mousquetaires noirs, 28 rue de Charenton. The institution was suppressed during the French Revolution and reestablished in 1814. It is still a functioning hospital.

Letter 444. - According to Coste, the original autograph letter was in the possession of Father Joseph-Marie, a Capuchin from Elizondo, Spain. A facsimile is preserved in the Archives of the Mission, Paris.

1An unknown hand wrote 1638 on the original. That date is incorrect; the work among the Lorraine nobility did not begin until 1640 (cf. no. 459).

2Roger du Plessis, Duc de Liancourt (1598-1674), a man of piety and good works; he later allied himself with the Jansenists.

3Henri-Auguste de Loménie, Comte de Brienne et de Montrhon, Seigneur de la Ville-aux-Clercs, Secretary of State, died on November 5, 1666, at the age of seventy-one.

4François du Val, Marquis de Fontenay, Seigneur de Mareuil, de Villiers-le-Sec, et de Jaguy-en-France, Marshal of His Majesty's Camps and Armies, Counselor of the King in his Council of State. He was French Ambassador to Rome from 1640 to 1650. He died in 1665.

5In this work of assistance to the nobles of Lorraine who were refugees in Paris, the chief auxiliary of Saint Vincent was the Baron de Renty, an unparalleled Christian gentleman. It was a stroke of genius on the part of Saint Vincent to have the destitute nobility of Lorraine helped by their peers, without having recourse to the already overburdened Ladies of Charity. From the very first meeting, it was decided that they would establish the number and rank of the needy nobles of Lorraine who had taken refuge in Paris. M. de Renty undertook the investigation. The meetings were held at Saint-Lazare on the first Sunday of each month and continued until the end of the turmoil, for about seven years, with unflagging zeal and success. There were usually seven or eight gentlemen present. They personally carried material assistance and words of comfort to the refugees. When more peaceful times allowed the nobles to return to their own lands, the society helped them to pay for their journey with its alms, and gave them money enough to subsist for a time. (Cf. Abeilh, op. cit., bk. I, chap. XXXV, p. 167; cf. also, Abbé Ulysse Maynard, Saint Vincent de Paul [3rd ed., 4 vols., Paris: Retaux-Bray, 1886], vol. IV, p. 128.)
men and women religious and for the poor people of Lorraine. They said that if you had never done any good but that, you could hope for a large share in the eternal kingdom. We discussed the means of sending your 15,000 livres to that province. Monsieur de Fontenay, who has been the Governor in Nancy, said that we should call in two companies of cavalry to reinforce the convoy in which it is placed. M. du Halier will be glad to do that if we write to him about it. It will cost nothing, or little.

The saving will not be small for your poor if we can change the silver money given to us into gold. There are 12,500 livres in silver money of rather poor coinage. Monsieur Chenevis will not be willing to give us coin for coin, I am afraid. He will give us pistoles for twelves livres there that he can get here for ten. Nevertheless, I have instructed our Brother Louistre\(^6\) to find out about it this morning.

I am sending you the request we are presenting to the Deputies of Amortizations.\(^7\) The Bishop of Saintes,\(^8\) who is one of them, is of the opinion, Madame, that if you would be so kind as to recommend the matter to those gentlemen, they would exempt us, because he considers the case just. We make mention in it of you, Madame. I most humbly entreat you to have the request read to you and to examine the reasons we allege so that you can speak to those gentlemen about them.

I most humbly ask your pardon, Madame, for all the trouble I am giving you. The unequaled benevolence Our Lord

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\(^7\)Commissioners appointed by the King, following the Declaration of April 19, 1639, to see to the research, taxing, and liquidation of mortgage rights.

\(^8\)Jacques-Raoul de la Guibourgère, born in 1589, was the widower of Yvonne de Charette and father of several children when he was ordained. In 1631 he became Bishop of Saintes, succeeding his uncle, then went on to Maillezais, and finally to La Rochelle when the episcopal See was transferred there. Very few bishops were so intimately associated with Saint Vincent as was he. He died in 1661.
has given you for us encourages me to trust in you and causes me to be, in His love and that of His holy Mother, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

It will be my pleasure to let you know, when it is time, so that you may take the trouble of seeing those gentlemen. I shall give you a list of their names.

Addressed: Madame la Duchesse d'Aiguillon

445. - TO JEAN DE FONTENEIL, IN BORDEAUX

Paris, May 1, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I give thanks to God for the blessing He is incessantly showering on your Company and your works and I most humbly entreat you, Monsieur, to pray for the remission of my sins and that I may die well.


1Jean de Fontenciel, born in Bordeaux around 1605, was a friend and imitator of Saint Vincent. His outstanding qualities procured for him the highest positions in the diocese. He was appointed Canon of Saint-Seurin in July 1623, Vicar in perpetuity of the parochial church of Saint-Colombe, then of Saint-Siméon in Bordeaux in 1650, and Vicar General of the diocese on September 10, 1655. Like his friend Saint Vincent, he was convinced of the great good that would result from seminaries, missions, retreats, and weekly meetings of priests to discuss matters of theology, discipline, or piety. For this purpose, he founded the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Clergy, who directed the ordinands' seminary in Bordeaux and the seminaries of Aire and Sarlat. They were given the chapels of Notre-Dame-de-Montuzet, and the parishes of Saint-Louis-du-Marais and Saint-Simon-Cardonnat (Gironde). This Congregation was short-lived, surviving its founder by only three years. He died in Bordeaux, March 2, 1679. (Cf. Louis Bertrand, Histoire des Séminaires de Bordeaux et de Bazas [3 vols., Bordeaux: Féret, 1894], vol. I, pp. 207 ff.)
Your goodness encourages me to trouble you too frequently; I shall curtail this whenever you choose. I entreat you, Monsieur, to add to all your previous kindnesses that of sending the enclosed packages to Bayonne and to Dax by a safe means and as soon as possible, and making use of me in return.

I am, in the love of Our Lord, for you, for the Messieurs de Cruseau, and for all the men in your holy Company, Monsieur, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

I entreat you, Monsieur, to send the enclosed package to M. Benoît, at Notre-Dame de la Rose, near Sainte-Livrade.

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

446. - TO SAINT JANE FRANCES, IN ANNECY

Paris, May 14, 1640

Most worthy and amiable Mother,

I cannot thank you humbly or affectionately enough for all the incomparable kindnesses you unceasingly bestow on our Missionaries and on me. I am asking Our Lord to carry

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2Benoît Bécu, born in Braches (Somme), March 21, 1602, was ordained a priest in 1627 and entered the Congregation of the Mission on May 14, 1637. In 1639, he went to found the establishment of La Rose and later returned to Richelieu, where he was still living in 1646.

3Sainte-Livrade-sur-Lot is the principal town of a canton in Lot-et-Garonne.

Letter 446. - According to Coste, the original autograph letter was to be found in the Visitation Convent of Montluçon. However, the Convent of Montluçon was forced by
out this duty Himself, dear Mother; may He be your reward. You have given them furniture, dear Mother; may it please the goodness of God to become Himself the furnishing and precious adornment of your dear soul, so that it may shine like the sun in heaven as it does on earth! We are in your debt as always, and at fault for not having written to you sooner. The only reason for that, I think, was the hope of writing from week to week to tell you the latest decision concerning the Visitor. However, [the difficulties]¹ and the importance of the matter will still hold things in abeyance, for at least eight to ten days.² We thought it advisable, however, to tell you, dear Mother, that the Commander³ will send you M. Roton, his

¹There is some doubt about the reading of these words.
²Saint Vincent, the Commander de Sillery, and Octave Saint-Lary de Bellegarde, the Archbishop of Sens, were entrusted with the study of two very important matters for the Order of the Visitation: should Visitors be established and, if so, what limits should be placed on their powers.
³Noël Brulart de Sillery, a member of the Order of the Knights of Saint John of Malta and Commander of their establishment in Troyes, was one of Saint Vincent’s most glorious conquests. After holding the highest posts at Court, after being the Queen’s First Squire, then her Knight of Honor, extraordinary Ambassador to Italy, to Spain, and later in Rome to Popes Gregory XV and Urban VIII, he renounced public life, left the magnificent Hôtel de Sillery, sold his most sumptuous possessions, dismissed most of his servants, and went to live in a modest house near the first monastery of the Visitation. This took place towards the end of 1632. Saint Vincent, his director, had brought about this miracle. When he saw the Commander detached from all worldly possessions, he taught him how to make good use of his immense fortune. He took him to prisons and hospitals, and initiated him in the practice of all sorts of charity. Noël Brulart de Sillery began his priestly studies in 1632, and received Holy Orders and was ordained a priest in 1634. He celebrated his first Mass on Holy Thursday, April 13, 1634, in the chapel of the Sisters of the Visitation. His priestly life was short, but replete with works of charity. He gave generously to religious Congregations, especially to the Visitation, the Priests of the Mission, the monastery of the Madeleine, the Jesuits, and Carmel. He tried
chaplain, in ten to twelve days at the most, with the latest
decision he is to make with the Archbishop of Sens. And since
the said Commander will explain the state of the affair to you
concisely, I will say nothing to you about it, except: (1) that
we recognize more and more the usefulness of the Visitor's
making visitations when necessary; (2) that we think it is
expedient for him to have the authority the holy canons confer
on a Visitor, independently of the Ordinaries, and that he
make use of it, yet without changing anything in the rules,
with all the respect, circumspection, and deference possible;
(3) that if you, dear Mother, write to the . . . that they, or at
least some that I know, use it in the same way with regard to
the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre-Dame, concerning
the rumor of a Bull that their Foundress had had written for
some matter relevant to the affair in question; (4) that the only
remedy is that . . . ; (5) that it would be more advisable to leave
things as they are and entrust them to the direction of Divine
Providence than to act otherwise; (6) that our worthy Mother
is the only one to whom we think Our Lord will make known

unsuccesfully to organize a seminary in the House of the Temple in Paris. God called
him to Himself September 26, 1640, at the age of sixty-three. Saint Vincent assisted him
in his last moments and personally celebrated his funeral service. (Cf. Vie de l'illustre
290-307; cf. also, Marcel Martin Fosseyeux, "Contribution à l'Histoire du monastère
Société de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Île-de-France, [1910], pp. 184-202.)

4Octave Saint-Lary de Bellegarde. He was 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 Conserans in 1612, and on November 14,
1621, 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.

5The Sisters of Mercy of the Charity of Notre-Dame, founded in Paris in 1624 by
Mother Françoise de la Croix. Before approving their Constitutions, the ecclesiastical
authority had entrusted them to Saint Vincent, Father Binet, and Father Vigier for
examination.
His holy Will, since she is the Foundress of this holy Order, His Divine Goodness being such that He communicates to people with that title important lights concerning the work He has entrusted to them.

These, dear Mother, are the thoughts we have at present and about which we are to confer fully beforehand with the Archbishop of Sens.\(^6\)

I made the visitation in the city and the faubourg.\(^7\) I shall tell you how they are in the letter I am sending you by Monsieur Roton.

To get back to your Missionaries,\(^8\) I shall tell you, dear Mother, that I think God has given you in one single glance as clear a discernment as if you had formed them. O dear Mother! to what a degree you are my mother and theirs, and how fortunate they are, in my opinion, to have the happiness of being near you and how fortunate I also am because you are so good to me. I am, in the love of Our Lord, most worthy Mother, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

*Addressed:* Reverend Mother de Chantal, Superior of the first monastery of Annecy

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\(^6\)The preceding lines of the original, beginning with the words "The only remedy," have been heavily crossed out in an effort to render them illegible. We have omitted two passages which we were not able to decipher.

\(^7\)Of the monasteries of the Visitation in the city and the faubourg.

\(^8\)The Priests of the Mission in Annecy.
My very dear Father,

We received your letter of May 14 rather late. Believe that the affection and desire God has given us to cherish and serve your dear children produces no [state] comparable to our love, which would be happy to have the power to do more. They are so good that it takes little to please them. Moreover, the holy edification and usefulness of their lives and their unceasing work for the greatest glory of God and the profit of souls makes everyone say that they have been sent by God and that M. Codoing has the spirit of God.

Our very good father, the Commander, sent me word that, if we wish, he will have the house in Troyes provide two more priests and a Brother. God knows how gladly the Bishop of Geneva will accept them. This diocese has 455 Catholic parishes and 145 held by the heretics. That makes 600, and they are large, densely populated parishes. Consequently, M. Codoing says that it will take four years to visit all of them. You can see, dearest Father, how profitably the increase in this blessing will be put to use. Your dear children are delighted to find a people so well disposed; may the Holy Trinity be glorified for this! Oh, what a fine crown awaits you, dearest Father, and our dearest father, the Commander, because of the good use he is making of these faithful workers! I think this mission here will put more souls in Paradise than many others, with the help of divine grace.

1This letter is the answer to that of May 14.
2Commander de Sillery.
3Juste Guérin.
447a. - SAINT JANE FRANCES TO SAINT VINCENT

As for the Visitor,¹ the reasons that indicate his usefulness are so solid that they cannot be questioned. However, since God has permitted that, unbeknown to me, so many monasteries have been informed of this plan and are so strongly against it and have expressed that to me, would I be able to join in it without separating myself from them? And what would be the outcome of that? I leave it to you to ponder, my very dear Father. They would all stir each other up and then as you say, they would inform the Prelates who would cut off their communication with us. That, to all appearances, would cause a great upset in the Institute, which is blessed with complete peace and union as far as I can tell, and by the grace of God, I know of no disorders except that which came about from the dismissal of those Sisters from N.² That was very disturbing and must have greatly humiliated that Superior in the eyes of the Bishop. Such things are bound to happen when one does not follow the Rule.

Oh! very dear Father, I must confess that I am perplexed when I consider the usefulness of the Visitor and when I see that he cannot be established without an enormous upheaval in the Institute, if it does not accept him. I cannot help feeling that in this case he may do more harm than good and, consequently, if the houses cannot be won over tactfully, that it would be better to leave things as they are, in the hands of Divine Providence, than to proceed further. These are my sentiments and those of the Prelates.

¹An Apostolic Visitor appointed by Rome to help preserve uniformity of spirit among the Visitation monasteries.
²The monastery in Rouen.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Yesterday I received three of your letters at once: one from the second, another from the third Sunday after Easter, and the other from April 18, I think. Here, briefly, is the answer to all three.

I praise God and am inexpressibly consoled because of all that Our Lord is doing there through you, although we still do not have what you are requesting with regard to our affairs. But, may God be blessed for not seeing fit to grant it and for all the good you are doing in the midst of it all! If the principal matter is not settled during this pontificate, in nomine Domini.

I thank God meanwhile that the Vice-Gerent has given you verbal permission to buy a house in Rome and to establish yourself there. I think those people are right who do not wish you to be situated where the air is bad, or where you are too far away. I entreat you, Monsieur, to pay heed to both, especially the first. One must be satisfied with a little in the beginning. If we can send you four thousand livres for that purpose, that will be all. The title of the chapel will be the Most Holy Trinity, please, and the house can be called the Mission.

Do you see any objection to accepting the alms people give you for Masses? I do not think I see any problem in your visiting the poor in the vicinity, or in your offering yourself to the Vice-Gerent to receive ecclesiastics for retreat and
ceremonies. But all that in time, when you have the support I shall send you, on learning that you actually have a house. If matters are pressing in that regard, get the money from M. Marchand and we shall repay it here. If not, I shall try to have it sent to the Nuncio or to M. Mazarini.

I still have not seen the said Nuncio for important reasons that I cannot write to you and I shall not be able to see him personally until business matters both here and there are settled. I shall try to have him visited this week by someone who sees him often. He promised to do so and would already have seen him, were it not for the fact that he has just returned from the country.

What shall I say about Bishop Ingoli’s suggestion? Nothing certainly, Monsieur, but that I accept it, with all the reverence and humility in my power, as coming from God. We shall do our best to undertake it, but we have absolutely no one in either of the two Companies from the county of Avignon. Nevertheless, I think that it is absolutely necessary for the Bishop and the other two who are to accompany him to be from the same Company.

Since writing the above, I have been to celebrate Holy Mass. This is the thought that came to me: because the power to send persons ad gentes resides, on earth, in the person of His Holiness alone, he has consequently the power to send every

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2Bishop Renuccio Scotti.

3Jules Mazarin was born in Pescina in Abruzzi in 1602, had studied in Spain as a youth, and had served in the Papal army and the Papal diplomatic corps. He met Richelieu for the first time in 1630. In 1631, the Holy Father had him negotiate the Peace of Cherasco with France. He had hardly entered the ecclesiastical state [he received tonsure in 1632, but never became a priest] when he was assigned to important diplomatic positions: Vice-Legate of Avignon (1634), then Nuncio in France (1635-1636), in which positions he demonstrated the ability and flexibility of the most subtle statesman. He became a French citizen in 1639, and Richelieu obtained a cardinal’s hat for him in 1641. Before his death, Richelieu recommended Mazarin to Louis XIII. He became the principal minister of Queen Anne of Austria during the regency of Louis XIV (1642-1661) and, until his own death (1661), was the absolute master of France.

4We think that the suggestion concerned the mission in Persia. It was, in fact, in June
priest throughout the world for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and all priests have the obligation to obey him in that regard. According to that maxim, which seems reasonable to me, I offered this Little Company to God, to His Divine Majesty, to go wherever His Holiness commands. However, like you, I think it is necessary for His Holiness to consent that the direction and discipline of those sent belong to the Superior General, together with the faculty of recalling them and sending others in their place. Nonetheless, they shall see to it that they are with regard to His Holiness like the servants of the Gospel with regard to their master. If he says to them: go there, they will be obliged to go; come here, they will come; do that, they will be obliged to do it. We have few in the Company who have the talents necessary for a mission of such importance, yet there are some, by the mercy of God.

I have not been able to talk to His Eminence about M. Le Bret’s business matter. I shall speak of it to the Duchesse d’Aiguillon, his niece. I greet the said Sieur Le Bret with all the respect in my power and am his most humble servant and yours.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Monsieur Marchand, banker at the court in Rome, to be sent, courtesy of him, to Monsieur Lebreton, Priest of the Mission, in Rome

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1640, that the new Bishop of Babylon, Jean Duval, in religion Bernard de Sainte-Thérèse, of the Order of Discalced Carmelites, left France to go to Ispahan (Iran). He arrived there on July 7, with three men from his Order. Bishop Ingoll, Secretary of Propaganda Fide, had requested Saint Vincent to give the prelate two auxiliaries.

5We think Saint Vincent had Lambert aux Couteaux particularly in mind, as he later proposed him by name to be Coadjutor of Babylon.

6Cardinal Richelieu.
June 1640

Would to God that you could see the center of my heart, for I truly love and respect you with all my affection. I acknowledge myself to be the most obligated of all men in the world to your charity because of the great benefits and fruits that the Missionaries, your dear children in God, are producing in our diocese. They are so great that I cannot put them into words; they are unbelievable except to one who sees them. I was an eye-witness of this on the occasion of the visitation I began after Easter. Everyone is unanimous in loving, cherishing, and praising them. Indeed, Monsieur, their doctrine is holy and their conversation as well. They give great edification to everyone by their irreproachable life. When they have brought their mission to a close in one village, they leave for another and the people go along with them weeping and saying, "O bon Dieu! what shall we do? Our good Fathers are leaving," and for several days they continue to go and see them in the other villages.

People from other dioceses are seen coming to confess to them and admirable conversions are accomplished through them. Their Superior possesses great gifts from God and marvelous zeal for His glory and the salvation of souls. He preaches with great fervor and great fruit. To be sure, we are exceedingly obligated to Commander de Sillery for having provided for their support. Oh! how admirable Divine Providence is for having graciously inspired the heart of that good gentleman to procure these evangelical workers for us! It is the good God who has accomplished all this, without any human persuasion entering in. He took into consideration our need and our unfortunate nearness to the wretched city of Geneva.


1Bernard Codoing.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Here is a fine young woman who has come from thirty-two leagues away to see if she is suited for the Charity. Please consider her. The man accompanying her is her father; he brought her expressly for that purpose. And I, I am, in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, in La Chapelle

451. - SAINT JANE FRANCES TO SAINT VINCENT

[Annecy, between 1626 and 1641]

Alas! my true and most dear Father, could it really be possible that my God is granting me the grace of bringing you to these parts! That would indeed be the greatest consolation I could receive in this world, and this news is for me like a special act of God's mercy on my soul, which I think would be incomparably relieved by it in the midst of a certain interior suffering which I have borne for more than four years and which serves me as a martyrdom.

Letter 450. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

'These dates embrace the time period during which Saint Louise lived in La Chapelle.


In 1626 Saint Jane Frances was living in Annecy to which she had returned from Paris in 1622. This letter could not have been written before 1626 and the Saint died in 1641. The letter is most probably from 1640 because in that year Saint Vincent had some thought of going to Annecy (cf. no. 452), and we are not aware that he planned to do so at any other time.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

We are sending everything we have for those men and women religious.¹ You can see from the letter I wrote to M. de Villarceaux,² which you will seal, how the Duchesse d’Aiguillon feels about the distribution. It would be good perhaps for you to take [it] to him.

Mathieu³ is bringing you your little allowance and you will adjust your expenditures accordingly. As for the two thousand livres you received for the religious from M. de Saint-Nicolas,⁴ in the name of God, Monsieur, use none of it for any other purpose under any pretext of charity whatsoever. There is no act of charity that is not accompanied by justice or that permits us to do more than we reasonably can.

I shall say nothing to you concerning the business about M. F[eury], except that I am very glad he talks things over with M. Midot⁵ and that you settle your differences with him

Letter 452. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹The end of an attestation signed December 20, 1639, by the Dominican nuns of the main convent in Toul reads as follows: "We can say and we declare with the entire diocese of Toul: 'Blessed be God, who has sent us these angels of peace, in such a time of calamity, for the good of the town and the consolation of its people,' and for us in particular, 'to whom they have given and are still giving every day alms from their goods, providing us with wheat, wood and fruit, thus coming to the assistance of our great need!' " (Cf. Collet, op. cit., vol. I, p. 291.)

²Anne Mangot, Seigneur de Villarceaux, Intendant of three dioceses. He died as Master of Requests on April 10, 1655.
³Brother Mathieu Régnard.

⁴Probably Georges Froger. The gentle and zealous Froger, Doctor of the Sorbonne, had been Pastor of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet in Paris since 1603. He directed the Community of the Daughters of the Cross for five years and died September 3, 1656.
⁵Jean Midot, Doctor in Theology, Councillor in the Parlement of Metz, Grand Archdeacon, Canon, and Vicar General of Toul. He was highly thought of in the courts of Rome and Lorraine. After the death of Charles de Gournay, he governed the diocese
amicably as the need arises, whereas President de Trélon, who could moderate the little flare-ups, is removed from the situation. It would be desirable for those gentlemen to approve of matters being returned to their original state, but, since Providence has disposed otherwise through that good and holy prelate now deceased, we must submit. Besides there is no hope that justice will dispose things otherwise, nor is it expedient to attempt to do so.

The visitations I have made up to the present in Richelieu and in Troyes took place with so much fruit and so many blessings that I could see the truth in what they say about the Carthusians, that among the means by which they maintain their primitive observance is the annual visitation. That made me think that it is advisable for us to make ours every year. Therefore, since I myself cannot go to make them in Lorraine in person, I am sending M. Dehorgny. You are well acquainted with his simplicity, piety, and exactitude to the observance of the Little Rule of the house. I entreat you, Monsieur, to receive him in this capacity and to have the same confidence in him as you would in me. You know that it was you who gave him to us, and are aware of his gratitude for that and, moreover, of the esteem he has for you. I hope that you will act in such a way that everyone in the house may profit from this action, which is never carried out without great fruit and blessings.

I just sent M. Lambert to our house in La Rose for the same purpose and hope to go and do the same, around the middle of autumn, with regard to Troyes, Geneva, and some other places, if God gives me the health to do so. It is

as Capitular Vicar. According to Collet (op. cit., vol. I, p. 291, note), in the seventeenth century his family possessed several letters that Saint Vincent had written to him. Only one is known to us (cf. vol. IV, no. 1225). Jean Midot was the author of Mémoires sur les évêques de Toul, which has remained in manuscript form.

6Nephew of Commander de Sillery.
7Charles Chrétien de Gournay had died September 4, 1637.
8In November 1638 and in November 1639.
9In July 1639.
important that the above-mentioned gentleman not be known in Toul for who he is, for many reasons. He will give you news of us and tell you how I embrace you in spirit with all the humility and affection in my power. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Dear Mother,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
If the profession of our dear Sister de Chaumont can take

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453. - TO MOTHER FRANCOISE-ELISABETH PHELIPPEAUX,¹
IN SAINT-DENIS

Saint-Lazare, the last day of June, 1640

Letter 483. - According to Coste, the original autograph letter was in the possession of Baron Bich of Aosta. The present whereabouts of the original is unknown but a manuscript copy is preserved in the Archives of the Mission, Paris. The letter was also published, with the authorization of its owner, Baron Bich, in the seventh "Bulletin de l'Académie Saint-Anselme d'Aoste" in 1871, pp. 5-6.

¹Mother Françoise-Elisabeth Phelippeaux de Pontchartrain entered the first monastery of the Visitation, on the rue de Saint-Antoine, at the age of sixteen. She was thirty when the Saint-Denis monastery was founded, and became its first Superior (June 30, 1639 - June 5, 1642). When her term of office was completed, she returned to the convent on the rue Saint-Antoine. At Saint-Denis she left a small but fervent Community. She remained at the monastery of Chaillot from 1653 to 1655 and was sent to the Madeleine as Superior in 1665. The historian of the Visitation monasteries wrote of her (Histoire chronologique des fondations de tout l'Ordre de la Visitation Sainte-Marie [Ms., 10 vols.], p. 561): "She radiated only God, His glory, and His perfection, and was so extraordinarily fervent that she could not understand how a Sister who followed the exercises of the Rule exactly could possibly suffer trials. She was like a true seraphim, all burning with love, at the head of her little Community, which she led like another Moses in her little desert." She died on July 2, 1674.

²Marie de Chaumont, daughter of Louis de Chaumont, Seigneur d'Athieules, and of
place next Saturday, the day of your holy feast, I trust that Our Lord will grant me the grace of coming to serve you, or else I shall come the next day, Sunday. If not, I cannot do it on Monday, because I gave my word that I would be of service to the little Chandenier girl, who is to take the habit that day at your house in the faubourg, and on Tuesday we have our meeting for priests. Wednesday I think I will be able to leave for my trip of fifteen or twenty days. Nevertheless, I shall do what I can to wait for a Thursday, if necessary. God knows how much I want to be of service to that dear child and how much I am, in His love, dear Mother, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mother Superior of the Visitation Sainte-Marie de Saint-Denis, in Saint-Denis'

Marie de Bailleul, lady-in-waiting to Anne of Austria and sister of Nicolas de Bailleul, Superintendent of Finances.

3The Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin, July 2.

4The Rochefoucault de Chandenier family gave three of its members to the second monastery of the Visitation in Paris: Marie-Louise, Catherine-Henriette, and Marie-Henriette, grand-nieces of Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld and sisters of the two Abbé de Chandenier, who were so closely associated with Saint Vincent. Marie-Louise and Catherine-Henriette were transferred to the third monastery at the time of its foundation (the Sisters took possession of a house on the rue de Montorgueil on July 25, 1660), and after thirteen years they returned to the second monastery together. Marie-Louise had had the happiness of making her profession before Saint Jane Frances in 1635. She died in the odor of sanctity on January 3, 1694, at the age of seventy-four. (Cf. Annee saintie des religieuses de la Visitation Sainte-Marie [12 vols., Annecy: Ch. Burdet, 1867-1871], vol. 1, pp. 40-54.) Marie-Henriette was elected Superior four times, in 1670, 1673, 1691, and 1694. We read in the Histoire chronologique, vol. 11, p. 445: "Our most honored Mother Marie-Henriette de Chandenier has governed us with so much prudence and moderation that she has always seemed to us a rare example of all the virtues, constantly united to God, tranquil in all circumstances, zealous without temerity to maintain the observance. We have enjoyed more than nine years of happiness under her direction, and we are still enjoying, at present, her fourth three-year term of office, which is not yet finished."

5For the Tuesday Conference.

6This trip did not materialize or, at least, it was delayed or cut short.

7The monastery of Saint-Denis was founded by Mother Hélène-Angélique Lhuillier,
Monsieur, I shall tell you astonishing things about this town which would seem unbelievable if we had not seen them. Besides all the poor beggars I mentioned, the majority of the inhabitants of the town and especially the nobility are enduring so much hunger that it cannot be described or imagined, and what is most deplorable is that they do not dare to ask for anything. There are some who pluck up their courage, but others would rather die. I myself have spoken to people of rank who do nothing but weep incessantly because of the situation.

Here is another even stranger thing. A widow, who no longer had anything for herself or her three children and who saw herself reduced to dying of hunger, skinned a grass-snake and put it on the coals to roast it and eat it, since she could not find anything else. Our confrere who lives here, having heard about it, ran to her house and, having seen this, remedied the matter.

Not a single horse dies in the town, of any disease whatsoever, that is not immediately carried off to be eaten. Just three or four days ago there was a woman at the public almshouse with her apron full of that kind of foul meat; she was giving it to other poor people for scraps of bread.

A young woman had for several days been deliberating about selling what was most dear to her in the world for a little bread, and she had even sought opportunities several times. God be praised and thanked that she did not find them and that, at present, she is out of danger.

Another extremely deplorable case is that the priests, who are all, thank God, of exemplary life, are suffering the same want and have no bread to eat. Things are so bad that a pastor who lives half a

Superior of the first monastery of Paris, thanks to the patronage of Queen Anne of Austria and in spite of the objections of the people and of Armand de Bourbon, Prince de Conty. Saint Vincent was its first Superior. According to the author of the remarks dedicated to this monastery in the *Histoire chronologique*, p. 529, the Saint stated that he was aware of God alone when he entered the convent of Saint-Denis, where, he said, “the spirit of the Institute was flourishing in its first fervor.”


1The year is given by Abelly; moreover, Jean Dehorgny spent only part of the months of June and July in Lorraine (cf. nos. 452 and 459).
league from the town was reduced to pulling a plough, harnessed with his parishioners in the place of the horses. Is it not deplorable, Monsieur, to see a priest, and a pastor at that, brought to such a condition. One no longer has to go to Turkey to see priests condemned to ploughing the earth, since they are reducing themselves to that at our doors, being constrained to do so by necessity.

Moreover, Monsieur, Our Lord is so good that he seems to have privileged Saint-Mihiel with a spirit of devotion and patience, for amid the extreme poverty of temporal goods, they are so avid for spiritual things that up to two thousand people come to hear the catechism lessons. That is a big number for a small town where the majority of the large houses are deserted. The poor themselves are very conscientious about attending, and about frequenting the sacraments. Everyone in general has a high esteem of the Missionary who is here. He instructs and helps them and one man considers himself fortunate to have spoken to him just once. He also exerts himself with great charity and much labor at the borders. He even allowed himself to be so overwhelmed with general confessions and want of food that he fell ill.

I am amazed at how, with the small amount of money he receives from Paris, he can give so many alms both in general and in private. That is where I see so clearly the blessing of God who causes His gifts to multiply. What Holy Scripture said about the manna came back to me: each family was to take the same amount and there would be enough for everyone, whether there were more or fewer people to gather it. Here I see something similar, for our priests who have more poor people do not give any less and yet are not left empty-handed.

455. - JEAN DEHORGNY TO SAINT VINCENT

Bar-le-Duc, July 1640

First of all, every week our Missionaries give a great number of poor people linen, especially shirts. They take back the old ones to

2Ex. 16: 16-30.
have them washed, mended, and given to others, or else they tear
them into pieces to serve as bandages for those with wounds or sores.

Secondly, they themselves tend a large number of people suffering
from ringworm. There used to be twenty-five of them before on a
regular basis and there are still twelve. This disease is extremely
common throughout Lorraine. In all the other towns there is a
proportionate number. Thank God, they are cared for in such a
conscientious and charitable way that all of them are cured of it by
a very effective remedy our Brothers have learned.

Thirdly, our priests here lay out a considerable amount of
money—but it is well spent—on taking in the poor who are passing
through, for our Missionaries in Nancy, Toul, and other places, very
often refer groups of poor people to them to be sent into France
because this town is the gateway of Lorraine. They also provide them
with food and some money for their trip.

456. - TO FRANCOIS DU COUDRAY, IN TOUL

Paris, July 10, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Mathieu has brought you your money. We shall find out
from the President how things stand with M. de Fleury and
shall look into it.

I wrote to tell you that you must carry out the distribution
according to the orders of M. de Villarceaux and see that the
others do the same. I think you have the order he signed and
that you will follow it exactly. That, Monsieur, is what I most
humbly ask you to do. Also, obtain a receipt from each
monastery for what you give them. With regard to the

Letter 456. - The original autograph letter is at the house of San Silvestro in Rome.
1The Président de Trélon, nephew of Commander de Sillery (cf. no. 452).
2The Archives of the Priests of Mission, Paris, still possess several of these receipts,
all belonging to the year 1647.
distributions to be made in the other towns where there are individuals from the Company, please instruct them to do the same. They are to follow in their entirety the orders the above-mentioned Sieur de Villarceaux gave you and obtain a receipt for everything they give, because we must keep an account of it so that, whatever the pretext may be, not a speck of it is diverted or applied elsewhere. And please send me by way of Brother Mathieu a copy of the accounts, signed by M. de Villarceaux, and a copy of his orders, if there is one. Also send me every month the amounts you have given out or ordered to be distributed in other places. Never has greater order been seen than what is being required and observed. You have mentioned nothing concerning the number of poor country people who have been given refuge in the town or the faubourg to whom you dispense help. I show that to the good Ladies3 every month from all the other places. It is only from Toul that I have not shown it to them for a rather long time. It gives them great consolation. Last Saturday we spent two or three hours looking at the other letters and they were extremely gratified by them.

That, Monsieur, is all I have to tell you at the moment, except that I beg you take care of your health, and I ask this of you with all the affection in my power through Our Lord, in whose love and in that of His holy Mother, I am, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur du Coudray, Priest of the Mission, at the house of the Holy Spirit of Toul, in Toul

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3The Ladies of Charity.