salvation, both to those who are going to die and to those who are going to recover, in order to help them to live well, which is producing very good results and clearly shows . . . .

I would like to mention the other places where they are primarily and say: "in the past few days or recently at Saint-Denis Hospital;" to mention Sedan and also that those in the rural areas serve in instructing children as well as in caring for the sick and dressing wounds.

That no mention be made of the good being done by the above-mentioned demoiselle either at present or in the future.

No widows are making any contributions, or only very few of them and rarely, but not regularly.

As for the work of the Sisters of the house, after the words: "do bloodletting and dress the wounds of the poor from outside who come to them for this purpose," write: "prepare or give out the medications."

The two o'clock reading and silence are not specified, nor at the other time either; perhaps this is not necessary.

Should not mention be made that the money put in the common purse is used to buy what is needed at the house to clothe the Sisters, even those living in the parishes where their habits are made so that, in this way, they will always be uniform?

In the article: "they will show respect and obedience in all that concerns their conduct and the treatment of the sick poor to the. . . ."

773. - TO JEAN-FRANCOIS DE GONDI, ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS

[August or September 1645]

Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, humbly petitions, stating that, since it has pleased your pastoral charity to authorize the said Priests

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Letter 773. - Recueil de pièces concernant la communauté des Filles de la Charité, p. 1 ff. This manuscript, preserved in the Archives of the Mission, Paris, concerns mainly documents issued by Jean Bonnet, Superior General; in fact, it is better known under the title of Recueil de M. Bonnet.

This petition closely followed no. 772.
of the Mission to establish the Confraternity of Charity for the assistance of the sick poor in all the parishes of your diocese where it can be conveniently established, and after having successfully made the establishment in several villages, some charitable ladies of Paris have been so touched by it that they have brought about, through their pastors, the establishment of this Confraternity in their parishes, for example, Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet, Saint-Leu, Saint-Sauveur, Saint-Médéric, Saint-Etienne, Saint-Sulpice, Saint-Gervais, Saint-Paul and others where this Confraternity has been established and is working successfully. But because the ladies who make up the Confraternity belong, for the most part, to a social class that does not allow them to perform the most menial and abject services proper to the work of this Confraternity, such as carrying the soup pot through the city, doing the bleedings, preparing and giving enemas, dressing wounds, making beds and watching at night over the sick who are alone and near death, they have taken some good country girls to whom God had given the desire to assist the sick poor, who attend to all these little services, after having been trained for this purpose by a virtuous widow named Mademoiselle Le Gras. They have been supported, while living in the house of the above-mentioned lady, by the assistance of some virtuous widows and other charitable persons who have contributed their alms to this, in such a way that in the thirteen or fourteen years since this work was begun, God has so blessed it that at present there are in each of those parishes two or three girls who work every day assisting the said poor and even sometimes instructing poor girls when they can. They live at the expense of the Confraternity of the parishes where they are employed, but so frugally

²Saint-Merry.
that they spend only one hundred livres a year, at the most, for food and clothing, and in some parishes, only twenty-five écus.

Besides the work these girls do in the parishes, three of them are employed by the Ladies of Charity of the Hôtel-Dieu to serve the sick poor there and to prepare for them the little comforts they bring them each day to the Hôtel-Dieu. In addition, there are ordinarily at least ten or twelve engaged in raising the little foundlings of this city, and two or three for the assistance of the poor convicts. Besides those employed in the aforementioned works in this city, there are also some serving in the hospitals in Angers, Richelieu, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Sedan and, most recently, at the Hôtel-Dieu of Saint-Denis-en-France and in other places in the country. There, they perform more or less the same tasks with regard to the care of the sick, healing wounds and educating poor girls, all of this rather successfully, by the mercy of God.

And in order to provide these girls for all the places where they are being requested, the above-mentioned lady trains others in her own home and ordinarily has more than thirty of them whom she employs, some to teach the poor little girls who go to school in her home, some to visit the sick of the parish to bring them food or medicine or to nurse them; some to do the bleeding and dress the wounds of the poor from outside who come to them for this purpose; some to sew or do similar work; some to learn to read or write; others to do the housekeeping. Everything is done according to the orders given them.

She also supports them partly with the money the girls earn from their handwork when they have some leisure time after their ordinary work; partly with the assistance of the above-mentioned widows who sometimes still contribute to it, each one according to her means; and partly with ordinary alms, but especially with the considerable revenue which the King and Queen, and the Duchesse d'Aiguillon as well, have
charitably donated to them in perpetuity, amounting to more than two thousand livres a year.

And what is still more noteworthy in the work of these poor girls is that, besides the corporal services they render to the sick poor, they try to contribute to their spiritual welfare, as best they can, particularly by saying some good word to them from time to time and giving them little reminders about their salvation, both to those who are going to die, that they might leave this world in a good state; and to those who will recover, in order to help them to lead a good life.

And Our Lord so blesses the little service they render in their simplicity that there is good reason to bless Him for its successful results. It is evident that what is said in Scripture is seen accomplished in them, namely, that God is pleased to communicate Himself to the simple and humble and to use the smallest and lowliest to make them great and exalted. In a word, it is He Himself who has called and approved them and even inspired their humble manner of living. This will be easier to believe if we add that the voice of the people, which is the voice of God, gives its approval to it, not only by reason of the usefulness of their services to the public, but also on account of the good example they are spreading by their upright lives. What lends even greater authority to the above is that everything has been done by virtue of the consent and permission Your Excellency has given to this petitioner, since the approbation of the prelate is the most certain mark of a true vocation and of a good work.

However, works pertaining to the service of God come to an end ordinarily with those who begin them, if there is no spiritual bond among the persons involved in them. That is what this petitioner, under whose direction they have always been until now, in accordance with the authority which you, Most Illustrious Lordship, have granted him in your kindness, fears may happen. For this reason, Excellency, I think it desirable that your charity be pleased to erect as a Confrater-
nity this company of girls and widows and to give them as regulations the following articles, according to which they have lived until now and are resolved to live by in future, under the name of Girls and Widows, Servants of the Poor of the Charity...).

These, Excellency, are, in substance, the little regulations this petitioner had drawn up to be kept by these girls, servants of the poor. They are subject to the good pleasure of your pastoral charity which is most humbly requested to approve them and also to erect their little Company as a Confraternity, since it appears that, by their charitable works and exemplary life, they are useful to the public and prejudicial to no one. So many poor, sick, galley-slaves and foundlings are assisted by them, corporally and spiritually, in addition to their teaching of poor girls, that the Confraternities of the Ladies of Charity cannot really succeed without the aid of these poor girls. Lastly, they themselves will not be able to continue the good they are doing, nor subsist very long together in true charity, if they are not bound together and united as a Confraternity.

For these reasons and other sound considerations, may it please you, Excellency, graciously to grant the most humble request of this petitioner, and you will be doing a work agreeable to God, useful to His Church and one which will draw down blessings from heaven on your sacred person and your whole diocese. For this intention, these good girls, the

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3This Rule is published in vol. XIII, no. 145.
poor afflicted persons they will have assisted, and this petitioner will offer their prayers to the Divine Majesty.⁴

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: His Excellency, the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Archbishop of Paris

774. TO GUILLAUME DELVILLE, SUPERIOR, IN MONTMIRAIL

September 22, 1645

Vincent de Paul asks Guillaume Delville to feed and lodge free of charge in his house Adrien Le Bon, former Prior of Saint-Lazare, who has to go to Montmirail, and even to treat him as if he were the master of the property and persons.

775. TO DENIS GAUTIER,¹ SUPERIOR, IN RICHELIEU

October 15, 1645

Monsieur,

I am greatly consoled by the blessing God has given to the spiritual exercises of your retreatants but, above all, by your wise direction which I hope will always remain such, when

⁴The following year, Saint Vincent submitted a second petition, which was received favorably. The Archbishop's reply can be found in vol. XIII, no. 146.
¹The Avignon manuscript gives François Grimal, Superior of Sedan, as recipient of the letter. We prefer the reference in Reg. 2.
you act upon advice and with patience. These are the means with which, as today's experience shows, the Romans successfully guided their republic, and also the most effective ones God has left us for sound leadership. I have no doubt that the care of the house, the parish and so much other business you have, weighs you down, but remember, Monsieur, that Our Lord is the strength and wisdom of those whom He employs in such works, and have confidence that He will work in you accordingly.

776. - TO DENIS GAUTIER, SUPERIOR, IN RICHELIEU

Vincent de Paul asks Denis Gautier to receive into his house, suitably to the occasion, Adrien Le Bon, former Prior of Saint-Lazare, to offer him food and lodging, and even to treat him as if he were the master of the property and persons.

777. - NICOLAS PAVILLON, BISHOP OF ALET, TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

During our present stay at the Estates,¹ the Bishop of Lodève² has done me the honor of informing me of the resolution he had taken, because of his age and frequent ailments, to resign his diocese into the hands of Her Majesty, in favor of Monsieur du Bosquet, Councillor of State and Intendant of Justice in this Province, with the sole condition of receiving a reasonable pension. Since he even desired that I be the witness to his resignation, I felt it my duty to


¹The Estates of Languedoc.
²Jean de Plantavit de la Pause, a very learned Prelate (1625-1648).
notify you of this, believing that you would be most agreeable to it and pleased that he should fix his affection on a person of such merit and ability, as you know him to be. My hope that he will be most useful to procuring the glory of God in this diocese and the salvation of the souls to be entrusted to him has caused me to entreat you with all my heart, Monsieur, to hold him in high esteem and to give him all the help you can in these circumstances.

I can assure you that, besides the service you will be rendering to God and the good you will bring about for this diocese, I will be obliged to you for this in a very particular way, since I cherish him dearly and respect him highly for the proofs he gives of his virtue and his truly Christian piety. I hope for this favor from your zeal for all that concerns what is beneficial to the Church of God, and that you will do me the honor of believing, Monsieur, that I remain always, in the love of our dear Savior and His holy Mother, your most humble and very obedient servant.

NICOLAS,
Bishop of Alet

Pézenas, December 28, 1645

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

778. - TO JEAN SCARRON, PROVOST OF TRADESMEN

[January 1646]

The Priests of the Congregation of the Mission established

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3Chief canton town in Hérault.

Letter 778. - The original signed letter is at the seminary of Saint-Sulpice in Paris.

1Jean Scarron, Seigneur de Mendiné, Councillor in the Great Chamber of the Parliament. The Provost of Tradesmen was the senior magistrate of the royal government prior to the Revolution. He regulated commercial matters for the municipality of Paris.

2Scarron's comments, added to the bottom of this petition, enable us to assign this date.
in the Priory of Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris humbly petition and declare that, having need to build a wall to enclose the land belonging to said Priory, adjoining and contiguous to the house and suburb of Saint-Lazare, in order to put an end to the serious damage being done there, it pleased the King to grant them the authority to surround and enclose this property with walls, as it formerly was, on the old land markers, to continue them where there are none and to build and erect some small houses along the Saint-Denis roadway, at the end of the above-mentioned faubourg, as set down in his letters patent of February 20, sixteen hundred forty-four, signed by Guénegaud. When these letters had been presented to the Treasurers of France in the Generality of Paris, they had the sites inspected and indicated the building-lines needed.

Having considered this, Monsieur, may it graciously please you to ordain that the said letters patent here attached be recorded in your registry, so that the petitioners may enjoy the benefit of them and use them as may be thought proper; and you will do well.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Unworthy Superior of the Priests of the Mission

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3The seminary of Saint-Charles, also known as the little Saint-Lazare, was situated there.

4Henri de Guénegaud du Plessis, Marquis de Plancy, Commander of Montbrison, Treasurer of the State Treasury in 1639, Secretary of State from 1643 to 1669, Keeper of the Seals of the Orders of the King in 1656. He died in Paris on March 16, 1676 at sixty-seven years of age. On February 23, 1642 he had married Elisabeth de Choiseul, daughter of the Marshal de Praslin.

5At the bottom of the petition are a few administrative formulas:
   Show to the attorney of the King and of the City.
   Issued at the office on January 9, 1646.

SCARRON

I request on behalf of the King and the City that the site be inspected in our presence by the Master of the Works.
February 3, 1646.

(Signature illegible)

Granted as requested.
Issued at the office of the aforementioned city on February 3, 1646.

SCARRON
779. - TO RENE SAUVAGE,¹ IN ANNECY

Paris, January 19, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

For a long time I have been thinking about ways by which we might be all to all and for all the duties in the Company. And because you need practice in preaching and hearing confessions, and in the other exercises of the Mission, I am sending M. Charles² in your place, to give you the opportunity of going to the mission and to form and perfect yourself in this. I beg you, Monsieur, to explain things to him and give him information about your little seminary. I have told him, as I have told you, to be satisfied with explaining to them in simple terms an author such as Binsfeld or Toledo³ in French.

Letter 779. - Made public by M. Charavay in the Amateurs d'auto, October 1871, p. 171; copy made from the original letter, which was part of the Merlin collection.

¹René Sauvage, born in Arrest (Somme), near Saint-Valéry in Picardy, entered the Congregation of the Mission on July 2, 1638 at the age of twenty, was ordained a priest in 1640, and made his vows on October 17, 1642.

²François Charles, born in Plessala (Côtes-du-Nord) on December 10, 1611, was received into the Congregation of the Mission on March 12, 1640, was ordained a priest during Lent of 1641, and died on January 26, 1673, after fulfilling at Saint-Lazare the functions of Director of Retreatants and of the coadjutor Brothers. In the circular letter addressed to the entire Company announcing his death, Edme Jolly, Superior General, greatly praised his virtue. (Cf. Notices, vol. II, pp. 245-246.)

³The Jesuit, Francisco Cardinal Toledo, born in Córdoba on October 4, 1532, died in Rome on September 14, 1596. He was a brilliant professor of philosophy at the Roman College and successfully carried out various diplomatic missions. He wrote several treatises on philosophy and theology and was especially renowned for a work on casuistry, often republished: Instructio sacerdotum ac de septem peccatis (Rome, 1601). It was reissued in 1604, 1608, 1633 and several times later, under the title Summa casuum conscientiae absolutissima.
O Monsieur Sauvage, my dear brother, how fervently I ask God to give you the spirit of His Son Our Lord, that you may diffuse it into the many souls His Divine Providence has resolved to save through your ministry!

I had planned to write to Messieurs Guérin and Tholard but the pen is being taken from my hand and I am obliged to have someone else do it.

In the meantime, I embrace you, prostrate in spirit at your feet and at those of all the members of the Company. I am, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Sauvage, Priest of the Mission, in Annecy

780. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[Before 1650]\(^1\)

Monsieur,

I most humbly entreat you, for the love of God, to allow me the honor of speaking to you today for as little time as it will please you. If you have not gone to the trouble of signing our accounts, will you please put it off until I have added the expenses of the Sisters of the Hôtel-Dieu, which I forgot to include yesterday?

In my great hastiness I commit many faults, not to mention those due to malice. I entreat your charity to obtain mercy for me.

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\(^4\)Jean Guérin, Superior in Annecy.

Letter 780. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

\(^1\)After 1649, Saint Louise would have written “Most Honored Father” and not “Monsieur.”
All your poor daughters greet you most humbly, asking you to remember them. And I, the least of all, am, Monsieur, your most humble and very grateful daughter and servant.

L. de M.

Feast of Saint Vincent

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

781. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

[1646 or 1649]¹

I know how anxious you are because of a letter your father has written to oblige you to go and assist him. I feel I am bound to tell you what I think about this:

(1) It is no small evil to break the ties with which you have bound yourself to God in the Company;

(2) In losing your vocation, you will deprive God of the valuable services He expects of you;

(3) You will be responsible before the throne of His justice for the good you will not do and which, nevertheless, you should have done by remaining in the state in which you are now;

(4) You will risk your salvation by staying with your relatives, and perhaps you will be of no comfort to them, no more than others who left under this pretext; for God did not permit it because, if He wanted them to be better, He has other ways of accomplishing this;

¹Letter 781. - Reg. 2, p. 347. The recipient of this letter seems to have been Paul Carcireux, whose sister was a Daughter of Charity, and who left the Congregation to assist his father.

¹Reference to the sons of Madame de Longueville enabled Coste to select these two years for assigning a date to this letter.
(5) Our Lord, knowing the harm there is in being obsessed with relatives, for those who have already left them to follow Him, did not, as the Gospel says, want one of His disciples to go simply to bury his father, nor another to go sell his possessions to give them to the poor;²

(6) You would give bad example to your confreres and be a source of sorrow to the Company, by the loss of one of its children whom it loves and has raised with so much care.

That, Monsieur, is what I beg you to consider before God.

The motive you may have for withdrawing lies in your father's need. But you must understand what circumstances, according to the casuists, oblige children to leave a Community. For myself, I think it is only when fathers and mothers suffer from natural causes and not from their social condition, as when they are very old or when, because of some other infirmity due to natural causes, they cannot earn their living. Now, that does not hold true of your father who is only forty or forty-five years of age at the most, enjoying good health, able to work and who is, in fact, working. Otherwise, he would not have remarried, as he has done recently, to a young woman eighteen years of age, who is one of the most beautiful girls in town. He himself informed me of this so that I might present her to the Princess de Longueville³ as wet nurse for her son.⁴

²Lk. 9:59-62. "To another he said, 'Come after me.' The man replied, 'Let me bury my father first.' Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury the dead; come away and proclaim the kingdom of God.' Yet another said to him, 'I will be your follower, Lord, but first let me take leave of my people at home.' Jesus answered him, 'Whoever puts his hand to the plow but keeps looking back is unfit for the reign of God'." (NAB)

³Anne-Geneviève de Bourbon, second wife of Henri II, Duc de Longueville, was a beautiful, learned and witty woman with a passion for intrigue, who took an active part in the second Fronde. She had a profound veneration for Saint Vincent. After her husband's death (1663), she took up lodgings close to the Carmelite nuns in the rue Saint-Jacques, passed the rest of her days in carrying out the penitential exercises and austerities practiced at Port-Royal, and died a Jansenist on April 15, 1679. Her life has been written by Joseph-François Bourgoin de Villefore, La véritable vie d'Anne-Geneviève de Bourbon, duchesse de Longueville (2 vols., Amsterdam, 1739) and by V. Cousin, op. cit.

⁴The Duchesse de Longueville had two sons: Jean-Louis-Charles, Comte de Dunois,
I do think he is not too well off. Alas! who is there who is not affected by the misery of these times? But it is not his present financial difficulty which obliges him to recall you, because it is not serious. It is simply the one he fears, for want of a little confidence in God, although he has lacked nothing up until now and has reason to hope that His Goodness will not abandon him in future.

You might perhaps be persuaded that it is through you God wishes, in fact, to provide for him, and this is why Providence is presenting you with a parish worth six hundred livres, through the actual intervention of this good man. But you will find that this cannot be, if you consider two things: first, that since God has called you to a state of life which honors that of His Son on earth and is so useful to your neighbor, He would not want to remove you at present from this state to compel you to look after a family in the world who is seeking only its own comfort and will be constantly after you to demand what you have and what you do not have. It will also weigh you down with troubles and anguish, if you cannot assist it to its satisfaction and your own. In the second place, it is incredible that your father has been promised a parish for you with a revenue of six hundred livres, because those in the Bourges diocese are among the lowest in the kingdom. However, even if this were the case, how much would you have left over once your maintenance was taken out?

I am not telling you this for fear that temptation may prevail over you. No, I know your fidelity to God; but it is so that you may write once and for all to your father your reasons for following God's Will rather than his. Believe me, Monsieur, his temperament is such that he will give you very little

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better known as the Abbé d'Orléans, born January 12, 1646 and died February 4, 1694; and Charles-Paris, born January 29, 1649 in the Hôtel de Ville, who drowned June 12, 1672 when crossing the Rhine. We think Saint Vincent is referring here to the Comte de Dunois.
rest when you are with him, any more than he gives you when you are far away from him. The trouble he causes your poor sister who is with Mademoiselle Le Gras is unimaginable. He is trying to force her to leave the service of God and the poor, as if he would receive great support from her. You know that by nature he is restless, to the point that whatever he has displeases him and whatever he does not have arouses violent desires in him. Lastly, I think the greatest good you could do him is to pray to God for him, while preserving for yourself this one thing necessary, which will one day be your reward and which, even because of you, will draw down His blessings on your family. This is what I ask of Him with all my heart.

782. - NICOLAS PAVILLON, BISHOP OF ALET, TO SAINT VINCENT

Pézenas, February 5, 1646

Monsieur,

On the advice you were pleased to give me concerning the articles people are claiming have been accepted in Monsieur du Bosquet's affair and are causing it to be flawed, I saw him this morning, on his return from the Mass he had just celebrated, and he immediately assured me that he would sooner renounce every kind of diocese than commit this sort of despicable act. I think you will be seeing him soon in Paris where he will talk to you at length about this matter.

I do not know any of those persons professing to be of outstanding piety, about whom you say people are complaining of their misrepresenting affairs here. Since I have gone to the Priests of the Oratory to be more tranquil and free from long and frequent communications, and because by nature I do not have the spirit of intrigue, I am less informed about what people are doing.

If, Monsieur, you want to know my procedure in Assembly affairs,

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1The Assembly of the Estates of Languedoc.
I can tell you that, when I foresee something important to be discussed there, I give it mature consideration before God in my morning prayer and recommend the matter to Him. I say Mass for this intention, and then go to the Assembly where, based on the knowledge God gives me, I form my opinion and propose it in my place quite simply and in the same spirit as I would want to have done it at the hour of death.

As soon as possible, I shall send Monsieur Féret² the letter addressed to him in your packet. Please accept, Monsieur, my boldness in telling you that, before taking him out of the province and withdrawing him from us, you should really think it over, because he is as useful there for the service of the Church as he could be in many other places. Besides a little seminary with twenty-five priests both from the diocese and outside of it, which we opened three months ago in Alet where we need his services, the prelates of the Assembly have taken the resolution of establishing clerical conferences in their dioceses and have been pleased to adopt our own system. Now, if he does not remain with us, I cannot see how we can help them with this, not to mention the meetings of clergy already ordained and those for ordinands, missions, visits and other similar initiatives which are taking place every day and to which the prelates of this province are open, provided they are given some assistance with them. This, Monsieur, is what I have felt bound to represent to you, more to inform you of the state of this region, as far as advancing the Kingdom of God is concerned, than to change your plans for this man, in the event that it seems more advantageous for the good of the Church. I consider and hold anything coming from you in entire submission and reverence, and I am, with all my heart, Monsieur, your most humble and very obedient servant.

NICOLAS,
Bishop of Alet

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior General of the Mission, at Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris

²Hippolyte Féret, Vicar General of Nicolas Pavillon.
Monsieur,

These lines are to inform you that the Chief Justice\(^1\) has hastened here to ask the Queen for the diocese of Bayeux for his son.\(^2\) It has been vacant for some days. She has granted it to him all the more willingly since he has the requisite qualities for filling it, and Her Majesty was pleased to be presented with such a favorable opportunity in the person of his son of doing something in return for the father's services and his zeal for the welfare of the State. The Queen promised me that she would write you about this, and I wanted to do it in advance so that you might take the trouble of seeing him and giving him the instructions you judge necessary for acquitting himself well of this office.

I shall say no more to you about this, and so I conclude by assuring you that I am, with much affection . . .\(^3\)

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\(^{1}\) Mathieu Mole.

\(^{2}\) Edouard Mole governed the diocese of Bayeux for only five years: from June 22, 1647 until April 6, 1652, the date of his death.

\(^{3}\) Abelly relates (op. cit., bk. II, chap. XIII, sect. V, pp. 451ff.) the measures which Saint Vincent took to prevent the selection of Edouard Mole by seeking to convince his father, the Presiding Judge, that his son did not have the necessary qualities to be a bishop. Mathieu Mole replied, "I am an old man, I am not rich, I have a large family. My duty as a father is to put them beyond the reach of want by placing them in good positions before I die. If my son has not the requisite qualities for governing a diocese, he will always have some experienced priests beside him whose advice he will follow." (Cf. Coste, Life, vol. II, p. 230.) The father outlived the son.
Monsieur,

I entreat you to take the trouble of telling one of your men to see Monsieur Laumonion and ask him, on your part, to pass judgment on the La Vaurette affair.¹

This morning, the Vicar General of the Reformed Dominicans came to see me and told me it was absolutely necessary that the incorporation the General has promised me of the Cahors convent into their Province take place here as soon as possible. He is supposed to see you today or tomorrow to ask your intercession with the Queen for this purpose. I beg you to grant it to us in this affair that is so deserving of your efforts.

The Nuncio,² who did me the honor of coming to see me yesterday, is preventing me from going to the Bons-Enfants, as I had decided to do, to assist at your conference and to tell you that there is a big hubbub in this town about the rumor that they want to give the Archdiocese of Bordeaux to a bishop who they feel is unworthy of it.³ You would not believe the uproar this is creating. May God inspire those who make decisions on these high offices to choose persons who are worthy of them!

Meanwhile, I remain . . . .

ALAIN,
Bishop of Cahors

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¹The proceeding to unite the priory of La Vaurette to the Cahors seminary.
²Nicolò di Bagno.
³The See of Bordeaux became vacant on June 18, 1645 by the death of Henri d'Escombreau de Sourdais. On November 20, 1646 he was succeeded by Henri de Béthune, Bishop of Maillezais.
Monsieur,

Regarding what you wrote me recently about several persons being suspicious that the Bishop of Lodève's resignation of his diocese in favor of Monsieur du Bosquet involved some secret pact between them which rendered the resignation defective and contrary to the holy Canons, I feel obliged to tell you in confidence what I learned from Monsieur du Bosquet himself.

At the beginning of the Estates, he did me the honor of informing me of the choice the Bishop of Lodève had made of entrusting his diocese to him since, because of age and infirmity, he no longer felt he had the strength and power to carry out its functions. At the same time, however, he wanted him to accept his library and a garden he owned near Lodève, as things useless to him in future but which might serve the purposes of Monsieur du Bosquet. But he did not want to do anything against his conscience and the advice of good and learned casuists. I took the liberty of expressing my opinion on this to Monsieur du Bosquet: that he should not get involved in this agreement under those conditions, either verbally or in writing or in any other manner, even if some casuists were of that opinion, because in no way should this smack of simony or border on it in the least. Nevertheless, in the event that he accepted the diocese without binding himself to that stipulation, this would not prevent him from buying both at a fair and reasonable price, if he felt this would suit him. Thereupon, the act of resignation, pure and simple, was drawn up with the reservation of a pension of part of the revenue for the Bishop, in presence of the Bishop of Narbonne and myself, as requested by both parties. Now, what could be a problem in this affair is that, although there is no agreement, verbal or otherwise, making this purchase obligatory even after Monsieur du Bosquet is in possession of the diocese, according to what he has always declared to me, he admitted to me in good faith, nevertheless, that he told or

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1Jean de Plantavit de la Pause.
2François de Bosquet, Intendant of Justice in Languedoc.
3Claude de Rebé.
had someone tell the Bishop of Lodève he would need his library and garden once he is in office. Furthermore, he is inclined and has even decided to make an arrangement with him, according to the fair estimate that will be made of them. However, he is unwilling to commit himself to this in any way. Now, because this possibility has come to the knowledge of certain persons, they have suspected some kind of simoniacal agreement or one that could cause disaficication if the sale were to go through, since men form their judgment only on external appearances and do not fathom the intentions and benevolent dispositions one might bring to business matters.

I felt, Monsieur, that I should inform you of all the above, to give you fuller knowledge of everything I know about this affair, since you have to give an opinion on it, and I even induced Monsieur du Bosquet, in presence of the Bishop of Puy, to make known his feelings about it and to speak to you frankly when he is in Paris, so as to avoid the blame and adverse judgment that could ensue from it.

I think you will deem it inappropriate for him to know that I have written to you about this, for it might sadden him and make him cool toward me and, as a consequence, put a stop to the continued confidence he has had in me, which I desire only for the glory of God and the service of His Church.

I remain always, Monsieur, in the love of our dear Savior, your most humble and very obedient servant.

NICOLAS,
Bishop of Alet

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, at Saint-Lazare, in Paris

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1Henri de Maupas du Tour.
2François de Bosquet was consecrated Bishop of Lodève on December 20, 1648; from there he became Bishop of Montpellier on June 24, 1657 and died on June 24, 1676. (Cf. Abbé Paul-Emile-Marie Joseph Henry, François Bosquet [Paris: Ernest Thorin, 1889].)
March 2, 1646

I saw in your last letter that you have finally sent Monsieur Martin to Genoa. Dare I say to you, Monsieur, that on this occasion it is important—more than I can express to you—to give yourself to God to be exact to all the orders of the General, whatever they may be, even though they be contrary to your judgment and any plea you might make of something better, or of any inconvenience that might arise from them; for there could be none greater than that of disobedience. A few days ago, a captain was telling me that, when he saw that his general was giving orders badly and he would assuredly lose his life in carrying out these orders, and he could have the general change his mind just by saying a word, he would have lost his honor by doing this and preferred to die instead.

Imagine, Monsieur, what shame will be ours in heaven on seeing this perfection of obedience in war and how imperfect ours is by comparison. I assure you, Monsieur, that two or three Superiors who acted in this way would be capable of ruining the Company and, if I did not know your heart so well, I would be obliged to do something else. My conviction, that you are better than I shall ever be and that you love the Institute better than I, causes me to say no more to you about this and I shall not even give it another thought.

Lastly, after trying to show M. . . . the error of his opinions and being unable to do so, we have been advised by four Doctors of the Sorbonne, the Coadjutor of Paris, the Cardinal, the Chancellor and the Chief Justice, to act as we
formerly did with M. P.\textsuperscript{5} So, we did this last evening. I beg you, Monsieur, to offer his soul to God, and also to offer mine which is in a state a thousand times worse because of my infidelities to the inspirations Our Lord gives me to do His holy Will in all things.

787. - TO JEAN MARTIN, PRIEST OF THE MISSION, IN GENOA

Paris, March 10, 1646

Monsieur,

I cannot express to you the consolation my soul received from your letter, nor how wholeheartedly I have prayed to God to give you more and more of the spirit of His Son and the divine workings in that place\textsuperscript{1} where you have such need of it. O Monsieur, how very necessary is the humility and the spirit of a perfect Missionary for the place and duty you have! I ask Our Lord once again to grant you a large share of this and the physical strength so necessary for you in the midst of such heavy labors. I cannot express to you my consolation at seeing you with good M. Blatiron. Oh! what a happiness for the two of you to be together, destined by God from all eternity to serve Him in the important duties in which His Divine Providence has placed you both! O Monsieur, who would have said this four or five years ago? His Divine Goodness will not rest there, if you are most faithful in the present situation.

The Little Company here is doing fairly well, thanks be to God, and often prays to God for both of you. The one who

\textsuperscript{5}Probably Guillaume Perceval, who had been requested to leave the Congregation in 1644.

\textsuperscript{1}In Genoa.
needs prayer the most is the most wretched of all sinners in the world and who remains, in Our Lord . . . .

I thought I would be able to write to M. Blatiron but they are after me to go say Mass. I have time only to embrace the two of you again, prostrate in spirit at his feet and yours.

788. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION OF THE HOUSE OF SAINT-MEEN

March 16, 1646

Saint Vincent replies to this Missionary regarding the opposition of the Benedictine monks who were claiming possession of the Saint-Méen Abbey.¹ It is better to lose it, he says, than to go to court over it.

789. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL, IN LE MANS

March 20, 1646

I forgot to advise you, before your departure, of some faults found at times in the houses where visitations are made:

(1) That they hear the confessions there of people who come

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¹On July 14, 1645, when Achille de Harlay de Sancy, Bishop of Saint-Malo, turned over to the Priests of the Mission the perpetual direction of the seminary he had just established in the abbey of Saint-Méen (today the chief town in a canton of Ille-et-Vilaine), he assured them of a yearly income of five hundred livres. He joined the seminary to the monastery on condition that there would be five Missionaries, three for the seminary and two to give missions; that they would maintain gratuitously, for two or three years, twelve young clerics, among them four priests, as far as possible, to assure the service; that they would give a pension to the monks of the abbey and, after the death of the latter, that they would augment the number of non-paying clerics to twenty. They were also to officiate at services, repair and furnish all the necessities of the abbey; pray the canonical hours, fulfill the conditions of the foundations, and hear the confessions of the pilgrims and travelers. (Cf. Arch. Nat. S 6711.)
from the towns, faubourgs and villages. I beg you to forbid all our priests to do this and to tell them that if, after a mission they have given, some penitents whose confession they heard, return to them for some necessity, they may, in that case go and hear their confession in a neighboring parish that is neither in the town nor in the suburbs.

(2) That there are some who go to preach in monasteries of women. If you come across any, please give orders that this should not happen again.

(3) That the front door is not always kept closed. If the Le Mans house is at fault in this, I ask you to remedy it, so that no one may enter without knocking; and see that the Canons do not allow men, and still less women, to come into our house by another way. Try, Monsieur, to make them observe this precaution so necessary for Communities, and have them consult some persons on this who know how important it is.

(4) That some men are dispensing themselves from Community customs. It is most important to insist that the order of the day be observed invariably and that the holy customs and maxims of the Company be practiced. Let Superiors have a clear conception of their obligation to see to this, as also to hand over, sealed, the letters of the General, without the local Superiors having any right to see their letters. These same Superiors also must in conscience transmit these letters to the General without reading them, even though the men who write them might want to show them to them out of respect.

(5) That petty divisions and aversions sometimes occur among persons. But give yourself to God, Monsieur, to reunite and cement them in charity, for this should be one of the principal fruits of the visitation.

(6) Moreover, you will take notice of the churches, the altars, the crosses they place there and those carried in processions to cemeteries, etc., so that everything may be done with proper decorum and arranged as becomingly as our poverty will permit.
(7) Just as stinginess is blameworthy, so is facility in paying more for things than they are worth, and I see that both faults are equally made light of in some of our houses where they are not so particular as all that and where it is said we bid higher on things and have plenty of money. A middle course between these two extremes, and the observance of what is practiced here in this house with regard to food, must be recommended.

790. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

It is true that illness, far better than health, makes us see what we are, and it is in the midst of sufferings that impatience and melancholy attack even the most resolute. But since they do damage only to the very weak, you have profited from them rather than their doing you any harm, because Our Lord has strengthened you in the practice of His good pleasure, and this strength is apparent in your determination to combat them courageously. I hope also that this will be even more clearly apparent in the victories you will win by suffering henceforth for the love of God, not only with patience but also with joy and cheerfulness.

791. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL, IN LE MANS

Paris, March 23, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

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Letter 791. - The original autograph letter from which this copy was made was put on
This is my third reply, although you told me you have not received my preceding ones. If Mademoiselle Le Gras’ health permits and the weather is better and it is after Easter, she could make the journey from Le Mans. Before then, there is no likelihood of this.

*Quid* if she were to send two Sisters there right now, without mentioning any conditions until she gets there or until we have their approval, which I am seeking and will have someone keep on seeking? How does this seem to you?

You are right, and I am consoled that you are planning to spend the feast days there doing what you told me. Nevertheless, people are crying out for a visitation, which is being requested in several places, and I do not know how you will be able to make the one in Rome. This makes me consider sending Monsieur Alméras and his poor health there.

Just as stinginess is blameworthy so is the fault of facility in paying more for things than they are worth, and I see that both faults are equally made light of in some of our houses where they are not so particular as all that and where it is said we bid higher on things and have plenty of money. A middle course between these two extremes, and the observance of what is practiced here in this house with regard to food, must be recommended.

I have asked Monsieur Lambert to give you an answer about the rest, as we have agreed on the solutions to be given to you. I have also given instructions for you to be sent what you are requesting.

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1. Sale by M. Charavay. One of Charavay’s catalogues has this letter erroneously addressed to “M. Pierre Goulart in Sainte-Genéviève.”

2. The Daughters of Charity had established such good order in the hospital in Angers that they were requested for the Hôtel-Dieu in Le Mans. In that same month of March, M. Portail wrote to Saint Louise: “We are impatiently awaiting your Daughters here. The administrators are putting pressure on us.” (Archives of the Mission, Paris.) The Sisters did not leave for Le Mans until May 4.

3. Saint Vincent repeated here what he had already written in his letter of March 20, probably fearing it had not arrived at its destination.
In the meantime, I greet you and your little family, prostrate at its feet and yours, and I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

792. - TO ETIENNE BLATIRON, SUPERIOR, IN GENOA

March 23, 1646

O Monsieur, how apparent God is in your Little Company and in your occupations! And how could you be equal to so much work otherwise? I cannot thank God sufficiently for the strength He gives M. Martin and you amidst such heavy labors, nor can I rid myself of my constant apprehension that you are both doing too much. In the name of God, Monsieur, try to do something to moderate your work in the way I wrote to you. Does it not seem to you that you will have to be relieved by someone else whom we would send to assist you? You can believe, Monsieur, that in saying this to you my heart flutters because I have perfect confidence in you and with very good reason. However, I constantly fear that you may become ill! In the name of God, Monsieur, take the best possible care of yourself.

I embrace M. Martin and you, prostrate in spirit at your feet and at the feet of those Gentlemen working with you, whom I greet and to whose prayers I recommend myself.

Letter 792. - Reg. 2, p. 197. The copyist notes that the original was in Saint Vincent's own handwriting.
Monsieur,

I have good reason to humble myself, seeing God's guidance over me who am unworthy of the grace I desired before our dear feast of the Incarnation to serve me as preparation. I entreat God's goodness that this may be before the end of the Easter season and that, recovered from your illness, you will be in perfect health for that and for all our good God wants from your charity. I entreat Him, through the most holy love of Jesus, that we might truly give ourselves once again to Him and offer to His most holy Mother tomorrow this painting, destined to adorn an altar under the beautiful title of her name, asking her for renewed assistance for my son of whom I have had no news since the seventh of this month. This distresses me greatly. I likewise have had no news from the Mother Superior of the Visitation of Tours, nor from Monsieur Deure. This really makes me apprehensive.

I also beg you most humbly, Most Honored Father, to do me the charity tomorrow of remembering at the holy altar our entire Little Company, guilty and hard-hearted in carrying out the most holy Will of God for us. Oh! my very dear Father, if our good God reveals the reason for this to you, how repulsive I will appear to you! I see nothing in myself that is not blameworthy except for a very feeble willingness to do better. Help your unworthy daughter, by your holy prayers and charitable admonitions, to belong entirely to God and to obtain from His bounty that He may look with pity upon her poor son.

Enclosed is a book which Monseur Guérin, the confessor of our Sisters at Saint-Gervais, sends you by them. He sent one to us, too. God willing, we shall draw profit from it for His glory!

I ask you, with the greatest possible humility, prostrate in heart and affection at your feet, for your holy blessing, to draw down on
my poor soul the graces it needs to be truly, Most Honored Father, your most obedient daughter and very humble servant.

L. DE MARILLAC

Eve of the Incarnation of the Son of God

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

793a. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Palm Sunday, 1646

I thank you most humbly for all the kindnesses you have done for me during my little illnesses, as you did over twenty years ago, Mademoiselle, and I beg Our Lord to be Himself your thanks just as He will be your reward.

I am well, thank God, but I am not going out yet because I have not been purged, since I still have a slight cold.

Your heart is somewhat dismayed at the sight of my minor ailments and because you sometimes view things with an eye that looks to aftereffects and consequences.

You do the same thing with regard to your son and this is what disturbs your peace of mind. It is good, Mademoiselle, not to give this scope to our imagination and to check it by considering that this is a consequence of our melancholy inclinations and, ordinarily, most things do not come to pass and will turn out only as Divine Providence arranges them.

Well then! You wanted to make your review and a more interior communication2 to him in whom Our Lord has given

Letter 793a. - Archives of the Berceau, original autograph letter. The text was published in the Annales (1928), pp. 257-259 and reprinted in Mission et Charité, 19-20, pp. 55-57. This edition uses the latter text.

1In 1646 Palm Sunday was March 25.

2"Review," "Communication"—these words allude to the direction of conscience
you a certain confidence. God was not pleased to allow this, in order that you might make it interiorly and intimately with Him who, honoring you exceedingly with His love, as the Apostle says, wills, through divine jealousy, that you make this precious review and interior communication to Him. This being the case, have you any reason to complain?

And how do you know if God is not purposely depriving you of news of your son, so that you might honor in a special way the deprivation He suffered of His Son, and which the Blessed Virgin suffered as well? Offer Him your tender affections for that purpose, Mademoiselle. Bless Him, give over to Him the direction of your son and He will speak so well to him that even out of wrongdoing, if there was any, which I do not believe, He will draw good and his salvation. Will not He who draws water from rocks and oil from hard stones bring about the result I am describing?

I have seen that beautiful painting. Tomorrow the Church will celebrate the feast of the Incarnation. I hope to say Mass in sight of it tomorrow, since that seems more fitting to me than today. Is it for your oratory or for the children’s?

Will you not be writing Tuesday to Monsieur Portail about your Sisters whom he is requesting? Could he not arrange things according to your way of thinking, about which you will inform him? It is really desirable for you to go there but, as things are not ready and you cannot be present for every establishment, make some notes for this purpose which may serve both for the present and for the future.

The Sisters either have to be in charge or be subject to the other Sisters. The latter is not advisable and the former is

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for which Saint Louise appealed to Saint Vincent.

3The feast of the Annunciation was transferred to the next day (March 26) because of the solemnity of Palm Sunday.

4M. Portail had requested that Daughters of Charity be sent to serve in the hospital in Le Mans.

5Sisters of another Community were at that time working in the hospital in Le Mans.
perhaps difficult. However we have to tend toward that or to have them given a certain number of the sick to attend to in their own way. Tell me your thoughts on that. We write on Tuesdays and Saturdays and shall see about it.

In the meantime, I shall offer you and your dear daughters as well to Our Lord at the Divine Sacrifice of Holy Mass which I am about to celebrate. I ask you for the same favor in your Holy Communion.

I would be very glad to know something about that little twelve-bead chaplet attached to the picture of the Blessed Virgin.

Good day, Mademoiselle.

I am your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

794. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[March 1646]

I am unworthy of the guidance of Divine Providence which your charity does me the honor of pointing out to me in order to draw me away from my infidelities. So I renounce those apprehensions about the future, in order to will only what God ordains each day. Nevertheless I think I cannot prevent myself from having the justifiable fears which I should have for my infidelities, in all submission, however.

It was not my intention that the painting of the Blessed Virgin be either for our oratory or for the Foundlings, but that it might serve

Letter 794. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1This letter appears to be Saint Louise's reply to no. 793 which was dated March 25, 1646, and a follow-up of her letter of March 24, no. 793.
as an adornment for an altar dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, to make reparation in some way for my son's faults. I used some rings I still had to have it made. That is why, Monsieur, I most humbly entreat you to allow it to remain in your church, that this reparation be made since it was, unfortunately, in one of your houses that the misdemeanor of that son of mine occurred.

The little chaplet is the devotion I asked permission of your charity to make three years ago, which I do privately. I have a number of these little chaplets in a small box, with thoughts on the subject written on a piece of paper, to be left for all our Sisters after my death, if your charity allows this. None of them knows about this. It is to honor the hidden life of Our Lord in His state of confinement in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, and to congratulate her on her happiness during those nine months. The three small beads are to greet her under the beautiful titles of Daughter of the Father, Mother of the Son, and Spouse of the Holy Spirit. That is the essence of this little devotion. By the grace of God, unworthy though I be, I have never missed it since the time indicated, and I am ready to abandon it, aided by the same grace of God, if your charity tells me to do so. My intention in this humble devotion is to ask God, through the Incarnation of His Son and the prayers of the Blessed Virgin, for the purity necessary for the Company of the Sisters of Charity and the stability of this Company, according to His good pleasure.

Tomorrow, with God's help, I shall send you a letter for M. Portail. Kindly look it over to see if it is appropriate to send it on to him. Also, I shall try to be present in spirit at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass tomorrow, and although I do not think you are saying it downstairs, I will have the happiness of assisting at it, if I can learn the time of it.

Please do not forget the answer to what Madame de Lamoignon, the President, is asking about continuing the collections. I am, Monsieur, your most grateful daughter and obedient servant.

L. DE M.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

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2Then in Le Mans.
795. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL IN LE MANS

April 3, 1646

You are doing very well during your visitation getting to the bottom of everything to make things more stable and conformable to the spirit of the Company; this is what I have been hearing. And since in doing this you would not be able to reach Rome much before autumn, we have decided to send M. Alméras to make the visitations in Italy and, on the way, in Marseilles and Annecy. As for the other houses, they will be awaiting the benefit of your charity and I the satisfaction of seeing you there to establish order and the perfection of discipline. Now, the better to do this, you have no need of hurrying. I have no doubt that you will always find new reasons for refining, regulating, setting things right, as well as doing and undoing, particularly in the house where you are now. It cannot be otherwise this first time. That is why you should take all the time you need there. It took God several days to create the world and He preserves it only by orderly changes and mutations.

May His Goodness be pleased to make us steadfast in His love!

796. - TO GUILLAUME DELATTRE, IN CAHORS

Paris, April 7, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have just received your letter of March 20, with the copy

Letter 796. - The original autograph letter is at the seminary of Colle in Tuscany.
of the contract drawn up between the Poor Clare nuns and you regarding payment of three thousand livres for the Fajemot house, with the obligation of thirty-four hundred livres, payable on demand. I have sent you the ratification for this purchase. His Excellency has assured me that he will have the price paid. You did not tell me in your last letter that you expected to pay half of this, and had not His Excellency told me he would pay and would have the whole price paid, I would have been very worried.¹

From this fact I take the opportunity to tell you, Monsieur, that another time it will be well for you to give me succinctly more details about matters. For example, in this affair you might have told me that you had gone to [ask]² the Vicar General³ for payment of that sum and he had treated you coldly, saying he had no orders to give you anything. And yet, lo and behold, two days later that amount was paid. You do not tell me who gave it, and that is what you should have done, so it seems to me, as also you should have done for the Fajemot premises, building and farm area. You likewise did not tell me that you had deserted Saint-Barthélemy during Lent and that the pastor⁴ was ill.

¹The house, composed of two main buildings, which M. Delattre had just acquired from M. Brengue, faced the Place Guillard. It had belonged to the distinguished Pons-Fajemot family, citizens and magistrates of the town, very much involved in the political life of Cahors at the end of the sixteenth century. It was burdened with a mortgage in favor of the Poor Clares who had a right to 5,744 livres on the 6,400 livres which it had cost. Guillaume Delattre immediately paid 3,000 livres and obligated himself to pay what remained, when requested to do so. (Cf. Adrien Foissac, Le premier séminaire de Cahors (1638-1791) et les prêtres de la Mission [Cahors: F. Plantade, 1911], p. 10.)

²This word was blotted out on the original letter. Only the first letter was visible.

³Father Jean Garat, whose life was written by Leonard Roche (Le portrait fidèle des abbés ou autres supérieurs réguliers et de leurs religieux dans la vie du Père Jean Garat [Paris, 1691].)

⁴The contract of union between the parish church of Saint-Etienne or Saint-Barthélemy de Soubiroux and the seminary dated from December 27, 1644. The Directors of the seminary could not take possession of the parish until the death or retirement of the pastor, Antoine Guittard. (Cf. Foissac, op. cit., p. 9.)
I think it advisable, Monsieur, for you to inform me in much greater detail about things; it is also advisable for you to act with full confidence and submission to the wishes of His Excellency. You have an even greater obligation to do this since he esteems you and is very fond of you, although he may not express this to you. He wants to have his own way and he wants people to approve of what he orders, what he does, and what he does not do; and he is right. He has his reasons which we do not know but should respect, all the more so since we do God's Will in doing this. Furthermore, I think it inadvisable to air our petty grievances right and left. A strong stomach digests everything and a weak one turns sour everything it takes in and sometimes vomits it. Oh! how good it is, Monsieur, to digest matters between God and ourselves!

His Excellency spoke to me about the moat. I told him he was right not to set himself at variance with the town by trying to demand from it a special gate for you. That has too many consequences in war time. It would be better, for now at least, for you to use the town gate tower.\(^5\)

We shall send you a lector from the seminary in place of M. Water\(^6\) who will please come here. We have orders from Rome to send Missionaries to his country and are being pressured to do this by the bishops of that land. If he has made a vow to go to Rome, we shall work on getting him dispensed from it. I embrace him and good Monsieur Treffort\(^7\)

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\(^5\)We know from Pouillé de Dumas that in 1646 Alain de Solminibac made an initial gift of 2,000 livres to the seminary, then established in the town at the Chanterie, to buy a house called Fajemot, situated in the faubourg de la Barre, near the church of Saint-Barthélemy from which it was separated by a moat and its enclosing walls. A few years later, the new major seminary was built there.

\(^6\)James Water, born in Cork (Ireland), entered Saint-Lazare October 9, 1638 at twenty-two years of age, was ordained a priest in 1642, made his vows in 1644, was sent to the seminary of Cahors, and probably was sent back to his own country in 1662.

\(^7\)Simon Treffort, born in Villiers-Herbisse (Aube) October 2, 1611, entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 5, 1642 and made his vows on October 7, 1645. He was Superior in La Rose from 1668 to 1677 and died in Cahors on July 16, 1682.
with all possible humility and affection. I am really sorry that I cannot write to the two of them. I ask God to restore dear Brother Dupuis\(^6\) to health. If we can, we shall send you another priest and the Brother you are requesting.

Meanwhile, be content and at peace, Monsieur, in the confidence that Our Lord will bless your labors more and more and will animate you more and more with His spirit. This is what I ask of Him with all the affection in my power, and I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

*Addressed:* Monsieur Delattre, Superior of the Priests of the Mission, at the Seminary of Cahors, in Cahors

797. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Wednesday evening [Around 1646]\(^1\)

I will speak to M. Vacherot tomorrow, if he comes to this house, it not being appropriate for me to send for him to tell him that. As for the girl, *O Jésus*, Mademoiselle, it is not advisable! I could tell her in a joking way something about the person's affection, if the opportunity arises, but I am really at a loss as to when I shall be able to talk to them. I have never been so overwhelmed with business as I am now. All

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\(^{6}\)A cleric of the Mission; no other mention of him is made in the extant letters of Saint Vincent.

\(^{1}\)Around this date in the letters of Saint Vincent and Saint Louise, we find the name of M. Vacherot, the physician for Saint-Lazare.
day tomorrow we shall have some Doctors here on business and Friday I will have to spend almost the whole day writing. We shall see.

As for Mademoiselle Viole's document, the power of attorney she mentions will have to be drawn up early tomorrow morning in your name, and you should sign it as one of the officers of the Confraternity of Charity of the Foundlings. You are indeed one of them and one of the most important. I will have it prepared this evening and will send it to you tomorrow to be signed. The nearest notary will have to go to witness your signature and we will have to send someone to fetch it. I will try to send one of our Brothers posthaste.

Good evening, Mademoiselle. I am y[our] s[ervant].

V. D.

798. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[Between 1645 and 1649]

Monsieur,

My apprehension that someone forgot to tell you that I shall not fail to notify all our Sisters to be at the conference tomorrow, Monday, as your charity did us the honor of promising, causes me to bother you with these few lines, for fear that some other business might deprive us of this happiness. Providence has brought here our Sisters from Maule, Saint-Denis and Issy; they, along with all the others, are really happy about this. God grant that it not be to our
Monsieur,

Blessed be God, Monsieur, for what you tell me about the spiritual matters of your house going well and that you are making good use of the advice of your admonitor! I am praying that He will bless your direction more and more.

You may have heard about the ordinance issued by the Bishop of Cahors concerning the priests of his diocese; namely, that they are to spend some time in your seminary, as you will see fit. His Excellency is taking care of his business as fast as he can, with the intention of returning home as soon as possible. When he gets back, he will see to the purchase of the house.

On another occasion, Monsieur, it would be well for you to give me the substance or, to put it better, a brief history of the principal matters about which you write me. For example, you give me a short justification regarding the inhabitants of Saint-Barthélemy. It would have been expedient had you narrated the affair just as it happened and mentioned to me afterwards the things that could justify you. And since you did not tell me enough of what went on, I cannot form a

1The text for this ordinance can be found in Foissac, op. cit., p. 20.
2Alain de Solminihac was in Paris.
3The Faiemot house.
judgment on your offense. I shall only tell you, Monsieur, that your dealings should be gentle as to the means, even though firm in arriving at good and just ends, which will always be the case when they are according to Rule or to the order of Superiors. As for other things, it is good to seek the advice of your Domestic Consitors and, in important matters, of the Superior General and, for external affairs, of the Bishop or his officers. That is how I act, and rarely do I do anything out of my own poor head. And all the more should we take orders and advice from outside when there is question of an action involving the diocese or particular individuals. In this case, we should not only follow the orders of the bishops and of pastors in their parishes, but also the permission of the bishops in person, in disagreements we have with their people and scandals that we remark. It is another story when there is question of discipline and disagreements with members of the Company. In this case, it is up to the General to give the orders and we must have recourse to him. And we are all the more bound to take care to lead the people gently and patiently and to rid ourselves of all sensitiveness in our own opinions, since Our Lord has taught us how to act toward people, and since it is up to us to instruct priests, not only by word but also by example, how to lead their people. Accordingly, it would be well, Monsieur, for you to acquiesce to the orders of the Vicar General or of whomever His Excellency may have given orders to settle that difference. If he has not spoken to you about this, perhaps it is because he does not know what a humble and docile spirit you have.

I beg you, Monsieur, not to be discouraged by what I am saying to you nor to infer from it that you are not fit for leadership. Nature and the evil spirit are suggesting that to you, but holy humility and confidence in God will lead you

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4Jean Garat, Vicar General for Alain de Solminihac.
to trust that you will be able to do all things with His grace. This is the opinion of the Bishop of Cahors and my own as well. That is why I want to take special care to warn, counsel and console you because, having a good spirit as you do by God's grace, and good intentions, I hope Our Lord in His goodness will bless your leadership.

It has just occurred to me to give you another piece of advice following on that, but only very briefly; it is that you should get in the habit of judging events and persons, always and in all circumstances, for the good. If an action has a hundred facets to it, says the blessed Bishop of Geneva,\(^4\) always look at its best side. In the name of God, Monsieur, let us act in that way even though intelligence and human prudence tell us the contrary. I have within myself that unfortunate quality of judging everything and everyone according to my own poor wits, but experience has made me see the happiness of acting otherwise and how God blesses this manner of acting. If time permitted, I would tell you many things about that, but here they are taking the pen from my hand and forcing me to close, by telling you that my heart cherishes yours perfectly in Our Lord's. I ask the same of you for the love of the same Lord, although I do not deserve it, if only because I love you more that I can express to you, and am . . . .

\(^{800.\ -\ JULIEN\ GUERIN\ TO\ SAINT\ VINCENT}\)

\(Tunis,\ 1646\)

\(We\ have\ rescued\ one\ of\ the\ poor\ French\ women\ who\ were\ in\ the\ hands\ of\ a\ French\ renegade.\ All\ the\ tradesmen\ contributed\ their\ share\)

\(^{4}\)Saint Francis de Sales.

Letter \(800.\) - Abelly, \(op.\ cit.,\ bk.\ II,\ chap.\ I,\ sect.\ VII,\ p.\ 139.\)

On July 25, 1643 a contract was drawn up with the Duchesse d'Aiguillon for the
to this. My share cost me seventy écus. The two other women are in great distress; I am working to save the one in more serious danger. There are some others who are young and beautiful and in extreme peril unless they are helped. And one of them would have been lost already if I had not obtained with enormous difficulty a three-month delay for her ransom and put her in a place where her master can do no violence to her. Not long ago, these cruel men gave a woman more than five hundred blows with a stick to force her to deny Jesus Christ, and not satisfied with that, while she was lying half dead on the ground, two of them stamped so violently on her shoulders that they split open her breasts; and in this way she ended her life gloriously confessing Jesus Christ.

801. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[May 2, 1646]¹

Monsieur,

I most humbly entreat your charity to remember that the places

foundation of a house in Marseilles, and it stipulated that when Saint Vincent judged it appropriate, he would send to Barbary some priests of his Congregation "to console and instruct poor Christian prisoners . . . in the faith, love and fear of God, and to give there . . . missions, catechism instructions and exhortations in the usual way." (Cf. vol. XIII, no. 90.) The Saint did not yet have sufficient funds for this; moreover, he had to consult Rome. When everything was ready, Saint Vincent sent Julien Guérin and Brother François Francillon to Tunis, where they arrived on November 22, 1645. Lange Martin, the French Consul, took them into his home. Julien Guérin went to work immediately. At first he ministered secretly. When he saw there was nothing to fear, he no longer disguised the fact that he was a priest, and celebrated Mass publicly in the prisons. But if he could act openly with the Christians, the same did not apply with the Turks; in that quarter the slightest imprudence could have cost him his life.

François Francillon, born in Ceaux (Vienne) in January 1621, was received into the Congregation of the Mission as a coadjutor Brother in April 1645. He was the first Brother to work in Tunis. From there, he returned to France and was then sent to Algiers, where he stayed until July 6, 1688, the day on which the Turks affixed him to the mouth of a cannon.

Letter 801. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter was written on the Wednesday preceding May 4, the day the Sisters destined
for Le Mans have been reserved for next Friday and therefore we must have the conference you have so kindly promised us, tomorrow, Thursday. I most humbly entreat you to take the trouble to send us the subject so we can notify all our Sisters.

I have figured out all that the Sisters brought to the house in 1645. The total comes to 1,129 livres and 12 sous. Out of that, there were 43 Sisters to be supplied with habits and linen. I think there are almost 400 livres left over for the house, minus expenses, without including in that the linen and habits made by the Sisters of the house. I think, Monsieur, if you say something about this, it would be well for our Sisters to hear that what they bring in is just about equal to what is spent and that those bringing in more than what is needed for them, make up for others who do not bring in enough, for I do not know if the whole Company would be capable of understanding that their frugality is a great help to the house, because of the lack of restraint of some, and of the majority who tell too freely everything they know.

I beg God in His goodness to make you clearly understand our needs and our weaknesses, and my own especially. I am, by order of the guidance of His Holy Providence, Monsieur, your most obedient daughter and very grateful servant.

L. DE MARILLAC

Wednesday

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

302. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[May 2, 1646]1

Yes, indeed, Mademoiselle, I remember quite well for the hospital of Le Mans were to leave.

1If this conference was ever given, it has not been preserved.

Letter 302. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1This letter is the response to the proceeding (no. 301); it was written on the blank
tomorrow’s meeting at your house for the Sisters going to Le Mans. That is why I sent someone to the Pastor of Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas\(^2\) to whom, along with the lady officers, I had given the hope that you would go see them tomorrow to arrange the details of their Confraternity of Charity. With this in view, I informed the Pastor this evening that you could not go there tomorrow, but rather on Friday perhaps.

I have also paid attention to what you told me about what the girls are relating and have seen the inconveniences you mention.

Good evening, Mademoiselle. I am your servant.

V. D.

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803. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL, IN LE MANS

Paris, Thursday, 10:00 P.M., May 3, [1646]

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The Sisters of Charity by whom I am writing to you are leaving tomorrow morning to go to Le Mans. And since I neither saw nor received your letter of the twenty-ninth until just now as the clock was striking nine, I cannot reply to it at length until the day after tomorrow, with the messenger who

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\(^2\)Pierre de Pons de la Grange, from Saint-Flour, a Doctor in Law. He was pastor of Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas in Paris from December 24, 1645 to 1649, at which time he became Director of the Missions-Etrangères. He died on March 31, 1690.

Letter 803. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter. The postscript was written by Saint Vincent.

\(^1\)The presence of M. Portail in Le Mans, the departure of the Sisters for that city, and some other details, necessitate this date.
will also be arriving either before or about the same time as
the coach.

You are expecting only three Sisters but Mademoiselle is
sending you four. They have all consoled me more than I can
tell you by their good dispositions regarding this journey, and
I hope God will give His blessing to their establishment and
grant them the grace of corresponding fully to their present
eagerness to do well. I shall not say anything to you about
their particular guidance except that you should give them a
good confessor who is truly spiritual, a prudent older man
willing to follow the manner of direction proper to them,
which you will please make him understand clearly. In addi­
tion, no one but he should talk to them, except in passing, and
he himself shall do so only in the church.

I am glad that Brother Testacy is feeling better but, Mon
Dieu! how distressed I am about his journey, since he is going
on it without any real need and against the customs of the
Company! Still, his mind is made up to do it; in nomine
Domini, you could take him with you when you go to La Rose
and give him a companion there to go to his native place where
he should not remain longer than two weeks. So, Brother
Rivanaigre will be able to stay at the house and M. Brin

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2The Sisters were Jeanne Lepeintre, Claude-Brigitte, Andrée, and perhaps Geneviève.
The set of Rules their Foundress gave them before they left is still extant. (Cf. Ecrits
spirituels, L. 134.)

3Charles Testacy, born in Condom, entered the Congregation of the Mission on March
27, 1643 at thirty years of age, made his vows on January 9, 1646, and was ordained a
priest that same year. He was Superior in Cahors (1646-1647), then was placed in the
house in Saintes. Saint Vincent wrote of him: "He seems to be a man of common sense,
faithful to his practices, mature, and a good businessman." (Cf. vol. III, no. 870.)

4Pierre Rivanaigre, cleric, was born in the former diocese of Tournai in 1621 and was
received into the Congregation of the Mission on July 6, 1644.

5Gérard Brin, born near Cashel (Ireland), entered the Congregation of the Mission on
October 14, 1659 at twenty-one years of age, made his vows on November 2, 1642, and
was ordained a priest in 1644. This Missionary was perhaps the best of all the Irishmen
whom Saint Vincent received into his Congregation. He was recalled from Le Mans
during the year 1646 to be sent to Ireland where, together with other confreres
and compatriots, he did enormous good. Persecution obliged him to return to France in 1652
could continue to look after the seminarians, if he can do it, as he has begun to do.

I told you in my preceding letter that I did not agree to borrowing money so soon, so as not to give people any reason to talk. However, since we are being pressed so much for redemption, fine! You could get money from someone to meet the most urgent needs, but do it as discreetly as possible.

It is not advisable for M. Gallais to go and preach in the parishes in order to establish the Confraternity of Charity there. You know what I do in Paris. I try to win over and instruct the ladies in private. If he can do likewise, he will be doing well.

Thank you for the papers you sent me; you have really pleased me. I will read them tomorrow, please God, to be greatly consoled by them. I have had enough consolation for this evening from having seen in your letter the fruits Our Lord is gathering from your labors and those we can expect in future. These will be greater if we are truly faithful. I pray His Divine Goodness to grant it fully to them so that He may be all the more glorified and impart to you more and more, Monsieur, His strength and His spirit. I recommend you to Him very often with my whole soul, because yours is very dear and very present to me.

I was going to end this letter here except that I had to proceed further when I remembered the poor Sisters in Angers, to ask you to visit them on your way. They will be overjoyed to see you and perhaps are in great need of your visit.

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where he gave missions in Saint Vincent's native province. He was appointed Superior in La Rose (1652-1654), then spent the following two years in Paris. He held the same position in Troyes (1657-1658), Meaux (1658-1660) and Toul (1660-1662). He returned to Ireland in 1663 and took up his apostolic work with a zeal that age had not slackened. Neither prison, where he stayed for a month, nor illness, which brought him twice to the brink of the tomb, was able to stop this heroic Missionary, one of the most worthy sons of Saint Vincent.

6Superior of the house in Le Mans.
Mademoiselle Le Gras is hoping for this, as also to give a warm welcome to the two Sisters you are sending us. May God guide them all and grant me the grace of being, in His love, as much as I desire, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

M. Gallais could have the sermon of the Charity preached by someone else in the town, and have the ladies prepared and instructed at the pastor's house. There is no sermon given in Paris for this. The day before yesterday, I set up the Charity of Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas in the faubourg Saint-Jacques in this way.

Addressed: Monsieur Portail, Priest of the Mission, at Notre-Dame-de-Coëffort,7 in Le Mans

804. - THE ADMINISTRATORS OF THE HOSPITAL OF NANTES TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

The greatness of your charity has spread through every region of the land and principally to this town for which Monsieur d'Annemont, chaplain of the Marshal de la Meilleraye, has assured us your zeal has been aroused to give us some help in remedying the disorders being perpetrated in our hospital, to the prejudice of the relief of the poor, because of the negligence and carelessness of the hired help who are with them. As Fathers of the Poor, we felt it our duty in this urgent need to implore your goodness to give us the assurance of six of your Daughters of Charity to assume the care of

7Collegiate church united to the Congregation of the Mission.

Letter 804. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.
the poor in our hospital. Their sores and ailments are as so many mouths who demand of your compassion this benevolent assistance of your Sisters, whom we shall receive according to their Rule and establishment in Angers. We find nothing to add as regards their Rule and manner of living. But, in what concerns the welfare of this hospital and the administration of its affairs, they would depend absolutely on us and on those who will replace us in the office of Fathers of the Poor. They will even go for the daily provisions to economize the goods of the above-mentioned hospital, on the advice of the Fathers of the Poor. If you wish to have a special contract drawn up for their reception, send us the form with someone who has power of attorney to act on your behalf, and we will try to do what you desire in this instance, Monsieur, of your most humble and most obedient servants.¹

J. Fourché, J. Fournier, Léonard,
Fathers of the Poor

Nantes, May 18, 1646

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior General of the Mission, at Saint-Lazare, in Paris

804a. - TO GUILLAUME DELATTRE, SUPERIOR, IN CAHORS

Paris, May 19, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
I have just received your letter. In reply to it and to your preceding one as well, I shall tell you, Monsieur, that I was

¹Saint Vincent acceded to the request of the administrators.

very much saddened when I read in your letter that you have been so sick. I praise God that you were not dangerously ill and beg Him to preserve you for many years in His service and in that of His Spouse. In the name of God, Monsieur, take good care of yourself.

No, Monsieur, it is not the person you suspect who told me that which caused me to write you the last time but, on the contrary, it is he who gave me about you ... words of gratitude ... and of that I can assure you before God who is truth itself. However, it is someone else who mentioned it to me. I will tell you quite simply, Monsieur, that there are two things I would have wished: the first is that you had not been so intransigent regarding the ardor of those people, all the more so since you were not pastor and the pastor did not feel the way you did; secondly, it would have been advisable, since you were in town, to bring those people to the Vicar General as soon as they began to stiffen up, or to refer them to him. I can readily see that it is pure zeal to have the ordinances of the Bishop of Cahors observed, but honor regis judicium diligit, and then we do not always notice everything on the spot.

It is because of your firmness that the Bishop esteems and loves you and even indicates that he wants you, more than any other man he knows, in the duty you have. Obsequium tuum ejus judicium diligit.

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1Without doubt Saint Vincent is referring to no. 799 of this volume.
2Certain words are illegible because of stains on the paper.
3Although the union of the parish of Saint-Barthélemy to the seminary of Cahors, whose Superior would be the pastor, was decreed by the Bishop in 1644, it did not take effect until some weeks after this letter.
4Alain de Solminihac.
6His justice loves your compliance. This statement, suggested by the preceding one, is not taken from Holy Scripture.
This situation, Monsieur, and the acts of patience you are practicing in it will merit for you some new grace for similar situations.

Furthermore, I am delighted to see the offerings so frequently repeated which you have made and still make so often to God. O Dieu, Monsieur, how wholeheartedly I beg Him to be Himself honored by the glory He draws from them and be His own thanks and a help to your own dear soul.

I cannot express to you the tenderness Our Lord gives me for you and for your small but very good family, whom I embrace with all the affection of my heart which cherishes yours a thousand times more than itself in that of Our Lord. In His love I am, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

I embrace your dear family, prostrate in spirit at its feet.

Addressed: Monsieur Delattre, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Cahors, in Cahors

805. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[Before 1650]¹

Monsieur,

My poor memory prevented me yesterday from telling you that the little du Pont girl² had wanted to make her confession to you

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¹After 1649, the letter would begin with the words: "Most honored Father."
²Marie-Marthe du Pont-Courlay, grandniece of Cardinal Richelieu.
when she made her little retreat. I think she also wanted to talk to you about her parents' wish. This made me think, Monsieur, that, if your charity could speak to her, she would be able to tell you her thoughts more freely; also, you would have more influence over her than her brother, as I had proposed to you. He is living four or five leagues from here.

I most humbly entreat your charity to offer to our good God our little novena which begins today. This good God knows that, by His mercy, I want nothing but His holy Will, by which I am, Monsieur, your most grateful servant and humble daughter.

L. de Marillac

Would you please take the trouble to let me know what time the little du Pont girl should go to see you?

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

806. - TO CARDINAL MAZARIN

Paris, May 24, 1646

My Lord,

The Grand Master of the Collège de Navarre, told me that Your Eminence had instructed M. Le Tellier, to have me write


1The École Polytechnique, which now occupies the site of the Collège de Navarre, was transferred there by the decree of July 16, 1804.

2Michel Le Tellier, born April 19, 1603, was Secretary of State from 1643 to 1666, Chancellor and Keeper of the Seals of France from 1677 to 1685, and died on October 28, 1685. During the Fronde, he supported Mazarin and his policy. "As Councillor of State," he said one day, "I had a great deal to do with M. Vincent. He did more good for religion and the Church in France than any man I have ever known; but I especially observed that at the Council of Conscience, where he was the most important member, never was there question of his own interests or of the ecclesiastical houses which he had established." (Testimony of Claude Le Pelletier, 121st witness at the process of beatification.)
him to say whether the Sieur de Douay, licentiate in theology, has the requisite qualities to be head of the school of philosophy in the same collège. The following, My Lord, is what I have learned about him, both from the deceased principal and from several scholars worthy of credence.

They all say he is very capable, a good man, experienced in the duties of this office in which the late principal had employed him for several years; that he holds the usual orthodox views of the Church and, lastly, that the public opinion of the collège is that this young man is indisputably the most capable of those being considered for that position.

What further confirms this is that the late principal, a holy man who worked wonders in his duty, came to see me a few days before his death and asked me to use my good offices with Your Eminence, that you might be pleased to give him as Assistant this young man whom he judged before God to be the one most capable of continuing the good order he had established in his office. And I, My Lord, beg Our Lord to sanctify you and preserve you for the good of this State, and am, My Lord, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
Unworthy Superior of the Mission

807. TO JEAN MARTIN, PRIEST OF THE MISSION, IN GENOA

Paris, May 25, 1646

Vincent de Paul gives Jean Martin an account of the labors of the Missionaries. He has just received a new recruit into the Company, in whom he is placing the highest hopes.

Letter 807. M. Charavay, who put this letter up for sale, stated in his catalogue that the original was signed by the Saint and comprised one page of text.
Monsieur,

I think that the right of the Master of the Hôtel-Dieu in Le Mans to name the two Sisters and of the Administrator to name the others is the cause of the disorders occurring in the service of the poor. Would it not be better for the Master to offer not to make use of this right, while continuing to contribute the sum agreed upon, and for the Gentlemen, having no right in view other than their administration in order to carry out their duty, to be willing themselves to call on Sisters of some religious Community to serve the sick poor? Perhaps you do not see any benefit in having two of our Sisters remain in the midst of these disorders.

I beg to make known to your charity the holy Will of God, who has been pleased to take our good Sister Marie Despinal in Angers by a happy Christian death, as her confessor informs us. I most humbly entreat you to recommend her to the prayers of your holy Company and to remember the reply you must soon give to those good Gentlemen in Nantes, and that I am, Monsieur, your most obedient and very humble servant.

L. de MARILLAC

May 28, [1646]1

809. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[Around 1646]1

Monsieur,

The Marquise de Mortemart2 has just left here and has told me...
to ask you most humbly on her behalf for a tutor for her son. She still has a good priest from Roule who has begun teaching him the fundamentals but she questions whether he is capable, and is letting him know that he is only temporary. His name is Monsieur Lafons. She most humbly entreats you to find out something about him, if you can, so that if he were as capable as someone else, he might be considered along with the others.

I most humbly thank your charity for doing me so much good. It seems to me that when I allow myself to get carried away like that by the fears that put me in the same state as genuine afflictions, I need to be guided a little severely. From my son's letter which I am sending you, you will see my weakness on the one hand, and over the cause of my sorrow, which makes me so much in need of your charitable assistance and of being always, Monsieur, your very grateful daughter and most humble servant.

L. DE M.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

810. - TO JEAN MARTIN, IN GENOA

Paris, June 8, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
I received great consolation from your last letter as from
all the others. That helps to assuage somewhat my apprehension that the labors you have been enduring for so long may overwhelm you. I have written my little thoughts on this to M. Blatiron, so that he will try to get them reduced. I hope he has taken heed of this and that I will soon have some good news on that point.

In my uncertainty about being able to write to you, I spoke to M. Blatiron about your mother's health, which is still good, and told him that your brother is going to Toulouse with the Archbishop to teach Greek to his nephew.

Speaking of relatives, you could not believe how consoled I am at the thought that you share the sentiments of Our Lord and that, like Him, you say that your mother and your brothers are those who do the Will of God. May His Holy Name be forever glorified by this!

I have written to Rome for M. Dehorgny to send you that German pupil, about which you are aware. I have had no reply yet but I hope for one soon.

Believe me, Monsieur, I have great compassion for all your fatigue and, please God, you will get the rest I desire for you! Until then, I shall not stop asking Our Lord to be your strength, your relief, your consolation and your all. I am, always in His love, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Martin, Priest of the Mission, in Genoa

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1Gillette du Noyé, daughter of Guillaume du Noyé and Marie Nubert, owners of a bookshop in Paris.
Tunis, June 1646

Two Englishmen were converted to our holy faith and are serving as an example to all the other Catholics. There is a third one, only eleven years of age, one of the most beautiful children you could ever see and one of the most fervent you could ever hope for. In addition, he has great devotion to the Blessed Virgin whom he constantly invokes, so that she might obtain for him the grace to die rather than deny or offend Jesus Christ, for that is the intention of his master who is keeping him only to make him renounce the Christian faith and who uses all sorts of means for this purpose. If someone could send us two hundred piastres, we could rescue him from this danger and there would be good reason to hope that some day, with God's grace, he would be a second Bede,¹ so intelligent and virtuous is he, because there seems to be nothing childish in him. He made profession of the Catholic faith last Holy Thursday and received Holy Communion that same day, and he continues to receive frequently. He has already been beaten twice with a stick to force him to deny Jesus Christ. The last time, while his master was striking him, he said to him, “Cut my throat, if you wish, for I am a Christian and I shall never be anything else.” Several times he has declared to me that he is determined to let himself be beaten to death rather than renounce Jesus Christ. For one so young and vulnerable, his whole life is admirable. I can say in all truth that he is a little temple in whom the Holy Spirit dwells.

¹The Venerable Bede (673-735), a celebrated English monk and scholar, a Saint whose feast is May 25.
812. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[Around 1646]

Monsieur,

Since Madame de Mortemart could not find you, she instructed me to tell you that the person who is acting temporarily as tutor for her son is supposed to go see you so that you might take the trouble of finding out if he is capable of this task. However, she is afraid he might simply tell you that he wants to learn from you how he should act, and that is not her intention.

Our poor Sister Genevieve is still quite sick, and I am, your most obedient and very grateful daughter and servant.

L. de Marillac

Saturday

813. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[June 1646]

I forgot to show these letters to Mademoiselle Le Gras. Will she please let me know if she was in Angers with the Fathers of the Poor at the time our Sisters were established.

Letter 812. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1This letter is connected with no. 809.
2Sister Geneviève Doinel. She served the poor in the parish of Saint-Leu, then in Chantilly in 1649. In 1650 she was sent to Hennebont, where she remained until 1653. She did not know how to write and placed a cross upon the act of the erection of the Company on August 8, 1655. She returned to Chantilly in 1656.

Letter 813. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1The contents of this letter allow us to assign this date.
2Saint Vincent had enclosed with his letter a petition addressed to him by the Administrators of the hospital in Nantes, requesting the Daughters of Charity.
3Title given to the Administrators of the hospital.
in the hospital? She will also see from Father Portail's letters that our good Sisters are returning, and this consoles me deeply.\footnote{4}

M. Lambert has just told me it is urgent to find a solution for Richelieu.\footnote{5}

Mademoiselle de Lamoignon took it upon herself yesterday to inform you of the Ladies' decisions about what you suggest. Among other things, it was decided that you should send your Sisters to visit the babies\footnote{6} as soon as possible.

\begin{center}
814. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT
\end{center}

(End of June or July 1646)\footnote{1}

\textit{Monsieur,}

\begin{quote}
We are anxious to send Sister Guillemine to Saint-Paul so we can bring Sister Anne\footnote{2} here. If you had the time to say a few words to her, we could send her over today.
\end{quote}

\footnote{4}{The installation of the Sisters at the hospital of Angers took place on February 1, 1640, in the presence of Saint Louise.}

\footnote{5}{We must admit that M. Portail acted too precipitately in calling the Sisters to Le Mans before all the difficulties were smoothed out and especially before seeing that in the hospital services, the personnel would not be mixed with the Daughters of Charity. Sister Jeanne Lepeintre and her companions waited some fifteen days in Le Mans for the solution, in a state of inactivity that must have been very painful for them. Finally, the whole business fell through and on June 1, M. Portail informed Saint Louise that he was sending two Sisters back to Paris and another two were leaving for Angers. "Well, Mademoiselle, here are your dear Daughters back with you, as you ordered. I think they have earned as much merit by their inactivity as they would have in performing heroic actions. If they have done nothing else except preach by their modesty and equanimity in time of trial, neither the time nor the expense of their journey was spent in vain."}

\footnote{6}{Sister Elisabeth Turgis went there some time later as Superior.}

\footnote{7}{The Ladies of Charity.}

\footnote{8}{To visit some of the foundlings farmed out with wet-nurses.}

Letter 814. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

\footnote{1}{Reference to the building project enables us to assign this date.}

\footnote{2}{Guillemine Chesneau and Anne Hardemont.}
I had asked Monsieur Lambert to send us your bricklayer to have him look at the place for building a parlor, and I forgot to tell you that there might be a room built above it, since it is also very necessary for that parlor to be covered. Since Madame de Liancourt is coming here, I shall speak to her about it because she knows about building. I think she will contribute something toward the expenses, since she can have this room for the time of her little retreats.

I ask your pardon for my obtrusiveness and am, Monsieur, your most obedient daughter and very grateful servant.

L. DE M.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

815. - TO JEAN BOURDET, SUPERIOR, IN SAINT-MEEN

June 29, 1646

If what you tell me about the little pieces of news of the Company refers only to that news, it was an oversight on my part not to have shared it with you and I most humbly ask your pardon for this. But if it concerns the direction of the Company or some particular individuals, it is not advisable for me to write about it, for many reasons. In any case, I do not think you mean it that way. Rest assured, Monsieur, that I do nothing without the advice of the consultors the Company has given me, nor without recommending the matter to Our Lord.

I saw from your letters that, without awaiting instructions from us, you have accepted the Plancoët chapel, even contrary to the reasons I gave you for not taking it, and they were

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3The plan of building a parlor was adopted at the Council of June 26, 1646. Saint Vincent earnestly requested that the parlor not have a grill, for fear lest, in time, the Sisters get the idea of becoming nuns.


1Today the chief town of a canton of the Côtes-du-Nord.
considerable, especially the one where I said that if we are occupied with attending to the devotions of that holy chapel, we are setting aside Our Lord's intention for us which is to go to the rural areas to seek out the poor souls who should receive grace in their own locality and not go searching for it elsewhere. I am well aware that you have good reasons in favor of it, especially that of a change of air; but it would have been much better to buy a house with good air so you could go there for an outing once a week, rather than to commit yourself to a new establishment where, if it is successful, you will have unimaginable work. If we do not do it, there will be reason for complaints against us, or you will have to employ there all the workers you have, and more.

In the name of God, Monsieur, let us not rush into things; let us move very slowly. I recall that I wrote you the same thing in Troyes and you had led me to be hopeful about this. Rest assured that you could not put forward any reason I have not considered, as well as its response, before deciding on anything . . . .

As for the visitation of the houses of the Company, that is a custom of every holy Community and of the Church itself. If rules or regulations are made, it is to correct faults, and since all faults have to be corrected, then we need as many rules as there are types of faults. The way to avoid having a Visitor make a lot of rules is to act in such a way that he encounters very few faults. In this sense, you are right in hoping that he makes very few rules, and I agree with you. I also agree that the Visitor should be circumspect about giving orders on matters pertaining to the Church and external matters, positis ponendis. The person who has been appointed

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2M. Bourdet had directed the house in Troyes from 1642 to 1644.
3Reg. 2 gives us two excerpts from the Saint's letter. The first ends here and the second begins.
4Observing, however, what is necessary.
for this will have the necessary prudence, just as I am sure that you will be exact in having his instructions carried out.

816. - TO LOUIS THIBAULT, PRIEST OF THE MISSION, IN SAINTES

Paris, July 4, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I was hoping for the happiness of seeing you rather than of writing to you again, but since the business of the Charity has held you up again, so be it. The joy I will have of embracing you will be all the greater the longer I will have desired and awaited it. I ask Our Lord to bring you back in good health, and the same to Brother Gondré1 whom I greet affectionately.

The persons you say you have to bring to us will be welcome but if you have not said anything to commit yourself regarding the one who wants to come to the seminary for non-resident priests2 at two hundred livres a year, please do not bring him for such a small amount. We do not take anyone for less than 250 livres. If you have promised him, in nomine Domini. There are no residences in Paris that cost less than ours, nor any where the boarders are better treated, and God knows we are experiencing great financial difficulties because of this.

Letter 816. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original signed letter.

1Nicolas Gondré, born in Assigny (Seine-Maritime), entered the Congregation of the Mission as a Sub-Deacon on April 11, 1644, at twenty-four years of age. During his internal seminary, he was ordained a Deacon and was sent to Saintes. In 1646 he returned to Paris, was ordained a priest and in 1648 volunteered to go and serve the natives of Madagascar, where he arrived on December 4, 1648. God was satisfied with his good will and called him to Himself on May 26, 1649. Saint Vincent highly esteemed the virtue of M. Gondré and considered him "one of the best subjects in the Company." (Cf. Notices, vol. III, pp. 43-56.)

2The Bons-Enfants.
I am reserving until you are here the joy of showing the
tenderness of my heart for yours because words cannot
express, as much as I would like, my consolation of being
entirely at your disposition, in the love of Our Lord, and
always, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: To be delivered to Monsieur Thibault, if he is
still in Saintes

817. - TO CLAUDE DUFOUR, IN SAINTEs

Paris, July 4, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
I give thanks to His Divine Goodness for having preserved
you on your journey and to M. des Noyelles1 as well, and I
beg Him with all my heart to preserve you everywhere for His
-glory.2

Here is the reply to the requests in your letter:
(1) No seminarian is to be accepted until the Bishop of
Saintes3 returns, unless he makes his intention known to you
by letter or otherwise, as he did for the person who is
presenting himself. You may receive him, if it is true that M.
Thibault had orders for this, as he told you. And not only

1Philippe des Noyelles, born in Arras, entered the Congregation of the Mission on
January 18, 1642, at thirty-three years of age, and made his vows on June 2, 1646.
2At first Saint Vincent had added: "and the good of His Church." Upon reflection
he scratched out these words.
3Jacques Raoul de la Guibourgère.
with regard to the seminarians, but also for all the other exercises or exterior functions, you will please remember not to undertake anything without the advice of the said bishop, nor without having written to me about it beforehand.

(2) It is not advisable to perform any public action in the parochial church,\(^4\) such as preaching, catechizing or hearing confessions.\(^5\)

(3) I highly approve the establishment of the conference of non-resident priests, since you foresee that this can be done easily, but it is appropriate for you to write to His Excellency about it to obtain his consent, for perhaps he would want to be present and to inaugurate it himself.

(4) It would be better from now on to wear a skull cap in the house rather than a hat, to maintain uniformity, considering that you now have a place to stay.

(5) If you judge that giving five sous a week to the poor is insufficient, you could give them up to two sous a day, because you could not give more or even as much there as in Sedan.

(6) With regard to the lamp before the Blessed Sacrament, Jésus, mon Dieu! it must indeed be kept lit. This is necessary, especially since oil is cheap.

I entreat the Light of the World to enlighten your dear soul more and more for the guidance and advancement of those whom Providence will send you.

His Excellency spoke to me about you a few days ago, expressing to me his great satisfaction at knowing that you had been sent to Saintes, because of the good reports given him.\(^6\) I am sure you will always find in him great kindness, great support and much facility in handling business.

I most humbly greet the whole Company, at whose feet and

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\(^4\)First draft: "in your church."

\(^5\)The words: "if the Pastor does not wish it," which followed in the original draft, were crossed out by the Saint.

\(^6\)First draft: "what was said to him about you."
yours, Monsieur, I prostrate myself in spirit to kiss them all and to implore the assistance of your prayers for me and for the Company in general, which is doing better and better, by the grace of Our Lord. It is in Him that I offer you my poor heart which cherishes yours in a way I cannot express to you and which makes me forever, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Dufour, Priest, Superior of the Mission, in Saintes

818. - TO MESSIEURS DEHERES AND BAUTRU

Paris, July 8, 1646

Monsieur,

Although I do not have the honor of [knowing] you, nevertheless, I take the liberty of writing to you [in the interest] of the Congregation of the Mission and to offer you the services of this Little Company in general, along with my own in particular, beseeching you, Monsieur, to accept them.

Letter 818. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, signed draft; the document is in very bad condition.

1Guillaume Bautru, Comte de Serrant, Councillor of the King, Intendant of Justice, Police and Finance for the Généralité of Touraine, member of the French Academy, was one of the wittiest men of his time. He was the author of several poems that were quite popular, and of a satirical work entitled: L'Ambigu. He started his career in diplomacy and was Ambassador to several countries. He died in Paris on March 7, 1665, in his seventy-ninth year of age.

2At the beginning and in the body of the letter, the secretary had at first written Messieurs. Everywhere else he wrote in the singular, except at the close of the letter, which was probably done out of distraction.
The authority the King has given you, by the oracle of Divine Providence, to maintain his authority among his [subjects] and to maintain public rights and guarantee the rights of [each] individual person, causes us to turn to you, Monsieur, [on this occasion] which presents itself, trusting greatly in the extraordinary charity with which you so worthily carry out your duties.

We are proprietors by contract [of the customs dues] of Angers, conjointly with the Hôtel-Dieu of Paris through the donation made to us by the late Commander de Sillery. At present, we have been informed that the Mayor and the Magistrates of the said town have had issued a farming lease of several taxes on a great deal of merchandise coming into the town, but especially of a new [tax] on wine. This is to the detriment of several articles of the Council and of the general lease of the above-mentioned dues which expressly forbid this. Therefore, Monsieur, we earnestly entreat you to have removed from the notice they have posted the article which speaks of the above-mentioned new tax on wine. For, if there were reason to levy new taxes on it, how could we maintain this tax farm, since even the tax farmer is obliged to relinquish his ancient rights in order to facilitate the sale of this commodity? In doing this, Monsieur, you will be doing a notable good not only to our Little Company but also to the poor of the Hôtel-Dieu, preserving for us our most available cash and most assured assets, indemnifying us from proceedings we would be obliged to institute against the Council by opposing this undertaking, which would distress us greatly.

You see, then, Monsieur, how much we need your protec-

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1Laurent Lanier (1645-1647).
2First draft: "which expressly prohibits imposing any tax on said wine for any occasion or reason whatsoever."
3First draft: "of the wine."
4First draft: "a service."
tion and also how obligated we are to implore even more for you the protection of Our Lord. I entreat Him with all my heart to grant me opportunities to convey to you the marks of perfect obedience and the expression of the desire I have of being inviolably in His love, Messieurs, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
Unworthy Superior of the Congregation of the Mission

Addressed: Messieurs Dehères and Bautru, Intendants General of Justice in Touraine

819. TO ANTOINE PORTAIL, IN RICHELIEU

Paris, July 11, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received one of your letters from Saint-Méen, written just before your departure, which I do not have at hand right now. I suspected what you wrote me about the situation in that house and I ask you to send me a more detailed report on it.

As for the chapel M. Bourdet has taken charge of, I am distressed about it, not knowing what decision to make on something that will, I think, be more burdensome than useful to us. Please let me know your opinion on it.

M. Brin has been here for fifteen or twenty days. Divine Providence manifested itself in his return, making use of him to give us back M. Coglée who, after spending a few days in the seminary, has been sent to Sedan. M. Codoing also came

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1The chapel in Planoët.
in from the place where he has been and is very well at present.

Right now, the Community is quite large because of the return of those scattered here and there on mission and some others who have come for a visit from Crecy, Sedan, Montmirail, etc. Some of them are studying the art of controversy and others, cases of conscience.

Enclosed are five receipts to be signed for the salt revenues. I ask you to send them back by the ordinary mail.

A while ago, you requested the notes on the manner of living of the Sisters of Charity. They could not be sent in time to you in Saint-Méen but I am sending them to you now, having had a copy put in their place.

I await news of your arrival in Richelieu. May God guide you in that place and give you an abundant share in His grace, in order to bring forth, there as elsewhere, fruits of everlasting benediction.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

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

820. - ETIENNE BLATIRON, SUPERIOR IN GENOA,
TO SAINT VINCENT

July 1646

The number of our confessors has gone as high as eighteen. There have been more than three thousand general confessions and a large number of reconciliations of very great importance, putting an end
to disputes which have been the cause of twenty-three or twenty-four murders. Most of the persons involved obtained in writing pardon and peace from the offended parties and will be able to obtain forgiveness from the Prince and be restored to their pristine state.

821. - ETIENNE BLATIRON, SUPERIOR IN GENOA,
TO SAINT VINCENT

[Around July 1646]

When I wrote you the order followed on our missions, I forgot to tell you what we were doing for the instruction of the people and the relief of the confessors. We have two young clerics who, outside the time for catechism, teach the mysteries to all those who want to go to confession and, when they are sufficiently instructed, they give them a little printed card to that effect. When a penitent comes to make his confession, he presents it to his confessor who is thereby assured that he is adequately instructed in Christian truths, and he does not have to take the trouble to question him. In this way, the confessors proceed more quickly and do not keep those near the confessionals waiting.

822. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL, IN RICHELIEU

Paris, July 15, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I already wrote to you in Richelieu where I think you arrived today, and I acknowledged receipt of your last two

1Date given by Abelly.

letters, one from Rennes and the other from Saint-Méen. They did not surprise me much because I had my own suspicions about what you wrote me.

I hope in this new visitation you will find something to console you, in the care each man takes to do well. Because of this, I am expecting good results from what you will set to rights there and greater exactness in carrying out regulations. For this end, I am asking Our Lord to give you more and more a share in His own spirit.

M. Alméras left here yesterday to go and join you in Richelieu, but he will not be arriving very soon because he has gone as far as Rennes first, to see about a seminary they want established in that diocese. The Duchesse¹ has given for this purpose a recently vacated rectory dependent on Marmoutiers.²

Monsieur Alméras left without taking his letters; I am sending them to you to be given to him when he arrives, please.

My greetings to M. Gautier³ and to the whole family in general, with all possible affection and tenderness. And my heart embraces yours, most dear to me, with consolation and the desire of being one and inseparably united to that of Our Lord, in whose love I am in truth, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

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

¹The Duchesse d'Aiguillon.
²The renowned Abbey of Marmoutiers (Indre-et-Loire) depended on the Congregation of Saint-Maur.
³Superior of the house in Richelieu.
Monsieur,

I felt it very necessary to send our Sister Elisabeth to Saint-Germain-en-Laye to look into the conduct of our Sister there and, at the same time, being so near, she could go to Maule and Crespières. By the same token, she will be able to get more details about the need to change Sister Marie, the one Madame de Bouillon is asking to have removed. She can make it appear that there is no other reason for this except that she is going for a little change of air. In fact, since she is accustomed to doing hard work, I would be afraid that she might fall sick on us when she had to leave. The thought did not enter my mind yesterday to propose this to our Sisters. I beg you most humbly, Monsieur, kindly to let me know if you think this is all right. She could go and spend tonight at Saint-Germain and tell Mademoiselle de Bouillon your response to her request that you send one of your Gentlemen there to have the treasurers give an account.

I ask your charity for his holy blessing in order to prepare me for Holy Communion, and I am, Monsieur, your very grateful servant and most obedient daughter.

L. DE M.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

Letter 823. - Original autograph letter. A facsimile of this letter was published in Revue des Documents Historiques (July 1873), p. 50.

1 Date added on the back of the original.
2 Elisabeth Martin, who would set out for Nantes on July 26 with Saint Louise.
3 In the canton of Meulan (Yvelines). The Daughters of Charity had an establishment there.
4 In the canton of Poissy (Yvelines). The Daughters of Charity had an establishment there.
5 Probably Marie Thilouse, a Sister who was causing problems. She had had several assignments before being sent to Nantes. She withdrew from the Company before the end of 1649.
6 Éléonore-Catherine de Bergh, Duchesse de Bouillon. She had a château at Morainvillers which was near Maule and Crespières.
7 Louise de la Tour d'Auvergne, Demoiselle de Bouillon.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter written from Angers, with the report of the Saint-Méen visitation and of the present state of the house. Seeing that your efforts are being blessed ever more by God's paternal hand, I was greatly consoled by it. I offer Him with all my heart my most humble thanks for this and on your advice I have felt it my duty to write to M. Bourdet, although I have not yet finished his letter\(^1\) which I hope to do at the first free moment.

What you also wrote me about the good Sisters in Angers has greatly added to my consolation, and I praise this same goodness of God for causing you to arrive there at just the right time.

I strongly approve the three little remarks you noted for me regarding the authority of local Superiors, and we shall settle that when you get back.

I ask Our Lord to communicate His spirit to you more and more in order to diffuse it in the other places you are to go, beginning with Richelieu where I hope you will find the people well enough disposed to receive the graces God has in store for them. Please take the trouble to give me news of all this. M. Alméras is supposed to go to see you, sooner perhaps than I thought. He left here to go to Rennes, after a stop in Angers. But since I was informed that the matter could be taken care of without him, I wrote him that in that case he could go on

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\(^1\)No. 825.
to Richelieu. I do not yet know what he has done.

What was written to you about M. Brin is not true. He came here directly from Le Mans where experience has shown us that the Providence of God alone withdrew him from that place in order to bring M. Coglée back to us in the Company. The latter had left it upon returning from Marseilles and has since been sent to Sedan. M. Brin is living with us and giving great edification.

M. Codoing is also doing very well. Every day he goes to the conferences being given on cases of conscience and on controversies. In general, the whole Company here and elsewhere is doing better and better, by God's mercy, so much so that I am not getting complaints from anyone. Only M. Dufestel is no longer with us, and his departure took place very quietly. He is now the Dean of Saint-Omer in Lillers. M. Colée has also gone to Amiens. My humble and affectionate greetings to M. Gautier and all the others in that house. I embrace them all in spirit as cordially as possible, asking the assistance of their prayers for me and for the entire Company. I ask your prayers in particular, Monsieur, in which I have great confidence. I beg Our Lord to preserve you and to give you a share in His sweetest consolations, that you may be strengthened in sustaining the burden of your labors.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

After I had signed this letter, I received yours dated the seventeenth, which I cannot answer right now. I will just say that what you want to put into the Rules for the local Superior seems very good to me.

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2Today Lillers is the chief town of a canton in Pas-de-Calais.
I think you should be here for the changes to be made in the Rules.

*Addressed:* Monsieur Portail, Priest of the Mission, in Richelieu

**825. - TO JEAN BOURDET, SUPERIOR, IN SAINT-MEEN**

[July 22, 1646]¹

You tell me, Monsieur, that you have always found fault with visitations and the way they are made in the Company. I most humbly beg you, Monsieur, to allow me to give you the reasons the Company has for acting in such a way.

The first is that visitations made by those who serve the General of a Company, or the ones they have others make, are conducted like those in the Church, which has ordered all bishops to visit all their churches from time to time and to have them visited every year by their archdeacons and more often by their rural deans.

(2) That every well-regulated Order and Community observes this custom;

(3) That the majority recognize, as the Carthusians do, that one of the main reasons why they have not needed a reformation is that this Order has a visitation every year;

(4) That experience has shown us that one of our houses was almost subverted in its discipline, and several individuals confused as to good moral character, and that only a visitation was capable of remedying that evil and did remedy it, so much

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¹This is the letter Saint Vincent mentioned in the preceding letter. It is reasonable to assume that it was completed on the same date or shortly thereafter.
so, that no other house in the Company is doing better than that one;

(5) That the same experience has shown us that all the houses are profiting more or less from it, by the grace of God, depending on whether Superiors are more or less faithful themselves in observing, and having others observe, the recommendations the Visitor makes;

(6) That, when a visitation is overdue, most of the houses request that someone be sent for it;

(7) That local Superiors ask for visitations because the Community in general and each member in particular are more united to him and his orders after the visitation than previously;

(8) That Communities breathe easily afterwards, because it moderates ardor and strengthens Superiors who are not forceful enough to curb the audacity of certain members. In addition, if there is someone in the Community who causes trouble for the majority, his bad temper is cured in part, or the Community is disburdened of him by his being sent somewhere else, where perhaps he will improve.

(9) That, by means of the visitation, all the Rules, or nearly all, are put into practice again if they had not been;

(10) That, if enmities exist, charity is restored among all the confreres;

(11) In a word, it can be said that visitations, made well and exactly, do what the sun does: they give light, and these visits reveal all the faults of the Community to the one who is there to remedy them. The sun gives warmth, and the visitation enkindles in the persons visited a greater love of God and the neighbor as well as a greater esteem for their vocation and for the observance of the Rules. Just as the sun spreads its influence over all creatures, it can also be said that the visitation benefits the entire family visited.

Yes, you will tell me, but it still seems to me that all these effects are not apparent everywhere. I reply that this is true
in houses where Superiors and subjects are not sufficiently disposed to merit the grace of this holy action but, in those places where Superiors have sufficient humility and zeal, the visitation works wonders, as experience has proven everywhere.

You will say that you do not blame the visitations but the way they are made by some members of the Company. Blessed be God, Monsieur, that you have nothing against visitations but only against the manner of making them! Let us take a look at how we proceed in them.

We begin this holy action with a sermon dealing with the way to make this visitation well;

(2) Each man tells the Visitor in private his own faults, those of the Community in general and those of any individuals in whom he has remarked some;

(3) When all have spoken in this way, the Visitor admonishes the Community at Chapter, of the faults which pertain to it, and, in private, the individual members;

(4) Then he gives the necessary recommendations to prevent them from falling into the same faults again and to propose the good they should be doing.

What wrong is there in all that? If there is nothing to find fault with in this manner of making the visitation, perhaps you will find it in the performance and recommendations of the Visitor, because I am sure that you cannot find fault with the exhortations and admonitions.

As for performance or confidential information, there is no Community where things are not done in this way, and our prelates publicly question the pastors and people reciprocally about their faults. As for the recommendations, both the bishops and the Visitors of Communities make them. Otherwise, what would be the use of visitations? Once doctors have cured a sick person, they prescribe a mode of living for him in order to keep him from falling into the same illness.

Yes, but sometimes they make recommendations which
diminish a Superior's authority in order to build up that of
the Community, such as giving a Superior an admonitor and
some consultors, and they themselves cannot choose those
officers along with the General, or with the Visitor when the
General cannot do it himself. I reply that, if Superiors were
faultless and infallible in their suggestions, this would not have
to be done, but being subject to sin and to making mistakes,
and not always having the discernment necessary to act
without advice, it is unjust for a Superior not to have an
admonitor himself and persons whom he can consult. The
General himself has his admonitor, his confessor and his
consultors, whom the Company has given him, and he does
not choose them himself.

Moreover, Monsieur, I have seen the recommendations M.
Portail gave in your house and they seem very good to me,
considering the state of your house and the persons of whom
it is composed. That is why I entreat you, by the compassion
of Jesus Christ, to be convinced not only of the importance
of visitations in the way they are made but also to observe the
recommendations that are given and see that they are observed
exactly. Rest assured, Monsieur, that, if you do this, God will
bless and sanctify your leadership more and more.

826. - TO GUILLAUME DELVILLE, IN FONTAINE-ESSART

Paris, Feast of Saint James,† 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
I learned from your letter, from M. Roze's letter and from
Janus the distress in which you and your family found yourselves in the circumstances about which you wrote me. I could not express to you the sorrow my heart felt at this and how I would like to have suffered in your place, myself alone, what you and your family have endured. Monsieur Codoing, the bearer of this letter, will be able to testify to you how deeply this has touched me. I am sending him mainly to assure you that your troubles are my troubles, and to tell you more particularly how I think before God this affair should end. I beg you, Monsieur, to accept this and receive what he will say to you as coming from him who is, more than he can express to you, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Delville, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Fontaine-Essart, in Fontaine-Essart²

827. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL, IN RICHELIEU

Paris, July 25, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
Here I am on the point of leaving for Fontainebleau¹ for

²The Priests of the Mission, formerly in Montmirail, established themselves in Fontaine-Essart in 1644, in a house willed to them by Louis Toutblanc, secretary of the Duc de Retz.

Letter 827. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.

¹The Court was at Fontainebleau. Apparently, the Saint was called there to fulfill his
a stay of three or four days. So you can judge whether I have much free time to write to you. Nevertheless, I am doing it in order to respond to what you wrote me in your letter of the seventeenth.

I am starting with the news of the journey Mademoiselle Le Gras is going to make to Nantes in order to establish there the six Sisters requested by the administrators of the hospital. She is supposed to take with her the school mistress who was teaching here, and leave her in Richelieu in place of Sister Marguerite.

I do not approve, any more than you do, of their little ways of arranging their clothing, and it will be a good idea for you to have them moderate this, especially with regard to the veil they wear, unless that is the way it is ordinarily worn by women of the people. I will talk this over with Mademoiselle Le Gras.

My opinion is that you should still put off receiving the vows of Messieurs Gobert and Lucas.

As for what you ask about how to act with regard to M. du Coudray, I cannot tell you a better way than that of gentleness and humility. But I beg you to fear nothing with these virtues. Our Lord will bless whatever you do there, and I hope you will have the same facility as elsewhere to introduce functions on the Council of Conscience.

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2Sister Elisabeth Turgis.

3The result of Saint Vincent's conversation with Saint Louise is familiar to us. On August 13, Saint Louise wrote to Antoine Portail: "I would not dare say anything to you about that suggestion regarding the small veil, except that I feel that M. Vincent is quite apprehensive about it and with good reason. I have made the suggestion several times, not of a veil (which is greatly to be feared), but of something that could protect the face from the intense cold and heat. For this reason he has allowed the Sisters who have recently taken the habit to wear a white linen cornette on their head when need be. But I do not think black is at all feasible, Monsieur." (Cf. Ecrits spirituels, L. 148.)

4Evrard Gobert, born in Vendresse (Ardennes), entered the Congregation as a priest on July 1, 1641, at thirty-four years of age.

5Jacques Lucas, born in La Pernelle (Manche) on April 10, 1611, was ordained a priest in 1635 and received into the Congregation of the Mission on March 10, 1638. He was Superior in Luçon (1650-1654) and in La Rose (1662-1668).
the practices of the Company and banish those that are not proper to it. You will also be able to moderate his authority with regard to the change of officers, just as for other Superiors. In short, everything should be as uniform as possible.

I have no news yet about Brother Testacy's return.

Brother Pierre Vas did not stop here after delivering your letter to me.

In my preceding letters, I wrote to you about M. Brin. And now I will tell you that M. Le Blanc has gone in his place to be in charge of the Le Mans seminary. M. Cuissot has also been sent there to replace M. Alain whom we are recalling here. Brother Nicolas who was in Crécy has gone there to take care of affairs, and Brother François Le Rogueux to do the gardening.

[As soon] as we [get] the money, we will send the book of ceremonies.

I have nothing in particular to say about the disorder in the church, which you mentioned, but I do entreat you to

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6Charles Testacy had made an unauthorized journey to his native place (cf. no. 803).
7A coadjutor Brother who was received at Saint-Lazare on February 3, 1642, at the age of seventeen. The Notices, vol. I, p. 497 and vol. V, p. 547, list him as Pierre Rus, who was born in Luxin-en-Vauge in 1625, entered the Congregation of the Mission on February 3, 1642 in Paris, and made his vows on September 24, 1646.
8Georges Le Blanc (George White), born in the diocese of Limerick (Ireland), was already a priest and thirty-seven years old when he entered the Congregation of the Mission on November 7, 1645. Saint Vincent sent him to Ireland at the end of 1646 and recalled him to France in 1648 to place him in Saint-Méen and in 1649 he sent him to Paris. Later on his name never occurs in Saint Vincent's correspondence, at least not with any certainty, because he had a namesake: a certain Georges Le Blanc, with a degree in theology, was involved in 1651 in an affair concerning Irish students of the Sorbonne who signed a declaration against Jansenism. (Cf. Patrick Boyle, "Les relations de saint Vincent de Paul avec l'Irlande," in Annales [1907], vol. LXXII, p. 190.) Could it be the same man? According to Father Thomas Davitt, C.M., they are one and the same person. (Cf. Thomas Davitt, "Jansenism and the Irish Student-Priests in Paris 1650-1651" in Colloque, the Journal of the Irish Province of the Congregation of the Mission, no. 15, Spring 1987.)
9Francois Le Rogueux (Leroqueux), born in Hienville (Manche), entered the Congregation of the Mission on August 7, 1644, at sixteen years of age.
remedy it as best you can and to put everything to rights in the way God will inspire you to do.

M. Guérin from Tunis is still working with much success. He escaped great danger following the conversion of the King's son who, having run away with five or six of his attendants, went to Sicily where they were baptized. And poor M. Guérin, forced to remain shut up for a month, on suspicion that he had a part in this, expected from one hour to the next that they were coming for him to have him burnt. He was completely resigned to this but Our Lord willed to preserve him and even to introduce him more than ever into the good graces of the King, who gave him a letter for our King, which I have here, but we are unable to find anyone who knows how to translate it.¹⁰

M. Nouelly and Brother Barreau¹¹ arrived in Algiers a short

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¹⁰It was, indeed, Julien Guérin who had prepared the conversion of Cheruby, son of Hadji-Mohamed, Bey of Tunis. He used to receive him into his house at night to teach him Christian doctrine. The Prince fled secretly with three slaves, landed in Sicily and was baptized in Palermo. Felipe IV, King of Spain, on whom the island depended, consented to be his godfather and gave him an appanage in his states. The Bey was furious and put a Christian slave to death; it was rumored that Cheruby had married her. The author of the sketch of M. Guérin's life (cf. Notices, vol. III, pp. 57-82) stated that the Bey sent for him and questioned him, and that the suspect knew not only how to dissipate his suspicions by his clever answers, but curried the favor of the Bey who granted him permission to bring in more Missionaries. After a sojourn in Spain, Cheruby went to Rome. Caught in an Italian port by a corsair which his mother had dispatched, he was taken back to Tunis. He always showed great affection for the Catholic religion and for France.

¹¹Jean Barreau was born in Paris in the parish of Saint-Jean-en-Greve, September 26, 1612. While still a young man, he left the position of Parliamentary Lawyer to enter the Cistercian Order. Some time later, he asked Saint Vincent to receive him into his Community. He began his internal seminary on May 14, 1645. In 1646 Saint Vincent sent him to Algiers to fill the post of French Consul. There his dedication to the slaves was limitless. The goodness of his heart moved him more than once to commit himself for sums that he did not possess or that were not his, and so he was badly treated by local authorities and reproved by Saint Vincent. When he was about to lose Jacques Le Sage who died on May 12, 1648, he made his vows in his presence, although he was not yet released from the simple vow of religion that he had taken when with the Cistercians. Only in 1652 was this dispensation requested, and finally, on November 1, 1661, this time validly, he was able to give himself to God in the Congregation of the Mission. At that time he was in Paris, where he had been summoned by René Almées, the second Superior
time ago. The latter will hold the office of Consul in order to have greater freedom of action.  

We are still being requested in Salé, another town in Africa where we have permission to preach Jesus Christ. We do not yet know whom to select to go there. I ask you to reflect before God on who might really be capable and zealous enough for this, and to let me know your opinion.

Everything else here and elsewhere is going better and better, by the grace of God in whose love I am, with all my heart, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL  
i.s.C.M.

General, and he had only Minor Orders. He was ordained a priest in 1662 or 1663 and spent the remainder of his life at Saint-Lazare where he was Procurator. In 1672 he was even associated with the Procurator General, Nicolas Taieb. On May 24, 1675, during a serious illness, he made his will to which he added a codicil on April 7, 1679. (Cf. Arch. Nat. M 213, n°8.) He must have died shortly after this, because there is no further trace of his name anywhere.

Saint Vincent had bought the consulate of Algiers from Balthazar de Vias, with the financial assistance of the Duchesse d'Alguillon, for Lambert aux Couteaux, and the King immediately ratified the contract. This measure had the great advantage of avoiding all fear of conflict or even disagreement between the representatives of France and the Missionaries, and gave a prestige to the latter that could only be advantageous to religion. However, the Saint preferred to confer the office of Consul on a seminarian in order to leave the priests freer to preach the Gospel, and this, perhaps, is the reason why Jean Barreau was not called to the priesthood until late in life, after his return from Algiers.

The French Consul was the official protector of the French, foreign Jews, Greeks, Armenians, and anyone belonging to a country which did not have a representative in Algiers. He defended their rights, took care of their interests, facilitated their trade, and supervised the strict observance of treaties. A certain amount of taxes was due him, levied on all merchandise carried by their vessels to the port of Algiers, where they could not enter or leave without his passport. He was the judge of quarrels arising among slaves or among merchants of diverse nations. It is easy to realize that his office was far from being a sinecure.

12 Saint Vincent had bought the consulate of Algiers from Balthazar de Vias, with the financial assistance of the Duchesse d'Alguillon, for Lambert aux Couteaux, and the King immediately ratified the contract. This measure had the great advantage of avoiding all fear of conflict or even disagreement between the representatives of France and the Missionaries, and gave a prestige to the latter that could only be advantageous to religion. However, the Saint preferred to confer the office of Consul on a seminarian in order to leave the priests freer to preach the Gospel, and this, perhaps, is the reason why Jean Barreau was not called to the priesthood until late in life, after his return from Algiers.

13 A city in Morocco, on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, then a well-known lair for pirates. France maintained a Consul there. As early as 1643, the Company of the Blessed Sacrament of Marseilles had requested Saint Vincent to send Missionaries there. (Cf. Allier, op. cit., p. 55.) This latest project was not a success because of a conflict over jurisdiction. Although Saint Vincent had appointed a confère to that post, the Saint put an end to the project while the confère was en route to Morocco.
I embrace the whole family with all the affection of my heart.

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

828. - ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC TO SAINT VINCENT

Chancelade Abbey, July 31, 1646

Monsieur,

As soon as I arrived in this place, I wrote to the Bishop of Périgueux¹ to offer my services and, having learned through one of his close relatives that he hoped to have the Bulls gratis through the influence of the Cardinal, I begged him to go to Paris as soon as possible to do what was required to expedite them, and to omit nothing that might depend on him to advance this, since it is necessary for the glory of God, the salvation of those in his diocese and even for his own good. I assured him that if he knew how necessary this was, I was certain he would not lose a single moment in having them sent. He replied that he ardently desired to get them as soon as possible but he can only be as diligent in this as his brother wishes. His brother has gone to Holland on business for the King and has locked up his patent along with the letters of recommendation, so things are at a standstill until his return. Furthermore, since His Eminence has led him to hope that the settlement between the Pope and the King will be made at no cost to him, he consequently would be able to advance matters only as His Eminence sees fit. This reply really shocked me and, seeing the trust he has in me and the evidence he has given me of accepting my advice, it obliged me to write another, more forceful letter to him on the same subject. In it I am

¹Jean d'Estrades, appointed Bishop of Périgueux during the month of July, never took possession of his diocese. He was transferred to Condom and replaced in Périgueux in 1648 by Philibert de Brandon, the candidate of the Bishop of Cahors.
informing him that, having pondered this response before God on retreat (which he was aware I was making), I felt compelled to tell him that, if he puts off getting his Bulls until the settlement between the Pope and the King, this delay will be the cause of his committing a multitude of sins in his diocese and of the loss of a number of souls. He should be in no doubt about that nor that God will also demand an account of him concerning it. This would be a hindrance to the esteem the people of his diocese should have for him—something he needs, seeing that he prefers a little money to the salvation of their souls—and that would prevent God from giving him great graces which He would give him without fail and which are necessary for him in his direction of his diocese. I even fear He might take away those He has given him up to the present, if he were to put off going to his duties as soon as possible.

I felt it my duty to inform you of all this, so that you might act toward him as God inspires you to do, without letting him know that I had written anything of this to you, in order to oblige him not to lose a moment in going to that diocese which, spiritually as well as temporally, is in an unimaginably deplorable condition. I gave him some pressing advice and told him I would be giving him more, and would send it to you as I am now doing, asking you to transmit it to him.

They are trying to force him to make Sieur Alexandre du Fontpidoux, Counselor at the Presidal, his Vicar General. You saw him this past winter in Paris. He has no experience of any kind in the administration of a diocese, nor even of the knowledge required to do it, although otherwise he is truly an upright and honorable man. Consider, I ask you, how this diocese would be administered: by a young Bishop who does not know what is involved, with a Vicar General who would not know either. Our Officialis would be more suited for it, although that office would require a man who had a little experience, if that were possible.

There is talk that he is to bring his mother into his diocese. If that is the case, it will do him no good. I have already had experience with that.

Rumor has it that the Abbé de Vertueil, named for the Archdiocese of Lectoure, wants to change dioceses with him but I see that people

\[2\]Royal courts established in the sixteenth century to relieve the pressure of appeals to the Parlements. In certain cases they also served as courts of first instance.

\[3\]Ecclesiastical judge.

\[4\]Louis de la Rochefoucauld. He died as Bishop of Lectoure in December 1654.
do not want this to happen. I ask you to act as forcibly as you can, either with the Queen, if you judge it expedient, or the Cardinal or the Bishop of Périgueux, to hasten his arrival in his diocese which is in extreme distress, and to make it known that souls are being lost for want of a bishop. If you want to quote me and say that I wrote to you, I do not mind because that is quite true. The people are inconsolable at the loss of M. Brandon and cannot refrain from saying this openly, even to the friends of the Bishop of Périgueux who told me this, and that is doing him great harm.

I leave here tomorrow to go back to my own diocese, after making a retreat of twenty days which kept me from returning until now.

I entreat you to remember the reform of the Jacobin convent in Cahors and to go on working hard, as you have done, to procure good bishops for the Church, which is the greatest service you could render to Our Lord.

Take care of your health, I beg you, and believe me, always, Monsieur, etc.

ALAIN
Bishop of Cahors
APPENDIX

1. - DECLARATION BY WHICH SAINT JANE FRANCES
AUTHORIZED THE GIFT OF HER HEART TO THE FIRST
MONASTERY OF PARIS

Live Jesus!

I permit and consent that, after my death, our dear Sisters
of Annecy may give my heart to our dear Sisters in Paris, of
the monastery on the rue Saint-Antoine, who have manifested
to me their ardent desire to have it. I hope by this means that
these two monasteries will remain not only in the perfect union
which holy charity demands but also in a close relationship
of heart and mind, as I have always desired for them; on
condition, however, that it be removed not by opening me up
in the ordinary way but only through my side and, if possible,
that it be one of our Sisters who might render this service for
me.

Drawn up April 13, 1636

Sister JEANNE-FRANCOISE FREMIOT
of the Visitatation Sainte-Marie

B[lessed] b[e] G[od!]

SISTER JEANNE-FRANCOISE FREMIOT

November 11, 1641

2. - PETITION OF SAINT VINCENT TO THE PARLEMENT

March 2, 1645

Vincent de Paul, priest, Superior of the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission established at Saint-Lazare, humbly petitions, stating that, in order to resume possession and proprietorship of a house located in the faubourg Saint-Laurent, they made their claim before the lawyers of the Court of Appeals against Noël Bonhomme, the sworn vendor, controller of wines and a townsman of Paris, found in possession. This person so contested his right, that the parties were joined and the date was legally fixed for the Court of Appeals, notwithstanding the offers made by the petitioner from the initial stages of the claim, in execution of the settlement. The parties' statements were introduced into the proceedings submitted to Monsieur d'Alessau, judge for the Court of Appeals. He was prepared to make his report when said Bonhomme, because of the contestations coming from him and his co-heirs claiming a part and share of the amount offered as reimbursement for the value of said house, addressed the court by means of certain appeals at law which they had, including a foreclosure proceeding and an appeal, and he spoke summarily. Said Bonhomme was advised to accept the offers of the petitioner, which he had reiterated from time to time, that is, from the time the case was presented in the Court of Appeals, during the course of the preliminary investigation, even before the contestation and since then, and among other times, last January when the case was still, as it

APPENDIX 2. - A signed petition. Bibl. mun. of Rouen, Leber collection 3251. On the back is written: "Proceedings from M. Vincent de Paul and the Priests of the Mission against Noël Bonhomme, sworn vendor and controller of wine in Paris, and other claimants concerning the house of Nom-de-Jésus, faubourg Saint-Martin." We preferred to place in appendices this and other petitions because they are more the product of the pen of a lawyer than that of Saint Vincent.
is now, in the Court of Appeals, so much so that by a decree of last February 8, given according to Monsieur Gontier, the Counselor, the court ordered that, following the offers of the petitioner, stated in the Act of last January 16, said Bonhomme should be reimbursed in the amount of eleven thousand livres, out of which the man Paillet and his wife should be sent and paid the sum of twenty-two hundred livres for the deductions claimed by them. In so doing, besides the above-mentioned sum, the petitioner should also be obligated to reimburse the useful and necessary improvements which had been made on the house and property in question since their sale by auction, held for the profit of said Bonhomme, without prejudice to the claims advanced by the petitioner.

To this end, the sites will be seen and visited, and the aforementioned improvements inspected and appraised by experts, upon whom the parties will agree before said Monsieur Gontier, the arbitrator, unless he himself should be appointed for this ex-officio. The said experts will make a report on the sites, as well as on the damages if there are any. In execution of the decree, the petitioner appointed an expert, with a view to the prescribed report. But, at the same time, said Bonhomme had a summons issued to the petitioner to send and pay over to him before execution the monies awarded to him. Provided said petitioner can find surety for payment, after deductions have been made on those items claimed by him and declared below, he is quite ready, in response to the summons, to pay and hand over to said Bonhomme whatever is clearly and undeniably due to him.

First, the petitioner states that said Bonhomme must, before all else, settle and pay what is due to said Paillet and his wife, both principal as well as interest, the decree having ordered this when it stated "for the deductions to be settled between them."

Second, in accord with the report that will be made, he
must settle on the damages claimed by said petitioner and reserved by said decree.

Third, he must acknowledge in the Court of Appeals that he is in the wrong, and pay off the expenses incurred by said petitioner from the day the offers of reimbursement were made up to the day of the decree of February 13 which declared them valid, as well as expenses incurred since then and those yet to be incurred, because said Bonhomme presented a fallacious contestation, which he has since been obliged to admit.

In the fourth place, said Bonhomme is to be fined and held responsible for the garnishments given into the hands of the petitioner, at the request of his creditors, of which he offers to give proof; and, in order that the house and property in question may be released from all mortgages which said Bonhomme may have assumed since he has been the proprietor of said house, be it stated and ordered that he shall be obliged to list and declare, in such time as it shall please the court, all his creditors other than those who have foreclosed to the petitioner. Otherwise and in default of this, the petitioner shall be permitted to have decreed in his favor the said house and property in question, in order to pay off all mortgages. Pending the appraisal to be made, the monies still found to be owing to said Bonhomme shall remain in the hands of the petitioner, to earn interest for the time he has them, by reason of the ordinance, unless said Bonhomme, in order to receive the money remaining, prefers to put up valid and sufficient surety, which will be liable not only for said monies but also for the mortgages which may have been placed on the properties in question by said Bonhomme from the time he has been in possession of them, and to pay all costs.

This having been considered, My Lords, may it please you in your indulgence to accede to this request and to pass judgment, in execution of the decree of February 13, in accordance with and conformable to the above conclusions.
Otherwise, so that this case may be heard and the parties settled, order them to address Monsieur Gontier, the Counselor, summarily, or someone else at the pleasure of the court; and you will do well.

VINCENT DEPAUL, LOGER, M. GONTIER

3. - ANTOINE PORTAIL, PRIEST OF THE MISSION, TO ANOTHER PRIEST OF THE MISSION

May 23, 1645

M. Vincent received your letter and expected to answer it himself, but urgent business prevented him from doing so; therefore, he has instructed me to tell you:

(1) That he greatly sympathizes with your parents' affliction and with that which natural love causes you to feel for the same reason. He is asking and will ask Our Lord to give them, and you as well, the necessary consolation and grace to make good use of this for His glory;

(2) That you are not blameworthy for proposing to him that you should go to your native place for such a good purpose, which is to try to restore peace and to see that your mother gets some assistance. On the contrary, you are to be praised in a certain sense before God and the world, particularly for being submissive to whatever your Superior advises you to do.

Nevertheless, he is entreating you to consider before God the following reasons:

(1) That although it is true that the natural law obliges all of us to assist our parents in need, it is also true that the Son...
of God, author of the same law, says, as you know, that anyone who does not leave father, mother, brother, sister, etc., cannot be His disciple,¹ that is, a true Christian and, with greater reason, a true Missionary;

(2) That the same Son of God had those aspiring to this status of disciples put this maxim into practice one time, when he said to the man who wanted to go bury his father: *Sinite mortuos sepelire mortuos;* ² and another time with regard to the man who wanted to divide up his possessions and give his share to the poor: *Nemo,* he says to him, *mittens manum ad aratrum et respiciens retro aptus est regno Dei.*³

It really cannot be said that necessity is obliging you. Besides, by letter and through friends, you can make up for not being there. Were it through laziness, disregard, or some other bad motivation that you wanted to omit this duty, you would have some reason to wonder whether or not you were doing wrong. Since you desire this only for the love of God and to get it off your conscience, and you are not going, except by order of your Superior who holds the place of God, you must be at peace, for you will not have to answer for it before God, since M. Vincent is advising you to stay where you are, and he has had experience of the great difficulties that arise from acting otherwise. Also, the more the alleged pretext seems founded on charity and justice, the more dangerous it is because, being hidden, the evil goes unnoticed until after it has been experienced. But this is usually too late to remedy it.

Among other misfortunes that ensue are attachment to parents, their interests and material things; mental upset,

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¹Mt. 19:29. "Moreover, everyone who has given up home, brothers or sisters, father or mother, wife or children, or property for my sake will receive many times as much and inherit everlasting life." (NAB)

²*Let the dead bury the dead.* Lk. 9:60. "Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury their dead; come away and proclaim the kingdom of God.'" (NAB)

³*No one putting his hand to the plow and looking back is worthy of the kingdom of God.* Lk. 9:62. "Jesus answered him, 'Whoever puts his hand to the plow but keeps looking back is unfit for the reign of God.'" (NAB)
contempt for regularity and finally loss of vocation. The contrary is apparent in those who have carefully observed the maxims of the Gospel on this point and God has blessed their parents and their concerns; for example, the man whom you know who went twenty years without seeing his mother. The same cannot be said for another of our men who had left specifically to assist his mother. That was the farthest thing from his mind once he was on the outside. In fact, he sought only to gratify himself and to wallow in vice. This gave him such a fright that, before the year since he left was up, he was asking to return. We did take him back, and his parents' affairs have been going better than ever. I do not know why I included this last example, since it is not very appropriate because it is not a question of dissuading you from leaving the Company but only from a journey home. It is, no doubt, because of the experience we have that those who are insistent in asking and obtaining permission to go see their parents again, ordinarily lose their vocation.

And even though this misfortune might never happen to you because of your virtue, nevertheless, just the consideration of the bad example you would be giving to others by this journey should dissuade you from thinking about it, for those who are not as virtuous as you, Monsieur, might say: why should I, too, not take a holiday like so and so? And, thus, permission would have to be given them to go, or sadden them dangerously; and one and the other would be harmful both to the individual and to the Community. That was the main reason which kept the man who had been in the Company for twenty years from going to see his mother. M. Vincent is asking you, then, to make the sacrifice of your will to God by the practice of these evangelical maxims and by hoping that the same Jesus Christ, for whom you will be renouncing

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4 Antoine Portail is referring to himself.
yourself and your parents, will Himself be your provider, your father, your friend, your protector and your all. He is the one who said: *Quaerite primum regnum Dei et justitiam ejus, et omnia haec adjicientur vobis.*

That is, in general, what M. Vincent instructed me to write you, and he was quite distressed at not being able to dictate it to me word for word. Then this speech would not be boring to you, as it will be, in my opinion, because I have set it down so poorly. I beg Our Lord to put His own spirit into it, in whose love I am...


4. - PETITION OF SAINT VINCENT TO THE PARLEMENT

January 26, 1646

Vincent de Paul, Superior of the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission established at Saint-Lazare, humbly petitions, stating that, in order to re-enter into possession and proprietorship of a house now in the possession of Noël Bonhomme, this said Bonhomme, after several contestations before the Appeals as well as in court, has finally been constrained to accept the offer of the petitioner, namely, to reimburse him a sum of eleven thousand livres tournois, the adjudicated value by auction sale, making him its proprietary possessor, by a decision which settled the question of restoring

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5*Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things will be given you. Mt. 6:33. "Seek first his kingship over you, his way of holiness, and all these things will be given you besides."* (NAB)

APPENDIX 4. - Signed petition. The original is in the seminary of Saint-Sulpice. At the bottom of the document is written: "Accepted the request and the documents communicated to the parties to show them the contradictions in it; await the outcome of the proceedings but assign some costs."
the inheritance by payment and reimbursement to said Bonhomme of this sum of eleven thousand livres. However, in carrying this out, many difficulties were encountered on the part of said Bonhomme because, at the same time the decision was rendered, several garnishments were delivered to the petitioner, which obliged him to present a petition to the court requesting authorization to consign, deduction having previously been made of expenses he was obliged to bear. With that petition, as summarized by Monsieur Gontier, the Counselor, it was impossible to compel said Bonhomme either to defend or declare the debts and mortgages burdening said house, or to make him renounce possession of it in order to leave it to the petitioner and consignee, and to obtain payment by seizure and decree. The petitioner pursued the adjudication of the summary proceedings, and said Bonhomme was advised last August 28 to notify the petitioner by a declaration of debts with which he says the house in question is burdened. A certified copy of his declaration, signed by La Porte, his attorney, bears true witness that the petitioner was justified in not paying said Bonhomme the eleven thousand livres in question, and, on the contrary, that he could not remain indefinitely in possession of said house, since the petitioner has never deviated from offering to pay and even to consign the amount to him.

This having been considered, My Lords, as well as the summary proceedings in execution of the adjudication which allows the petitioner to repossess the house in question by reimbursing the eleven thousand livres, whereas this reimbursement has only been delayed by the actions of said Bonhomme, as he himself is now obliged to acknowledge, citing as it does the debts and mortgages mentioned in his statement, which, very likely, are not all that may have been contracted by its principals, may it please you in your indulgence to order that the statement of said Bonhomme, of which notice was served last August 28, shall remain attached to the summary
proceedings to show that said petitioner is justified in having feared to make payment without being validly freed from the debt, and hence all the issues he has raised in the summary proceedings in question are just, in the adjudication of any further proceedings which may be taken against him, as the case stands and on whatever shall be found in presence of the court, and you will do well.

VINCENT DEPAUL
INDEX

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

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