SAINT
VINCENT DE PAUL
CORRESPONDENCE
VOLUME III
SAINT
VINCENT DE PAUL

CORRESPONDENCE
CONFERENCES, DOCUMENTS

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April 3, 1992
TO

VERY REVEREND RICHARD McCULLEN, C.M.

FOR

HIS EMBODIMENT OF THE SPIRIT OF SAINT VINCENT
AND
HIS ABIDING INTEREST

IN THE TRANSLATION OF HIS WRITINGS
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APPENDIX

1. Petition of Saint Vincent to the Parlement [April 1647] (Now Vol. XIII, 97a.)
2. Petition of Saint Vincent to the Parlement [July 1647] (Now Vol. XIII, 97b.)

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INTRODUCTION

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

In placing new letters within the volume or changing the placement of letters we have relied on Coste’s corrections given in volumes VIII and XIII, the listings found in the Annales,1 the dates on recently discovered letters or, in the absence of a date, on internal evidence. To facilitate research in Coste’s work, we have chosen to keep the letter numbers of the original volumes and to indicate material newly added or relocated within each volume by adding a, b, c, etc., to the number of the preceding item. We have also decided to adhere to the span of years assigned by Coste for each volume.

In some cases, the finding of an original has enabled us to join fragments formerly considered separate letters. Such combined letters have been assigned a single number followed by a letter to

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1Annales de la Congregation de la Mission (1937), pp. 234-237.
differentiate the whole from the segments as published in the original Coste volume. Where variations of a single letter exist, only the most correct version has been included in the volume. Likewise, although Coste chose to publish letters originally written in Latin both in that language and in French, the present edition bears only the English translation of the original Latin.

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

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

The citations usually state as well the actual location of the manuscript or copy used for the present edition. Great care has been taken to verify these locations where possible. Letters drawn from other publications and those belonging to special collections, private or museum, have not been checked due to the near impossibility of such a task. However, an attempt has been made to verify all letters belonging to private houses of the Daughters of Charity, the Priests of the Mission, other religious houses, churches, and various religious institutions. In checking these locations and in the search for unpublished letters, we have at times been fortunate enough to locate the originals of letters for which only copies were known formerly. In these instances as well no mention has been made of the correction—the citation simply states that the manuscript is an original.
We have updated as well the department names given in the footnotes. Several departments have had name changes since the time of Coste, while two others have been subdivided.²

Although the project has undergone many delays, each has contributed in some way to the overall quality of the work. The appearance, in 1983, of the revised edition of Saint Louise de Marillac’s writings³ has permitted us to check her letters to Saint Vincent and her spiritual writings for any corrections which may have come to light. We have also adjusted all the footnote references to the appropriate indication as given in the new edition.

In any work of translation the question of style invariably arises, so it was not strange that we should be faced with the problem. Should we smooth out clumsy or elliptical phrasing in the interest of producing a more "readable" translation or should we preserve the roughness and unpolished style of the original in order to reflect the flavor and spontaneous quality of Saint Vincent’s expression, supplying explanations where needed to make the sense clear? As our response to this question, we have attempted to make our translation as "readable" as possible while adhering closely to the style of each correspondent. For that purpose we have made an effort to give as literal a meaning as we could to the expressions used, while still adapting them to modern terminology. We have tried to reproduce even the grammatical constructions used by each correspondent unless the true meaning of the sentence would suffer thereby. Very long sentences have been shortened and short phrases joined together to render thoughts more readily intelligible, though still preserving the sense of the original. The vocabulary

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

and expression have deliberately been kept simple. Saint Vincent's love for and practice of simplicity are no secret to anyone familiar with his life; therefore, it was judged fitting to follow his own simplicity in the choice of words and style unless he himself opted for more elegant forms.

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

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

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

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

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

Saint Vincent often makes use of scriptural references which, however, are not always direct quotes. Where he has done so, the translation has been adjusted to flow with the meaning of the sentence. The scriptural quotations given in the footnotes are usually taken from the New American Bible, unless a passage cannot be found in that edition or a more suitable rendering of the phrase is found elsewhere. In such instances, the Douay-Rheims Bible has been used. In the case of the psalms, both versions have been cited because of the variations.

Coste almost always refers to Vincent de Paul as Saint Vincent or the Saint. In the present edition we have added this title to the names of Louise de Marillac and any other individual who has been canonized since Coste’s time.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Let us not fail to seek the man beyond these words, the man of compassion, warmth, humor, savoir faire, authority, and, most of all, the mystic whose sanctity was carved amid the bustle and involvement of very human situations. He will give us hope that we, too, can find holiness in an ordinary, busy life. May this personal acquaintance with the real Vincent de Paul lead us to encounter the dynamic force behind his life, Jesus Christ, who, for him, was all things.

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Monseigneur

Je vous supplie de vous humblement jurer la même foi que le serment de votre souverain seigneur, se jurant à vous que je le jurerai et que je le ferai jurer à mes enfants, de lui, de la loyauté de la maison de Nantes, qu'elle n'est point déchargée entièrement et que son éternel amour et vœu au bien et au bonheur ne dérive pas.
que ton le seache chez elle ne l'en avertir
By Vens me sultes thunmou-moe le
Alexender elle Vaudont que se fut eu plustor
donne moy a Vens plaisit le 48 Chechebuis
pris qui ce suis

Mon favor, adentre Capemelle, par demain.
Improbable light avers Middell et Allendell
A la Rognon, pour et long a six, Semor, ivni.

Je n'ai plus plu deux mois que a fra a venu de
Ce cheveuis apres Midy anvenduyor, mani,

ce Hardy

Je vos humble et moy
obligée fille et senante de

Facsimile of letters 935 and 936
SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

CORRESPONDENCE

829. - TO ETIENNE BLATRON,1 IN GENOA

Paris, August 2, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I cannot tell you the consolation my soul experienced in reading your letter; I am in admiration of this good and holy Cardinal2 and his conduct toward you. As for the difficulties in the establishment, it is legitimate to make some concession regarding time. I do not know why you sent me the plan, which I gather from yours3 was drawn up by M. Codoing in Genoa.4

Letter 829. - Archives of the Mission, Curia Generalis C.M., Rome, original autograph letter written entirely in the hand of the Saint, except the part which begins: "We sent you a long time ago . . . ."

1Etienne Blatiron was born in Saint-Fallen-Chapeule (Haute-Loire) on January 6, 1614. He was received into the Congregation of the Mission on January 6, 1638, ordained a priest in 1639, and placed in Alet (1639-1641), St. stems (1641), Richelieu, Rome (1644-1645), and Genoa (1645-1657). He distinguished himself particularly in the latter post, where as Superior of a new house he had to organize everything. Saint Vincent considered him one of his most competent Missionaries and "a very great servant of God." (Cf. Louis Abelly, Vie du Vénérable Serviteur de Dieu Vincent de Paul [3 vols., Paris: Florentin Lambert, 1664], bk. III, p. 70.) Etienne Blatiron died in Genoa on July 24, 1657, a victim of his dedication to the plague-stricken. His biography was published in vol. II of Notices, pp. 151-203. (Cf. Notices sur les prêtres, clercs et frères défunts de la Congrégation de la Mission [10 vols. in two series, Paris: Dumoulin, 1881-1911].) In the Lyons manuscript there is a report on his virtues addressed to Saint Vincent.

2Stefano Durazzo, Legate in Ferrara, then in Bologna, was created a Cardinal in 1633, was Archbishop of Genoa (1635-1664), and died in Rome on July 22, 1667. This pious Prelate was always most gracious and very devoted to Saint Vincent and his priests.

3Etienne Blatiron's letter.

4Bernard Codoing stayed for a time in Genoa on his return from Rome. Born in Agen on
I am writing again to M. Dehorgny\(^3\) to send you someone other than M. Dunots,\(^4\) and that the person he sends you should be learned, spiritual, discreet, and know how to conduct a seminary, or at least have as many of these qualities as possible.

Monsieur Dufestel\(^7\) has gone home because of his constant

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August 11, 1610, he was ordained a priest in December 1635, was received into the Congregation of the Mission on February 10, 1636, and holds an important place among the first companions of Saint Vincent. He was the first Superior of the Annecy Seminary (1640-1642) and directed the house in Rome for two years (1642-1644). Then he was placed at the head of Saint-Charles Seminary (1645-1646), situated on the grounds of Saint-Lazare. From there he went to Saint-Méac under particularly difficult circumstances (1646-1648), then to La Rose (1648-1649), and finally to Richelieu (1649-1650), always as Superior. He was very successful in his missions in France and Italy. His sermons were so appealing that at one point Saint Vincent considered publishing them. Bernard Codoing would have rendered greater service to Saint Vincent had he been less attached to his own ideas and learned to control his tendency to hastiness. We might be tempted to say “Happy faults!” since they merited for us some of the most beautiful letters in Saint Vincent's correspondence.

Sometime between 1651 and 1655 Codoing left the Congregation of the Mission. On July 24, 1654, he was Pastor of Saint-Hilaire in Agen; on January 2, 1673, we find his signature on the baptismal register there. He also acted as Vicar-General of the Bishop of Gap. The last reference to Codoing is October 6, 1675, at which time he was at the seminary in Sens (cf. Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission, vol. 114-115 [1949-1950]).

\(^3\)Jean Dehorgay, from Estrées-Saint-Denis (Oise), entered the Congregation of the Mission in August 1627 and was ordained a priest April 22, 1628. In 1632, when Saint Vincent made the move to Saint-Lazare, Dehorgay took over the direction of the Collège des Bon-Enfants, which he retained until 1635, then took up again (1638-1643, 1654-1659). He was Assistant to the Superior General (1642-1644, 1654-1667); Superior of the house in Rome (1644-1647, 1651-1653); and Director of the Daughters of Charity (1660-1667). In 1640, 1641, 1643, 1644, 1659, and 1660, he visited several houses of the Company, reestablishing good order wherever necessary. His sympathy for Jansenist ideas merited for us two beautiful letters from Saint Vincent, who had the joy of seeing him return to sounder beliefs. He died July 7, 1667. We still have twenty-three of his conferences to the Daughters of Charity and several letters.

\(^4\)Humbert Dunots, born near Saint-Claude (Jura), was attracted to the Congregation of the Mission by Bernard Codoing, who received him in Annecy in 1642. At that time he was already a priest and forty years of age. He followed Codoing to Rome and remained there until he died in San Salvatore, near Rome, on September 29, 1649, a few days after hearing the confession of a plague-stricken person, from whom he caught the disease. In a letter written after Dunots' death, Martin Le Vaœur, C.M., praises his great piety, his perfect regularity, and his mortification which led him to use instruments of penance, and adds: “It is very difficult for a man to attain greater purity and innocence in this life than did this good servant of God.” (Cf. Bibl. mun. de Lyon, Ms. 774, f219-223.) Humbert Dunots was scrupulous and ill-suited to teaching. We see in this letter that he suffered from the bad influence of Bernard Codoing; fortunately this lasted only a very short time.

\(^7\)Dufestel's name is scratched out in the original. François Dufestel, born in Oisemont (Somme), entered the Congregation of the Mission in 1633, and was ordained a priest in
opposition to the Rules and regulations of the Company, which he also communicated to others, going so far as to threaten to overthrow it after I am gone and, in fact, he was laying the foundations for this. For rather a long time he had promised me repeatedly that he would set himself straight but instead he was doing just the opposite. He has had the deanship of Lillers in Artois given to him. It is a conquered town. He is satisfied and the Company is at peace.

Monsieur Codoing is still going along as usual. I really fear what you and Monsieur Martin have told me about him, although he seems to be coming around. We shall follow the advice of both of you regarding his place of residence and his duty. He had already done so much harm to M. Dunots that the latter suggested that they both go off to Geneva.

But Mon Dieu! Monsieur, what is this you tell me about the

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September 1636. He was Superior in Troyes (1638-1642), Annecy (1642), Cahors (1643-1644), and Marseilles (1644-1645). He left the Congregation in 1646 to become Dean of Saint-Omer de Lillers (Pas-de-Calais).

9Taken from the Spanish.

10Codoing's name can barely be deciphered because it has been crossed out.

10Jean Martin, born in Paris on May 10, 1620, entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 9, 1638. He was ordained in Rome on April 25, 1645, and that same year was sent to Genoa to found a new house. Saint Vincent probably had no Missionary more gifted in drawing crowds and converting souls. In 1654 Jean Martin was recalled to France and placed in Sedan as Superior and Pastor; then he was sent to Turin in 1655 to direct a new establishment founded by the pious Marchese de Fiasaca, Prime Minister of State. There, as in Genoa and Sedan, the zealous Missionary knew how to soften the most hardened hearts. He was given the name "Apostle of Piedmont" and his co-Missionaries were called Padri santi (holy Fathers). In 1665 René Alméras asked him to head the house in Rome. This was a painful sacrifice for Jean Martin but he resigned himself to it. He was sent to Genoa (1670), Turin (1674), Rome (1677), Perugia (1680), and back to Rome in 1681, always as Superior. He died in Rome on February 17, 1694. His obituary, written by one of his contemporaries, is in the Archives of the Mission in Paris. It was published, with some corrections, in vol. I of Notices, pp. 260-272.

11He was named Director of the Saint-Méen Seminary. On July 14, 1645, Achille de Harlay de Sancy, Bishop of Saint-Malo, gave the Priests of the Mission the permanent direction of the seminary he had just established in Saint-Méen Abbey, near Bourseul (Côtes-du-Nord). He guaranteed them a tenth of the yearly annuity of 500 livres and added to the establishment the revenue of the abbey, on condition, among other things, that there be five Missionaries: three for the seminary and two for the missions, that for two or three years they would teach gratis twelve young seminarians, and that they would give a pension to the monks of the abbey until the last one died. As indicated in no. 832, n. 8, Saint-Méen became a troublesome establishment for the Congregation.

12An attempt was made to cross out this name on the original to make it illegible.
horrible wickedness of poor B[rother] P[ascal]. The evil spirit had the power to make a priest of the Company say what he says and to make him commit this deception! Bon Dieu! of what evil is he not capable or the other party guilty! Please send him back to us as soon and as quietly as you can; in the meantime, make use of someone else while you are waiting for the arrival of the person I hope to send off tomorrow or three days from now. It will not be the one about whom I wrote to you previously because we sent him to Le Mans after you told me you could manage without him.

I see clearly that those gentlemen were right in their conclusions but cui fini did you send me the plan for the foundation? Is His Eminence disposed to make the foundation as soon as possible? There are conditions in this project that could change the order of the Company and perhaps upset it in that place. Please let me know the purpose of this document (I have not been able to figure it out very well from reading your letter), and then I shall tell you my little thoughts on these difficulties.

I am writing to you from Orsigny, where I have been since yesterday. In two hours I shall be returning to Paris; I sent your letter from there to the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, who wanted to see it.

I do not recall the other points in your letter to which I should respond.

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13Jean-Pascal Gouret, born in Angers in 1613, was received into the Congregation of the Mission as a coadjutor Brother on November 21, 1641. Saint Vincent sent him to Plessis for the relief of the poor, as he had sent Brother Mathieu Regnard to Lorraine.
14The Saint had added the words: “O Jésus, Monseur, what wickedness!” which he later scratched out.
15Brother Nicolas or Brother Le Roux. There were nine Brothers named Nicolas during this period. (Cf. Notices, vol. I, pp. 493-509.) It is not possible to identify to which of the nine Saint Vincent was referring. Brother François Le Roux (Leroqueux) was born in Hiersville (Manche), and entered the Congregation of the Mission on August 7, 1644, at the age of sixteen.
16Why, for what purpose.
17Farm in the commune of Soisly (Bessines). Saint Vincent accepted this farm from Jacques Norain, notary and Secretary of the King, by a contract dated December 22, 1644. The farm provided food for the Saint-Lazare house. According to Saint Vincent (cf. vol. IV, no. 1467), the farm which supplied Saint-Lazare did not provide a sixtieth of the needs of the Motherhouse.
18Marie de Vignecrode de Posticoulay was born in 1604, in the Château de Glessay near Bressuire, of René de Vignecrode and Françoise de Richelieu, the eldest sister of the great Cardinal.
Our little items of news are that, by the grace of God, the Company is doing rather well everywhere,19 except for what you tell me about this Brother. In Paris there are still about sixty priests in the Bons-Enfants Seminary,20 and the minor seminary of the Petit

While still very young, she married, in the reception room of Anne of Austria, the nephew of the Duc de Luyne, Antonin de Beauvois de Grimoard de Roque, chevalier, Seigneur de Combalet, whom she had never seen and did not love. During the two years this union lasted, the couple lived together only six months. The Marquis de Combalet, kept away from home by the necessities of war, died in battle at the siege of Montpellier on September 3, 1622. His wife, widowed at the age of eighteen, left the Court and withdrew to the Carmelite convent in Paris. She was admitted to the novitiate and, after a year of enclosure, received the religious habit from the hands of M. de Bérulle and took her first vows. Richelieu, who loved her dearly, did everything he could to bring her back to the Court. It was at his request that the Pope forbade the young Marquise to remain in the cloister, that Marie de Médicis chose her as lady of the bedchamber on January 1, 1625, and that the King elevated her estate of Aiguillon to a duchy-peerage on January 1, 1638.

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

19First reading: “everywhere, by the grace of God.”
20On March 1, 1624 Jean-François de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris, had turned over to Saint Vincent the Collège des Bons-Enfants so that he might have a place to lodge the priests wishing to join him in giving missions in the country. This collège, nearly three centuries old and occupying about sixteen acres, was one of the oldest of the University of France; it was almost abandoned and in a pitiable state of decay. It was not a teaching center but simply a hostel where students were provided with shelter and sleeping quarters. When the Missionaries went to the country, which happened often, they entrusted the keys to a neighbor.
Saint-Lazare has about forty; by the grace of God, it is off to a rather good start. We are being asked to go to Notre-Dame de Plancoët, a well-known shrine recently established in Saint-Malo. Monsieur Nouelly and Brother Barreau have left to assist poor Christian slaves in Algiers, and we are about to send a priest and a Brother to Salé, in the kingdom of Morocco, in Barbary.

That, Monsieur, is about all I can tell you. My poor heart which loves yours more than itself is, with unalterable affection, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i. p. de la Mission

21Petit Saint-Lazare, otherwise known as Saint-Charles Seminary. In 1645 Saint Vincent established it within the enclosure of Saint-Lazare for youths completing their studies in the humanities; not all the students, however, aspired to Holy Orders. Before he died, Cardinal Richelieu endowed twelve students; others paid room and board. The seminary stood on the corner, facing rue du faubourg Saint-Denis, which today, on the side of the uneven numbers, meets Boulevard de la Chapelle.

22Boniface Nouelly, born in Collanges (Als), entered the Congregation of the Mission as a priest on November 22, 1643, at twenty-five years of age. In 1644 he was placed in Marseilles, and in 1646 was sent to direct the new mission in Algiers. After a year of hard and dedicated work, he caught the plague at the bedside of a man stricken with the disease and died on July 22, 1647. (Cf. Notices, vol. III, pp. 28-34.)

23Jean Barreau was born in the parish of Saint-Jean-en-Grève, Paris, on 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, and began his novitiate 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 he did not possess or which did not belong to him; for this he was badly treated by local authorities and reproved by Saint Vincent. When his companion, Jacques Le Sage, became gravely ill, Barreau took his vows before him, although he was not yet released from the simple vow of religion that he had taken as a Cistercian. This dispensation was not requested until 1652. Finally, on November 1, 1661, he was able to take his vows validly in the Congregation of the Mission. He was in Paris at the time, summoned by René Almeiras, the second Superior General, and had only Minor Orders. He was ordained a priest in 1662 or 1663 and spent the remainder of his life at Saint-Lazare as Procurator. In 1672 he was associated with the Procurator General, Nicolas Tacle. 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.)

24Saint Vincent subscribed the initials i. p. d. M. (indique prêtre de la Mission) to his signature. It has been traditional in the Congregation of the Mission to append to one's name the Latin of this phrase of Saint Vincent, indique secundum Congregationis Missionis, or the initials, i.e. C.M. The editors have adopted this traditional practice and have substituted the initials of the Latin phrase for the French used by Saint Vincent.
I am writing M. Dehorgny to drop everything and to send you someone who knows how to conduct a seminary. Please send Brother Pascal back to us as soon as you get this letter. We shall have our good Brother leave within three days.

We sent you a long time ago, by way of Marseilles, scissors, penknives, booklets, and devotional leaflets. I think M. Chretien is delaying sending them on to you, awaiting the person who is supposed to go and visit you. If you need them in a hurry, write to him.

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

830. - TO SAINT LOUISE DE MARILLAC

Paris, August 4, 1646

Mademoiselle,

A week and a half have gone by since your departure, and we have heard nothing from you. Everyone here wants some news and I do not know what to say to those who are asking me for it. I myself,

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25Sébastien Nodé, a coadjutor Brother, born around 1603 in the diocese of Rouen. He was received into the Congregation of the Mission in 1633.
26Jean Chretien, born on August 6, 1606 in Oncourt (Vosges), was ordained a priest on April 5, 1631, and received into the Congregation of the Mission on November 26, 1640. He was Superior in Marseilles (1645-1653), sub-Assistant at the Motherhouse (1654), and Superior in La Rose (1655-1662). On November 26, 1667 he was a member of the house in Troyes.

Letter 830. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 64. Letter 831 informs us that this letter was in Brother Ducommar’s handwriting.

3Saint Louise de Marillac was born in Paris on August 12, 1591. Her father was Louis de Marillac, brother of the devout Michel de Marillac, Keeper of the Seals (1616-1630), and of Maréchal de Marillac, renowned for his misfortunes and tragic death. She married Antoine Le Gros, secretary of Queen Marie de Médicis, on February 5, 1613, and they had one son, Michel. Antoine Le Gros died on December 21, 1625. The devout widow had implicit confidence in her spiritual director, Vincent de Paul, who employed her in his charitable works, eventually making her his collaborator in the creation and organization of the Confraternities of Charity. The life of Louise de Marillac, whom the Church beatified on May 9, 1920, had been written by Gobillon (1676), the Comtessce de Richemont (1883), Comte de Langle (a.d.), Monseigneur Bouvard (1898), and Emmanuel de Broglie (1911). Her letters and other writings were copied and published in
more than all the others, am worried and can only turn to you to find out something. I am so afraid that the intense heat and the discom­forts of the coach may have exhausted or at least greatly weakened you that I await the account of your journey with great impatience. I am determined to thank Our Lord fervently if you are still in the same state of health as when you left. ²

831. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

Yesterday I received a letter which seemed to me somehow to come from your charity but, since I did not see any trace of your handwriting in it, I was rather worried, for fear that you were very sick. But I am somewhat relieved by what good Brother Ducournau ¹ so kindly told me. In the name

part in the work entitled: Louise de Marillac, veuve de M. Le Gras. Sa vie, ses vertus, son esprit (4 vols., Bruges, 1886). Saint Louise was canonized on March 11, 1934, and on February 10, 1960, was named the patroness of all who devote themselves to Christian social work. Therefore, in this English edition of the letters of Saint Vincent, “Saint” has been added to her name in titles of letters and in the footnotes. To the above bibliography should be added some of her more recent biographers: Monsignor Jean Calvet, Louise de Marillac. a Portrait, translated by G.F. Pullen (1959); Joseph I. Dirvin, Louise de Marillac (1970); the compilation by Sister Anne Rognault, D.C., editor: Louise de Marillac, ses écrits (1961), of which the section containing the letters was translated by Sister Helen Marie Law, D.C.: Letters of St. Louise de Marillac (1972); and the revised edition of this latter work entitled: Sainte Louise de Marillac. Ecrits spirituels (1983), ed. Sister Elisabeth Charpy, D.C., trans. Sister Louise Sullivan, D.C., Spiritual Writings of Louise de Marillac, Correspondence and Thoughts (New City Press, 1991).

²Saint Louise left Paris on July 26, in the company of Sister Elisabeth Turgis who had been assigned to Richelieu, Sister Françoise Noret, Sister Perrette from Sedan, who was going to the Angers hospital, and the Sisters who were to form the little Community of Nantes: Elisabeth Martin, Claude, Marguerite Noret, Catherine Bagard, and Antoinette from Montreuil. The little group arrived in Orléans the next evening, passed the morning of the twenty-eighth there, then left for Meung-sur-Loire, where they spent the night. They made additional stops in Cour-sur-Loire and Mont-Louis. At the port of Ablevoie, Sister Elisabeth Turgis left them to go to Richelieu. They stopped for six or seven hours in Tours before going on to Saumur, and made a pilgrimage to Notre-Dame des Ardilliers. The travelers spent the next night in Ponts-de-Cé at the home of a surgeon’s wife. At dawn they took the boat which landed them on August 3 in Angers, where they remained for three days with the Sisters of the hospital. They went by boat from Angers to Nantes, making three brief stops along the way, completing their journey on Wednesday. (Cf. Ecrits spirituels, L. 159, pp. 171-178).


¹Bertrand Ducournau, born in 1614 in Arna (Landes), was received into the Congregation
of God, Monsieur, you know that you must take a little time to recover your health and to try to keep well for the service of God.

I am quite surprised that you did not receive the letter I wrote to your charity in Orléans, where we spent only Saturday morning so we could reach our destination while our good God still gave me the strength. O Most Honored Father, if your charity were aware of the assistance of His divine guidance, you would be grateful for it to make up for my infidelities and ingratitude. I most humbly beg this of you through the holy love of God.

I do not know what will become of this establishment. As yet, I have not perceived any difficulties, other than a few murmurs among the people, but rather so much praise from everyone that it is unbelievable. We stayed only three days in Angers, where I again had the honor of writing to you, and four or five hours in Tours, but we did not arrive in Nantes until August 8, since we had to stay so long on the water because it is unusually low.

Although we did all we could so that no one would know the day of our arrival, good Mademoiselle La Carisière had given orders for someone to meet us at the boat and to take us, after a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, to Mademoiselle des Rochers' home. She most humbly sends her regards to you and expressed a little regret at not receiving any reply to the two letters she respectfully wrote you after the death of her good husband, who was much loved and esteemed in this town.

I had informed you of some difficulty in asking for Monsieur des Jonchères to be Director of our Sisters, but if I have no further instructions from your charity other than what you gave us, I see no likelihood of making a choice except on your advice and to propose to him that, in his charity, he accept. He is not what people had told me and I do not see how his sister

of the Mission on July 28, 1644 as a coadjutor Brother, and took his vows on October 9, 1646. Since he had fine penmanship and common sense, and had learned to be shrewd, frank, and reliable in business affairs, from the various positions he had occupied in the world, Saint Vincent made him his secretary in 1645. The first letter written by Brother Ducournau was that of May 3, 1645. (Cf. vol. II, no. 749.) By his devotion, tact, and love of work, this good Brother rendered inestimable services to Saint Vincent and his Congregation. It can be said that, by his preparation of materials and his personal notes, he contributed more than Abelly himself to the first biography of Saint Vincent. After the death of the Saint, Brother Ducournau remained as secretary to the Superiors General René Alméras and Edme Jolly, and was archivist of Saint-Lazare. He died in Paris on January 3, 1677. His assistant in the secretariat, Brother Chollier, has written his life, which is found in Notices, vol. I, p. 377ff.

2 The establishment in Nantes.

3 At that time there was at the hospital one of its former chaplains, whom M. des Jonchères, the ordinary confessor of the Visitation nuns, wished to replace. Until that time, Saint Louise had not been much in favor of this choice, for reasons she makes known here, and also because she was afraid of displeasing the Visitationines.
could spoil anything because she is very zealous and sensible and does
good not only in this hospital but in all the charitable and needy houses.

Would to God, Most Honored Father, that I had sufficient strength and
love to recognize Divine Providence's loving guidance of us. Oh! how
loudly would I sing its praises! I must keep this short and be content with
inviting the Celestial Court to render to God the glory it can for this, and
you, our Most Honored Father, to whom our good God makes known His
designs upon us, to supply for our deficiencies.

This Holy Providence, which knows my attachment to my own plans,
allowed us to find that the Sister we wanted to bring here had a bad knee.
So we had to take another, whom it was necessary to change. Oh! let us
bless God forever for His mercies; I bless Him most especially for the grace
of being, Monsieur, your most obedient daughter and very grateful servant.

L. de Marillac

I think that a two-week stay here will really improve matters for us.

August 11 [1646]

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

832. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL, IN RICHELIEU

Paris, August 12, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am writing to you rather hurriedly to tell you that I praise God
for your leadership in your work and ask Him to bless it more and
more in Richelieu and elsewhere.

*Year added on the back of the original by Brother Deconneau.


1Antoine Portail, born in Béziers (Gard) on November 22, 1590, came to Paris to study at
the Sorbonne. He made the acquaintance of Saint Vincent there around 1612 and became devoted
to him. From the time of his ordination (1622) to that of his death (1660), he was the Saint's
For a few days now I have been wondering if I should ask you to come back to work on our Rules and to revise, if need be, what you told me should be changed. Because I presume that you will remember it, I ask you to let me know, since I could not give it the requisite attention at the time you informed me about it, and now I would find it difficult to make the change myself. This is because the Coadjutor\(^2\) is going to work on it. He now has the authority to approve our Rules, being the Archbishop’s Vicar during his absence. So, let me know again what you think should be changed in our Rules and in those of the Daughters of Charity.

You will find plenty to do in Saintes and in La Rose. We have sent M. Dufour\(^3\) to the former place and have given him M. des

\(^2\)Jean-François-Paul de Gondi, Abbé de Buzay and the future Cardinal de Retz, was the son of Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi, General of the Galleys, and Françoise-Marguerite de Silly. On June 13, 1643, he was named Coadjutor to his uncle, Jean-François de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris, and was consecrated on January 31, 1644. Although he played an active role in the troubles of the Fronde, the Queen, no doubt to win him over, obtained the Cardinal’s hat for him on February 19, 1652. Discontented with his influence and plots, Mazarin had him imprisoned at Vincennes. Becoming Archbishop upon the death of his uncle (1654), and consequently more dangerous to the Prime Minister, Cardinal de Retz was transferred to the château de Nantes, from which he escaped and went into Spain, then on to Italy. In Rome the Priests of the Mission gave him hospitality in their house, upon the order of the Sovereign Pontiff. Because of this, Mazarin very nearly let all the force of his anger fall upon Saint Vincent and his Congregation. After the accession of Pope Alexander VII, who was less benevolent to him than Innocent X, Cardinal de Retz left Rome and undertook a long journey to Prusche-Comté, Germany, Belgium, and Holland. He returned to France in 1662, renounced the archbishopric of Paris, and received in exchange Saint-Donis Abbey. Age and trials had made him wiser; during the last four years of his life, some persons even considered him pious. In this peaceful, studious, simple-natured man, concerned with paying off his numerous creditors, no one would have recognized the ambitious, flighty, and restless Prelate who had stirred up Paris and made the powerful Mazarin tremble. Cardinal de Retz died on August 24, 1679.

\(^3\)Claude Dufour, born in 1618 in Allanche (Cantal), entered the Congregation of the Mission on May 4, 1644, shortly after his ordination to the priesthood. He was first sent to Montmirail (1644), then put in charge of the seminary in Saintes (1646-1648). He was very virtuous but of a rigid and unyielding kind of virtue. In his eyes the life of a Missionary was too soft. He persuaded
Noyelles, who was offended by M. Dufour's spirit to a degree that is quite impressive. Good M. Le Soudier is in agreement with him and has written to me in a way that seems out of sorts. So, it would seem advisable for you to take someone in Richelieu, if possible, in place of M. des Noyelles, whom you will send to them. The man must know how to preach because he will have to conduct the mission in Saintes, while M. Dufour directs the Seminary. M. Bourdet would get along well with M. des Noyelles but I do not see anyone you could take away from him. I make no mention of Saint-Méen because the reformed Benedictines have expelled them from there by a decree of the Parlement. Efforts are being made to reinstate them; there is a Council decree to that effect.

As for M. Le Soudier, it will be easy for you to win him over.

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4Philippe des Noyelles, born in Amiens (Pas-de-Calais), entered the Congregation of the Mission on January 18, 1642, at thirty-three years of age, and took his vows on June 2, 1646.

5Samuel Le Soudier was born in 1609 in Carva (Calvados), entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 9, 1638, and took his vows in Richelieu on June 14, 1642. He was assigned to Luçon, and later to Saintes where he was in 1646.

6Jean Bourdet was born in Saint-Béat (Puy-de-Dôme) on May 14, 1614, entered the Congregation of the Mission at the end of 1636, was ordained a priest in 1640, and took his vows in 1643. He was Superior in Troyes (1642-1644) and in Saint-Méen (1645-1646).

7Parlement refers to the French judicial system. At the time of Saint Vincent, France had eight Parlements, each with its own legal jurisdiction, chief of which was the Parlement of Paris. They registered or gave sanction to the King's edicts, ordinances, and declarations, and supervised their implementation.

8The Benedictines of Saint-Maur had looked askance on the transformation of Saint-Méen Abbey into a seminary. They protested before the Parlement of Brittany, to which the royal letters patent of secularization had been addressed, as was customary, so that they could be verified and registered. When the Bishop of Saint-Malo became aware of the opposition, he feared for his plans and, instead of presenting the letters, turned from the direction of the court and requested that other letters be sent for registration and execution to the Great Council and not to the Parlement. In the meantime, the new requests required time, and the Parlement of Brittany, urged on by the Benedictines of Saint-Mélan, ordered the Bishop to produce the letters he stated he had received from the King. Confronted with evasive answers time and time again, Parlement forbade him, on June 1, 1646, to change anything within the abbey, and sentenced him to pay
Regarding La Rose, God has taken good M. Jegat, who was a pearl in the Company. He drowned in the Lot River which runs nearby, where he had gone to bathe, on his doctor's orders. Please have the customary prayers said and the usual conferences. Of the seven who should be there, only four Missionaries are left. As soon as possible, we shall send three men to fill the vacancies. If we can, we will send you M. Michel, a parish priest from Normandy. He

gave four livres in expenses. In addition, the King's attorney was ordered to ask the Superior General of the Congregation of Saint-Maur to send as many monks as were necessary to "carry out the functions and especially the divine service, in line with the devout intentions of the founders." On June 22, after an investigation de commodo et in commodo [concerning its advisability], the Great Council handed down its decision in favor of the Bishop. This meant open battle between the two authorities. On July 17, Parliament confirmed its decree of June 1, forbade anyone to put into effect that of the Great Council, under pain of a fine of three thousand livres, and issued an order to the Priests of the Mission to leave the abbey. At dawn on July 23, M. de Montbourcher, Counselor in the Parlement and Commissioner; M. Monneraye, substitute for the Attorney General; an assistant Councillor, a process-server of the court, the Visitor of the Reformed Benedictines, the Priors of Mont-Saint-Michel and Saint-Méline, the new Prior of Saint-Méen, five other Benedictine priests, and a lay Brother, presented themselves at the gate of the monastery. All exits were barricaded so thoroughly, wrote Dom Germain Morel, "that it was difficult to imagine that the barricades of Paris, so famous in history, could have been better built." The besieged soon had to give in and take refuge in the guest house of the abbey. The contending parties lived side by side until the beginning of August. Passions were at a boiling point and the slightest provocation resulted in a quarrel. Unbeknown to the directors, the seminarians and the servants took malicious pleasure in exasperating the monks. One day they filled the only well of the enclosure with all kinds of garbage. The monks had had enough and complained to the Parlement. On August 7, 1646 a decree was issued in which the court ordered that humble remonstrances be addressed to the King about the decision of the Great Council, and that the Priests of the Mission, the seminarians, and their partisans should leave the abbey and give back to the Benedictines the holy relics, furniture, and vestments, under pain of imprisonment. The seminary directors and their students obeyed. Such was the situation when Saint Vincent wrote the present letter.

The above information has been drawn from the manuscript of Dom Germain Morel, a Benedictine of the Congregation of Saint-Maur and Prior of Saint-Méline in Reannes, one of the main opponents to the entrance of the Priests of the Mission into Saint-Méen Abbey (cf. Bibl. Nat., fr. 19831). M. Ropartz summarized Morel's manuscript in a booklet entitled: Dom Germain Morel, Histoire de la sécularisation de l'abbaye de Saint-Méen. If the comments of Dom Morel must be read with a certain circumspection, we can trust the many documents which he has preserved for us in his manuscript.

Bertrand Jegat, born in Vannes (Brittany) in 1610, was ordained a priest on September 20, 1636, and was received into the Congregation of the Mission on October 9, 1638. He died in La Rose in 1646.

Guillaume Michel, born in Esteville (Seine-Maritime), left his parish of Saint-Valery to enter the Congregation of the Mission on June 19, 1646, at thirty-nine years of age. He left the
is a very wise man but has been in the seminary only three or four months.

I ask Our Lord to bless you in that place and everywhere else as well. Things must be hastened a little; M. Dehorgny is in a hurry about Rome.

I cannot write personally to M. Alméras. 11 I cordially greet him and the entire house with the tenderness known to Our Lord. Prostrate in spirit at their feet and yours, I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
Ls.C.M.

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

Congregation of his own accord before taking vows but later returned. In 1657 he was a member of the house in Sedan, and was in Fontainbleau in 1666.

11 René Alméras, nephew of Madame Gouzans, (late President of the Ladies of Charity of the Hôtel-Dieu), was born in Paris on February 5, 1613. A Counsellor in the Great Council at the age of twenty-four, he left everything—family, position and hope—in spite of the opposition of his father (who was to follow him later), to enter the Congregation of the Mission, where he was received on December 24, 1637. He was ordained a priest at Easter in 1639.

Saint Vincent entrusted to him important positions, such as Director of the seminary and Assistant of the Motherhouse. He appointed him to his council and often relied on his prudence to deal with lay persons in delicate matters; he also gave him charge of the retreatants. So much work ruined Alméras' health. The Holy Founder, convinced by personal experience that a change of air could improve one's health, sent him in 1646 to visit several houses in France and Italy. When he reached Rome, Alméras was notified that he had been appointed Superior of the house. He stayed there until 1651. On his return to France he took over the direction of Saint-Charles Seminary. In 1654 we find him engaged in distributing relief to the poor of Plessis and Champagne. He again made visitations of some of the houses of the Congregation and once again became Assistant of the Motherhouse, in which position he remained until the death of Saint Vincent. He was also Visitor of the Province of Poitou. He was in Richelieu when the Saint, realizing that his own death was near, begged him to return to Paris immediately. Alméras was ill, but he came, carried on a stretcher, and had the consolation of receiving a last blessing from the Saint. Appointed Vice- General by Saint Vincent, then elected Superior General by the Assembly of 1661, he governed wisely the Congregation of the Mission and the Company of the Daughters of Charity, until the day of his death on September 2, 1672.
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have not yet received any letters from you and cannot believe you have not sent me any. Just imagine how worried we would be if we did not have news of you from elsewhere. The former Mother Superior of the Visitation Monastery in Orléans, who passed through here on her way to Dieppe, assured us that she had seen you, and Abbé de Vaux wrote from Angers that you had been there and had left in good health. That has consoled us somewhat and

Letter 833. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original signed letter. The postscript is written in the Saint's hand.

1August 14.
2The year of Saint Louise's journey to Nantes. All the other details confirm this date.
3Saint Louise wrote to Saint Vincent on August 11 (cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 147, p. 159) that she had recently written him from Angers and also when she was in Orléans the previous week (cf. no. 831).
4Marie-Renée Rousseau was Superioress of the Orléans monastery (May 24, 1640-May 21, 1643). Mother Claude-Espérance succeeded her for two straight terms.
5Guy Lassier, Abbé de Vaux, who died on April 21, 1681, was one of the most notable priests from Anjou in the seventeenth century. For a long time his only ambition was to satisfy his vanity and his passion for hunting and other worldly amusements. In February 1627 he was appointed to Saint-Etienne-de-Vaux Abbey in Saintonge, and was named Vicar-General of Angers the following year, then Canon of Notre-Dame in Paris. Despite the obligations imposed on him by these dignities, he continued to lead a very worldly life. In 1632 he, like many others, was anxious to satisfy his curiosity as to what was going on in the Ursuline convent in Loudun. (It was rumored that some of the nuns were possessed by devils; Richelieu ordered the exorcism of the nuns and the execution of the Pastor, Urbain Grandier, for the practice of witchcraft.) The Abbé had cause to rue the day. It is alleged that, to his great confusion, one of the nuns, penetrating into his interior life, revealed faults he had never mentioned to anyone. From then on he was a new man. In 1635 he made a retreat at Saint-Lazare where he met Saint Vincent, with whom he remained in contact. He also had dealings with Saint Jean de Chantal, Jean-Jacques Olier, Father Surin, and Baron de Renty. In his native town of Angers, he established a Visitation convent, richly endowed the seminary, and founded the ecclesiastical conferences in his diocese. The Daughters of Charity of the Angers hospital had no protector more dedicated nor counselor more enlightened than Abbé de Vaux. He gave hospitality to Saint Vincent, Saint Louise and Jean-Jacques Olier.

We have only one of the letters Saint Vincent wrote to him (cf. vol. I, no. 416), but there are about one hundred addressed to him by Saint Louise. (Cf. François Charmet, *Les vies des saints personnages d'Anjou* [3 vols., Paris: Lecoffre, 1863], pp. 279-303.)
leads us to hope that you are now in Nantes. God grant that it is with the strength needed to work for this establishment. I beg His Divine Mercy to give you for this purpose an ample share of His Spirit, so that you can communicate it to your dear daughters and together with them diffuse in souls the fragrance of holy devotion!

I have nothing particular to say to you on what you will have to do with these gentlemen, trusting that Our Lord will give you sufficient light and counsel. He alone knows how ardently I recommend to Him every day your soul and your journey, and what great blessings I ask Him for you and your little troop, whom I greet in spirit with all possible tenderness.

I have been able to see your assistants here only one time. I am supposed to see them today, please God. Everything is going rather well, except for a little restlessness apparent in a few Sisters, but your presence will set everything right again, as will perhaps the conference I plan to give them next week.

Your son is not feeling well and is in bed at his doctor's home. I offered him our house and anything we could do to make him feel better, or two Sisters to nurse him, in the event that he wanted to stay where he is. He preferred the help of the Sisters, who have been with him for several days now. Monsieur Brin has just been to see

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She had arrived there August 8.

7Administrators of the hospital.

8They were Jeanne Lepointre, to whom Saint Louise had delegated her authority, Julienne Loret, "a majestic soul in a small body," and Elisabeth Heliot, the very dedicated and intelligent secretary of the Foundress.

9This conference, dealing with mutual respect and cordiality, is still extant (cf. vol. IX, no. 27, [August 19, 1646]).

10Saint Louise's son, Michel Le Gras, was born October 19, 1613. The instability of his character and his vacillation about a vocation to the priesthood were a cause of great anxiety to his mother. Ultimately he abandoned the soutane at the age of twenty-seven (1640). After ten years of further wavering, he married Demoiselle Gabrielle Le Clerc on January 18, 1650 in the Church of Saint-Sauveur. Saint Vincent witnessed the marriage contract.

11M. Vacherot. (Cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 155, p. 158.) Vacherot was a skilled physician who served the Motherhouses of the Priests of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity (1646-1648). He was very attached to Cardinal de Retz, whom he helped escape from Mazarin and followed to Rome in 1654. He died in Commercy in May 1664, at the age of sixty-two.

12Gerard Brin, born near Cashel (Ireland), entered the Congregation of the Mission on October
him; he assures me that he is better and that there is nothing to fear. That is why I beg you not to worry about this, but rather see to it that I may soon be rid of my own troubles with the Ladies of Charity of the Hôtel-Dieu, especially Madame de Nesmond, who are waging a fierce war against me for having allowed you to go. If you return in good health, as I hope from God's goodness, peace will soon be made. So please take the best possible care of yourself.

Take all the time you need so as not to rush anything or inconvenience yourself regarding your return. Our Lord will be pleased with this, since you will be doing it for love of Him.

It is in this same love, Mademoiselle, that I am truly your most humble and faithful servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
I.S.C.M.

Since writing this letter, I have received yours from Angers containing two important matters: first, the problem with Sister Perrette, and the other regarding the confessor for your Daughters in Nantes. For the first, we shall have to see if she changes, and do as you say. I am a little perplexed about the second point; however, all things weighed and considered, I think it better to hold to the

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13 Madame de Nesmond, born Anne de Lamoignon, was the wife of Théodore de Nesmond, President Judge of the Parliament of Paris, and sister-in-law of Madame de Lamoignon (Marie de Landes).

14 Sister Perrette was a source of great anxiety to Saint Louise (cf. Ecris spirituels, L. 178bis. p. 200, and L. 182bis p. 205). In the hope that a change of residence might be beneficial to her, she was assigned to Nantes. In the end, she ran away from Nantes and returned to her family in Sedan.
decision we made here, because this is the beginning and because there is some thought of using him elsewhere after a while. So then, you could take the spiritual Father of the Visitation, unless you think it better to act otherwise, based on the knowledge you have there. That is what I ask you to do.

I have just learned that your son is almost cured, and I am going to send word to your officers to come here immediately after dinner to discuss with them what will have to be done.

Please look after your health and pray to God for the greatest sinner in the world who is your servant.

V. D.

Once again I ask you to follow the inspiration Our Lord will give you concerning the Sisters' confessor.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, Superioress of the Daughters of Charity, in care of the Administrators of the Nantes Hospital, in Nantes

834. - JULIEN GUERIN TO SAINT VINCENT

[Tunis,] August 1646

I feel obliged to inform you that, on the feast of Saint Ann, a second Joseph was sacrificed in this town of Tunis for the preservation of his

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15 M. des Jonschières.


1Julien Guerin, born in Lancelle (Orne), had lived some time in the army before entering the priesthood. The reception of his brother, Jean, into the Congregation of the Mission on November 7, 1639, left vacant the parish of Saint-Maurice which Julien administered for three months. He resigned it at the age of thirty-five to come to Saint-Lazare, where he was received on January 30, 1640. In 1641 he went to assist the unfortunate population of Lorraine, but his health failed and he was sent to Richelies, where he took his vows on June 14, 1642. The missions he preached in the diocese of Saintes in 1643-1644 were a great success. Saint Vincent suggested to him in 1645 that he go to establish the Mission in Tunis. The valiant Missionary died in that city on May 13, 1648. His biography has been published in vol. III of Notices, pp. 57-82.

2Antonin de la Paix. The patriarch Joseph (On 39:6-21) had been imprisoned for spurning the
chastity, after resisting for more than a year the violent solicitations of his lewd owner and receiving more than five hundred strokes with a rod because of the false reports this she-wolf was making. In the end he gained the victory by dying gloriously for refusing to offend his God. For three days he was bound by a heavy chain. I went to visit and console him and to exhort him to suffer all the torments in the world rather than act contrary to the fidelity he owed to God. After making his confession and receiving Holy Communion, he said to me: "Monsieur, they can make me suffer all they want; I intend to die a Christian." When they came to take him to his execution, he made his confession once again, and for his consolation God permitted that we be allowed to assist him at his death, something that had never been granted by these inhumane beings. His last words, uttered with his eyes raised to heaven, were: "O my God, I die innocent." He died very courageously without ever showing any sign of impatience in the midst of the cruel torments he was made to undergo. Afterward, we had a very honorable funeral for him.

His wicked and lewd owner was not long in suffering the punishment due to her perfidy because, when the master returned home, he promptly had her strangled as the final measure in giving vent to his anger.

That saintly young man was Portuguese by birth and twenty-two years of age. I invoke his assistance, and since he loved us on earth, I hope he will not love us any less in heaven.³

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³This martyrdom is recounted in greater detail in the obituary of Julien Guérin (cf. Notices, vol. III, pp. 67ff).
Your Eminence,

The Bishop of Saintes is going to see [Your Eminence]. He will confirm what I had the honor of writing to Y[our] E[minence] regarding Bordeaux and M[ailllezais] for La Rochelle, and will tell him that the partisans of the Bishop of M[ailllezais] accept this treaty and will thank Y[our] E[minence] for it, and that the Bishop of M[ailllezais] desires that it might please the goodness [of Your Eminence] to lead him to hope for some abbey with [a benefice], to make up for the loss of revenue [he] suffers because of this treaty. [He does this] in such a way, however, that he submits to the will of Y[our] E[minence]. He has done very well in [M[ailllezais]] and intends to do even better in Bordeaux.

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Letter 835. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, signed letter. This is a first draft with some additions inserted in the Saint’s handwriting.

1Jules Mazarin (Giulio Mazarini) was born in Pescaia in Abruzzi (Italy) in 1602, studied in Spain as a youth, and served in the Papal army and the Papal diplomatic corps. He met Richelieu for the first time in 1630, and represented the Pope in negotiating the peace of Caraccio with France in 1631. He had hardly begun preparing for the priesthood (he received tonsure in 1632, but never became a priest) when he was assigned to other important diplomatic positions: Vice-Legate of Avignon (1634), then Nuncio in France (1635-1636), in which positions he demonstrated the ability and flexibility of the most subtle statesman. He became a French citizen in 1639, and Richelieu obtained a Cardinal’s hat for him in 1641. Before his death (1642), Richelieu recommended Mazarin to Louis XIII. He became the principal minister of Queen Anne of Austria during the regency of Louis XIV (1642-1661) and, until his own death in 1661, was the absolute master of France.

2Jacques-Raoul de la Guibourgé, born in 1589, was the widower of Yvonne de Charette and father of several children when he entered the priesthood. In 1631 he became Bishop of Saintes, succeeding his uncle; then he went to the diocese of M[ailllezais], and finally to La Rochelle, when the See was transferred there. Very few other bishops were so intimately associated with Saint Vincent. He died in 1661.

3Today, principal town of a canton in Vendée, in the district of Fontenay.

4Henri de Béthune, Bishop of M[ailllezais].

5An important treaty by which the See of M[ailllezais] was transferred to La Rochelle, the Bishop of M[ailllezais] appointed Bishop of Bordeaux, and the Bishop of Saintes named for La Rochelle. It was hoped that a decisive thrust would be effected against Protestantism by erecting a diocese in one of its main bulwarks. (Cf. L. Bertrand, La vie de M Billy Henri de Béthune, archévèque de Bordeaux [2 vols., Paris, 1902].)
And I, Eminence, continue my [poor] prayers for the preservation of Y[our] E[minence], [for the] welfare of this State and for the sanctification of your dear soul. I am, by the grace [of God], Eminence, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

836. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Paris, August 21, 1646

Mademoiselle,

I received the letter you wrote me from Nantes.¹ I praise God for all you tell me, particularly for your good health which I ask His Divine Goodness to preserve, and I ask you, for your part, to do all you can for this purpose.

I am glad you found that the lady you mentioned to me² is different from what you had imagined her to be. Since this is the case, you will do well to abide by your first decision regarding the direction of our Sisters, provided however that nothing has occurred to cause you to change your mind.³

M. de Vaux has informed me that one of the Sisters in Angers⁴ is seriously ill. Perhaps he has also notified you of this, and you have been able to think of someone we could send in her place, if need be.

The Queen has commanded us to send her two Sisters for the Charity in Fontainebleau. We have complied with this and chose

Letter 836. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 64.
¹Cf. no. 831.
²Mademoiselle des Jonchères.
³The first person proposed to direct the Sisters was M. des Jonchères.
⁴Sister Marie-Marthe Trumeau. She recovered, and subsequently served in various houses of the Company: Nantes, where she was Superior; La Fère, and Cahors, in addition to her work in Saint-Paul parish in Paris.
Sister Barbe and another Sister, whom I think we shall have to recall because she is too young.

837. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Nantes, Tuesday, August 22, [1646]

Monsieur,

I think you have received the letter in which I told you I felt Divine Providence wanted us to follow the order your charity had given us about the direction of our Sisters, and the grace His goodness has granted us regarding the difficulties with Sister Perrette about which I had written you. I think our Sisters will have as their ordinary confessor the confessor of the Visitation nuns, who would like to devote himself as hospital chaplain, in place of the one who has been there for a long time. I greatly fear that those good nuns are going to blame us for their displeasure at this. They do not know about it yet, and I shall do my best to have the honor of seeing them beforehand, lest they reproach me for it, even though I had no part in it.

I thank you very humbly, Most Honored Father, for your kindness to my son. This gave me great peace of mind. The day I had the honor of receiving your dear letter, I had a very strong desire to offer him to God and to surrender him entirely to Him. That helped me to bear the news your charity gave me.

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3 Sister Barbe Angiboust, who was placed in charge of the poor and the sick. She occupies an important place in the first twenty-five years of the history of the Daughters of Charity. Barbe entered the Community on July 1, 1634, at the age of twenty-nine, and was admitted to vows March 25, 1642. She was put in charge of the foundations in Saint-Germain-en-Laye (1638), Richelieu (1638), Saint-Denis (1645), Fontainebleau (1646), Brezane (1652), Bernay (1655), and Châteaumun (1657) where she died on December 27, 1658. In 1641 she was in charge of the Sisters serving the galley slaves. The conference on her virtues held in the Motherhouse on April 27, 1659 is very edifying (cf. vol. X, no. 109).

4 Sister Anne Scoliège, born in Nantes, entered the Company in 1646. She was principal of the girls' school.

7 A few months later, three more Sisters were sent to staff the hospital in Fontainebleau.

Letter 837. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1 Year added on the back of the original by Brother Dussorema.

M. des Jonchères.
I hope that our business with these gentlemen will be completed tomorrow. All that will remain is to see that the arrangements I requested of these gentlemen have been finalized, and a little time to see that each of our Sisters is exact in the practice of the Rules in her particular duty. However, the fear of satisfying myself unnecessarily and of remaining ill causes me to resolve to leave next week to take the Angers coach, if I still have the good health God is now giving me. Sister Jeanne Lepeintre told me that a clergyman was at our house to tell me to pass through Le Mans. I will not do this, at least not make a stop there, unless your charity instructs me to do so and informs me what I should do there.

I am very annoyed that my son did not accept the honor you did him of taking him into your house. Mon Dieu! I think my prayer for his total conversion will never be answered! It seems to me that the illness he had is more dangerous than he realizes. However, I am really afraid he is turning a deaf ear and is unwilling to allow fear to enter his mind, lest it urge him to a felicitous change of heart.

I know nothing about your health and that causes me a little concern. For the love of God, Monsieur, please reassure me.

I think the Ladies of the Hôtel-Dieu will be quite satisfied with me when they see that I did not fail to write. I am surprised at so much anxiety, since I know well that I do not deserve it. God knows this, and why does He permit it? It is to humble me.

I attribute to your charity some of the honors bestowed on us here. In the name of God, do not mislead anyone about me any longer. People take me for a great lady. I think there is scarcely a lady of rank who has not come to see us, and some people have even come from the country just for that. Oh! how I shall burn [for this] some day, and how greatly embarrassed

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Administrators of the hospital.

Jeanne Lepeintre had been sent to the Daughters of Charity by her mistress, Madame Goussault. Saint Vincent says elsewhere that she was "a very fine, wise, and gentle girl." Both he and Saint Louise had great confidence in her because of her intelligence and organizing ability. She was first sent to the school of the Charity in Saint-Germain-en-Laye (1642). In the spring of 1646, after installing the Sisters in the Le Mans hospital, she returned to Paris, where she was put in charge of the Motherhouse while Saint Louise was establishing the house in Nantes. Jeanne then became Superior in Nantes (1646), where great difficulties were being encountered. In 1654 she headed the foundation in Châteaudun, and in 1657 at the Salpêtrière (cf. Écrits spirituels, L. 64, p. 77, n. 1). In the manuscript Recueil de Pièces relatives aux Filles de la Charité (p. 24), we read: "During the lifetime of Mademoiselle Le Cras, she seemed to be a hypochondriac. Moreover, she could not be made to do anything she did not like, nor would she accept opinions other than her own." She was reprimanded for this fault more than once by Saint Vincent. Her last years were sad ones spent at the Nom-de-Jésus, where she had to be committed because of mental illness.
I shall be! May God’s Will be done; in it I am, Monsieur, your very obedient servant and unworthy daughter.

L. de Marillac

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

838. TO SOME RELATIVES

It is not without some special design of Providence that you have been slandered. God has permitted this for His glory and your own good: for His glory, so that you may be conformed to His Son, who was calumniated to the point of being called a seducer, an ambitious man, one possessed by the devil; for your own good, so that you may satisfy God’s justice for other sins you may have committed and of which you perhaps are unaware but which God knows.

839. TO JEAN BARREAU, IN ALGIERS

Paris, Feast of St. Bartholomew, 1646

Blessed be God, Monsieur, for bringing you safely to your consulate in Algiers! I ask His Divine Goodness to bestow His Spirit on you in order to serve Her Majesty and the people there in this same spirit, under the guidance of His Son and of the guardian angel He has given you.


1Abelly states that, because of the accusations of despicable calumniators, a celebrated Parlement, probably that of Bordeaux, instituted a suit against some relatives of Saint Vincent. Despite the entreaties of his friends, the Saint refused to intervene, except to moderate the severity of the judges who censured the slanderers, and, by this letter, to persuade his kinsmen to bear courageously this painful trial.


1August 24.
I cannot express to you the consolation my soul experienced on receiving your letter. Oh! how fervently I ask God to bless your stay in that place and all you will do there, as he has blessed your arrival!

I am writing to M. Nouelly about what is being done for those poor ransomed persons and the captives, which is nothing as yet.

Your good aunt came to see us to get some news of you. She was delighted with what I told her of your arrival, as was I with the goodness I saw in that dear soul. She recommends herself to your prayers and I, Monsieur, recommend my soul to you that God may be pleased to make it a sharer in the good you are doing there. I am waiting faithfully for news about this. In the meantime, I ask Our Lord to bless and sanctify your own dear soul more and more.

We have nothing worth writing to you at the present, except the blessing Our Lord has been pleased to give to the humble works of the Little Company. A mission that lasted three or four months has just been given by M. Gallais.² I cannot express to you the extraordinary blessings Our Lord bestowed on it and on the one in Genoa as well.

His Divine Goodness, which fortifies and humbles, has subjected us to suffering and shame because of the persecution we are undergoing in the Saint-Méen foundation, or rather the Bishop of Saint-Malo,³ who established us there. Blessed be His Divine Goodness who arranges things in this way!

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

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Barreau, Consul of Algiers, in Algiers

²Guillaume Gallais, a very talented Missioner, was born in Plouguenast (Côtes-du-Nord), was received into the Congregation of the Mission on April 7, 1639, at the age of twenty-four, was ordained a priest in 1641, and took his vows in 1645. He was Superior in Sedan (1643-1644), Crécy (1644-1645), and Le Mans (1645-1647).

³Achille de Harlay de Sancy was born in Paris in 1581, entered the Oratory in 1620, and in 1631 was named Bishop of Saint-Malo where he died on September 20, 1646.
Monsieur,

Only God alone could express to you the consolation you and M. Martin give me in all you are doing. O Monsieur, how gladly I am going to say Holy Mass that His Divine Goodness may sanctify your dear souls more and more! I have just written to M. Dehorgny what I just told you, asking him to send you the man he has designated for you, if he has not already done so.

Good M. Jegat, whom M. Martin knew, has died in La Rose. I recommend him to your prayers.

Our foundation in Saint-Méen is undergoing persecution from the reformed monks. They want to expel us from an abbey, a source of revenue for the monks, which the Bishop gave to the Company for its seminary, with the permission of the King and his Great Council. Help us to honor in this the expulsion of Our Lord from certain provinces and the acts of virtue He practiced. Please pray for these Fathers, whom I cherish more than myself and whom I have tried to serve at every opportunity, as our own Little Company.

At the same time, Our Lord, who fortifies and humbles, has consoled us by the marvelous and almost miraculous blessings He bestowed on a mission, lasting four months, that M. Gallais has just given in the same place, deep in the heart of Maine. I am sending the letter about it to M. Guérin in Tunis.

The things you requested were sent to you quite a long time ago. I think you will have received them and that the good Brother we sent you will be with you as soon as this letter.


1 August 24.
2 François Richard, born in Metz on February 3, 1622, was admitted to the Congregation of the Mission on September 24, 1641, took his vows in 1643, and was ordained a priest in Rome on March 31, 1646.
3 The Saint had first written "our house."
4 The Saint had added, "Benedictine," then he scratched out these words.
5 Sébastien Nodo or Sébastien Drugeon. The latter was born in Briennon-sur-Armançon
I think it is better for you to send Brother Pascal back to us and to hire instead some young boy to serve you, while waiting for us to send you someone else.

I warmly embrace good M. Martin and you, Monsieur, whom I cherish more than myself. I am, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Keep Brother Pascal as long as you [need him].

841. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Paris, Feast of St. Louis, 1646

Mademoiselle,

M. des Jonchères wrote that he accedes to the request you made him about the direction of our dear Sisters. It is impossible for me to write to him; the mail is just going out. Please assure him of my devotedness.

You will find the number of your Sisters increased by three, two of whom seem very good to me. I am not so sure about the third. *Mais quoi!* she came from a place one hundred leagues away. I told all of them we would try them out. They are from Poitou.

Your son was here yesterday. He is completely cured. I did not see him because I did not get down in time.

But when are you coming, Mademoiselle?

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(Yonne), entered the Congregation of the Mission at Saint-Lazare on November 1, 1645, and took his vows in November 1648.

Jean-Pascal Goret.

*These or similar words are missing from the original because the edges of the paper were cut carelessly.

Letter 841. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, copy made from the original letter owned by M. Buset, a lawyer in Paris (14 rue Marceau).

August 25.

One league equals about two and one half miles or four kilometers. Therefore, these three aspirants came some 250 miles to present themselves to Saint Louise.
Enclosed is a summary of the conference of our dear Sisters, written out by dear Sister Hellot. I have just read part of it and must confess that I shed a few tears in two or three places. If you are not coming soon, send it back to us after you have read it.

We await you with God knows what affection. I am, in His love . . . .

842. TO GILBERT CUISSOT

Paris, Feast of St. Louis, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I most humbly ask your pardon, prostrate in spirit at your feet, for not having replied sooner to the question about which you wrote me on the first of this month.

M. Vasse's affair involves an indemnity he has the right to take from Coëffort when the Superior is changed. We have made

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3Sister Elisabeth Hellot, a native of Paris, entered the Daughters of Charity in 1645. She was secretary to Saint Louise until her death in 1651 and used to draft the letters of the Foundress. During the conferences of Saint Vincent, she took notes which she immediately transcribed and verified.


1Gilbert Cuissot, born November 5, 1607, had been a priest for six years when he entered the Congregation of the Mission on May 14, 1637. After directing the Loup house, he was appointed Superior in La Rose (1640-1644), then at the Collège des Bons-Enfants (1644-1646), where he took his vows November 11, 1644. We find him next at the Le Mans Seminary (1646), and at Saint-Lazare (1646-1647). He was Director of the Cahors Seminary (1647-1662), and was in charge of the Richelieu house (1662-1666). He declared in writing that, at the time of the election of Saint Vincent's successor, he was hesitant about voting for René Almeras, who was in poor health. The Saint, however, appeared to him and determined his choice. He also declared that in 1662, while exorcising a possessed woman, he drew from the demon precious avowals concerning the Founder's holiness and the reward reserved by God for Missionaries faithful to their vocation. Gilbert Cuissot died in 1666.

2August 25.

3Notre-Dame de Coëffort, collegiate church in Le Mans, entrusted to the Congregation of the Mission.
arrangements with a Canon of Le Mans and Master of Requests for four hundred livres\textsuperscript{4} to be given him living or dead. M. Gallais will explain that to you, and he must be paid as soon as possible. I did not know about all these debts. What we can do is to try to pay Abbé Lucas\textsuperscript{5} here, and you could get some help from what the Farmer-General\textsuperscript{6} owes him. I am writing all this to M. Gallais.

I shall tell M. Bajoue\textsuperscript{7} what you told me about our Brothers learning to serve Holy Mass.

M. Gallais will be able to inform you about M. Pousset's business; you can decide together what is to be done, and then let me know.

M. Alain\textsuperscript{8} is suffering from tertian fever. He had his fifth attack yesterday. We are hoping that this will not amount to anything. As soon as he is better, I will ask him to answer your letter.

M. Gallais and you, Monsieur, can decide whether it is advisable to give the internal and external direction of the seminary to M. Leblanc.\textsuperscript{9}

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\textsuperscript{4}Throughout this edition the various denominations of foreign money have been left in French, since no adequate, unchanging value in modern currency can be assigned. One écu equals three livres; one thousand livres could support two priests and one Brother for a year on the missions and "it hardly takes less for those who stay at home." (Cf. vol. V, no. 1972.)

\textsuperscript{5}Councillor and chaplain of the King, Commandary Abbot of Saint-Hilaire in the Carcassonne diocese. He lived in Paris, rue Neuve-Saint-Honoré, in Saint-Roch parish. It is from him that the Priests of the Mission held the provostship of the collegiate church of Notre-Dame de Coiffort, and their titles with respect to the Hôtel-Dieu.

\textsuperscript{6}Farmers-General was a syndicate of financiers who bought from the State for a lump sum the right to collect taxes. Whatever profit they could make was used in other financial endeavors such as lending money.

\textsuperscript{7}Emerand Bajoue, born in Céaux (Vienne), entered the Congregation of the Mission as a priest on December 1, 1640 at thirty-one years of age, took his vows on April 24, 1657, in the presence of Antoine Portail, and died on February 28, 1671. He was Superior in La Roea (1649-1652), and Notre-Dame de Lorn (1652-1654).

\textsuperscript{8}Jean Alain, born in Dreux, entered Saint-Lazare as a priest on May 20, 1643, at the age of thirty-one, took his vows on April 20, 1646, and died around April 6, 1649. The tertian fever from which he suffered was a type of malaria marked by a recurrence of symptoms at forty-eight hour intervals.

\textsuperscript{9}Georges Le Blanc (George White), born in the diocese of Limerick (Ireland), was thirty-seven years old when he entered the Congregation of the Mission as a priest 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-Méd; in 1649 he sent him to Paris. In 1651 a certain Georges Le Blanc, with a degree in theology, was involved in an affair concerning Irish students of the Sorbonne, who
Your nephew is well, thank God. He returned to the seminary of his own accord and is doing well there.

I ask Our Lord to strengthen you more and more. I am, in His love, more tenderly than I could express to you, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
I.S.C.M.

At the bottom of the first page: M. Cuissot

843. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL, IN SAINTES

Paris, August 25, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I cannot tell you how consoled I am by the success of your visitation of Richelieu. I ask Our Lord to bless the others in the same way and to strengthen M. Alméras and you. I greet M. Alméras and ask him to apologize to his father for himself and for me because

signed a declaration against Jansenism. (Cf. Patrick Boyle, "Les relations de saint Vincent de Paul avec l'Irlande," in Annales C. M. [1907], vol. LXXII, p. 190.) According to Father Thomas Davitt, C.M., these 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.) There were three Irish confreres named Whiting: George, Francis and John, and one Frenchman named Charles Le Blanc. So, identification of "Monsieur Le Blanc" is difficult, and at times can be clarified only by the date or context of the letter.

Jean Cuissot, born in Moulins (Allier), entered the Congregation of the Mission on November 28, 1642 at twenty-three years of age, and took his vows on November 11, 1644. He had left the Congregation and been readmitted.


1René Alméras the elder, born in Paris on November 12, 1575, first married Marguerite Payot and then Marie Leclerc, the mother of his six children. He was secretary to the King, became
he did not go to take leave of him, for which he is more annoyed with me than I can tell you.

You will find plenty of work in Saintes, since Messrs. Soudier and Noyelles are not living a very orderly life, nor getting along with M. Dufour.

The latter's deep recollection has grated upon them. It may be that M. Dufour is going to excess. Not everyone can adapt to such holy exactitude as his. However, the principal fault stems from the freedom, though reasonable, of the others. Try to get them to settle their differences. If M. des Noyelles gives you no hope of adapting himself to the exact observance of regularity, it would be better to send him to Saint-Méen. M. Bourdet will be quite pleased with that. However, I do not know of anyone who can speak in public, who could replace him in Saintes. Please give this some thought, Monsieur.

I have just written to M. du Coudray that you will soon be with him, once you have taken care of matters in Saintes; I asked him to give you a warm reception and to make good use of your recom-

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Treasurer of France in Paris on January 19, 1608, secretary to Marie de Médicis, Comptroller (1622-1656), Postmaster General (1629-1632), and secretary for the execution of the orders of Marie de Médicis. He filled all these positions worthily. After he had given his son to the Congregation of the Mission, he himself entered it on March 2, 1637, at the age of eighty-one. He died at Saint-Lazare on January 4, 1658. (Cf. Notices, vol. II, pp. 453-461.)

2Samson Le Soudier and Philippe des Noyelles.

3François du Coudray, Superior in La Rose. Born in 1586 in Amiens, he was ordained a priest in September 1618, and in March 1626 was received into the Congregation of the Mission, of which the only other members were as yet Saint Vincent and Antoine Portail. He was gifted with extraordinary intelligence and knew Hebrew well enough to be judged capable of doing a new translation of the Bible.

The Saint chose him to go to Rome to negotiate the approbation of the nascent Congregation. He remained there from 1631 to 1635. We find him next in Paris; from there he went into various areas to relieve the poor, to assist soldiers, or to give missions. In 1638 the Saint put him in charge of the house in Toul. He was recalled to Saint-Lazare in 1641, spent part of 1643 in Marseilles evangelizing the galley slaves and founding a house, and in 1644 took over as Superior in La Rose.

Unfortunately, his vast erudition was not based on sufficiently solid theological knowledge. He maintained some unorthodox opinions and persevered in them despite several admonitions. The measures Saint Vincent was obliged to take to prevent him from spreading his errors darkened the last years of his life. In 1646 he went from La Rose to Richelieu where he ended his days in February 1649, in his sixty-third year.
I requested that he then go to make the visitation in Cahors in the same way he will observe you make it. The Bishop of Cahors is dissatisfied with M. DeJatire and asks for someone to replace him, and this is what is causing me difficulty.

I do not know if you heard about M. Jegal's death. On his doctor's orders he had gone to bathe, and drowned in a river that flows near La Rose. I cannot tell you what a loss we have suffered. When you get there, have the conference on him, if M. du Coudray has not had one, as I instructed him. Have someone write down what is said about his virtues and send it to us so we can have our own based on it. Only a few men here knew him.

I do not know if I wrote you about M. Le Soudier's departure for Salé in Africa, beyond the strait, on the Oceanic Sea, and that

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4 Alain de Solminihac was born in the château of Belet in Périgord on November 25, 1593. He was only twenty-two when one of his uncles resigned in his favor Chancelade Abbey (Dordogne), which depended on the Order of Canons Regular of Saint Augustine. He replaced the old buildings and had discipline restored. On January 21, 1630 Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld sent him full powers to visit the houses belonging to the Canons of Saint Augustine in the dioceses of Périgueux, Limoges, Saintes, Angoulême, and Maillezais. Alain de Solminihac was sought after in many places to establish the reform. Appointed to the Cahors diocese on June 17, 1636, he devoted himself body and soul to the Church of which he was the shepherd. He procured for his people the benefit of missions, visited the parishes of his diocese regularly, created a seminary for the formation of his clergy, and entrusted its direction to the sons of Saint Vincent. At the time of his death on December 21, 1659, the Cahors diocese was completely renewed. Since God had manifested the sanctity of Alain by several miracles, his cause was introduced in Rome at the request of the clergy of France. (Cf. Léonard Chastenet, *La vie de Mgr Alain de Solminihac* [new ed., Saint-Brieuc: Prud'homme, 1817]; Abel de Valon, *Histoire d'Alain de Solminihac, évêque de Cahors* [Cahors: Delsaud, 1900].) He was beatified by Pope John Paul II on October 4, 1981.

5 Born in Amiens, Guillaume Delattre was received into the Congregation of the Mission on August 10, 1642, at the age of thirty-two. He became Superior in Cahors (1644-1646), La Rose (1646-1648), and Agen (1648-1650), and died in Bordeaux in 1650.

6 Jacques Le Soudier. He got only as far as Marseilles. Born in Vire (Calvados) on October 28, 1619, Jacques Le Soudier entered the Congregation of the Mission on May 16, 1638, was ordained a priest in 1642, and took his vows in Richelieu on June 14, 1642. In 1646 Saint Vincent considered him for the foundation of the mission in Salé (Morocco). The project was abandoned, however, when Saint Vincent discovered that the Order of Recollects (Franciscans) had already made a commitment to that mission. In 1651 Le Soudier was in Saint-Quentin, where he remained for two years. He became Superior in Crécy (1652-1654), and Montmirail (1655-1656). A long illness interrupted his work and he died in Montauban on May 17, 1653.

7 The Atlantic Ocean; Salé is north of Rabat in Morocco.
the reformed Benedictine monks have expelled us from Saint-Méen on the authority of the Parlement. I have just received a letter from the Bishop of Saint-Malo, informing me that he has been notified that our men have been reinstated by order of the King, with the help of the captain of the guards of the Governor of the province. If the matter depended on us, we would recall our men, but it is the Bishop's affair. He has acted in his own name and interdicted the Saint-Méen Church, forbidding his people, under penalty of excommunication, to enter it while those Fathers are there. Mon Dieu, Monsieur, how this has grieved me! Would you ever have said that we would be tried in this way by those good Fathers, whom we have tried to serve with as much zeal as if it were question of our own affairs? I hope Our Lord will look upon the little we have attempted to do for them as proceeding from charity, quae patiens est. May it please the mercy of God that this be so and give me the means of serving them in future! I intend to do this more zealously than ever, with the help of God and I beg you to ask this of Him for me.

I am ending here, after recommending myself to your prayers and to those of the confreres, whom I embrace, prostrate in spirit at their feet and yours, and I am, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Portail, Priest of the Mission, presently at the Mission of Saintes

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8Achille de Harlay de Sancy.
9At the request of Achille de Harlay de Sancy, the Governor of Brittany, Maréchal de la Meilleraye, had sent fifteen cavaliers, under the command of Grand-Maisons, to rout the Benedictines from the abbey.
10*Which is patient.* Cf. 1 Cor 13:4. (NAB)

Throughout this edition use is made of the *New American Bible* (NAB) translation. However, when necessary, the Douay-Rheims (D-RB) translation of the Vulgate will be utilized, since the NAB omits some passages which the D-RB contains.
Monseur,

I have reported to the Queen what you and the Bishop of Maillezais have decided. She gives it her full approval and wishes all of it to be put into effect, point by point. To this end I am sending you the official letter of the appointment she has made of the Bishop of Maillezais to the archbishopric of Bordeaux, with the assurance that, on his part, he will be very glad to place his resignation into your hands.

As for the two thousand livres in pension and four hundred in benefices which you agreed upon, Her Majesty has ordered me, on her part, to assure you of them, so that nothing may delay the conclusion of this affair. In the meantime, I am . . .
Monsieur,

We have almost nothing to do, and yet I would not know how to get these gentlemen to move. They are keeping me here again for this week. We have one great difficulty: the custom of this town is to have a supplier who advances money gratuitously for the hospital dispensary, where his wife had been accustomed to come and prepare the portions of the sick; she still comes to distribute them whenever she wishes, although that is contrary to our regulations.

I presented this difficulty to the Administrators, who have been granting me all that I ask of them. I greatly fear that this will delay us and hold things up a little longer than I thought. I foresee great drawbacks to the peace and union of our Sisters, all the more so because this woman is unhappy with their way of doing things and is trying to connive, first with one Sister, then with another; I do not think I should leave them until they are free of this obstacle.

If matters can be settled this week, we shall leave on Monday, I hope. However, since that is not very certain, I beg you most humbly, Monsieur, kindly to let me know what I should do. This woman and her husband will finish their term in three or four months, and the Administrators plan to do away with this duty because of several other inconveniences. I need to know whether I should leave them with this hope, even though I fear that the disorders, complaints, and lack of proper service to the poor during that period might give people the impression that all these failings stem from our Sisters.

If you do me the honor of writing to me, I beg you most humbly, Monsieur, to address the letter to Sainte-Marie,1 lest it fall into the wrong hands, in the event that all these difficulties are really and truly removed and I leave on the day I indicated to you.

It is true that Abbé de Vaux informed me of the illness and relapse of our good Sister Marie-Marthe 2 in Angers; I have had no news since last week. Even if God has taken her, I do not think it necessary, Monsieur, to send another Sister yet, all the more so since our Sisters have made clear to me their need for the four Sisters they have been requesting for a long time. The Fathers of the Poor 3 asked me for them on their own initiative, when

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Letter 846. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1The Visitation Convent.

2Marie-Marthe Trueman.

3The Administrators or Directors of the hospital.
they saw that I was on the point of leaving Angers without discussing it with them, promising me anything I thought necessary to ask for their convenience. I promised them I would speak to you about it on my return and assured them we would send them someone as soon as possible, likewise two for this hospital here in Nantes. So, Monsieur, that makes seven Sisters we must ask of Divine Providence. May God be eternally glorified for the blessings He gives to our Little Company! I am always hopeful that it will grow, since your charity works so hard for its perfection. I cannot express to you the consolation my heart experiences from this, since God is showing me that I am in no way necessary to it and of very little use.

I felt very deeply the sorrow of Monsieur and Madame de Liancourt but am very much afraid that the way their son died 4 will be a great affliction for this good mother for a long time to come.

I was hoping that the illness of M. Vacherot's boarder 5 would have taught him a lesson but, from what I hear, he wanders about and even sleeps out of the house. He wrote to me and seems resentful again of having been put out of action and, in my humble opinion, he has placed and is placing a wall around his heart to prevent him from becoming aware of the state of his soul. I see all this evil but remain rather tranquil about it and no longer seem to be disturbed by it, although I greatly desire his salvation. I most humbly entreat your charity to ask this of our good God through the merits of His Son. It is, I believe, a matter for the Almighty.

My health is a little better than when I had the honor of last writing to you. You know all my needs but not my infidelities, which keep me from almost any exercise of devotion. I am always with people or taking care of my health. Poor me! However, Monsieur, I truly am—and God grant that it not be to my great shame—your most humble and very grateful daughter and servant.

L. de Marillac

[Nantes,] August 28, 1646 6

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

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4 Henri-Roger du Plessis, Comte de la Roche-Guyon, Marquis de Montfort, killed at the siege of Mardick on August 6, 1646.
5 Her son, Michel Le Gras.
6 Year added on the back of the original letter by Brother Dusournay.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I thank God for the grace you lead us to expect, of your coming soon to rest after your heavy labors. O Monsieur, how welcome you will be and how gladly I will embrace you! Please come then, Monsieur, and do not delay. I assure you that we will take very special care of your health; you will be the master of the house, free to say and do whatever you please, and my [master] in particular, I who have always loved you more tenderly than my own father.

If you need the four thousand livres in revenue you gave to the Feuillants and allocated to the Mission, we will return it to you most willingly, since it only seems fair to me that a founder who is in need should be assisted from the income of the foundation he has made. In addition, we will do more because if you need the capital

Letter 847. - Collection for the process of beatification.

1Louis Callon, Doctor of the Sorbonne, was one of those men "in whom holiness, learning, zeal, and simplicity were beautifully allied." (Cf. Placide Gallemant, La vie du vénérable prêtre de J.-C., M. Jacques Gallemant, [Paris, C. Costerot, 1653, p. 231.]) To these gifts were added that of fortune, for his parents had left him between fifty thousand and sixty thousand livres, a large sum for that period. In July 1626 he left the parish of Aumale, his native place, to enter the Congregation of the Mission. After a rather short stay at the Collège des Bons-Enfants, he returned to Aumale with the consent of Saint Vincent, who continued to regard him as one of his own men. The good he did in Aumale was considerable. He established a collège in his paternal home, bought a house for a girls' school, assisted the parish church, the hospital, and the convent for penitent religious. The Feuillants (a branch of Cistercians) of Rouen, and other Communities, likewise benefited from his generosity. On August 23, 1629 he gave Saint Vincent four thousand livres to establish missions to be given every two years by two priests of the Congregation in the Rouen diocese, and more particularly in the deanery of Aumale. He himself preached in the dioceses of Rouen, Paris, Meaux, Chartres, and Senlis. In the midst of his labors, he found time to write various works of piety: among others, Traité pour la préparation à la sainte communion (Rouen: Laur-Maury, n.d.), and Le catechisme de la chasteté honorable (Paris: Thierry, 1639). Conscious that his end was near, he left Rouen to go to die at Saint-Lazare, but his illness prevented him from getting beyond Vernon, where he died on August 25, 1647, in the convent of the Third Order of Saint Francis.

2In 1630 Pope Urban VIII divided the reformed religious of the Order of Chateaux (Cistercians) into two groups. The French group became known as the Congregation of Notre-Dame des
to support you in your old age, we will transfer it to you as we did for the pastor of Vernon.\(^3\) He had given us six hundred livres in revenue and, when he later asked us to return it, assuring us that he needed it, we gave him back both the interest and the principal. However, if you do not need it, you can still use the interest, Monsieur, as you have done up until now, and we will continue the missions we have begun and carried on with so many blessings.

We have been approached about an establishment in that area, which could be useful there. For my part, Monsieur, I shall never have a consolation greater than that of being able to please you, as my good and very dear father whom I cherish more than myself. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

848. - TO JEAN MARTIN, IN GENOA

[Late August 1646]\(^1\)

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Your letter, like all the others you write me, has consoled me infinitely because of all the matters about which you inform me and

\(^3\)To the Feuillants on November 23, 1650. (Cf. Arch. Nat. M 211, \#1.)

\(^1\)This letter evidently belongs somewhere between nos. 840 and 853, i.e., between August 24 and September 6, 1646. Since Saint Vincent was accustomed to writing every week, it is rather probable that this one was written on August 31.
the spirit in which you have written. I thank God for this and ask Him to sanctify your dear soul more and more.

I am worried about M. Blatiron's little journey in the intense heat, although I am greatly consoled that he has rendered this small service to God in the person of Madame de Guébriant, a person of considerable importance.

I have just now written to tell M. Dehorgny to hurry and send you M. Richard. I think you will have welcomed our Brother Bastien before receiving this letter. You will find him a very fine young man.

That, Monsieur, is all that my pressing business allows me to tell you now, in very great haste and with the assurance once again of my fidelity, which I give you with all possible humility and affection. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

849. - TO JEAN DEHORGNY, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

Paris, August 31, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I did not receive your packet this week. Nevertheless, I am sending you these lines to keep up our correspondence by all the regular mails, and also to tell you that I saw Father Charlet, who

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2 Renée du Bec-Crespin was the widow of Jean-Baptiste de Budes, Comte de Guébriant, Marshall of France, who died November 24, 1643, as a result of a wound received in the siege of Rotweil. He was buried at Saint-Lazare. In 1645 Queen Anne of Austria had entrusted to Madame de Guébriant the difficult mission of bringing to the King of Poland Princess Marie-Louise de Gonzague, whom he had married by proxy. Madame de Guébriant returned to Paris in 1646, and died in Périgueux September 2, 1659.

3 As indicated in no. 840, this could be either Sébastien Nodé or Sébastien Drueon.

Letter 849. - Bibliothèque Nationale, Rothschild collection, original autograph letter.

1 Étienne Charlet, French Assistant to the General of the Jesuits.
told me, with regard to our vows, that we should leave them as they are for the present.

I would be glad to know the thinking there, as to whether the perpetuity of the General\(^2\) requires the authorization of the Pope, or if that of the Archbishop of Paris is sufficient.

I am hampered by the refusal you received for granting faculties to the Missionaries in Algiers. I had a letter from them saying that they were well received and have already done much good there.

M. Le Soudier\(^3\) has left for Salé, an African coastal town on the Oceanic Sea, beyond the strait.

What shall we do about this? Will matters continue in this way after Bishop Ingoli?\(^4\)

The Capuchins here are requesting that no other Community be allowed to open houses in the towns of Greece, Africa, and Asia, where the King has Consuls and they themselves have houses, unless letters from the King are brought to the Consul. I have negotiated that but since the affair has not yet been settled, I will think it over.

I must admit that I am, I think, extremely attached to and zealous for the propagation of the Church in infidel lands, for fear that God might gradually do away with it here and that nothing or little of it will remain in a hundred years because of our depraved morals, those new opinions\(^5\) which are spreading more and more, and the general state of affairs. In the past hundred years, [the Church] has lost, through two new heresies,\(^6\) the greater part of the Empire and the Kingdoms of Sweden, Denmark and Norway, Scotland,

\(^2\)Until 1968 the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission was elected for life. In accordance with the 1984 revision of the Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation, the Superior General is now elected for a term of six years, and he can be re-elected for a second term of six years (cf. C. 105).

\(^3\)Jacques Le Soudier.

\(^4\)Bishop Ingoli was Secretary of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Propaganda Fide) from 1622 to 1649. For certain activities within France, it was necessary for Saint Vincent to deal with Propaganda Fide.

\(^5\)Jansenism.

\(^6\)The heresies of Luther and Calvin.
England, Ireland, Bohemia, and Hungary, so that she has only Italy, France, Spain, and Poland, and there are many heresies in France and Poland.

Now, these losses of the Church in the past hundred years give us reason to fear in the present misfortune that in another hundred years we may lose the Church entirely in Europe. So, keeping this fear in mind, blessed are those who cooperate in extending the Church elsewhere.

M. Martin informs me that you told M. Blatiron you are sending him M. Richard, and they are happy about this. I ask you to carry this out as soon as possible and to pray to God for me who am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.CM.

At the bottom of the first page: M. Dehorgny

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

Paris, September 1, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

[Your letter] of last month consoled me on the one hand and worried me on the other. [The consolation] came from the fact that you suffered none of the violence you expected on the following day; [the worry] stemmed from what you wrote me about not [being able to maintain] the Company, in its present danger. [With regard
to this, I shall say that, if the affair depended on the Company, we would have recalled you at the first summons. However, we are partners with a Prelate who is party to the suit, and the affair involves the welfare of other persons. If, then, we thought we were observing the evangelical counsel by not going to court, we would fall] into ingratitude, the crime of crimes. Moreover, the cause is just.

Furthermore, what risk does the Company run in all that? It means going to prison, you will tell me, for that is the worst one. Alas! [Monsieur,] of what else are we capable if not of doing that for [God]? Is it possible for us to see a hundred thousand men, from the lowliest of the common people [to Princes] of the blood, exposing themselves to danger, not only of imprisonment but of death, for the service of the State, and that Our Lord will not find five or six faithful servants courageous enough for His service?

Yes, but that is contrary to the Gospel maxim which forbids us to go to court and contrary to the custom of the Company. Saint Paul and Our Lord have advised us to suffer the loss of everything rather than go to court. But both of them were obliged to come to that in the end, and they lost their case and their lives in the process. The maxim of the Company is to prefer to suffer a loss rather than go to court. That is true, and I ask God to grant you the grace of being very faithful to the practice of this maxim, but that [is] when the
matter depends on us. Mais quoi! we are not the ones involved; it is a Prelate who has called us to serve God along [with him] in his diocese, whereas persons who have no right are driving you out of it. A Benedictine Abbey that is not part of the reformed Congregation, nor of any other, depends in no way on any other. No abbot has the right to enter the abbey of another nor the benefice of another Order. In addition, these good Fathers have no permission to go into an abbey to set up their reform there, except with the consent of the monks, the abbot or the bishop. Now, the monks have negotiated with the Bishop of Saint-Malo, in whom, as Abbot—which he is—and as Bishop, their right resides, [and the Bishop of Saint-Malo]² has forbidden their entrance. In qua ergo potestate?³

Yes, but the Parlement [supports them] and has brought them in. True, but this sovereign Senate [does not have the authority] either to bring into or maintain an individual in a property, if it does not belong [to him] by right. Furthermore, it seems likely that the one in Brittany, [which] has the reputation of having some of the best lawyers in the kingdom, [will not uphold] these monks, once [it is well] informed. Besides, the King [has given us the permission], and he has sovereign authority [over] the authority of the Parlements, and the power to overrule them. How can [you]⁴ know better the Will of [God in] temporal matters than by the orders of Princes, and in spiritual matters than by those of our prelates, each in his own diocese?

Yes, but this is the property of Saint Benedict, and consequently his children have the right to claim it when people try to alienate it from his Order and apply it to other uses. [I reply] that Church property belongs to the Church. If Saint Benedict were still alive, being a child of the Church, he would be very loath to deny this statement, especially since his Order's property was given to it by

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²These words, required for the meaning, were not found in the text. Achille de Harlay de Sancy was Bishop of Saint-Malo.
³On what authority, therefore? "On what authority are you doing these things?" Cf. Mt 21:23. (NAB)
⁴A word left out of the original.
the Church because of the assistance he rendered it at that time through seminaries of clerics, which he erected for the service of the Church and to fill up its benefices. Now they no longer do this, and the Church has ordered it to be done by the bishops. The King's edicts also oblige them to do likewise and to use benefices and other revenues for it. Is it not just that the same Church which gave that property to this Order for the creation of the above-mentioned seminaries—which it is no longer doing nor is in any condition to do—that the same Church should have the use of this small part of property, by authority of the Prince and the Prelate, to substitute for what these Fathers did formerly and do no longer, provided they do this with the consent of the rightful owners?

Accordingly, Monsieur, you are in the right, with proper authorization, based on a need of the Church and in line with its intention. And after all that, there will be some among us who are unwilling to suffer anything for this cause! Well! bon Dieu! what better opportunity awaits you to suffer something for God? I certainly see none. In the name of God, Monsieur, let us not be so little attached to God's service that we yield to a useless fear which may cause us to abandon the task He has given us.

Yes, but the Company will be blamed and discredited. O Monsieur, what pride there would be] if, under the guise of deference and humility, we [were to abandon] the honor of God so as not to risk our own! Oh! how far Saint Paul was from that, when he said that God must be served [per] infamiam et bonam famam, quasi seductores et tamen veraces! 5 I just said that you [have a just cause] and, since this is so, as everyone thinks, happy will you be] to suffer something propter justitiam, 6 [since by this] means the kingdom of heaven is yours. This is the [end for] which you have been called by God for the establishment and continuance of things pertaining

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5 Whether honored or dishonored, taken for imposters and yet we are truthful. Cf. 2 Cor 6:8. (NAB)
6 For justice' sake. Cf. Mt 5:10. (NAB)
to His glory, surely not like lions among sheep but like sheep among the [lions], to be torn to pieces and devoured.

May [His] Goodness grant us this grace!

I am, in His love. . . .

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851.- TO CARDINAL MAZARIN

Paris, September 4, 1646

My Lord,

This letter is to inform Your Eminence that a theology professor at the Sorbonne has died recently, and they are talking about proceeding to a new election in the same Faculty. The Penitentiary told me that the Jansenists are busy intriguing to have one of their party elected. Those who hold the common opinion of the Church are working in concert against them and have cast their eyes on a man named M. Le Maistre, who is very learned, preaches well, is one of the best writers in the world and belongs to the good party. He was asked whether he would accept the nomination, if he were elected. He raised an objection to this because a prelate is offering him a much more advantageous position. Because of this, My Lord, those gentlemen in the good party wanted me to ask Y[our] E[minence] if you would agree to guarantee him at present twelve hundred livres annuity on some benefice, or promise him that you will do so soon.

The advantages that will accrue from this for the Church, My Lord, are that Y[our] E[minence] will prevent this dangerous
opinion from being taught openly at the Sorbonne, will match a powerful genius against those persons, and will act with your usual providence in all matters of importance, in a question that concerns the glory of God and the welfare of His Church. Finally, you will be appointing a person on the side of the King and Y[our] E[minence]. The election is to take place next Monday. I need to know Y[our] E[minence's] will by Friday evening.\textsuperscript{3}

In the meantime, My Lord, I ask God to preserve Y[our] E[minence] and to sanctify your dear soul more and more. I am, in His love, My Lord, your most humble and very obedient servant.

\textbf{VINCENT DEPAUL}
\textit{i.s.C.M.}

\textbf{852. - TO JEAN BARREAU, IN ALGIERS}

Paris, September 6, 1646

Monsieur,

Only God Himself could make you understand how consoled we are by your successful voyage and the beginnings and progress you have made since your arrival. I thank the infinite goodness of Jesus Christ who has granted you this \textit{[grace]}, and ask Him to sanctify your dear soul more \textit{[and more]} so that, always and in all things, you may act in a holy manner.

Here is a little advice I think I should give you. It seems that you were somewhat too hasty in promising the postal tax money: (1) because it could happen that you might not find this money by the appointed time; (2) it could be that, if you borrowed this amount from merchants there, to be repaid to them in Marseilles, it could happen that the money would not be ready by the time they arrived in Marseilles, and this would bring discredit both to you and to your

\textsuperscript{3}September 7.

\textit{Letter 852. - This letter was published in the Revue des documents historiques, June 1873, p. 45, taken from the original which had been put on sale by Charavay.}
office. However, this was not the case because Providence allowed you to win the confidence of the reformed Mathurins\(^1\) to advance twelve thousand livres in ten to twelve days in Marseille to the person to whom you sent the order to withdraw them.

The second piece of advice is never to write or speak about conversions there and, what is more, not to support those that take place contrary to the law of the country. You have reason to fear that someone may feign conversion in order to provoke an affront. Please remember, Monsieur, what I told you the Jesuits formerly did in Pera\(^2\) in similar circumstances. We should really have a code, if you know how to use one, or perhaps I could send you one.

The heart of your affair is the intention of the pure glory of God; the continual state of interior humiliation, since you cannot devote yourself very much to exterior ones; and interior submission of the judgment and will to the person given you as adviser. As much as possible, do nothing without consulting him, if you are not obliged to give an immediate reply. Jesus Christ was the sovereign Lord of Mary and Saint Joseph; nevertheless, He did nothing without their advice. It is this mystery, Monsieur, that you must honor in a special way, so that His Infinite Goodness may be pleased to guide you in your present situation.

I wrote you that I saw your good aunt and how much she edified me. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

I plan to send you someone to act as Chancellor. We are urging the Fathers of Mercy\(^3\) to do this but, from what I hear, the disorder

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\(^1\)The Order of Mathurins, founded by Saint John de Matha, dates back to the twelfth century. It took its name from the Paris convent built on the site of an old chapel dedicated to Saint Mathurin. It is also called the Order of the Trinitarians.

\(^2\)A district in Constantinople.

\(^3\)The Order of Redemption (Order of Mercy) was founded for the redemption of captives by Saint Peter Nolasco in the thirteenth century. Its members are commonly known as Mercedarians.
among them is so great that there is no likelihood of our being able to arrange anything with them. The King has commissioned M. de Morangis\textsuperscript{4} to look into the matter. That is going. . . . We shall see what we can do about it. I praise God that you have taken that Father into your house.

*Addressed: Monsieur Barreau, Consul in Algiers\textsuperscript{5}*

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853. - TO JEAN MARTIN, IN GENOA

September 6, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I cannot tell you the consolation your letters bring me, particularly the last I received, dated August 17. Please write to me often.

I am worried because M. Blatiron has not yet returned from his service to Maréchal de Guébriant’s wife. I am afraid he may have fallen ill or that the lady’s ailment has gotten worse, God forbid!

I have word from M. Dehorgny regarding my request to him a long time ago to send you someone. He wrote me that he was waiting for the first rainfall to send off M. Richard, who is a fine man and from whom I hope you will receive great comfort. I truly experience the grief of the long labors you are enduring and feel none greater. I have continually asked M. Blatiron to do something to get the C[ardinal]-Arch[bishop]\textsuperscript{1} to moderate his zeal and your occupations, and I am planning to write plainly to him about this by

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\textsuperscript{4}Antoine Barillon, Sieur de Morangis, was made Master of Requests in 1625 and Councillor of State in 1648.

\textsuperscript{5}A note written by Brother Barreau tells us that this letter was received on January 22 and answered on January 25.

Letter 853. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.

\textsuperscript{1}Stefano Cardinal Durazzo.
the next regular mail. Meanwhile, Monsieur, please take the best possible care of yourself.

I praise God for the disposition he has granted those two priests who are with you to give themselves to the Company; I ask Our Lord to give them an ever greater share of His own Spirit. Please greet them most cordially for me as I greet your own dear soul, which my humble one embraces with special tenderness and affection.

I sent your letter to your mother; if she sends me a reply, I shall forward it to you.

We here are praying constantly for you and your work. Do the same for me who am, Monsieur, with all my heart, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

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

854. - CARDINAL MAZARIN TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

_In reply to your letter of the fourth of this month,¹ which you took the trouble to write me, I shall tell you that I have only praise for the zeal you manifest in all that regards the glory of God and the good of His Church. The care you are taking to put an end to the intrigues of the Jansenists, by the election of M. Le Maistre, is a fresh proof of this to me._

_I am pleased with the choice being made of a person who, according to your testimony, is worthy of filling the vacancy at the Sorbonne. In the meantime, you may assure him, on my part, of the twelve hundred livres annuity which you deem appropriate to be given him from some benefice, and this will become effective at my first opportunity._

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¹Cf. no. 831.
Believe, Monsieur, that I shall always be most faithful in rendering you service.

CARDINAL MAZARINI

Fontainebleau, September 7, 1646

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

854a. - TO BONIFACE NOUELLE, IN ALGIERS

Paris, September 7, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I beg Our Lord to make known to you the incomparable consolation your letters have brought me. I ask His Divine Goodness, who has chosen you from all eternity for a work as important as this to give you His Spirit of interior fidelity in His exterior submission to Saint Joseph.

O Monsieur, how many demons the prince of demons has assigned to tempt you in this situation! The work of our dear Brother,\(^1\) the differences of opinion, the mutual and reciprocal disapproval, and our natural inclination to have everything go our way—all these things have a devil that is forever at work to break the bond of charity with which God has united your hearts! But be steadfast, Monsieur; humble yourself profoundly for both of you; make many interior acts toward your dear other half, and you will rout those wicked phantoms and cast them headlong into the very depths of hell, so that they will never tempt you again. Just imagine,

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\(^1\)Brother Jean Barreau.
Monsieur, how much the holiness of your duty and the progress achieved in your way of acting enrages the demons.

In the meantime, apply yourself to your principal work, Monsieur. Visit, console, strengthen, and animate your poor slaves with the Spirit of God. That is the main and only reason for your work; everything else is subordinate to it.

O Monsieur, how well M. Chretien is doing, just as everyone would wish! Everybody recognizes that the Spirit of God is animating and guiding his own. Could you not write to one another? If there is any way to do so, I would be consoled by it, in order that this reciprocal communication might animate both of you and be of mutual assistance. If you do it, it should be done with such discretion that no one may find fault with your letters if they are intercepted.

I am writing two small pieces of advice to the Consul. The information in his letter, which you will anticipate with your own, will fill you in on what I am saying to you. Besides, I am extremely pressured.

Here is some news I have to tell you, to share with you our deep sorrow at M. de Beaumont’s imprisonment at the Parlement of Rennes, where his life is at stake. The Bishop of Saint-Malo established us at Saint-Meen in his diocese, where he opened a seminary for priests. With the King’s consent, he added to it the revenue of the monks in the abbey, with their consent as well, in conformity with the Council of Trent and the edicts of our Kings. The reformed Benedictine monks complained to the Parlement and incited them so much that they expelled us from that place. When we were reestablished there by the King’s authority, they took Monsieur de Beaumont prisoner and gave orders that we should be

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2Boniface Nouelty had been sent to Algiers to minister to the Christian slaves held captive there. Brother Barreau was sent to Algiers as French Consul, for the diplomatic service of the captives.

3Pierre de Beaumont, born in Puiseaux (Loir-et-Cher) on February 24, 1617, entered the Congregation of the Mission on February 23, took his vows on October 4, 1643, and was ordained a priest in March 1644. He was imprisoned as the result of the lawsuit which took place when the house in Saint-Meen was established. He became Director of the Internal Seminary in Richelieu, and afterward was twice Superior of that house (1656-1660, 1661-1662).
expelled from the province, contrary to the King's decrees, which are maintaining us there.

That, Monsieur, is why we have reason to honor the expulsion of Our Lord and the Apostles from certain provinces, and how our Little Company has begun to suffer in prison without having done any wrong. In this way, God has blessed its work, especially that of M. de Beaumont, in a particular way. He is one of the finest men I have ever known and one of the best workers in the Company. We are suffering in consequence of what is apparently their hatred of the Bishop of Saint-Malo because he had recourse to the Great Council instead of to them for the registration of our letters of establishment with the Parlement.

I share my sorrow with you so that you may see that you find your safety working among the infidels, while we suffer all these things in the midst of the faithful.

I am in a hurry to finish, while recommending myself to your prayers. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Nouelly, Priest of the Mission, in Algiers

855. - TO CLAUDE DE MARBEUF¹

September 8, 1646

My Lord,

I am the unworthy Superior of the Congregation of the Mission and I] take the liberty of writing you this letter, prostrate] at your


¹Chief Justice of the Parlement of Reims.
feet and those of the members of your Parliament, to beg you, by the compassion of Our Lord, [kindly to] protect the innocence of one of the [finest] men in the world, who is working for the salvation of the poor [or common people with] great blessings from God. He is Monsieur de Beaumont, one of the priests of our Company. The reformed Benedictine [monks] have had him put in your prison, where his feet are in chains because he was found [at Saint-Méen].

I beg you, My Lord, to consider that he [and his] confreres were called to that place by the Bishop of [Saint-Malo] for the purpose of establishing a seminary of young clergymen, in order to have them instructed in all things necessary [for their] state in life, in conformity with the Council of Trent [and the] orders of our Kings, who want the [bishops] to set up seminaries of priests in [their dioceses], where they may be trained according to the ancient custom of the Church, and to designate benefices for their maintenance. The Bishop of Saint-Malo established his [seminary] in Saint-Méen Abbey and appropriated to this work the revenue of the monks, with their consent, except for the pensions mentioned in the agreement made with them. The King confirmed this by his letters patent and by various decrees.

I am of the opinion, My Lord, that, once you and the members of the Court have been well informed about the affair, you will

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2We have already seen in no. 850 that, following an arrest order issued by the Parliament of Rennes, Pierre de Beaumont remained alone in Saint-Méen Abbey. When the royal sergeant, La Fontaine, came to the area with a small group of men to see that the orders of Parliament were carried out, he seized de Beaumont and took him to the Rennes prison. Disappointed at not having caught the important persons he thought he would find at the abbey, La Fontaine vented his anger on his one and only prisoner, and ordered the jailer to chain his feet brutally in irons. Dom Morel, who gave this account, adds that, at his personal intervention, de Beaumont received preferential treatment and was released after interrogation in the criminal chamber on September 4. The prisoner’s detention lasted only four or five days, and he was already free when Saint Vincent wrote this letter. (Cf. Pierre Collet, La vie de Saint Vincent de Paul, [2 vols., Nancy: A. Lesueur, 1748], p. 416.)

Saint Vincent’s behavior during the Saint-Méen incident was one of the main objections raised by the Devil’s Advocate at the process of beatification. (Cf. Noveae animadversiones R.P.D. Fidei promotoris super dubio virtutum tam theologialis quam cardinallium, quattuor difficultates, p. 9; and Ultimae animadversiones, p. 3.) The Procurator of the cause had no difficulty proving not only that his actions were irreprehensible but that he had conducted himself as a true saint. This admirable letter is the proof.
find no fault with it, except perhaps that these good Fathers are saying that the Bishop of Saint-Malo could not bring about the union of the said revenue nor approve it, seeing that it belongs to the Benedictine Order and not to the above-mentioned Bishop of Saint-Malo. The reply to this, My Lord, is that it belongs to the Benedictines in such a way that it depends on the Bishop’s jurisdiction. Therefore, the General of the Regulars has jurisdiction only over monks of the abbeys of his Congregation, and no authority over the others who [are not]. Consequently, neither he nor anyone else in the Order had any right to oppose the union of the said revenue with that seminary, considering that it does not depend on any Congregation.

To this, My Lord, I add another reason: since Saint-Méen Abbey is under the jurisdiction of the Bishops of Saint-Malo, it is probable that the Bishops are the [founders] of this abbey and gave it the tithes [it] possesses and a large part of the property, in consideration [of the fact] that this house served as a diocesan seminary for the training of young clergymen and furnished good pastors to the parishes that depended on it. This being the case, does it [not] seem reasonable, My Lord, that, since the reformed monks no longer do either of these things, they have, in fact, changed their status of workers in the Lord’s vineyard to something lesser, and the Church should recover its rights and apply the revenue it gave them to workers who are striving to do what they do not do?

Let us add to that, My Lord, that they could not ask the Congregation’s permission to enter the said abbey, seeing that the Bull of erection of their Congregation did not allow them to enter any abbey, even though they may have been called there by the monks, unless the Abbot and the Bishops consented to this. And far from asking the permission of the Bishop of Saint-Malo, who is the Abbot and who has jurisdiction over Saint-Méen, he has, on the contrary, in his possession a letter from the General of Saint-Maur, in which it seems as though the Bishop of Saint-Malo had asked him to put some of his reformed monks into that abbey, and this good Father excused himself from doing so because he lacked subjects to put there. Seeing this, the Bishop of Saint-Malo acted as he did both to
he did both to remedy the disorders existing in that abbey and to set up his seminary for the good of his diocese. After that, My Lord, were those good Fathers right to proceed so heatedly against their Prelate and the workers he placed in his vineyard, and [to have them] imprisoned and shackled? I do [not say] this, My Lord, by way of complaint against them. [There is no] man in the world who honors or [cherishes] them [as] affectionately as I try to do, by [the grace of God], as they themselves could tell you.

But if people fmd fault with the fact [that M. de Beaumont] returned to Saint-Méen contrary to the [Parlement’s decrees], rest assured, My Lord, that he did [so with the] simplicity of a poor Priest of the Mission [who does not] know what a lawsuit is, and who thought he was [doing the right thing] in following the orders of his Bishop and the King. You may believe, My Lord, that if the matter had depended on us, who are not involved in the case, we [would have] recalled [them] at the first writ issued.

This being the situation, My Lord, I have [recourse to] your goodness, since you are the principal [minister] of God’s sovereign justice in your [province], to request most humbly your protection for M. de Beaumont and for our Company. Besides the merit you will have for this before God, you will merit from all of us a perpetual obligation that will cause us to seek opportunities of rendering you our most humble services. I beg you, My Lord, with all possible humility and affection, to accept these offers for you and your family. I shall begin the prayers I plan to offer all my life for you, My Lord, and for the sanctification of your dear soul. I am, My Lord, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble and very obedient servant.
September 12, 1646

Saint Vincent de Paul announces to his correspondent that a priest of the Saint-Méen house has been released from prison, after spending four or five days there.

857. - TO JEAN DE FONTENEIL

Paris, September 13, 1646

Monsieur,

I beg you, in the name of Our Lord, to address this packet so that it can be sent and delivered to M. du Coudray in La Rose. I know I am imposing on you, but you know also that my services are at your disposition, and my heart as well. It greets yours with all possible humility and affection, because I am truly, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Fonteneil

Letter 856. - Collet, op. cit., vol. I, p. 415. The recipient was probably Antoine Portail. Through Charavay we learn that on September 12, 1646 Saint Vincent wrote him a three-page letter.


1Jean de Fonteneil, born in Bordeaux around 1605, was a friend and imitator of Saint Vincent. His outstanding qualities procured for him the highest positions in the diocese. He was appointed Canon of Saint-Seurin in July 1623, special archiepiscopal Vicar-General on November 1, 1639, Vicar in perpetuity of the parish church of Sainte-Colombe, then of Saint-Siméon in Bordeaux, Grand Archdeacon, Chancellor of the University of Bordeaux in 1650, and Vicar-General of the diocese on September 10, 1655. Like his friend, Saint Vincent, he was convinced of the great good that would result from seminaries, missions, retreats, and weekly meetings of priests to discuss questions of theology, discipline, or piety. For this purpose, he founded the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Clergy, who directed the ordinands' seminary in Bordeaux and the seminaries in Aire and Sarlat. They were given the chapels of Notre-Dame-de-Montaigu, and the parishes of Saint-Louis-du-Mainge and Saint-Simon-Cardonnet (Gironde). This Congregation
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I hope to write to you in more detail in my own hand, at the first opportunity. I cannot do so now because it is late and the mail is about to leave.

I cannot express to you my consolation at what M. Portail has written me about you, of which I was already aware. I ask Our Lord to give you an ever greater share of His own guidance and Spirit.

I am writing to Messrs. Le Soudier and des Noyelles. Please give them my letters unopened, as is done elsewhere. I am informing the latter, in view of the difficulties he is encountering in Saintes, to go to La Rose. So I ask you, Monsieur, to give him what he will need for that. As for M. Le Soudier, I am exhorting him to do his utmost to unite his heart with yours and to live with you with the requisite understanding and submission. If he were to act otherwise, and if in the end you are not satisfied with him, please send him to me; I will send someone to replace him. In fact, we shall send you a priest and a student Brother at the first opportunity.

I humbly recommend myself to your prayers and greet you with all the affection of my heart. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

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

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358. - TO CLAUDE DUFOUR, IN SAINTES

Paris, September 13, 1646

was short-lived, surviving its founder by only three years. He died in Bordeaux on March 2, 1679. (Cf. Louis Bertaud, Histoire des Séminaires de Bordeaux et de Bazas [3 vols., Bordeaux: Féret, 1894], vol. 1, pp. 207ff.)


1Samson Le Soudier.

2Clerical seminarians were frequently entitled "Brother." The context of the letter often dictates
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am so consoled at receiving your letters that I cannot refrain from complaining when I do not receive any, as happened this week, because this deprivation causes me to worry about you and M. Blatiron. I have not heard a word from him since he went to help Madame de Guébriant. As for myself, I shall try as far as possible to keep up the correspondence by all the regular mails. At present I still have nothing more to tell you except what I wrote a week ago, which is that M. Dehorgny is only waiting for the first rainfall to send you M. Richard, as he has assured me twice. This leads me to think that, if he is not already in Genoa, he will arrive there soon. The man is so good that M. Dehorgny is very reluctant to let him go. Since we cannot give you someone else suitable, we have also sent you from here a coadjutor Brother who is both exemplary and very supportive. Please let me know if he has arrived and what you think of him.

I now have high hopes that your work load will be a little lighter, especially if Monsieur Blatiron explains to the Cardinal-Archbishop\(^1\) the danger to which he exposes you by obliging you to work so continually and, in so doing, causes you to act contrary to the usual custom of the Company and the recommendation I have so often repeated to you to take a rest from time to time. I ask Monsieur Blatiron to make him understand this clearly, once and for all, because I hope he will take it into consideration.

Monsieur Guérin, who is in Tunis, informs me that he can easily communicate with you by letter, because ships from the principality of Genoa dock there frequently. I would be pleased if that were the

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\(^{1}\)Stefano Cardinal Durazzo.

whether Saint Vincent is referring to a lay (coadjutor) Brother or a clerical student.
case, both to serve as a diversion for Monsieur Guérin who has almost none, and for the consolation you would experience in reading his letters. Whenever I receive any, it is always with particular satisfaction.

I am not writing to M. Blatiron because I am not sure he has returned. If perchance he has, please let this letter be for both you and him.

I greet the two of you, prostrate in spirit at your feet, while humbly recommending myself to your prayers. Mine are intended to ask God to be pleased to preserve you, to grant you an ever increasing share in His Spirit, and to grant me the grace of letting you know how much I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
ls.C.M.

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

860. - TO JEAN-FRANCOIS DE GONDI,1 ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS

[Between August and November 1646]2

Vincent Depaul, 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 of the Mission to establish the Confraternity of Charity for the assistance

Letter 860. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, copy of the period. Saint Louise personally wrote on the back of this document: “A copy of a petition presented to the Archbishop of Paris for the establishment of the Daughters of Charity.” This petition is a second version; the first was published in vol. II, no. 773.

1Archbishop of Paris (1622-1654).

2The first date is that of the Sisters' entrance into the hospital at Nantes; the second is that of the approbation of the petition.
of the sick poor in all the parishes of your diocese where it can be conveniently established, 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 own pastors, a similar establishment in their own parishes. These include 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 the Charity has been established and is functioning successfully.

But because the Ladies who are members belong, for the most part, to a social class that does not allow them to perform the most menial and abject services that must be rendered, such as carrying the soup pot through the city, doing the bleeding, 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 has given the desire to assist the sick poor. These girls 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 charitable widows and other persons, who have contributed their alms to this. The result is 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 of these girls who work every day assisting the said sick 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 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 the little delicacies that they bring them every day to the Hôtel-Dieu. In addition, there are ordinarily

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3Saint-Merry.
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, Nantes, Richelieu, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 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 little girls.

And in order to provide these girls for all these places and all the others where they are being requested, the above-mentioned lady trains others in her own home and ordinarily has more than thirty of them, some of whom she employs 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 dress the wounds of the poor who come to them from the outside for this purpose; some to learn to read and write; and others to do the housekeeping.

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 contribute according to their means; partly with ordinary alms, but especially with the revenue that the late King and the Duchesse d'Aiguillon have charitably donated to them in perpetuity, amounting to around 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 as best they can to their spiritual welfare, particularly by saying some good word to them from time to time, counseling those who are going to die, that they might leave this world in a good state; and those who are recovering, in order to help them to lead a good life. And Our Lord so blesses the little service

\[4\text{Louis XIII died on May 14, 1643.}\]
they render in their simplicity that there is good reason to glorify Him for its successful results.\(^5\)

Because, 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, the petitioner fears that the same thing may happen to this company, if it is not erected as a Confraternity. That is why he represents to Your Most Illustrious Lordship, with all possible respect, that it seems desirable that you be pleased to erect as a Confraternity this company of girls and widows, under the title of *Confraternity of Charity of the Servants of the Sick Poor in the Parishes*, and to give them as regulations the following articles, according to which they have lived until now, and are resolved to live by for the rest of their days.\(^6\)

VINCENT DEPAUL
Most unworthy Superior General
of the Congregation of the Mission

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

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861. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL, IN LA ROSE

September 22, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
I am writing to you in haste from Fontainebleau,\(^1\) where I have

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\(^5\)At this point the Saint deleted a rather long passage of the first petition, probably because it contained an encomium of his works.

\(^6\)The Rule is published with other documents in vol. XIII, no. 145.

Letter 861. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original signed letter. The postscript is in the Saint’s handwriting.

\(^1\)The residence of the Court.
come to take care of the business entrusted to me. [I write also] to keep up my correspondence with you, to give you renewed assurance of my poor heart’s affection for your own most dear one, and to tell you, Monsieur, that the Bishop of Cahors² informs me that he will be very happy to have you make a journey to Cahors to see the state of our house and how things are going there. This is what I wanted to ask you by these lines, so you can set out as soon as possible.

I send Monsieur Alméras, Monsieur du Coudray, and the rest of the family my warmest greetings, humbly recommending myself to your prayers and theirs. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Since this is the Bishop’s wish, consult with good M. du Coudray whom I greet warmly, as to whether it is expedient for him to join you. If it is, I ask him to do so.

Addressed: Monsieur Portail, Priest of the Mission, presently at Notre-Dame de la Rose, in La Rose

²Alain de Solminihac.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

You did well not to attempt the ch...since affairs are in the state they are, Father Co....the Dominican feels we should be content...of M. from Paris, and he thinks that suffices and that...and which, supposing our intention of keeping ourselves in the...is better, because those of the Pope would be a dispo...to enter the religious state.

Messrs. Portail and Alméras are still in La Rose2 and will leave from there for Marseilles;3 they are trying to see that the entire little Rule,4 as it is written, is observed by everyone. You will see to this, since you are there.

I am very consoled by what you tell me about Bishop Ingoli's idea of making Messrs. Guérin and Nouelly Vicars Forane.5

Letter 862. - Provincial House of the Daughters of Charity, 80 rue du Noyer, Brussels (Belgium). This letter was put on sale in 1951 by M. Degrange, a dealer in antiquities in Paris. A description of this letter had been given in the Laverdot catalogue for January 1854, item no. 1060. Coote published two extracts from this catalogue in his edition (no. 862) and cited Laverdot's description: "A signed, two-page letter with a tear in the top outer margin, eliminating the end of seven lines on the front of the page and the beginning of four lines on the back." The text was published in the Annales C. M. (1951), pp. 373-374, and reprinted in Mission et Charité, 19-20, pp. 62-63. This edition uses the latter text; ellipses indicate the missing words.

1Saint Vincent was spending some time at the Orsinaux farm, which the Congregation had been given in 1644.

2Notre-Dame de La Rose, near Sainte-Livrade, in the Agen diocese. The Missionaries had been established there since 1639, serving the pilgrims and giving missions in the rural areas. M. Portail was making the canonical visitation of the house at the time, and Vincent was considering asking him to do the same for the houses in Ageney and in Rome, and lastly to take over the direction of the house in Rome.

3Père Portail and Alméras were supposed to pass through Marseilles, which they did. M. Portail went to make the canonical visitation of the house in Rome, where M. Alméras was appointed Superior.

4The first draft of the Common Rules was completed in 1642; their approbation was being sought in Paris and then in Rome. The first paragraph of this letter, in spite of the gaps, seems to be dealing with this question of approbation.

5In order to add weight to the authority of the Missionaries in Barbary (Julien Guérin in Tunis,
I am also consoled that you have sent M. Richard to Genoa; that little Community is held in high regard, according to what was told me by the Intendant of Justice of the King's army in Italy.

I share your view regarding the establishment of the Company in that Republic, as also your way of conducting yourself with Cardinal Ludovisi, and think you did well to limit yourself to the smallest space for your lodging.

Act as God inspires you regarding San Salvatore; the opportunity to withdraw is very timely, since you deem that establishment in that place has certain disadvantages. They would be very desirable to find some. They say about Saint-Esprit in Toul; they are beginning. The rural mission afterward with the odor. The Company in the administration of Saint-Amand parish.

The little persecution in Brittany has not yet abated, although the Bishop and the Coadjutor of Saint-Malo went right to the spot for that very purpose. Our prisoner was set free five days later. The Company is scattered here and there. Our Lord will bring them together when He chooses. As for me, I conclude by recommending

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Boniface Nouelley in Algiers), Bishop Ingoli, Secretary of Propaganda Fide, had them appointed Vicar-General of the Archbishop of Carthage.

6Republic of Genoa.

7Nicolo Albergati-Ludovisi became Cardinal-Archbishop of Bologna in 1645. He served as Grand Penitentiary from 1649 to 1687, the year in which he died.

8Perhaps San Salvatore Abbey, located some thirty-eight miles from Rome, where the Missionaries went to rest from time to time.

9The Missionaries were established in Toul in 1637. The allusion here is to the difficulty encountered by them with regard to the missions and retreats for ordinands. The Holy Spirit Brothers, who were serving in the hospital, felt threatened by the foundation.

10Undoubtedly the parish in the town of Toul, which had been entrusted temporarily to the Missionaries.

11Allusions to the difficulties in Saint-Méen.

12Ferdinand de Neufville de Villenoy had been Coadjutor to his uncle Achille de Harlay de Sancy since 1644. The latter died on November 20, 1646. Neufville succeeded him and remained Bishop of Saint-Malo until 1657, when he was named Bishop of Chartres.
myself to your prayers and am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DE PAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Dehorgny

863. - TO JEAN MARTIN, IN GENOA

Orsiny, September 27, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter of the eleventh of this month with the usual consolation your letters give me, because your soul is so dear to me and whatever comes from it is a pleasure.

I praise God for Brother Sébastien’s arrival and for the warm welcome given him by the priests with you and the Cardinal himself. I ask Our Lord to grant him the grace always to satisfy them and to edify them by his good example. M. Dehorgny sent me word that M. Richard had also left for Genoa. I think he must be with you today, and that he arrived in time to help you with the ordination work, in the absence of M. Blatiron, who you say is still being detained by Maréchal de Guébriant’s wife. I also praise God that she is satisfied with his services, and fully approve of his continuing to render them for as long as she needs them.

With God’s help, you will continue to succeed in your leadership and in your duties, because Our Lord’s work is accomplished not so much by the multitude of workers as by the fidelity of the small

Letter 863. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.

1Either Sébastien Nodo or Sébastien Drugeon.
number whom He calls. And because I know you are full of zeal and charity, I also expect to see great blessings resulting from your efforts, if our common Master is pleased to grant you the graces I ask of Him. I entreat you, Monsieur, to recommend my poor soul to Him, since I am, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

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

864. - TO RENE ALMERAS THE ELDER

Saint-Lazare, [September 28, 29, or 30, 1646]¹

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I prostrate myself in spirit at your feet and ask your pardon, with all the humility and affection in my power, for having inadvertently given you reason to complain about me because M. Almeras, your son, did not go to take leave of you before his departure. I told you, Monsieur, that I committed this fault without thinking; it is true that I did not reflect on it at all before he left.

This is how that happened. For a long time, we were not sure whether he should go to the country, because he was not feeling well and because we were uncertain about the places to which he should go. We had first thought of sending him to make the visitation of the few houses we have, beginning with Sedan, then

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¹An unknown hand added beside the address: “September 1646.” In fact, this is the only date which fits. Since the letter was written after the journey from Fontainebleau, and since the Saint had not yet returned on September 27, we can choose only from among the last three days of the month.
on to Toul, Troyes, Annecy, Marseilles, and Rome; not so much to make visitations as to try and see if this diversion might restore his health. We consulted the doctors, and they were strongly of the opinion that he should be sent to the country, but not to Rome, unless he was in perfect health when he reached Marseilles. A good deal of time was spent considering the route to Sedan, but when the very hot weather was upon us, we were fearful of sending him by that route because there are no coaches that can be covered, until after Troyes. This caused us to change our plans overnight, when the opportunity presented itself to send him to Angers, where he could go by covered coach as far as Orléans, and from there by river. The decision was made in the evening and he left the next day, without my giving a thought to his filial obligation to go and receive your instructions. I think the same holds true of him; at least he never mentioned it to me at all. From this you see, Monsieur, that my fault was not deliberate but a want of reflection on what I should do.

The letter I am sending you from your son will point out another failure to you, Monsieur. I received it some twenty days ago and am sending it on to you only now. This is another fault, but it is not so much my doing as it is of one of our Brothers, to whom I had given it before my departure for Fontainebleau and who forgot to forward it to you. I was quite surprised when I asked him on my return if he had sent it and he said no. Although, thank God, he is very careful, he was not so on this occasion. I think our sudden departure for Fontainebleau, where he accompanied me, was the reason. I am telling you all this, Monsieur, that you may kindly believe that on this occasion I was not lacking good will but memory, and, consequently, you may be more willing to grant me the pardon I ask for your son and for myself.

Monsieur Portail wrote me on the eighth of this month from our house in La Rose in the Agen diocese that your son and he have never felt better—those are his very words—and that they will be leaving there in a week for Marseilles. From there, one will head for Genoa and Rome, and the other for Annecy in the Geneva diocese, according to the instructions I am sending to them in Marseilles. Now, I am not certain which of the two will go to Rome,
or whether they will both go. I assure you, Monsieur, that your son will not go to Rome if Monsieur Merlet and our doctor, Monsieur Vacherot, think there is the slightest drawback in this. Your son's life is too dear to us, Monsieur, as is your own satisfaction. Even should the doctors judge that he can go, I shall nevertheless send word for him not to do so if, when he reaches Marseilles, his health is not as good as it was when he arrived in La Rose.

That, Monsieur, is our humble manner of acting with regard to your son, whom I honor, as God knows, and cherish more than myself. I am, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, Monsieur, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Alméras, Councillor of the King and his Master of the Chambre des Comptes

865. - TO THE SUPERIOR OF THE HOUSE IN TOUL.

1646

We go to court as little as possible and, when we are obliged to do so, it is only after having sought advice both within and outside [the Community]. We prefer to relinquish what belongs to us rather than scandalize our neighbor.²


¹The house in Toul had two Superiors in 1646: Jean Bécu (1642-1646) and Charles Aulent (1646-1647). The person to whom this letter is addressed, states Collet, "had undertaken some business matter in which he failed." We think this person was Jean Bécu.

²Having recorded these words of the Saint, Collet added: "Nevertheless, God did permit him to have a few lawsuits, some of which he won and some he lost; but this was because Providence had chosen him as a model for all states of life, and those who go to law need a good example." As a matter of fact, the only time Saint Vincent initiated a lawsuit was when he was driven to it, not for his own interest but for the interest of others. (Cf. no. 850.)