charity because this business needs to be settled promptly. For this reason I am sending you the letter for Sister Julienne, who will explain everything to you. Monsieur Lambert knows about it; all the trouble has arisen because of attachment to confessors. We really have to reflect on what could be done to avoid these unfortunate incidents.

I am very sorry to cause you so much anxiety by my poor leadership. Will your charity please recall that I already spoke to you about that poor young Sister, and you suggested sending her home. However, she is determined not to go back, and the advice Renée gave her is to allow herself to be put in the coach and to get off shortly after they leave her. These are bold persons, capable of doing great harm; that is why they are to be pitied. My thought is that this misfortune befalls them because they have the audacity to receive the sacraments with such bad dispositions. May God have mercy on us and grant me the grace of being always, my very dear Father, your most obedient servant and grateful daughter.

L. de Marillac

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

1130. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

August 30, [1649] ¹

Monsieur and Most Honored Father,

I suspected that I needed to come to this place, but I cannot give you an account until I have the honor of seeing you. Monsieur de la Hode, chaplain in Chantilly, came to see me to give me some advice. Apparently the whole family is being attacked from all sides. I do not know what our good God is telling us by this. I most humbly entreat your charity kindly

²Sister Anne-Marie. Saint Louise’s letter to Sister Julienne speaks of Sister Anne-Marie’s scandalous conduct.

Letter 1130. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

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

²Lanocourt, where Saint Louise had arrived on Saturday, August 28.

³The Daughters of Charity had been there for two or three years.
to let me know if I should stop in Chantilly because of the situation; I think it might be necessary.

I heard that Madame de Romilly has learned that the family of Monsieur Portier, who lives across from Saint Paul's, is all we could want it to be. She is supposed to speak to you on their behalf. I most humbly beg you, my very dear Father, not to mention the estate to her unless she mentions it to you, because the people who discussed this with my son told him that the parents are satisfied with the property. Under such circumstances it is better not to declare too openly what one has because that can be prejudicial if things do not materialize.

Hopes for the future, for property as well as employment, are quite good. Not that I intend or wish to deceive anyone—God forbid—but it seems to me that in the past the expense of preparing a man for a post was considerable. Then there is his intention not to squander what he has but to work to acquire more. This is what I strongly hope he will do, once he is settled. I most humbly entreat your charity to commend this matter and all the needs of our Company to our good God, to draw his graces and blessings upon it. I ask you to give me your blessing for love of Him, in whom I am, Most Honored Father, your most obedient servant and very grateful daughter.

L. de Marillac

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

1131. - To N

August 31, 1649

In this letter Vincent de Paul speaks of reparation to be made because of the desecration of some hosts by troops in the areas surrounding Paris.1

---

1Louise Goules, wife of Pierre Sublet, Seigneur de Romilly. She was a Lady of Charity who devoted herself to the foundlings in a very special way.

2There was question of a marriage plan for Michel Le Gras, but negotiations were unsuccessful.


3During the blockade of Paris, sacrilege and profanations were quite frequent in the environs of the capital. Unruly soldiers had broken into churches, stolen vestments, smashed the
Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

You are a little too sensitive about the departure of your Sisters. In the name of God, Mademoiselle, work at acquiring the grace of acceptance in such situations. Purging the Company in this way is an act of mercy Our Lord is granting it and will be one of the first things Our Lord will let you see in heaven. Meanwhile, you have the assurance that not one of those whom Our Lord has called to the Company will abandon her vocation. Why worry about the others? True, Renée and Mathurine have left, and apparently Anne-Marie will not stay much longer. Let her go; you will not lack Sisters. M. Thibault writes that he has three or four ready to go, if we want him to send them. I told him we would decide that on your return and you might pass through Chantilly on your way home; so please do so.

We had a general meeting yesterday; I have never seen the Ladies so enthusiastic about this good work.

Madame de Romilly mentioned to me the matter of which you are cognizant. She says that fifteen thousand livres will be given to that good girl, and she can expect the same amount after the death of her father and mother. I gave her the particulars of the bailiff's estate in presence of Madame d'Aiguillon who, like you, thought...
that only the broad outlines of things should be given. This good lady was responsible for making enquiries on the girl's behalf about the person and his estate. I saw Father Delahaie afterward and entrusted the affair to him; he on his part is supposed to inform me about it.

That, Mademoiselle, is all I can tell you at present, so it seems to me, except that I ask you once again to thank God for purging your Little Company in this way. I ask Our Lord to bless it, and I am, in His love, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, in Liancourt

1133. - TO MONSIEUR DES VERGNES, IN PERIGUEUX

Paris, September 4, 1649

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
I received your packet with the respect and joy I owe both to your person and to the reasons for consolation it contains. You can well imagine, Monsieur, how gladly I have thanked God for the graces He is granting to the Bishop of Périgueux and for the remarkable service he in turn is rendering to His Divine Majesty. I am much obliged to you, Monsieur, for sending me the enactments of his synod. I have found them worthy of their author and a great presage of blessings on his diocese. His incomparable piety

---

Letter 1133. - This original signed letter was most recently the property of the Augustinian Sisters of the Assumption, Paris.

1The first redaction had "letter."
2Philibert de Brandon (1648-1652).
and zeal have always led us to hope for such actions. May God preserve him for the Church for an entire century!

I make no reply, Monsieur, to the congratulations you offer me in his regard, except that I do not in any way deserve them. It is quite apparent that his calling is purely from God and is not the work of men.

I did not delay long in sending the journalist your note on the conversion of the nobleman, of which you are aware. May God be pleased to bless more and more the works of that great Bishop so that they may bear similar fruits!

You know, Monsieur, that we are all devoted to the service of the bishops. If the Bishop of Périgueux orders us to take charge of his seminary, we shall send him some of the best men we have, whenever he wishes. If you think it advisable to assure him of this, please do so—I mean in the event that he wishes it, but not otherwise. It is to be hoped that such questions will be resolved solely by the inspiration of God rather than by human persuasion.

I beg Our Lord to make us worthy of the honor of your benevolence and make me worthy of the honor I have of being, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
I.C.M.

In the event that His Excellency does wish to make use of us, would he kindly inform us two months before the establishment so that we may prepare as many workers as he desires.

Addressed: Monsieur des Vergnes, Officialis of Cahors, presently at the residence of the Bishop of Périgueux
I have received your letter with consolation on the one hand because it was your letter, and with distress on the other because there is good reason to fear that you may succumb to the allurements enticing you to abandon your vocation. Seeing you in this danger, I am bound to extend a hand to extricate you from it, as I do by my prayers and letters. I have already written you twice, and this is the third time, that you should return to La Rose or Agen.

I asked the Bishop of Condom if this was agreeable to him and he consented to it, once his major-domo had returned. Now, I know he is back with him at present and you, Brother, are not in your own house. Why is that? Do you not remember the lights God has so often given you in your prayer, causing you to take the resolution before His Divine Majesty and to testify publicly to the whole Company that you would rather die than leave it? And now, on the slightest pretext, when it is a question of neither death, nor blood, nor threats, you are surrendering without the resistance merited by such a promise made to God, who is constant and jealous of His honor, and who wishes to be served as He wills. He has called you to the Company; you have no doubt of that. He has even preserved you in it despite the efforts of your own father, who wanted to have you near him; and you preferred to follow the Gospel rather than please him.

You have lived among us in such an edifying manner that Our Lord has always been honored in your person. Do you want to go back on your word to Him now, misuse His grace, make light of His goodness, and fall into the regrets into which others have fallen through disorderly living? I have never seen anyone, to whom God has granted the grace that you have received from His goodness,
leave any Community without having his conscience bothered a
month later by the reproaches of God, and his life by a thousand
vexations.

"But," you will tell me, "I intend to please God always." Alas!
fine pretexts are never lacking, and if you examine yourself care­
fully, you will discover that it is not to make yourself better, more
submissive, more detached from the world and your comforts,
more humble, more mortified, and more clearly united to your
neighbor by charity, as you should be in order to become more
pleasing to God. Nevertheless, dear Brother, you think you are
serving Him and working out your salvation by departing from the
way of perfection; this is an illusion. If you had not already entered
on the way of the perfect, fine; but Saint Paul says that if those who
have once been enlightened and have savored the Word of God fall
back, it will be very difficult for them to be renewed by repentance. 3
How can you be convinced that you can preserve yourself by
returning to the world, since you have such a hard time overcoming
yourself when you are not in it? I am not calling the house of the
Bishop of Condom the world, but you would not be far from it, and
perhaps you would not be long getting there.

God allows us to go from bad to worse when we leave the state
in which He has placed us. One day the late Queen Mother 4
ordered Cardinal de Bérulle to send back to her a page who had
entered the Oratorians. This holy man replied that he could not take
from God a young man who had given himself to Him and that he
did not want to be responsible for his salvation. I have used this
example with regard to the Bishop of Condom so that he will
excuse me if I cannot consent to your leaving. No, dear Brother, I
cannot consent to this for the simple reason that it is not God’s Will,
and your dear soul would be at risk in it. If you believe the contrary,
at least leave only by the same door through which you entered the
Company. That door is a spiritual retreat, which I ask you to make

---

3 Cf. Heb 6:4-6. (NAB)
4 Marie de Médicis, mother of Louis XIII. She died on July 3, 1642.
before deciding on such a major separation. If you do not want to go to the La Rose house nor to Agen, then go to Richelieu; you will be welcome everywhere. The goodness of your heart has won all the affection of mine, and this affection has no other aim than the glory of God and your sanctification. I know you believe this to be true, and you also believe that I am in Our Lord . . . .

1135. - TO THE SUPERIORESS OF THE SECOND MONASTERY OF THE VISITATION, IN PARIS

Saint Lazare, Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin

I request our dear Mother Superior of the Visitation Sainte-Marie in the faubourg Saint-Jacques to permit a single entry into her monastery to Reverend Mothers de Saint-Jean and de Saint-Joseph of the Montmartre Abbey.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

1136. - TO RENE ALMERAS, IN ROME

Paris, September 11, 1649

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

You have good reason to protest as you do, seeing the services of M. Ferentilli so little acknowledged in France, but the C[ardi-
should be somewhat excused because of the difficulties the troubles have caused him, as well as those he has to face for the reasons I have written you. This is certainly not for lack of good will. I have always found that he has a great deal of it for that good Prelate, but he is powerless to express it to him.

M. de La Haye-Aubert's dispensation for the Aumale vicariate will be sealed on the first day the seals are done, I hope. I will let you know what it will cost.

We are patiently awaiting the Pope's blessed reply, and we believe in faith that God's Will will be made known to us in it; therefore, we shall conform ourselves to it without question, with the help of His grace. I am delighted that you are opposed to giving money for the success of this affair and that you want to leave the outcome to Providence alone.

_Mon Dieu!_ Monsieur, how ardently I desire that the Company be firmly established on this maxim, which is founded on faith! I only wrote you that crooked proposition to tell you that it had been suggested to me by C[cardinal] Gr[imaldi], and I assure you once again that I am most edified that you are rejecting it.

I am even more so by the Stations you made at the seven churches because of the dishonor to the Blessed Sacrament here, and I thank you for this.

M. Duiguin, who was in Ireland, has been here for a few days; he left Brother Patriarche in Saint-Méen. The latter has not yet recovered from his mental illness, which is why M. Brin sent them back to us, even though he is much better. I have been told that this good Brother greatly edifies the Company in his present state because he is so cordial, gracious, active, and totally given to God. We have just lost another man very much like that, who died here.

---

2 Jules Cardinal Mazarin.
3 The Fronde.
4 Probably the question of the vows. The vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and stability were optional for the members of the Congregation of the Mission. Saint Vincent was working toward making them obligatory for all those who would subsequently enter the Company. Six years were to elapse before his desire was accomplished.
5 Cf. no. 1131, n. 1.
in this house only three or four days ago, eighteen or twenty months after being received. The whole Community regrets his loss; I am still grieved by it, although in this as in all else I adore the ways of God with my whole heart. This good boy's name was Simon, and he came from Le Mans. Please pray and have others pray for his soul and for mine also. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.e.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Alméras, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Rome, in Rome

1137. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION, IN ROME

[1649]

The Congregation is growing in numbers and virtue, by God's mercy, as was apparent to me during the visitations and as everyone recognizes. Only I, wretch that I am, still go on burdening myself with new evil-doing and abominations. O Monsieur, how merciful God is to bear with me so patiently and for so long, and how weak and miserable I am to make such poor use of His mercy! I beg you, Monsieur, to offer me frequently to His Divine Majesty.

6Simon Bosson, born in the town and diocese of Le Mans, entered the Congregation of the Mission as a coadjutor Brother during Lent of 1648, when he was about twenty-two years of age. He died on September 6 or 7, 1649.


1 This date is called for by the Saint's mention of the visitations he had just made.
1138. - TO ETIENNE BLATIRON, SUPERIOR, IN GENOA

September 17, 1649

If you are finally being housed other than in rented rooms, there is good reason to believe that this is due to the powerful hand of God and His special goodness; for who could overcome so many great difficulties without Him? And who, without a special grace from heaven, could persevere constantly in this undertaking as your incomparable founders are doing? If, after so much effort and prayer, the matter is not successful, it will be a clear sign that God does not will it. Therefore, Monsieur, let us await its outcome with great indifference.

I admit that it is difficult for our Brothers to keep their temper when they are so overworked; we have some elsewhere who do little and complain a great deal, and who try the patience of their superiors. I praise God for the patience you have practiced toward your men, particularly with Brother . . . , when you overlooked his outburst. I am sure he recognized his fault, for forbearance brings that about better than reproofs which, nevertheless, must be given at the appropriate time and with the prudence God has given you. O Dieu! Monsieur, how necessary forbearance is for everyone and all things in general, and how gladly I thank God for the forbearance he has given you! Please ask Him for it for me, as much as is needed to merit the forbearance I have caused Him to practice during the sixty-nine years He has put up with me on this earth.

1139. - TO CLAUDE DUFOUR, IN SAINTES

September 18, 1649

God knows that the letters I receive from you give me very great
consolation because of the disposition He has given you toward slaves and convicts. This is a grace so precious that none greater can be seen on earth. What makes me doubly grateful to God for this is the fidelity of your heart, which bends and stands firm in accordance with the Divine good pleasure. Now, since the service of these poor people is an extraordinary vocation, you must reflect carefully on it and ask God to make known to us whether you are called to it. I ask you on your part to do this and I intend on my part to do so, not that I have any doubts about your determination, but in order that I may be more certain of God’s Will. Furthermore, now is not the time to go there: the plague in Marseilles has driven away the galleys and left the hospital without patients, and the plague in Barbary will make us put off sending anyone there. So, here is an opportunity for a little patience in this delay. It is also an occasion to merit better the happiness of such a holy work, by the good use of the lesser works to which you are devoting yourself, and these are still very great since in God’s house everything is supreme and royal.

1139a. - MARTIN LEVASSEUR, TO SAINT VINCENT

[Rome, September 29, 1649]

Monsieur,

These few lines are to inform you of the most remarkable things I noted in the life and death of M. Dunots and what was said in the conference.

---

Letter 1139a. - Municipal library of Lyons, Ms. 1285. The text used in this edition was printed in Mission et Charité, 19-20, pp. 76-81.

1Could this name have been misspelled? According to Notices, vol. I, p. 479, and vol. V, p. 385, Martin Levasseur was born on January 5, 1630 in Eu (Seine-Maritime), entered the Congregation of the Mission on March 7, 1651, and was not ordained a priest until Holy Week of 1654. On September 29, 1649 he was neither a member of the Congregation of the Mission nor a priest. During Saint Vincent’s lifetime there were no other Levasseurs who were priests. Charles and David Levasseur were coadjutor Brothers.

"Le Vazeux" could perhaps be the proper reading. Achille Le Vazeux, born in Bonneval...
held on this subject. There would be too much to relate if I tried to describe for you in detail the virtuous actions of this good servant of God. I shall mention only what seems most noteworthy and edifying to me.

We can reflect on this good servant of God both as a priest and as a Missionary. As a priest it can be said that he was a true epitome of the picture Saint Paul gives us in the Letters to Timothy and to Titus, and I think it would be very difficult to find a priest his age, in the active life in common like ours, who better put into practice what this Apostle directs us to do.

First of all, his devotion was sincere, straightforward, and solid, with no great indiscretion. It was not superficial and inconstant like that of many persons, which has more flame than heat. His meditation was almost continuous, except for the time he spent at Holy Mass and in the recitation of certain vocal prayers which he used to say daily. He was more concerned with prayer than with speculation. You know, Monsieur, how attentive and fervent he was in reciting his Office, and before he died everyone said he seemed like an angel in choir with the others.

As for Holy Mass, he never celebrated it until he had made a long preparation and, when possible, heard another Mass. His thanksgiving always lasted half an hour or three-quarters of an hour, and if he had not heard Mass before going to the altar, he heard it after he had said his own. On Sundays and feast days he usually heard three.

Piety and respect were obvious in his great care for the cleanliness of the church and the priestly vestments. He often used to sweep the church and the sacristy and was unwilling to let anyone else do it or help him, thanking those who tried to relieve him. He kept this up until the time of his illness, even though he was no longer sacristan. It was also he who washed the corporals and purificators. He was most careful to see that the ceremonies were observed and that we kept our hands clean because, he said, they were the instruments of the sacrifice of the Mass.

In his studies his only object was to rouse himself to the love of God and to the other virtues, as is clearly manifest in the writings found after his death. Except for a compendium of scholastic theology and one of philosophy, which he had copied with a few additions of his own, he had saved nothing from his time in Rome, except a synopsis of the Scripture Com-

(Burse-et-Loir) on June 22, 1620, was admitted to the Congregation of the Mission on August 24, 1639, received the priesthood on April 3, 1649, and shortly after ordination was sent to Rome, where he remained until 1653. He directed the Annecy Seminary (1653-1659), then was recalled to Paris and was sent to the Collège des Bons-Enfants; from there he returned to his family a few days before Saint Vincent died.
memoraries of Menochius which he had written during his first few months in Italy, and a few notes he had made on a Latin synopsis of sermons on the Mission and the Instructions of Murcantius. This is all that was found among his belongings, along with the rhymes based on Thomas à Kempis and a few litanies. Yet, he told me before he died that he had read all the books that are here, except for Ara, which he read only in part because he found it difficult. In all his own remarks there is nothing subtle or curious; everything in them is affection, devotion, and common things.

As Missionary

(1) A very great and extraordinary attachment to his vocation. He always spoke about it with appreciation. I found the following, written in his own hand: "Beware of imagining that you could do better elsewhere."

(2) His exactness is well-known and, to put it quite simply, he was the soul of good order in the house because of his good example and his carefulness to ring the bell exactly on time for the daily exercises.

(3) His fervor. He was never idle but was either praying, reading, sweeping, or working in the garden. For an entire year he awakened so punctually that, regardless of how cold it had been and even if the clock stopped during the night, he got up right on time. Once, beside himself, he said to me, Homo Dei apprehendo vitam aeternam. His conversation was usually about God or about virtue.

(4) His mercy toward the poor. He often said to me that it was very hard to stay here because the poverty of the good people was painful to him and made him very sad, when he saw that they could not be helped as they needed. He was always after me to see how we could assist them.

(5) His love of God. He often used to say, "We have to die; what are we doing in this world?" and he longed to be in heaven. One day, when a certain person did something wrong, he told me he was unable to see God being offended and that this caused him a pain similar to what he would suffer if someone tore out his heart. He often asked me to warn others of their failings. Once, when I told him that this was a waste of time, he replied that at least he should do it so as not to be responsible before God, and he strongly agreed with the maxim of the Jesuits, "Either good order or the door."

As a consequence, he was very careful in the confessional to give absolution only to those whom he felt were entitled to it. One day, when some priests of the Company questioned him about the opinion of certain

---

2 As a man of God, I am taking hold of everlasting life. Cf. 1 Tim 6:11-12. (NAB)
authors regarding necessary and presumed involuntary proximate occasions and relapses, he replied coldly that it could never be like that for him. Speaking to me one day of the ease with which a certain person gave absolution and light penances, he said, “O Monsieur, how difficult it is to have genuine faith regarding what takes place in the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist and not be more careful that they are not profaned.” When I shared with him one day that people were complaining about his penances and delay of absolution, he told me that we should let them talk and should consider God alone. He was fully persuaded that the compliance of confessors is one of the greatest reasons for the disordered state of the people. He could not hear the opposite being said without expressing his feelings. I know from experience what that did for certain souls in great spiritual distress who, by God’s grace, were delivered from it.

When the cavalier, Santi, was sick, he asked me to send him [Depart] to him, but the former was already dead. When someone else went he refused to go to confession to him. When I went to see him, he said he deeply regretted the loss of this good priest and that it had been a great consolation to go to confession to him. He said he had several confessors in Rome and elsewhere, but had never found any who had given him more enlightenment and consolation.

As for himself, he made his confession with such humility, compunction, and holy fear that while I was hearing him, there often came to my mind this passage of Holy Scripture, Ad quem respicient nisi pauperum et tremenlern sermones meos, and never have I given absolution with such joy and fullness of heart, for I seemed to see grace in him, so externally visible was it in this great servant of God.

Although it was almost always absolutely necessary for him to follow the custom of the Company to confess some sin of his past life in order to ensure the Sacrament, his soul was so pure that, in addition to the pence he would give him, he nevertheless often asked me to add to it some arduous discipline. Those are his own words.

His obedience was quasi modo geniti infantis, with never any objection. He often told me he was surprised that there were people who had trouble obeying. He said he had learned from experience that he had always been mistaken when he followed his own opinion, but when he followed that of superiors he always recognized the truth of the words, Qui

---

3Whom shall I respect but the poor and those who tremble at my words. Cf. Is 66:2. (NAB)
4Like that of a newborn child. Cf. 1 Pt 2:2. (NAB)
He often used to repeat the words of Saint Bernard, “He who follows his own opinion, follows a false teacher.”

Whenever he went some place, even for half an hour, he would kneel down and ask my blessing, most often at the door in the presence of lay persons. He did so with such humility and respect that those who saw him were moved. One person who happened to be there said to me, “O Monsieur, in your house you know what virtue is; as for us, we live like animals.”

When he had some scruple, he would seek me out and ask if there was any sin in that and whether he should confess it. When I told him no, he would go to the sacristy and vest for Mass.

As for his meekness, he never offended anyone and, even though he was sharply reproached on certain occasions, he never showed any sign of being humiliated or sad but always humbled himself.

His mortification is more to be admired than imitated. If I were to write you what he suffered for chastity, it would be a long story. Besides the ordinary discipline for which he had permission, he often came to ask my permission to take others. For a long time he used certain belts made of branches from the gooseberry shrub which he had twisted and adjusted for this purpose and applied to the flesh. The thorns from this type of bush are a horrible sight because he would use year-old branches. Just imagine that, Monsieur; and people think it is great, as indeed it is, that Saint Teresa disciplined herself with nettles. For a long time he slept on the bare ground. True, he did not practice these extreme mortifications the last two years of his life because he was forbidden to do so. He told me that the saints were honored with good reason because virtue was difficult to acquire and one really had to suffer before acquiring even a little.

As a reward God gave him great purity of body and mind. In his most recent communications he told me he no longer felt any of his past temptations, and for more than a year God’s mercy had aided him in that regard. Nevertheless, he was very prudent in conversations with women and never looked them in the face.

Lastly, the constancy with which he always followed virtue, and the perseverance with which he sealed all his good works. When he fell ill, he asked me not to leave him; the following day he went to confession and asked for Communion as Viaticum, after which he asked me to give him Extreme Unction as soon as possible.

He showed very great patience, never grumbling or complaining. He

---

5He who hears you, hears me. Cf. Lk 10:16. (NAB)
said he would not recover, and the morning before he died, he told me he had suffered extraordinarily during the night and that God had made him experience a sampling of all the pains the saints had endured, "even those of the holy martyrs," he added a little later. I dared not question him in great detail but I thought that this was some vision of the devil. He died in great peace, like an infant in the cradle. After his death I found among his papers a little piece of paper with protestations to God written in his own blood and carefully sealed so that it might not be read. I am sending it to you, Monsieur, along with the verses he wrote on Gerson and on the Gospel which I think are well worth saving. A Capuchin had asked me for some of them but I excused myself saying I wanted to send them to you. They are incomplete because he was unable to revise them and was doing this only for his own consolation. M. Blosquelet is asking me for his scholastic theology notes, and someone else for what he did on Sacred Scripture, and for a synopsis of the instructions of Menochius and of the sermons on the Mission, the points of which he wrote briefly in Latin. They ask that you, Monsieur, allow me to give these to them, if you deem it proper.

This, Monsieur, is what I had to tell you about the late good M. Dunots, but I think his humility has deprived us of the knowledge of many of his actions, which would serve as examples and give us much edification. I can say in all truth and simplicity that, in my poor judgment, it would be very difficult for a man to attain greater purity and innocence in this life than this good servant of God. That is why I believe he is in heaven, according to the words of Our Lord, Beati mundi corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt.6 Please pray to God for me, Monsieur, that He may pardon me the poor use I have made of the example of this good servant of God and grant me the grace to imitate him in some way.

I will just add a few more things here: (1) he always rose around midnight to say some little prayer on his knees. He did this with permission; otherwise he never would have done it, regardless of his great devotion; (2) he was extremely careful not to speak unfavorably of his neighbor, and he could not bear to hear people speak ill, even in general, of vices or disorders in certain provinces or towns, or of certain professions; (3) it was his custom to say, "Fathers, Brothers, let us do good; we will find it;" and when he was teaching some of our men, scarcely a day would go by, either in class or at repetition of prayer which he sometimes held in the absence of the superior, without his saying at the end, "Let us do good; we will find it;" (4) often—quite often, in fact—he used to say, "I want to

6Blessed are the clean of heart, since they will see God. Cf. Mt 5:8. (NAB)
die, I want to die," which showed how detached he was from the world and how he was thinking of eternity. But how can I mention everything? His life was one of constant dedication to God or to charitable works for the neighbor; therefore, it is impossible for us to express how much he is missed by lay persons as well as by the members of the house.

I am, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

Le Vasseyer
i.e.C.M.

San Salvatore, September 29, 1649

1140. - TO FATHER FRANCOIS BLANCHART¹

Saint-Lazare, Feast of Saint Jerome,² 1649

Reverend Father,

The bearer, Monsieur de Saint-Paul, is a monk of your holy Order and the brother of Monsieur de La Bourlerie, assistant tutor of the King. He wishes to spend a month in your house in order to see your holy observances and put into practice those which are in conformity with his intention to live and have others live in a small Community, observing the Rules of Saint Augustine, not in the exact manner of your holy Congregation but as best it can, short of

¹François Blanchart was born in Amiens in 1606. After a short stay at Saint-Acheul Convent (1624), then at Saint-Vincent Abbey in Sens, he came to Sainte-Geneviève Abbey, which he left to introduce the reform and take the position of Superior at Sainte-Catherine Convent in Paris, then at Saint-Denis in Rheims. His attainments caused him to be chosen for more important positions: Assistant, Visitor, Coadjutor General (December 14, 1644), and finally, Abbot of Sainte-Geneviève and Superior General (February 1645). The Congregation of Canons Regular of Sainte-Geneviève had him as Superior (1645-1650, 1653-1665, 1667-1675).

²September 30.


In 1837 this authentic letter of Saint Vincent was given by Monseigneur Weld to Henry Granville, 14th Duke of Norfolk. It was later given by Henry, 15th Duke of Norfolk, to his sister, a Daughter of Charity, Sister Mary Howard (Lady Elizabeth Fitzalan Howard), who gave it to the Central House of the Sisters of Charity, Saint Vincent's, Mill Hill. The letter was sent by Sister Howard to Saint-Lazare in Paris to be examined, and was declared to be authentic.
that. I have assured him that you in your goodness will grant him this favor. I entreat you most humbly, R[everend] Father, to consent to this. In so doing you will contribute to the sanctification of his soul and to the salvation of the souls entrusted to him; you will also be doing a service to a deserving person and to Monsieur de La Bourlerie, his brother. I assure you, Reverend Father, that I too shall be as much obliged to you as if you had granted this favor to me. I am, R[everend] Father, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
Unworthy Superior of the Congregation of the Mission

Addressed: Reverend Father Abbot of the Congregation of Sainte-Geneviève

1141. - TO PHILIBERT DE BREAUMANOIR DE LAVARDIN,
BISHOP OF LE MANS

October, 1649

Excellency,

I venture to write you this letter to assure you, with all possible humility and respect, of my perpetual obedience. I beg you most humbly, Excellency, to accept it and allow me to inform you that there are many priests here, even some of a certain rank, who are...
asking for benefices which were vacant and which you have
granted since your consecration, including the archdeaconry and
canonry. Owing to your failure, Excellency, to register your oath
of fidelity in the Chambre des Comptes, it is being alleged that you,
Excellency, could not dispose of these benefices.

The last person to bring pressure to bear on me in this matter is
one of the King's chaplains, who is making the request for one of
his brothers. He brought me a Doctor of the Sorbonne, very
knowledgeable in the question of benefices, to try to persuade me
that it is up to the King to grant these benefices. By the grace
of God, however, I stood my ground, and rightly so, I think.
Nevertheless, because there are a large number of petitioners and because
they might obtain these benefices by some other means, I have
thought, Excellency, that since we make special profession of
obedience to the Bishops and particularly to those who so kindly
allow us to be in their dioceses, as you so kindly do in yours,
Excellency, I feel I should inform you of this so that you might
have your oath of fidelity registered, in order to dismiss the pretext
of these persons here and of any others who could stir up trouble
in that regard.

I found it difficult to summon the courage to write to you,
Excellency, for fear that you might not be open to this. However,
the importance of the matter and the fear of failing in my duty
toward you have caused me to prefer falling into rashness than to
fail in fidelity in the service I owe you, Excellency. I am, in the
love of Our Lord, Excellency, your most humble and obedient
servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am glad you have received payment for the bill of exchange I sent you for fifteen hundred livres and consequently that you have paid back the amount you had previously taken, thinking we would pay it here.

However, I certainly am more surprised to learn that the Bishop1 never tires of giving you something. Seigneur Dieu, what charity! I had the happiness of speaking with the late Bishop of Geneva2 several times when he was alive. He was so good that God's goodness was clearly visible in his own. But I have never met anyone before or after him in whom this same Divine Goodness was more apparent than in the Bishop of Luçon. I am sending him a note of thanks for his most recent acts of generosity, more to avoid being ungrateful than to express my gratitude to him, which is so great that I cannot put it into words. May God grant us the grace of rendering to the Luçon diocese the services this distinguished Bishop expects of us and which we owe him for so many reasons!

I am consoled to hear that you are striving to render him all possible reverence, submission, and obedience; it would, moreover, be unpardonable for you to fail in such a just duty.

I am writing to Richelieu to ask them to send you by coach a priest for M. Thouvant's3 mission. I hope he will be with you two or three days after this letter is delivered to you. Before the close of this mission, we shall consider your proposal concerning M. L., and I will write to you about it. May God be pleased to bless your

Letter 1142. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.
1Pierre Nivelle, Bishop of Luçon.
2Saint Francis de Sales.
3Claude Thouvant, Canon and Archdeacon of Aizenay. (Cf. no. 907, n. 6.)
work and leadership and to grant me a share in the merit of your prayers and Holy Sacrifices! I cordially greet your little Community for whom, and for you in particular, I am in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Chiroye, Superior of the Priests of the Mission, in Luçon

1143. - TO RENE ALMERAS, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

October 8, 1649

M. Ferentilli spoke to you as a Roman and certainly as a friend, when he advised you to have presentable men. *Mais quoi!* what would M. . . and the likes of him do in Rome? You are not allowed to preach there or hear confessions in the house or teach the ordinands in public; *cui ergo fini?* ¹ Only to have fine looking men at the altar and in the refectory and to take them from their work here! This display of men, Monsieur, would certainly cost the Company dearly, and I am not sure whether there might not be something undesirable in this before God. To say that they will appear in the parish—if you ever get one—again, *cui fini?* And then, unless I am mistaken, there are very few sermons given and liturgies performed in the parishes of the city. If indeed Providence provides us with some work in Rome, you will soon have with you, not any of our older men but those who will contribute most to the welfare of the Mother of Churches. *O Jésus!* Monsieur, you would

¹Then, for what purpose?
really have to be well matched. The poor, who do not know where to go or what to do, who are suffering already and who increase daily, are my burden and my sorrow.

1144. - TO MATHURIN GENTIL, IN LE MANS

Paris, October 12, 1649

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

We already had the Chancellor's, word and a decree signed by the rapporteur to halt Hossard's proceedings until the verification of our establishment in the Parlement. However, when I spoke to the Chief Justice, he told me that this same Parlement would annul anything that might come from the Council, that in two weeks he would ask the Procurator General to come and see him, and that he would try to persuade him to hand down his verdict, which he has been withholding from us for two or three years. You can see, Monsieur, that this means you will have to drag out the affair with M. Hossard.

How can I have M. Aubert paid the twenty livres the farmer owes him, if he does, since we ourselves cannot get anything of what he is obliged to hand over to us? Please ask him to excuse us.

I am really distressed that the ordination has been turned down,
and I ask God to grant you the grace of rectifying this error at the first opportunity. I shall write about it so that they will find the means of having it—in fact, I think I have already done so—and also that everything possible be done for the growth of the minor and major seminaries. I am not writing to him now because I do not think he has returned from his journey.

I greet and embrace cordially your dear soul and the whole Community, for whom, and for you in particular I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

I have just learned that you have not been well. I am certainly very sorry about this and would be even more sorry if I did not hope that you are now feeling better. I ask this of Our Lord with all my heart, and I ask you, Monsieur, to do all you can to recover, sparing nothing that might contribute to that. I await more recent news on the state of your health.

Will you have room and could you find one hundred beds for a group of the ordinands? Please let me know about this in writing; they are obliged to pay their own expenses.7

At the bottom of the first page: M. Gentil

---

6First redaction: "May God forgive M. L. If he turned down the ordination, and may He grant him the grace of rectifying this error at the first opportunity! I shall write him to dispose himself to do this; in fact, I think I have already done so, and also that he should do all he can." The correction was made in the Saint's own handwriting.

7The last paragraph, which begins with "Will you have room," is in the Saint's handwriting.
1145. - CARDINAL MAZARIN TO SAINT VINCENT

October 13, 1649

Monsieur,

I am much obliged to you for your good advice and for all you wrote me in your letter of the fourth of this month.¹ I have received all this with the confidence and esteem it deserves, and truly a wiser argument or one more full of affection for me cannot be found. I thank you a thousand times, asking that I might continue to benefit from your dutiful attention in similar circumstances. In the meantime, to repay you for this, I shall seek opportunities for expressing to you, better than by these lines, that I am . . . .

1146. - ETIENNE BLATRON, SUPERIOR IN GENOA, TO SAINT VINCENT

October 19, 1649

Monsieur,

Some time ago I wrote you regarding the virtue I had remarked in Monsieur Brunet's life. Now I would like to be able to recall that and many other [acts of virtue] I saw him practice, which I should have noted and tried to imitate if I had been mindful enough of my own good. We held a conference on this subject and I had intended to send you a summary of it right away; however, our constant work does not allow us to do anything leisurely but always in haste, as I am now doing. More than my work, however, I beg you to accept my good will. Anything I could tell you about this good servant of God is but a shadow in comparison with the truth. I had asked Monsieur Portail to write a summary of his principal acts of virtue, but he told me that this was too difficult a request, and that his acts of virtue were so numerous and excellent that a ream of paper could not contain them. He added that his virtues could be better admired than written down because they were

¹This letter is no longer extant.

Letter 1145. - Archives for Foreign Affairs, Mémoires et Documents, France, Ms. 264, f° 487, copy.

Letter 1146. - Lyons manuscript, f° 223ff.
sound and hidden, and his life was not showy and pompous but solid and interior.

"Among other things," he said, "I admired his deep humility, his admirable gentleness, and his resignation and most perfect conformity to the Will of God. What was most outstanding, however, was his constant, unvarying perseverance in these virtues, so much so that, even though he was old and a senior member, he did not make a show of this and act like an emeritus miles, but seemed rather like a child or a seminarian in the practice of humility and obedience, as in all else." Up to this point, I am quoting Monsieur Almiras.

Following are some of the things our priests in Genoa remarked about this good servant of God:

A very profound humility, always considering himself as the least. He took special pleasure in working at the lowliest duties and sought every opportunity to perform them. When there was sweeping to be done, he was usually the first on hand and often cut short his recreation to go to the kitchen and wash the dishes. He considered himself fortunate when no one could be found to serve the Masses because then he could serve them himself. If at times he made a little error in serving them, he immediately humbled himself and knelt at the feet of the priest to ask his pardon. If he noticed that anyone had muddy shoes, he would watch for a time when no one was looking and would clean the shoes on the quiet. He very humbly accepted the clothes that were brought to him and personally returned those he took off, not wanting to inconvenience the Brothers who were supposed to come and pick them up. He never complained about a cassock being too long or too short or badly made. When he went out with a member of the Company, he always tried to give the right side to his companion, even if the latter were younger; if he could not take the lowest place, he became embarrassed and would blush, making it clear that he was not just being polite in what he did but was doing it through a genuine sentiment of humility.

This same virtue was the reason why we never heard him argue with anyone. If in conversation he at times encountered someone who had an opinion different from his, he immediately condescended with a gracious smile, submitting his judgment to that of the other person. One day, while he was traveling on foot from Alet to Marseilles, he hurt his leg near Narbonne. After staying a week there with his companion in the hope of getting on a boat, they were obliged to go by land. Since they could not go on horseback because they were short of money, and in addition good
Monsieur Brunet was no longer able to walk, they bought a donkey to carry him and their coats, without saddle or stirrups.

He traveled one hundred and twenty leagues in this manner. I could never convey to you the joy in his heart, which he also manifested exteriorly at seeing himself on that animal, even though he was often taunted and followed by children who pointed at him and shouted after him. During missions, although he had a bad leg, as we know, he was unwilling to go on horseback unless everyone else did the same. In that case he would choose the worst and the least comfortable horse, and delighted in riding without saddle or bridle through places where he was very well known. Those who saw and knew him were astonished and in admiration of him.

His great obedience was apparent in his perfect resignation at remaining wherever he was assigned and in doing whatever duty or work people wanted him to do. He was sent from Notre-Dame de la Rose to Alet, where he was indescribably happy with the conversation of the Bishop of Alet 2 and the great good he could do for souls. He was there only three months, and when he received instructions to leave, he was not in the least upset. Having been sent later from Rome to Genoa, he had no sooner arrived than there was talk of sending him back to Rome. He was always indifferent and ready to go wherever obedience might call him. One day he was assigned as companion to a priest who was going out. He immediately got ready to accompany him despite the fact that he had been suffering from diarrhea for three days. His companion remarked this and asked him why he had not told him about his ailment. He replied that he did not think he should excuse himself when obedience was calling. In this he showed how obedient and mortified he was. He was extremely mortified in everything, and what was most admirable was that he tried so hard to conceal his virtue that we are aware of only the smallest part of it.

His mortification made him so punctual and obedient to all the house regulations that he seemed to have no other desire except to obey, so much so that the following Scripture text cannot apply to him: Proni sunt sensus hominis ad malum ab adolescentia. 3 He was so mortified in speech that he was never found talking out of time, and followed closely the counsel of the wise man, Os sapientis in corde suo. 4 If necessity obliged him to speak, he did so in a low tone and in few words. He was abstemious at table; when unusual fruits or dishes a little better than usual were served, he would

---

2 Nicolas Pavillon (1597-1677).
3 The desires of man's heart are prone to evil from his youth. Cf. On 8:21. (NAB)
not touch them, and on such occasions the Brothers used to say to one another that Monsieur Brunet's share would remain intact. What they had thought they often saw come to pass.

He wore a small iron chain against his flesh and said he was the slave of Jesus Christ. Around his neck he wore a six-inch figure of the Crucified but with no cross; it had three rather long, sharp nails which he often put next to his bare skin to share and honor the sufferings of Our Lord Jesus Christ, mortificationem Jesu Christi in corpore circumferens, in accord with Saint Paul's advice. He never complained of cold, heat, weariness, food, drink, sleeping quarters, or the inconvenience of his room. He was lodged in a little cubbyhole under a stairway where there was just a small window and not even a chair on which to sit, and nobody noticed this. He never said a word about it and was unwilling to get a chair for himself, until someone in the house found him on his knees writing and brought him one.

If paradise is the reward of the poor in spirit, Monsieur Brunet will have a large share in it, since he had no attachment for the things of this earth; that was quite evident. Whenever he received a medal, booklet, rosary, or something similar for his own use, he would accept it only on condition of being able to give it away when charity demanded it. In fact, he used to give whatever he had to the first person who asked for it. When he was asked why he gave these things away so easily, he replied that an act of charity was worth more than all the possessions in the world. If, by chance, he forgot or lost something, he was not at all upset but would say that if someone found it that person would make better use of it than he did. As for clothing, his practice was to ask or refuse nothing, and he showed the greatest joy when he was given old clothes.

He was extremely punctual and exact in observing the Rules. Although he lived in the most distant rooms, he was always among the first at Divine Office and the other Community exercises. He never let the month go by, whether he was in the country or at home, without presenting himself to the Superior for spiritual communication, although very often he did not know what to say because his life and his soul were so well-regulated. As soon as he heard the clock strike, he would kneel down and leave what he had begun, to run where obedience was calling him.

His simplicity was extraordinary, neither put on nor hypocritical, so that anyone who saw or heard him could sense what was in his heart. He did not know how to equivocate, and avoided exaggeration in anything he had seen or heard.

---

5Carrying about in our bodies the mortification of Jesus Christ. Cf. 2 Cor 4:10. (NAB)
But who could describe his gentleness, kindness, and cordiality? If someone was angry and saw this good servant of God, he would have to calm down. In him were verified these words of Jesus Christ, Beati miles, quoniam ipsi possidebunt terram, meaning, according to Saint Augustine, possidebunt corda hominum vel subjugabunt.

He had a great love of solitude, causing him to be quite at home with prayer and meditation. He was never seen running here and there in the house; anyone who needed him had no great trouble finding him, since he was usually in his room and almost always kneeling or standing, reading and praying in this place of solitude and retirement. He had acquired close union with God, with whom he conversed so often and so lovingly that we would see him with his eyes bathed in tears and his face radiant, and this moved us to devotion. We never saw him looking sad or melancholy, although occasions for being so often presented themselves in the order of fallen nature. Instead, by the grace of God, he constantly practiced virtue. He did not get upset about things but remained cheerful, conforming himself to God's Will in everything and accepting from His hand both adverse and favorable events.

I shall close here because they are taking the pen from my hand. I am sure that what I have said is very little in comparison with all that could be told. I ask this good servant of God to pray for us in heaven, where I believe he is enjoying unending glory. I am, in the love of God, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

ETIENNE BLATIRON
i.e.C.M.

1147. - TO GUILLAUME DELATTRE, SUPERIOR, IN AGEN

October 23, 1649

I cannot see that things in La Rose are as bad as they make them out to be. True, something did get into M... but he has been freed of that. Let me say, not just for this but for all the other disagree-

---

6Blest are the meek, for they shall possess the land. Cf. Mt 5:5. (NAB)
7They will possess or subjigate the hearts of men.

ments, that I am afraid some troublemaker is giving you uncharitable reports in order to introduce divisiveness into our houses and among our Brothers. If this is the case, Monsieur, give yourself to God so as not to listen to that person. You will then experience a consolation similar to one I had. One day I had forbidden a servant, whom I had before the Company came into being, to report anything to me that was prejudicial to anyone. I did this because I recognized this tendency in him and because he had already tried to give me a bad impression of an upright man with whom I was living. After that, he no longer dared to bring me such news. Whenever I think of this my heart is touched with gratitude to God for that grace. Scandal often does as much harm to the listeners as to those who devise it, even if it were to do no other harm than disturb the mind, as it does, and give rise to temptations to speak or write about it to others.

I really think that frugality has enabled you to survive. I know you have very little income, that boarders' fees help you in only a small way, and that, with the high cost of living this year, you will have a hard time managing, but I am also well aware that, if you knew how powerless we are to assist you, you would be sympathetic about this and not even dream of asking us for anything. The recent wars and present famine in almost the entire kingdom prevent us from being paid and from providing for our own little necessities. I would indeed be more surprised than ever, if God had not given me a little confidence and submission to His Providence, when I see our poverty on the one hand and on the other the heavy expenses we have to shoulder. You must regulate yours according to your possibilities and take on only as much as you can handle. I say this with regard to poor priests passing through, whom you might want to assist. True, this would be excellent, if you could do it, but you must attend instead to what is necessary. It is not advisable for you to ask the Bishop's permission to extend this hospitality; he will gladly approve the suggestions you make him for the good of his seminary, but he is not in any mood to accept others that do not concern him. If, however, you think you should write to him about your needs, I leave that to your own discretion.
Excellency,

Words cannot express my joy and respect upon receiving the letter you did me the honor of writing, coming from someone so dear to me and whom I honor so highly. If previously I had esteem for Your Most Illustrious Lordship, based on what I had heard of your virtues, I am now obliged to have love and gratitude toward you, to which I add the renewed offer of my perpetual obedience. I entreat you most humbly to accept it, Excellency, along with that of our little Congregation which is entirely yours.

In conformity with your wishes, I have asked God with all my heart to bless the important duty in which His Providence has placed you. And because I have learned from our men there that when Your Most Illustrious Lordship entered the College of Propaganda Fide you had the piety to have a general Communion made for this purpose, I also had one here to correspond with it on our part; all the priests in the house offered Mass for your intention. Please God we shall offer these same prayers again from time to time because I cannot think of a better intention for which to pray.

Please allow me, Excellency, to ask for the assistance of your prayers for me. I assure you that I am and always will be, Excellency, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
Unworthy Superior of the Congregation of the Mission

Letter 1148. - Archives of Propaganda Fide, II Africa, n° 248, f° 120, original signed letter.

He had just succeeded Bishop Ingoll as Secretary of Propaganda Fide.
1149. - TO MATHURIN GENTIL, IN LE MANS

November 9, 1649

I have news from one of our houses¹ that the poor food being served there is having a harmful effect on bodies and minds. If the person in charge of the pantry, thinking he is saving money, is inclined to this excessive frugality and does not provide better meals after the warning I am giving him and the letter I am writing him about this, I shall be obliged to replace him with someone who will supply adequately what is needed to feed the Community the way we do at Saint-Lazare and elsewhere because, for want of this, several men have become ill. I tell you this, Monsieur, because you are in a similar duty and so that you will please be careful to avoid such unpleasant consequences. Make an effort to serve good bread and good meat and not to sell the better wine so as to serve what is inferior, nor to expose the Community to complaints of miserly treatment. I have been so affected by the ones made to me by the house of which I am speaking that I strongly fear others may give me the same cause for distress. I hope it will not come from you; please be attentive to this.

1150. - ETIENNE BLATIRON, SUPERIOR, TO SAINT VINCENT

Genoa, November 1649

His Eminence, the Cardinal,¹ spent a week with us and made retreat with ten of the Missionaries. Oh! what a great servant of God he is! His exactitude and punctuality in observing the order of the exercises was incredible, although he looks very frail and is fifty-six years old but appears older because of his constant labors, both spiritual and corporal.

¹This house was probably the Le Mans Seminary, where Mathurin Gentil was Treasurer!


¹Stefano Cardinal Durazzio.
In the morning, he would make his prayer on his knees in common with the others, motionless from beginning to end, even though some of the men stood up. For the other meditations, which each one made in his room, he made them kneeling or, if he was sometimes a little tired, he would ask me if he could stand up. I had already told him he could and that it would even be all right if he sat down for a while so as not to tire himself too much, but he never failed to ask me each time so as to have the merit of obedience.

When he shared his thoughts and the good sentiments he had during prayer, he did so as simply, humbly, and devoutly as any one of us. As soon as he heard the bell for the Office or the other Community exercises, he dropped everything and was one of the first in chapel. At table he wanted to be treated like everyone else. I begged him to allow us to treat him differently, and he finally gave in. He was upset that we gave him separate washing facilities, since he wanted to be the same as everyone else.

Toward the end of the retreat, I asked him to give us all his blessing to obtain perseverance from God. He did not want to do this; on the contrary, he insisted that I give it myself. Still, after much persistence, he blessed us. Oh! dear Father, what an example of virtue we have before our eyes!

1151. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[Between 1647 and 1649] 1

Most Honored Father,

Forgive my too violent apprehension of what I have always most feared in the person about whom I spoke to you. My reflections on this subject, which increase my sorrow, are the reason why the consolation God has given me through your charity has not been apparent to you. If you believe in the guidance of Divine Providence in my life, in God’s name, my very dear Father, do not forsake me in this need; if not, do me the charity of pointing out my self-deception so that I may not die impenitent.

I forgot to entreat you most humbly, for the love of God, to say Holy

Letter 1151. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1Before 1647, Saint Louise always wrote “Monsieur” in the salutation of her letters to Saint Vincent; after 1649, she always addressed him as “Monsieur and Most Honored Father,” or “Most Honored Father,” or “Very Reverend Father.” In this instance we have “Most Honored Father” at the start and “Monsieur” at the end; this indicates the period between 1647 and 1649.
Mass for my son tomorrow and do whatever God chooses to inspire you to help him out of the great distress in which I think he now is. This would really arouse your compassion if you saw it as I do.

I am doing my best to understand the thoughts you so kindly gave me. I ate my supper better than I thought I would. I want to try to give God what He is asking of me on this occasion, which I hope to know through the advice your charity will give me. I have great need of this and of being, as God wishes, Monsieur, your most grateful daughter and humble servant.

L. de M.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

1152. - TO BROTHER JACQUES RIVET, IN LA ROSE

November 13, 1649

I have received your letters, and they gave me the inexpressible consolation of knowing that you have returned to La Rose. I am sending this letter there to tell you how welcome back you are. Indeed, no matter what was written to me about you, I always believed you would do what you have done. The situation was truly dangerous, but God’s grace was strong and you have been faithful to your vocation. For this, I bless His mercy a million times.

You would have done some good in that good Bishop’s house, but you will do incomparably more by remaining in the original state in which you know God has placed you. Although this Bishop is very virtuous, you would nevertheless have been obliged to associate with people who are not as virtuous as he, and whose example and conversation might have been perhaps too harmful to you. Our business is to gain heaven; everything else is a sheer waste of time. So let us take the shortest and safest routes to it, such as a

1Jean d’Estrades, Bishop of Condom.
hidden life, the acquisition of the Christian and evangelical virtues, and lastly the observance of our little Rule.

So then, dear Brother, I ask Our Lord, who preserved you in the midst of such danger, to accomplish in you His eternal designs. He doubtless wants to bring you up in His house and make you entirely His in time and eternity. Amen.

1153. - TO MARC Coglee, SUPERIOR, IN SEDAN

November 15 [1649]¹

As for the eternal covenant you wish to make with Our Lord in the Company, O Jésus! Monsieur, I consent to it with all my heart, which loves yours more than I can tell you.

1154. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[November 1649] ¹

Most Honored Father,

I am very sorry for being so insistent, but the impossibility of continuing to take in the little children weighs too heavily upon us. Right now our two wet nurses have seven of them who refuse to drink from the bottle, and we do not have a double ² to put them out to nurse, no reserve of sheets or linen, and no hope of being able to borrow any more.

Do us the charity, Most Honored Father, of telling us whether, in

¹The manuscript dates the letter 1645. Quite probably the copyist mistook a 9 for a 5. On November 15, 1645, Marc Coglee was, in fact, in Marseilles, not in Sedan. Furthermore, he did not take his vows until December 13, 1649.
²The date added on the back of the original by Brother Ducournau.
²A small copper coin worth two deniers.
conscience, we can watch them being put in a situation in which they will die, for the Ladies attach no importance to giving us any relief. I am sure they think we are making our fortunes at their expense, which is absolutely contrary to the truth because we kept only one hundred livres of the money allocated to us for the wet nurses' food. I know of only one way to help all those who are suffering in this work; namely, that we, in the name of our Company, should petition the Chief Justice 3 to have us relieved of taking the children and to give this responsibility to whomever he wishes. However, the Ladies would have to agree to this course of action so that no one will be offended; otherwise, it seems to me that we are in continual mortal sin.

Yesterday four children were brought in. Besides the seven who are nursing, there are three who have been weaned—all recent foundlings—and one of them is just skin and bones. They should be put with a wet nurse again, if possible. If we could bear this trial without involving you, I would most gladly do so, but our helplessness does not allow it. These good Ladies are not doing what they can; not one of them has sent anything, nor has anything come in from those in the group because most of them have paid their annual dues in advance.

I beg God to have mercy on us. I am beginning to fear that all this misery is due to me who am what I am, Most Honored Father, your most obedient and very grateful daughter.

L. de Marillac

I think a general meeting should be held. The Hôtel-Dieu lunches are also falling off.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

---

3Mathieu Molié.
Most Honored Father,

I most humbly entreat your charity to give me about a quarter of an hour tomorrow so I can make up for what I seem to have lost yesterday in the opportunity Divine Providence was giving me. I do not know whether I should put the blame on fear or my pride, which always makes me reluctant to speak about myself.

Enclosed is Madame de Romilly’s reply. I beg you to take the trouble to let me know whether I should send your letter to the President, Madame de Lamoilgnon, even though the Princess is not coming, and whether it is advisable to invite Madame de Brienne, who is back in town.

Enclosed also is a short report I have done. If you see fit, you might take the trouble to talk about it at the meeting. Please let us know where the latter will be held so Mademoiselle de Lamoilgnon can be notified.

Will your charity please let us know whether we should tell our Sisters in Serqueux to send us the girl they mentioned to us? Enclosed also is a letter from Messieurs de Gien. What shall we tell them? Cannot the Duchesse de Ventadour be more insistent?

Yesterday one of our Sisters, wearing her habit, went off without saying a word; she is the one from Saint-Cloud. What does this mean? Are not strong measures required for some of them so that this practice will stop? Once before this Sister asked us if she could leave; we gave her the

Letter 1155. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1Date added on the back of the original by Brother Ducournau.
2Madame de Lamoilgnon was President of the Ladies of Charity (1643-1651).
3Charlotte de Montmorency, Princess de Condé.
4The Duchesse de Ventadour, née Marie de la Guiche de Saint-Gérand. On February 8, 1645, she married Charles de Lévis, Duc de Ventadour, widower of Suzanne de Thémines de Montluc, who had bequeathed forty thousand livres to Saint Vincent for the foundation of a mission in Cauna (Landes). After her husband’s death (May 19, 1649), Marie de la Guiche sought consolation in works of charity. She was one of Saint Louise’s principal auxiliaries and best friends. The eve of Saint Louise’s death, the Duchess came to be with her, caring for her with all the devotedness of a Daughter of Charity. She spent part of the night with her and, after a short rest, returned to stay by her bedside until the end, holding the blessed candle herself. (Cf. Gobillon, op. cit., pp. 178, 181.) In 1683 the Duchesse de Ventadour was elected President of the Ladies of Charity. She died in her château, Sainte-Marie-du-Mont, in Normandy, during the night of July 22-23, 1701, at the age of seventy-eight. Thanks to her generosity, this locality had an establishment of Daughters of Charity as early as 1655.
permission and she stayed on of her own free wilL I think God is speaking to us through these events, either to destroy the work or to strengthen it. Will your charity please reflect on this and tell me honestly if I am the Jonah who should be removed from it?

I belong to God for anything He chooses and am, Monsieur, your most obedient servant and very grateful daughter.

L. de Marillac

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

1156. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[November 1649]

Most Honored Father,

I am too insistent, but we have absolutely reached the point where we must get help without delay or abandon everything. Yesterday we had to use all the money in reserve here—nearly fifteen to twenty livres—to buy wheat for the children at Bicêtre, and we had to borrow some to have at least four setiers. Furthermore, no income is in sight for the next month. There are twelve or thirteen children here and no change of diapers for them. Something must be done at the meeting of the Ladies tomorrow, please, such as a decision to take up a collection in the parishes every Sunday, placing small baskets in prominent places and having the pastors and preachers promote this; also, have the collection taken up at the Court, as proposed. If someone went to speak to the Princess about these dire needs, I think she would make a donation. It is shameful that the Ladies are going to so little trouble. They must think we have more than enough to live on, or else they want to force us to abandon everything. For these reasons I think they have made up their minds to do nothing at all.

Will your charity please let us know if we should send out notices for
the meeting, and whether you think it is a good idea to send Madame de Schomberg 3 and Madame de Verthamon 4 to it?

The other things I had to tell you would take too long. I can do that tomorrow, if I have the honor of seeing you. I have great need of God's very special assistance, since in all that concerns me I see only wretchedness and affliction. Blessed be God for this! It is sufficient to reveal my need to you; I have no other hope of assistance and consolation except from your charity, of whom Providence has willed that I be, Most Honored Father, your most obedient daughter and very grateful servant.

L. de Marillac

Will your charity please let us know if the subject for the conference 5 is indeed the one you gave me when I was complaining about Sisters who are asking to be changed?

I am afraid you are going to the country.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

1157. - TO JEAN GICQUEL, IN LE MANS 1

December 5, 1649

Your difficulty in keeping the accounts for the mission expenses obliges me to ask you to give yourself truly to God to accept any kind of duty. You must believe you are doing His Will when you carry out the orders given you and be convinced that we deviate

---

3 Anne de la Guiche, Duchesse de Schomberg, a Lady of Charity.
4 Marie Boucher d'Orey, wife of François de Verthamon, Master of Requests.
5 On November 28, Saint Vincent gave a conference entitled "On The Love of Work" (cf. vol. IX, no. 42).


1 Jean Gicquel, born in Miniac (Ille-et-Vilaine) on December 24, 1617, was ordained a priest during Lent of 1642, entered the Congregation of the Mission on August 5, 1647, and took his vows on May 6, 1651. He was Superior of the Le Mans Seminary (1651-1654) and of Saint-Lazare (1655-1660) (cf. vol. V, nov. 1906, 1912 and vol. VI, no. 2157), and Director of the Company of the Daughters of Charity (1668-1672). An interesting diary of the last days of Saint Vincent, attributed to him, is preserved at the Motherhouse of the Congregation of the Mission.
from this Divine Will when we follow our own choosing. It would be sufficient to tell you that with regard to the ceremonies, but it should also be added that they are highly recommended in Holy Scripture, where they go almost hand in hand with the divine commandments. This leads us to think that God is honored as much by the ceremonies, when they are performed in His Spirit, as He is by the observance of His law. You can conclude from this the importance of this practice and whether there is not a temptation to be excused from it.

In God’s name, Monsieur, let us remain indifferent; let us strive to be equally attached to whatever obedience marks out for us, be it agreeable or disagreeable. By the grace of God, we belong to Him; what else should we desire except to please Him? No wonder we are contradicted; what merit is there if we are not? And who can protect himself from this? For some petty contradiction should we stop doing good, and a good such as glorifying God? The person about whom you wrote me, who finds fault with your ceremonies, is very wrong in acting as he does, but I hope he will not do it any more. I have sent him a note about this, and perhaps I will make him see his fault even more clearly at the first opportunity.

We shall send you someone soon, God willing, in order to agree on the same ceremonies as we have here, so that we can try to be uniform in this as in everything else.

I praise God for the good that people are telling me about you; you serve as an example there. This fills my heart with consolation.

1158. - TO LOUIS RIVET, SUPERIOR, IN SAINTES

December 8, 1649

If M. . . writes to me, I will take the opportunity of letting him know in my reply that he is not giving us the satisfaction he led us...
to hope for. I will also try to give him a hint that he should show a little more submission and indifference than he now does. However, since this is the work of the Holy Spirit rather than that of men, who can say things but not move the person, we shall pray to God for that. I ask you to do so also, Monsieur, that He may attract him strongly to the practice of the virtues, above all, of humility and condescension. Your good example will also contribute to this. His correction will probably take a long time because of the impetuosity of his age and his vivacious spirit, but be patient! These very things should cause us to bear with him gently, in the hope that the idle dreams of presumption and the force of desire usually found in young people will diminish with age.

I know well, Monsieur, how much you have to endure in your present duty, and I ask Our Lord to strengthen you in your difficulties. It is in such circumstances that we acquire virtue; where there is no suffering, there is little merit. My wish is that God may grant us great indifference with regard to duties. O Monsieur, how sure we would then be of doing His holy Will, which is our sole aspiration, and how much peace and contentment we would enjoy, or so it seems to me! I beg you to ask Him earnestly for this grace for me and for the whole Company. I often offer to Him your own soul, which is very dear to me because it is so good and precious to Our Lord, in whom I am your . . . .

1159. - TO RENE ALMERAS, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

December 10, 1649

I cannot give you a definite answer about Brother [Doutrelet],¹ until I know what he has decided to do and how far his good intentions regarding the Company may go, if he really is deter-

¹As is known from no. 1068, Brother Doutrelet did not wish to renew his vows.
mined to remain in it. Nevertheless, Monsieur, I shall tell you that if his conversion is real and sufficiently extensive to include a definite intention to die in his vocation and to live in it according to our customs, complete submission to superiors, indifference with regard to places and employments, and, in a word, the desire to work unceasingly at the acquisition of virtue; if, I repeat, all this seems genuine enough to you, I consent to your keeping him and giving him a try for a while. If he decides to leave, I have nothing to say except in nomine Domini, and that, at the time he leaves, he must be notified of the revocation of his title. If he still wants to sit on the fence between two extremes, bargaining with God and with the Company, limping along on one foot, wanting to do one thing but not another; in short, barely belonging to us as he has been for some time, I think you should wait no longer but try to persuade him gently to leave and, if you can, get from him a written declaration that, since he was given the title only to provide him with the means of working in the Company, he does not intend to use it nor to ask for anything from it, given the fact of his departure.

If he is unwilling to do this, please do not hesitate to dismiss him. In that case, inform him that we are revoking his title and, to prevent him from being admitted to Orders, give notification of this to those to whom he might go to have himself ordained. It is also advisable that you compile at the same time an official report of his misconduct, indicating his present state and the most scandalous acts he has committed. Have this signed by some of your priests who have witnessed his disorderly behavior. Obtain some advice as to how this document should be drawn up. If I cannot do so today, I will send you at the first opportunity the Company's power of attorney to make the above-mentioned revocation.
Monsieur,

Enclosed is a letter from Mademoiselle de Villenant in which you will see what I have learned about the matter. What bothers me is the difficult time widows have in being freed of their responsibilities after the death of their husbands. We are having trouble finding the money needed in order to be received and to pay the commissions, or to obtain the gift of this, which I have been told can be done.

Furthermore, the good woman who is managing this affair told me today that the most urgent matter to be resolved is that the person who had been handling the discussions for us had returned to his own region and would be glad if, on his return, he found the business concluded by someone else. This makes me somewhat fearful that they may be thinking of breaking off with us. If that is the case, I would not know what else to say.

All the above-mentioned difficulties are only with a view to my son’s lack of experience. However, he needs to be spurred on to work seriously and somehow to attend to matters on his own. Like me, he has a lazy disposition, and in order to accomplish anything we have to be pushed either by necessity or by our inclinations which, through bursts of enthusiasm, lead us to undertake even some rather difficult things.

When Monsieur de Marillac examined the clauses, he saw clearly that there was something to be desired in them. Nevertheless, he did not advise me to break things off, even though they may not have granted me what he advised me to ask, because he sees great advantages for us in this affair.

If your charity is coming to this neighborhood Saturday morning, I most

Letter 1160. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1Date added on the back of the original by Brother Ducourneau.

2On the eve of Michel Le Gras’ wedding day, his mother was trying to ensure a respectable position for him. Since the plan she mentions in this letter was unsuccessful, some other solution had to be sought. René-Michel de la Rochemaillée, uncle of Michel’s fiancée, agreed to appoint him Counselor at the Cour des Monnaies, the court concerned with minting, counterfeiting, and devaluation of currency and cases arising therefrom.

3Monsieur de Marillac, Counselor in the Parlement, cousin of Michel Le Gras.

4The clauses of the marriage contract.
humbly ask you to let me know. That is the day the uncle 9 and the young lady 6 are supposed to come, and I think everything will have to be settled. Your valuable good advice will be a big help to me in making a decision. I beg you most humbly to give it to me as coming from Our Lord. I am, in Him, Monsieur, your most humble daughter and very grateful servant.

L. de M.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

1161. - TO SIMON LE GRAS, BISHOP OF SOISSONS

Paris, December 15, 1649

Excellency,

I received your letter and your orders as if they had come to me from Our Lord. I had shared your views on the Abbess of Biaches, 1 Excellency, with those who spoke to me on her behalf, and with her, too, before I learned them. I had also used nearly the same arguments you did me the honor of writing me, in order to get her to relinquish Saint-Jean-des-Bois 2 and to accept Argensolles. 3 She has finally made up her mind to do this, Excellency, provided Madame d'Argensolles and her nuns give their consent. I told her I would work on this, and soon after that I did, in fact, make the proposal to M. de Montmaur, 4 the brother-in-law of Madame d'Ar-

9René-Michel de la Rochemaillée.
1Michel's fiancée, Demoiselle Gabrielle Le Clerc, daughter of the Seigneur de Chennevières and the late Dame Muset de la Rochemaillée.
2Blanche d'Estournel. She governed the Biaches Monastery in the Noyon diocese (1614-1664).
3In Oise near Compiègne. Saint-Jean-des-Bois and Argensolles were both in the Soissons diocese.
4Henri-Louis Habyer, Seigneur de Montmaur, Master of Requests.
gensolles. I explained to him in detail the merit of the affair so that he might act as an intermediary with her; he led me to hope that he would be willing to do so. Since then he has told me that he discussed it with one of the nuns of the Order, who looks after Madame's business affairs, and that he asked her to go to Saint-Germain to talk to him about it. We are awaiting the reply.

Among the objections M. de Montmaur foresees that the Argensolles nuns will raise with us, the main one is their fear that, if they give their house over to nuns of such an Order, they may want to pass from a position of occupant to that of proprietor someday, and in this way, their property might be contested by those who have no right to it. My reply to that, Excellency, was that the agreement drawn up will be so incontestable that this claim will never arise, and that the agreement will be confirmed in the Parlement and wherever else this may be necessary. In it they will declare that they are entering this monastery simply as guests and will place themselves under the obligation of leaving whenever it pleases God to grant us peace.

I shall do myself the honor, Excellency, of informing you of the outcome of these negotiations, which are a special blessing for me because they give me the opportunity to ask for your blessing. I do this now, Excellency, prostrate in spirit at your feet. I entreat you to believe that no priest in your diocese will render you obedience with greater submission and joy than I shall do, whenever it pleases you to give me the opportunity to do so. This, Excellency, is what I await. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.
I read the letter you wrote to M. Lambert, and I take this opportunity to tell you that we must not meddle in the Duke’s affairs because: (1) this arouses the jealousy of his officials there; (2) it would make us troublesome to Madame, who will be very edified if we leave it alone; (3) since your predecessor gave people grounds for thinking that he took a little too much advantage of Madame’s benevolence, he drew upon himself and upon the Company the ill will of the people and the envy of the leading citizens of the town; (4) our profession should lead us to avoid any involvement in secular affairs. Besides, if am not mistaken, the attorney you mention came to see me when I was in Richelieu and wanted me to give him the same assistance. However, I discovered that there were certain reasons why his request should not be granted. You also mention this, Monsieur, as though it were a simple proposition, and merely so as not to offend him by a refusal to write on his behalf. I am telling you all this not so much for its own sake as for other occasions which might arise. When we are new to a place and duty, we always need a few words of caution.

I would also like to tell you, Monsieur, that now is not the time to complain about feeding the preacher, and still less to shift responsibility for it to the inhabitants, for fear lest their opinion of our being stingy will be borne out, and they will reproach us with the fact that the house is well endowed and that, since we receive other persons for retreat free of charge, we certainly can do an act of charity for a poor Capuchin. In time we shall see if the church council could provide some funds for that and for the other things. Meanwhile, I ask you once more to leave things as they are, without


1Armand-Jean du Plessis, Duc de Richelieu, nephew of the Duchesse d’Aiguillon.

2The Duchesse d’Aiguillon.

3Denis Gautier.
changing anything or making innovations, and all that for a good reason.

This will serve as a reply to your idea of having papers drawn up on the land, division into lots, etc. Not that this should not be done, but not for some time yet; first, we have to obtain the Seigneur's document of amortization.

---

1163. - ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC TO SAINT VINCENT

Mersuès, December 15, 1649

Monsieur,

After having thanked you a thousand times for the trouble you took to speak to the Chancellor ¹ and to explain so clearly to him the reasons that might prompt him to grant me the favor I am asking, and after entreaty you to render me the same service with the Queen, I must tell you that my evocation ² is as certain as if I already had it in my hands because all it requires is an order from Her Majesty to the Chancellor. Since she has never refused anything I have asked her and it has always been for other persons, how could I have any doubt that she would refuse me this favor, which I am requesting for my dear Spouse, after having acted and suffered as I have done for the service of the King and Her Majesty?

I can say truthfully that since the onset of this trouble until now, I have not let pass any opportunity which I could make the most of and use for that purpose. I have not even waited for occasions to present themselves but have sought them out and strongly and constantly opposed anything that I knew was contrary to the service of Their Majesties. After all that, now that I find myself in this critical situation, I would find it hard to believe that she would refuse me her patronage.

You will receive from the deputies a copy of our conference, which I have not yet sent to any of the Bishops who were present, except for the

---

¹Pierre Séguier.

²Act by which a matter under discussion in one legal jurisdiction is removed to another jurisdiction.
Bishop of Périgueux, because I have not had time to review and study it. I shall do so after my retreat, which I am now making. After sending it to you, I added at the beginning of the article about the visitation the words you will see on the enclosed piece of paper. I thought it appropriate to insert them because they are in line with the Councils and holy decrees.

You will see that it has been decided to establish seminaries and that those who cannot do so will send the clerics of their dioceses to the one nearest them. As for the direction, we have always agreed that it should be given to your men. We also agreed that a collège or house should be established to receive those who will dedicate themselves to God’s service, so that they will be trained in piety and the spirit of the Church during their studies. That is why I stated that the direction should be entrusted to your men and I gave a number of reasons for this. So, this suggestion was approved by the whole assembly, etc.

ALAIN,
Bishop of Cahors

1164. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[December 1649]¹

Monsieur,

I think your charity will recall my speaking to you about that good girl from Saint-Cloud. The enclosed letter is for her; please take the trouble to read it. Divine Providence has not made it possible for her to sell what she has inherited, but she is renting it to her sister, who is well-off and will pay her thirty écus a year for it. Our Sisters are fond of her and find no difficulty accepting her, provided your charity approves.

We would really like to know if the poor wet nurses will get any money for these feast days. We would also like to know if the children who are still nursing, and whom they are bringing back because they are not being paid, will be put out to nurse again with the money given for putting the new foundlings there. We will do our best to get them to take them back,

¹Date added on the back of the original by Brother Docournau.
if we have any money. However, some have already been left with us.
We are very much in need of God's guidance in the business of my son.2
I think he will have the honor of discussing this with you, since he has taken
the liberty of staying at your house tonight, for fear of something unpleas-
ant. He will tell you the distressing difficulties in this affair which I think
he has always submitted to God's Will. In this Will I have the honor to be,
Monsieur, your most obedient and grateful daughter and servant.

L. de Marillac

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

1165. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[December 1649] 1

Monsieur,

I most humbly entreat your charity to recommend our concern 2 to God.
I found the de Marillacs 3 quite willing to please us. However, the nun
thinks it advisable for me to see Mademoiselle d'Atri 4 to remind her of the
services the late M. Le Gras rendered to her late mother 5 and to try to
have her, like the Comte de Maure,6 arrange something for my son. In view
of this, I entreat you to allow me to go to Port-Royal with her daughter,
who is willing to take me there tomorrow or the next day.

2The position Saint Louise was seeking for him before his impending marriage (cf. no. 1160,
n. 2).

Letter 1165. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter, which in 1990 belonged
to Abbé Lorenzo, curate of Saint-Dominique Parish, Paris.
1Date added on the back of the original by Brother Docoreau.
2The position Saint Louise was seeking for her son.
3The cousins of Michel Le Gras: Jeanne Potier, wife of Michel de Marillac, and Marie de
Creil, widow of René de Marillac. Marie de Creil had become a Carmelite nun.
4Marie-Angélique d'Atri, one of the daughters of Geneviève d'Attichy. She was a nun at
Port-Royal. Saint Louise's husband had done a great deal for the d'Attichy children after their
parents' death. He "had used up everything," writes the Foundress, "his time and his life, in the
affairs of their house, completely neglecting his own." (Cf. Horres spirituales, L. 96, p. 97.)
5Geneviève d'Attichy, wife of the Duc d'Atri.
6Husband of Anne d'Attichy, who was Mademoiselle d'Atri's aunt.
I am really afraid Madame de Herse may have discouraged the Ladies from coming to the meeting by suggesting they bring money with them. I think she should make it clear, Monsieur, that she does not mean it should come from their own purses nor that we are trying to oblige anyone to do this.

The more I think of what we owe, the more I fear that the affair is going to be left on our hands. The wet nurses are beginning to threaten us and to bring back the children; the debts are accumulating so quickly that there will be no hope of paying them. That will be more detrimental to the Company in the countryside than if we had used counterfeit money.

I am thinking about that poor pregnant woman. I believe she could be accepted now. If you would like me to speak about it to the Reverend Mother Prioress and Madame Le Vacher for you, I will be very glad to do so.

I did not have time to see M. Desbordes, as I had planned. M. de Marillac enlightened me on what was most urgent. If this business were not under the guidance of Divine Providence, I would be very apprehensive about it.

You know my need to obtain from our good God the means of drawing down His grace so as to carry things out. I think He still wants me to place in your charity’s hand my will and my limited power of acting in order to offer Him everything. This is what I am doing, most particularly in this matter and in all else, for the accomplishment of His holy designs on me. I am, by His grace, Monsieur, your most obedient servant and very grateful daughter.

LOUISE DE MARILLAC

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, General of the venerable Priests of the Mission

7Prioress of the Augustinians of the Hôtel-Dieu.
8Vicomte de Soubé and Commissioner of Audit. He was also a friend of the Marillac family.
1166. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Thursday, at eleven o'clock [December 1649] 1

Mademoiselle,

You are right in fearing something about the kind of financial arrangements connected with that post. What makes me say this is that it has been vacant for a long time, perhaps because they have not found any merchant willing to buy it. Most likely they had to sell it since it belongs to several persons. I do not know if it is one of those newly-created, which few people want to buy; it is advisable for you to find out about this. Mademoiselle Lunis' late husband has a nephew named M. Cocquerel, who is at the Cour des Monnaies. Through Mademoiselle Lunis, he could tell you what kind of post it is, what it is worth, how many pledges they have, if they have been paid, and if there is any seizure for debt or resistance to confirmation. 2

The work of the foundlings is in the hands of Our Lord. Friday we shall see what effect Madame de Herse's proposal has. 3 As for the insults the Company will have to suffer, it will be most happy since this comes from doing good.

I will be very glad if you speak to these good nuns of the Hôtel-Dieu on behalf of that poor creature, who is not yet in town and will not be here for another ten or twelve days.

Letter 1166. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1This letter is an answer to the preceding one.

2The purchase of an office required confirmation by the government, which raised money by such sales.

3According to Baunard (cf. Louis Baunard, La Vénérable Louise de Marillac [Paris: C. Poussielgue, 1898], p. 399), it is in the speech delivered at this meeting that the touching appeal, so often and so justly quoted as a model of eloquence, was made: "Come now, Ladies; compassion and charity . . . ." (Cf. vol. XIII, no. 196, for this conference to the Ladies of Charity. In n. 1 to this conference, Coste has questioned Baunard's assumption.)
It will be good for you to see Mademoiselle d’Atri.
I ask Our Lord to bless your labors and your business. I am, y[our] s[ervant].

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

1167. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN RICHELIEU

December 18, 1649

I thought Brother Admirault¹ would abide by what I already told M. Benoit² to tell him; namely, that we practice the Gospel counsel of not returning to our parents’ home once we have left them to follow Our Lord. You know what He said on this subject and how He dissuaded His disciples from going back to their native place. He saw a disadvantage in this for them, and we have always found it the same for our men in such circumstances. If you ask me, Monsieur, why then did we send you to your home, I reply that it is because you did not ask for this and, in fact, you went there only through obedience. And then, there is a big difference between you and a young man. You are a senior member and are, so to speak, confirmed in the Company. He, on the contrary, is weak and a beginner. So I ask you please to dissuade him from making this visit and to dispel any hope of it from his parents.

Letter 1167. - Reg. 2, pp. 302, 178. The second excerpt begins at the words, “Is there no way, Monsieur, to send back to M. Cuisat . . . ?” We do not know whether, in the original, it came before or after the part we have placed at the beginning.

¹Claude Admirault, born in Chinon (Indre-et-Loire), entered the Congregation of the Mission on September 20, 1648, at sixteen years of age, took his vows in 1651, was ordained a priest in December 1656, and was placed in the Agen Seminary. He was Superior of the Montauban Seminary (1665-1675, 1686-1690), and the Agen Seminary (1690-1694).

²Benoît Bécu.
Is there no way, Monsieur, to send back to M. Cuissot the Brother he lent you? Does not the word “lend” oblige one to return something? And if you promised him to do so, are you not doubly obliged to keep your word? There is no point saying that you left him Robin, since he keeps asking for Bernard. We must be sincere with one another. Regardless of how much the Richelieu house needs this Brother, the fact is that he still belongs to Cahors which, furthermore, has a great deal to do. You know there are about forty people there and only three or four Brothers, whereas you have at least five. If you need more, hire a servant and send this Brother back as soon as possible, I beg you. Good order demands that Brothers, no less than priests, cannot leave one house to go to another or remain in another house by their own choice or that of the local superiors, unless the General has decided it this way. I wrote this recently to Cahors, Agen, and La Rose, where quarrels have arisen because of the changing of Brothers.

1168. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

December 20 [1649] 1

Monsieur,

I have been assured that the post belongs to those in possession of it and that no one can purchase it unless they resign. Our business continues.

---

3Gilbert Cuissot, Superior of the Cahors Seminary.
4Jacques Robin, born in Mortiers (Charente-Maritime), entered the Congregation of the Mission as a coadjutor Brother on March 8, 1644, and took his vows on September 7, 1648.
5Bernard Gazer, born in Saintes-Livrade (Lot-et-Garonne), entered the Congregation of the Mission as a coadjutor Brother in La Rose on February 26, 1647, at the age of twenty-two.

Letter 1168. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.
6Year added on the back of the original by Brother Davournau.
I found the person I mentioned to you yesterday quite calm, and this morning he did well what he was supposed to do. I most humbly beg your charity to continue to recommend him to God.

Mme de Villenant requests most humbly that you allow her to talk to you before Thursday; and if so, would you please tell her, Monsieur, where she will have the honor of meeting you. If this is possible, kindly let me know through our Sister who is the bearer of this note. It is an urgent matter of importance for the glory of God.

I am very sorry for not having stopped by Monsieur Desbordes’ house. The coachman did not know the way and took the wrong road.

Enclosed is the clarification of the doubt we had. Will your charity please see that it does not get lost and continue to do me the honor of believing that I am, Monsieur, your most obedient and very grateful daughter and servant.

L. de Marillac

Addressee: Monsieur Vincent, General of the venerable Priests of the Mission

1169. - TO ETIENNE BLATIRON, SUPERIOR, IN GENOA

New Year’s Eve, 1649

I had clearly foreseen that your journey to Rome would be made at the wrong moment if you undertook it in the present state of your affairs, and I told you to postpone it, if you judged it advisable. Your Community was also right to desire this but proceeded wrongly in the way of holding you back because: (1) they should defer to the leadership of the Superior and the orders of the General; (2) they did not contact me to point out the inconveniences of your absence; (3) they had recourse to outside means to prevent it, asking the help of persons who are not members of the Congregation. Although we owe obedience to the bishops in what concerns our work for the neighbor, our internal direction belongs nevertheless...
to the Superior and to the Officers of the Company; (4) in a family, people see only the special reasons that concern it; we see not only these but also the general reasons why orders must be given. Since these are not known by the individual members, they should not then interfere with matters outside their competence.

In short, Monsieur, at its beginning the Company has fallen into the disorder in which others do not find themselves until several centuries later, and the road to dissension lies open when subjects criticize what Superiors do. I want to believe that your men did not reflect on that and, therefore, I excuse them. Do not fail, however, to inform the Visitor, who will soon be with you, of what I have just written you, so that he may speak so clearly to them about it that they will not fall into the same fault again.

You tell me there is a spy in the house, who remarks and reports what goes on. Please tell me if he is a Frenchman and what his name is, in veiled terms. I know you are all leading a life in which there is not only nothing blameworthy but which is, rather, most edifying. Nevertheless, I admit that it is most annoying to be criticized in this way because persons inclined to that never judge things objectively but according to what they are themselves.

1170. - ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC TO SAINT VINCENT

Mercuès, January 5, 1650

Monsieur,

My most humble thanks for offering to assist me both with the Chancelade affair and with our evocation. My assurance that you would do me this kindness has caused me to act as I now do toward you, and since I am as devoted to your service and your dedicated Congregation as I am to my own affairs, I have no difficulty making use of your services on occasion, as I am now doing.
If the Chancellor refuses to grant me what I am asking of him, and the Queen does not command him to give it to me, this will really dash the enthusiasm of people in this area in the service of the King, once it becomes known, because if they abandon me, after the risks I have taken, what will others think will happen to them? We shall be awaiting the outcome.

The approval you give to our conference will make me appreciate it all the more. Many other matters were decided, which have not been put into writing; among others, one that concerns you and which I shall perhaps add, if you think it advisable. It is to entreat our Holy Father not to grant any more rescripts de promovendo a quocumque episcopo, on the virtues of the Ordinary, nor any extra tempora.¹ The Bishop of Périgueux is responsible for writing about this to the Cardinal Dauzay, in the name of the assembly. I have written to the latter in advance, telling him the serious trouble it is causing in our dioceses and that it is the ruin of our seminaries, which are established mainly to test the vocation of clerics, as has been so highly recommended by the holy canons. All the bishops in the kingdom should unite with us in this.

There is fighting every day in Bordeaux,² and the terrible desolation in that part of the country is unbelievable.

I never complained about the refusal of Father Faure, the Jacobin,³ to preach in our pulpit. I could not have done so because I had never seen, spoken to, or written him. It was about his Provincial, to whom I had promised our pulpit and who had assured me that Father Faure was coming to preach.

It is not the curate of Puy-l'Évêque ⁴ who is asking to enter your Company; it is another man, who is serving in one of the annexes of that parish. He is a native of that place, and the people there are very different from the people of Gourdon. This man is gentle and virtuous and has studied theology. He has only one good eye but is not deformed. Moreover, he obtained a rescript from Rome for a dispensation because it is in Canon Law, and I gave him Orders. Monsieur Cuissot told me he had not gone to him but to Monsieur Water about his plans. I shall tell him or have him notified that he should go and see him to examine his vocation and then

¹To be ordained by any bishop ... outside the times. The sense of this statement is that no general permission should be given to any bishop to ordain men without sufficient training and outside the normal time for administering the sacrament of Holy Orders.

²Cf. Antoine Saintmarc, Bordeaux sous la Fronde (1650), d'après les Mémoires de Lenet (Bordeaux, 1856).

³Dominican. "Jacobins" was the name popularly given to the Dominicans whose Paris house was on rue Saint-Jacques.

⁴Principal town of a canton in the district of Cahors.
let you know what he thinks, to see if you want us to send him to you. We shall do this gladly, wishing to express to you, on this occasion and on any others that will arise to serve you, that I am, etc.

ALAIN,
Bishop of Cahors

1171. - TO MARC COGLEE, SUPERIOR, IN SEDAN

January 7, 1650

Regarding the incident with the gentlemen of the Sedan bureau, who want control of the receipts of the Confraternity of the Rosary, it is advisable, in similar public rivalries involving the Company, for you to notify us immediately. In the meantime, in order to pacify them and to remain on good terms with them, it will be well for you to comply with the request of those gentlemen regarding these receipts, since you see that they are determined not to allow the pastor to maintain such absolute control that they are not aware of what is going on. Furthermore, what they are asking is justified, given the regulations. The people, who contribute to these alms, must want this. The monk who made the establishment could not deviate from the rules of the parish by his own regulations or by what is done in other places where this confraternity is established, unless the churchwardens of the time consented to it.

1172. - TO JACQUES CHIROYE, SUPERIOR, IN LUÇON

January 9, 1650

I have been told here that La Motte¹ does not bring in an income


¹This appears to be a piece of property known as "La Motte," which Jacques Chiroye wanted to add to the Community's holdings in Luçon.
of fifty écus, as you wrote me; far from it. Even if it should bring
in more, does that justify your maintaining two households or the
expense involved in the purchases and furnishings this demands?
I have already written you my thoughts on this. I greatly fear that
what the Bishop\textsuperscript{2} is doing, according to what you say, is through
your explicit or tacit inducement rather than on his own initiative.
This being the case, I ask you to delay carrying out this plan, which
could be more burdensome than advantageous.

In the name of God, Monsieur, let us be more careful to extend
the empire of Jesus Christ than our own possessions. Let us take
care of His affairs and He will take care of ours. Let us honor His
poverty, at least by our moderation, if we do not do so by total
imitation.

1173. - TO LOUIS SERRE, IN SAINT-MEEN

January 11, 1650

You have consoled me greatly by reporting the state of your
house to me. What you tell me about M. Thibault,\textsuperscript{1} however,
distresses me. He is risking his health too much; he did not feel well
and yet he went to work. I fear he will fall victim to this in the end.
In the name of God, Monsieur, look after him and see that he rests
and takes better care of himself. You will be doing a service to the
Company and to the many persons who have need of his services
for their salvation. Please do the same with regard to any others
who need to restrain themselves.

\textsuperscript{2}Pierre Nivelle, Bishop of Luçon.

\textsuperscript{1}Louis Thibault.
1174. - TO A BISHOP

[Between 1643 and 1652]

Who would not acknowledge that it is a very clear blessing of God on the diocese of... to have given it a Bishop who brings peace to souls in places where neither bishops nor visitations had been spoken of for a hundred years? Consequently, Excellency, can I ever conceive a high enough esteem for your person or pay you sufficient respect? Must I not declare that you are a God-given Bishop, a Prelate of grace, and a truly apostolic man who, through Jesus Christ, has become well-known to people in greatest distress? May His Holy Name be forever blessed for this! May He preserve you for many years to come! May you be rewarded in the end with an eternity of glory and be recognized in heaven among a very great number of blessed souls who will have entered this abode of glory through you and will acknowledge you there as their second savior after Jesus Christ!

1175. - TO MOTHER ANNE-MARIE BOLLAIN, SUPERIORESS OF THE MADELEINE CONVENT

My dear Mother,

The grace of O[ur] L[ord] be with you forever!

What you ask me about having that good priest for the direction of the house raises two difficulties: first, with regard to authority, he will want to assume too much, and this is not advisable because he will consider himself a born Superior, and perhaps his succes-

---


1Abelly states that the letter is addressed to a bishop of great merit, appointed through the influence of Saint Vincent. This bishop had reported to the Saint the first fruits of his labors.

2The period when Saint Vincent was a member of the Council of Conscience.

Letter 1175. - Reg. 1, f° 62 v°, copy made from the original autograph letter.

The Madeleine convent.
sors will claim the same thing as a right; second—and I place this
last—there is the man himself. Since he is somewhat delicate and
sickly, at first he would find the responsibility for your house a
problem. It is better to see how things will go in the beginning.

I told our Brother who takes care of business matters to return
to you today the papers you sent me, which are only copies. You
suggested to me that we should have recourse to arbitrators and
that you would take M. Defitta\(^2\) for yours. I told you that we will
gladly abide by his decision. M. Pepin is the only one I have found
who thinks we could not lease Verneuil. M. Blavet said in his
presence that we could. All those to whom I have spoken about it
since then, and who know the coach business, think it is unjust for
your Dreux coaches to prevent the establishment of some in
Verneuil as well as in Lisieux, Bayeux, Coutances, and Valognes
farther on, where the owners of the Rouen coaches in which you
have shares have the right to put some, and throughout Normandy.
Judge for yourself, dear Mother, what right Dreux has to exclude
all these other towns, which have no coaches, from having some
for their convenience, when they wish. Moreover, there are many
examples of that: the coaches from Abbeville and Calais still use
the Beauvais route where there are already some established.
"Yes," you say, "but the owners will get less from their tolls." Even
if this were to be the case, should your private interest be prejudicial
to the other towns farther on, since the establishment of coaches is
a question of public transport? One thing that is unjust is for the
other coaches to pick up persons in Dreux; if they did, the Dreux
coach should be allowed to seize the other coaches.

These, dear Mother, are my humble thoughts, which I write to
you in all simplicity. The pen is being taken from my hand and I
must finish. If M. Defitta judges otherwise, I defer to his decision.
I am in the love of O[ur] L[ord], your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

\(^2\)A Paris lawyer and one of the Saint's friends.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

You know that all things in this world are subject to change, that man himself is never in the same state, and that God often allows some falling off in the holiest Companies. This has happened in some of our houses, as we have observed for some time now in the visitations that have been made, although at first we did not know the cause. It has taken a little patience and attention on our part to discover it, but God has finally shown us that the liberty some have taken to sleep longer than the Rule allows has had this bad effect. Not being at prayer with the others, they were being deprived of the benefits of making it in common, and often they prayed only a little or not at all in private. The result was that these persons were less careful of themselves, their actions lacked energy, and the Community was irregular in its practices. To remedy this disorder, the cause has to be eradicated; therefore, exactness in rising must be recommended and enforced so that gradually each house will be changed and become more attached to the Rule, and each member in particular will be more attentive to his spiritual welfare.

This led us to hold our first spiritual conference of the new year on this first action of the day, to strengthen all of us more in the resolution to rise without fail at four o'clock, and thereby to participate more fully in the happy consequences of this fidelity. Since this, along with the inconveniences that arise from the contrary, served as a motivation for us in our conference, I thought it my duty, Monsieur, to share it with you, together with the objections and replies that may be given and the means that may

Letter 1176. - Reg. 2, p. 302. Other authentic concordant copies are extant, including one in the Departmental Archives of Vauciuse, D 296.

\footnote{According to Collet, op. cit., vol. II, p. 295.}
be used. You can make your Community aware of this, to maintain it in the same custom, or to enter into the spirit of it, if it is not already doing so, in order to share in the same happiness.

(1) The first benefit of rising at the sound of the bell is that we are observing the Rule and, consequently, the Will of God.

(2) Since the obedience practiced at that hour is all the more pleasing to God because it is prompt, it also draws down blessings on the other actions of the day, as we see in the promptness of Samuel who, having risen three times in one night, was praised by heaven and earth for this and highly favored by God.²

(3) The first fruits of good works are the most honorable. Now, since all honor is due to God, it is only right to give Him this one. If we refuse, we are giving the first share to the devil, preferring him to God. The result is that this lion prowls around the bed in the morning to seize this action so that, if he cannot get anything else from us during the day, he might at least be able to boast that he got the first of our actions.

(4) We form the habit when we accustom ourselves to a particular time. The result is that afterward we are prompt in rising. This even serves as a clock in places where there is none, and we have no difficulty jumping out of bed. On the other hand, nature takes advantage of what we offer it. If we stay in bed one day, it demands the same satisfaction the next day and will demand it as long as we do not deprive it entirely of any hope.

(5) If Our Lord left paradise for us and was reduced to such poverty in this life that He had nowhere to lay His head, with what greater reason should we not get out of bed to go to Him!

(6) Well-regulated sleep is beneficial to health of body and mind, but a person who sleeps a long time becomes effeminate; furthermore, temptations occur at those times.

(7) If man's lifetime is too short to serve God worthily and to make up for the bad use made of the night, it is a pity to want to shorten still more the little time we have for that purpose. A

²Cf. I Sm 3: 2-9.
merchant rises early to become rich; every minute is precious to him. Thieves do the same and spend the nights waiting to take passers-by by surprise. Should we be less diligent for good than they are for evil? People in society pay their calls in the morning and take great care to be present at the rising of an important personage. Mon Dieu! how shameful if laziness causes us to lose the time assigned for conversing with the Lord of Lords, our support and our all!

(8) When we are present at prayer and at repetition, we share in the blessings of Our Lord, who reveals Himself generously there, being, as He says, in the midst of those gathered together in His name. Morning is the best time for this action and the quietest part of the day. The ancient hermits and the saints, in imitation of David, used it for prayer and meditation. The Israelites had to rise early to gather the manna, and why should not we, who lack grace and virtue, do likewise to attain them? God does not dispense His favors equally at all times.

Indeed, since the time He has granted us the grace of rising all together, we have observed greater punctuality, recollection, and modesty in this house. This leads us to hope that, as long as this beautiful harmony lasts, virtue will go on increasing and each man will become stronger in his vocation. Carelessness has caused many to leave: not being able to coddle themselves at whim, they could not grow in love for their state. How can we go gladly to prayer if we rise only grudgingly? How can we meditate profitably if we are only half in church, and then merely out of propriety? On the contrary, those who are zealous in rising usually persevere, hardly ever grow lax, and make good progress. The grace of vocation depends on prayer, and the grace of prayer depends on rising. If then we are faithful to this first action, if we come together before Our Lord and present ourselves all together to Him as the first Christians used to do, He will give Himself in turn to us, will illumine us with His lights, and will Himself accomplish in and through us the good we are bound to do in His Church. Lastly, He will grant us the grace of attaining the degree of perfection He
desires of us so that we may be able one day to possess Him fully in the eternity of the ages.

See how important it is, Monsieur, for the whole Company to rise exactly at four o’clock, since prayer derives its worth from this first action, and all other actions are of value only to the degree that prayer makes them worthwhile. The person who said that he could gauge from his prayer how the rest of the day would go really knew what he was talking about.

But since the softness of some will not yield without protest because it is only an excuse, I foresee being told that the Rule of rising should not apply in the same way to persons of a weak constitution and to those who are more robust, and that the former need more rest than the latter. To this I oppose both the opinion of doctors, who all agree that seven hours suffice for all sorts of persons, and the example of every religious Order in the Church, whose hours of sleep are limited to seven. None of them takes more, some of them do not have even that much, and most of them have their sleep interrupted because they get up once or twice during the night to go to choir.

What condemns our cowardice is that women religious have no greater privilege, even though they are weaker and have been raised more tenderly. But do they not sometimes sleep longer than usual? No, I have never heard this said, and I am certain of it with regard to the nuns of Sainte-Marie, with the exception of the sick in the infirmary.

Someone else will say, “What, Monsieur, do we have to get up when we feel sick? I have a bad headache, a toothache, and an attack of fever, which kept me awake almost all night.” Yes, my brother and friend, you must get up if you are not in the infirmary or have not been told to stay in bed longer. If seven hours of rest have not given you relief, one or two hours more, taken on your own volition, will not cure you. But even if you were, in fact, helped by this, it is advisable for you to give glory to God like the others.

2The Visitation nuns.
by going to the place set apart for prayer, and there you can explain your need to the Superior. Otherwise, we would always be starting over because often several persons may not feel well, and others might pretend they do not in order to coddle themselves, and this would be a constant source of disorder. If we miss some sleep one night, nature will be quite capable of making up for it another night.

"Monsieur," someone else will protest, "do you also mean to deprive of any kind of extra rest those who return from a journey or have just finished some hard work?" Yes, as far as the morning is concerned, but if the Superior thinks that the fatigue is such that it requires more than seven hours of sleep, then he will have them go to bed earlier than the others in the evening.

"But they arrive very late and quite exhausted." In that case there is no harm in having them sleep longer in the morning because necessity serves as a rule.

"What! you mean we must always rise at four o'clock, with, as is the custom, one late sleep until six once a week or at least every two weeks, to recover a little of our strength? That is very difficult and could cause us to fall ill!" This is the language of self-love and here is my reply to it. Our regulations and even our customs require all of us to rise at the same time. If there has been some laxity in this, it has occurred only recently and in just a few houses, through the abuse of certain individuals and toleration on the part of Superiors. In other houses the practice of rising has always been faithfully observed, and these houses have been blessed. To think that a person could fall ill from not allowing some interruption in this exactness is an illusion; experience proves the contrary. From the time that we have all been rising, no one in this house, who was not sick before, has become ill, and we know of none elsewhere. We do know, however, and the doctors have said so, that too much sleep at night is bad for the sinuses and the digestive system.

Finally, if the objection is made that some business may arise, preventing a person from going to bed at nine or even ten o'clock, and that it is only reasonable for him to take in the morning the rest he lost in the evening, my reply is that we should avoid these complications, if possible, in order to retire on time. If we cannot
do so, this happens so rarely that the loss of one or two hours of sleep is of little importance compared to the scandal given by staying in bed while the others are at prayer.

Am I not wrong, Monsieur, to have dwelt so long on pointing out to you the utility and importance of rising, since your Community is perhaps one of the most fervent and regular in the Company? If that is the case, my aim is not to persuade them to tender, humble gratitude to God for the fidelity He has given them; if, however, they have fallen into the fault we are combatting, I think I have good reason to invite them to reform, and to ask you, as I do now, to see that this is done.

Here briefly are the means for you and them to do so. For the Community:

(1) Be convinced that exactness in rising is one of the most important practices in the Company and that as the day begins so the rest of the day continues; (2) give yourselves sincerely to God on going to bed in the evening, asking Him for the strength to overcome yourselves in the morning and to obey His voice without delay. For this end, kneel and invoke the protection of the Blessed Virgin by an Ave Maria, and recommend yourselves to your Guardian Angel. Many have been helped by this; (3) consider the bell as the voice of God. As soon as you hear it, jump out of bed, make the Sign of the Cross, prostrate yourself on the floor and, kissing it, adore God in union with the rest of the Community which is adoring Him at the same instant. When you fail in this, impose some penance on yourself. Some have used the discipline for as long a time as they have lost fighting with their pillow. The last means for each member is never to waver from this exactness because the longer you put it off, the harder it becomes for you.

The general means, which depend on your solicitude, Monsieur, and of the Officers of the house, are: first, that there always be someone appointed to go from room to room, carrying a light, when necessary, who says aloud Benedicamus Domino, repeating it until he gets a response. After that, another man should make the rounds, even a second one when the Community is large. Those named for
this duty must be exact in carrying it out. Second and lastly, those in authority should stand fast and never allow anyone to remain in bed after four o’clock in the morning, under any pretext whatsoever, outside of the infirmary—if there is one—except in a case of great necessity.

Speaking of authority, exactness to rising has been found so beautiful and beneficial that it has been decided that those who have not been faithful to it should never be given positions of authority in the Company. Their example would soon be followed in this relaxation, and it would be bad form for them to take for themselves what they would be obliged to refuse to others. May God be pleased to forgive our past failings, Monsieur, and grant us the grace to correct them so that we may be like those fortunate servants whom the master will find watching when he comes. “Amen I say to you,” says Our Lord, “he will make them sit down at table and proceed to wait on them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. Amen I say to you that he will place them in charge of all his property.”

That is enough for one letter, Monsieur. Please offer me to God and to the prayers of your little Company, of whom and of you in particular I am, Monsieur, the most humble and devoted servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

\[\text{Cf. Lk 12:37-38.}\]
I understand no more about those kinds of things you are proposing to me, Mademoiselle, than about the clauses you showed me. If you feel that the Prior and I should be named in the contract, he should be named before me. I beg Our Lord to bless the newlyweds and give you the dispositions he gave the Blessed Virgin when she was present with her Son at the wedding of Cana.

Your good daughter from Vienne came to pressure me this morning for the foster parents. I told her we are doing our best but she has to be patient for a while and do the least harm possible. However, since that is not ready money, I think she was a little disappointed.

I sent your letter to M. . . . What you wrote him about Florence

---

Letter 1177. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1 The contents of this letter dictate the assignement of the date. Michel Le Gras was married on January 18, 1650.

2 Adrien Le Bon, former Prior of Saint-Lazare. He died on April 9, 1651, in his seventy-fourth year.

3 At last Saint Louise was seeing the realization of her fondest dreams. On January 13, 1650, she wrote to Sister Jeanne Lepeintre, Sister Servant in Nantes, "I beg you and all the Sisters to offer your Holy Communion for my son who, I believe, will receive the sacrament of Matrimony one day soon. It would seem that God has chosen for him a very virtuous young lady, who is not from Paris." (Cf. Ecrits spirituels, L. 275, p. 311.) Michel Le Gras was married to Gabrielle Le Clare in Saint-Sauveur Church in Paris on January 18. His bride was the daughter of the Seigneur de Chennevières and of the late Dame Musset de la Rochemaillet. The following year a little girl, Renée Louise, was born, whom the Daughters of Charity called "the little Sister." She later became Mademoiselle d'Ormilly. Renée-Louise was still living in 1696, the year her father died.

Letter 1178. - Reg. 2, p. 60.
is very much to the point. God has granted us the grace up to this
time not to seek out any establishment, either directly or indirectly.
If the Company takes my advice, it will always be preserved
through this maxim, for if we are good, we will not lack any, and
if we are not, we already have too many houses anyway, and can
hardly fill the few we have.

I have been told that the Archbishop of Toulouse has been
waiting for a long time for me to give him some indication that I
would like the Company to work in his diocese, so he could
establish us there and put us in charge of his seminary, but I have
been careful not to give him the slightest sign of this. His brother
was here a few days ago; he skirted the issue with me for a long
time, but I deliberately refrained from discussing it. Providence
must call us and we must follow it, if we are to go forward
confidently.

1179. - CHARLES NACQUART TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur and Most Honored Father,

Your blessing!

Since the vast expanse of sea which separates us does not allow me to
be able to give you verbally an account of my mission, I have recourse to
this letter. It will serve for your charity and, by the same token, for the
Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, as the report the latter requests
of an explorer sent to this land to find out if it is promising and worth
encouraging evangelizers to win it over for Our Lord Jesus Christ. I am
well aware that humility should cover the face with shame and close the
mouth of such a poor instrument as I, since I am engaged in a work of such
great consequence, and I acknowledge that I am both unworthy and incapable of it. However, my duty and charity, together with the expecta-

1Charles de Montchal.

Saint Vincent had copies of this letter sent to the houses of the Company and even to persons
outside of it.
tions of the Sacred Congregation, oblige me to imitate the simplicity of those who have put in writing what God had accomplished in and through them in similar work, as I note that the great Saint Francis Xavier did in his wonderful letters. I realize, besides, that I am obliged to walk in his footsteps, since he was my predecessor, not in actual fact but in desire, for he ardently longed to come to this island but was driven away from it and led elsewhere by adverse winds or, rather, by the Spirit of God.

I shall describe simply and plainly to you our occupations before we boarded ship, and on land and sea, with a brief description of the country, its inhabitants with their customs and superstitious ceremonies, and what God in His goodness has done through us in this country. May the glory for the good be to God, and to me pardon and mercy for the evil done and the good omitted!

(1) What happened before we set sail.

On April 18, 1648, Monsieur Gondrée, my companion, and I left Richelieu, where we were living, for La Rochelle. Along the way, as is customary in our Congregation, we taught Christian doctrine in front of inns and elsewhere, whenever the opportunity presented itself.

We reached La Rochelle on Good Friday and, finding that the ship was not ready, we stayed there almost a month. But we were not idle; for, when we presented ourselves to the local Ordinary, he gave us permission to work in town or country at whatever we felt to be most expedient for the glory of God. Gratefully accepting this, in imitation of Saint Francis Xavier, whom you gave us as a model on our journey, we chose the hospitals. Although we were not lodged in them, we spent a good part of the morning visiting and serving the sick there, with the permission of the Fathers of Charity, who did us the favor of letting us work with them.

The prisoners were our parishioners during the Easter season. After administering the Sacraments, we acted as feet for them, going in their place to see those who, they hoped, would obtain their release.

(2) The most noteworthy events of our voyage.

Early in the morning of May 21, feast of the Ascension of Our Lord, we weighed anchor. At the Mass celebrated immediately after that, I exhorted the congregation to entrust our voyage to Divine Providence, who would make sea and wind favorable to our ship in proportion to the care we would take to keep our hearts in the purity of grace and fidelity to His service.

Since the feast of Pentecost was near, I prepared our flock of one hundred and twenty persons to receive the Holy Spirit through Penance.
and I opened the Jubilee which His Holiness had granted the faithful for peace. Everyone made the Easter duty by a general confession. This kept us busy until the feast of the Blessed Sacrament, since we preferred to do this ahead of time because of the dangers of the sea, rather than await the uncertainty of our arrival at the place we were trying to reach.

On the eve of the feast of Saint John the Baptist, a small ship from Dieppe, on its way to Saint Christopher, dropped anchor at Saint Vincent, Cape Verde, where we had stopped to take on a water supply. A number of the passengers gained the Jubilee on land, where we celebrated Mass.

The next day, feast of Saint John the Baptist, twelve black Portuguese, good Christians, came to hear Mass. At the end, they sang the Te Deum litanies and asked for the Sacraments, which we were unable to administer because we did not understand their language. I wrote you from that island, Monsieur, explaining to you the need for priests in the country of Senegal, near Cape Verde, where the inhabitants, who are black, seem very open to the reception of the Gospel. There is no danger except that in one season the air there is a little unhealthy.

If anyone would like to know the ways and means of becoming established in this country, he should contact M. Rozée, who lives in Rouen. He is one of the directors and seigneurs who have land granted in this country and who send ships there.

After remaining there six days to take on provisions, we put out to sea. The winds were against us from early July until August 16 and we almost had to give up, although we were close to the equator. But we had recourse to Him who draws the winds from His storehouse, and to the Blessed Virgin, Star of the Sea. In her honor we made a public vow to God to go to confession and communion during the week preceding her glorious Assumption, and to build a church in Madagascar under the patronage of the Queen of Heaven. A good will collection was taken up for this. As soon as each one had thrown his Jonah into the sea of Penance, the storm abated and the wind changed in our favor so that, on the eve of Our Lady's feast, we crossed the equator.

We experienced the same heavenly assistance around the September feast of Our Lady. The wind, which had been against us, became favorable

---

3 An island of the Lesser Antilles; also known as Saint Kitts.
4 June 24.
5 September 8, Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
immediately after our public prayer in honor of the Blessed Virgin, whose help we experienced on several other occasions.

When we were in sight of the Cape of Good Hope, God preserved us from the danger of being dashed against a submerged rock, about two leagues from land. A sailor spotted it and we promptly avoided it. As we neared the shore to drop anchor, our ship ran aground on another rock; we stayed there for six or seven hours in the fear of having to remain in a barren, unknown land. Finally, however, the tide floated the ship without any damage to it, and we went on to drop anchor at the port named the Bay of Saldanha.6

(3) The Bay of Saldanha and its inhabitants.

Because of the lengthy voyage, and the use of salted meat and water that went bad with time, several persons had contracted an illness called scurvy, affecting the nerves and joints. The land cures this disease. When we went to fetch water in this place, we saw some black people, inhabitants of the country, dressed in animal skins, and armed with bows and arrows, which they used for hunting. They were very thin and so famished that they rushed like dogs on the meat we threw to them. I was deeply moved to compassion, seeing those poor people who did not know their Creator. Prostrate on the ground, I asked Him who wills that everyone be enlightened and saved, to provide them with the means necessary for salvation. They noticed this action and said to one another, “These are Saterons,” meaning high priests. This made me think they had among them certain persons destined for some kind of worship, although I had not seen any sign of this, except that the men are circumcised and the women cut a joint of their finger when their first and second children come into the world. But I think these things are done more through custom than for any religious reason. I noticed a certain order among them because the men, women, and small children were all separated at meals, each eating with his or her own group. It seems to me that the way to help these poor uncivilized people would be to try, in passing, to win over through friendship one or two boys of twelve to fifteen years of age and teach them our language. In this way we could gradually learn their customs and some means of instructing them. If any of our men pass through there, I beg them to try this method or something else better.

After remaining a week at the Cape of Good Hope, we left and took to the open sea. Suddenly an adverse wind forced us to drop anchor. Perhaps God was punishing us for our negligence or coldness in thanking Him for

---

6Saldanha Bay, located on the southwest coast of the Republic of South Africa. The copyist mistakenly wrote “Sardinia” for “Saldanha”.

---
the provisions we had just picked up on land because, once we had celebrated Holy Mass for this intention, we had such a good wind that in a short time we passed Cape Agulhas,? which usually is very difficult and dangerous.

I greatly admired the Divine Wisdom during our voyage, in the countless number of various kinds of fish, very similar to land animals. Among others we saw some which Wisdom had equipped with wings by which they escaped when they were pursued by almost all the other fish. Some even landed on our ship.

Finally, after sailing for six months, we sighted Madagascar. I then exhorted the entire crew to forget all the minor offenses that had occurred among them during such a long, tiresome journey. Everyone promised to do so. On December 4 we cast anchor in the port so long and so ardently desired.

When we reached the port, I was one of the first to go ashore. As my feet touched land, I knelt on the ground to offer myself to God to carry out His plans and to take spiritual possession, in His name, of this island and all the others, by the authority of our Holy Father the Pope, in order to establish there the empire of Jesus Christ and to destroy that of the prince of darkness. I went straight to the Chapel in the fort to celebrate Mass, which had not been said there for five months, for lack of consecratable matter. The next day, December 5, M. de Flacourt, our leader and the mandated Governor of the country, together with M. Gondré, my companion, and the entire crew, came to the fort, and I celebrated a high Mass of thanksgiving. The Te Deum laudamus was sung, as we had vowed to God on the ship. The French whom we found welcomed us with great joy. When everyone was housed, we moved into a little hut that was vacant.

(4) Our work aboard ship.

No doubt you are interested, Monsieur, in knowing how we tried to procure God's glory during the six and a half months we spent at sea. That is why I shall report it quite simply here. From the day we embarked until we landed in Madagascar, we said Mass and had morning and evening prayers publicly, weather permitting, in the way our Congregation does during Missions. I had some leaflets printed for this purpose, which I distributed to the crew.

We prepared them to gain the Jubilee and arranged for them to make their general confession to this end. We left Cape Verde a few days after the feast of Saint John the Baptist. Reflecting that with us now were people who had been picked up, sailors as well as passengers, in need of

?The extreme southern tip of Africa.
instruction, we gave talks three or four times a week on the principal mysteries of faith and on other essential matters, as we do during our missions in Europe. After the introduction, we would question the young people on the points presented in the preceding instruction, concluding with an uninterrupted talk on some other point important to salvation. We continued this for six weeks with good results, but then we stopped for fear of tiring people, and to give them a little break. Our daily schedule was arranged much the same as in our own houses, except that sometimes we had to adapt ourselves to weather, place, and persons.

After mental prayer and the Divine Office, we read a chapter of Holy Scripture and shared our thoughts on the moral lessons which had impressed us, to be used for our own benefit as well as for that of our neighbor. Since there are always some sick persons on a crowded ship, one of us would visit them in the morning and another in the afternoon.

About nine-thirty we would read together Saint Francis Xavier's letters and note what applied to us. Our conferences were on how we could remedy our own needs and those of the ship.

In order to make good use of time, which is boring in idleness, we had our people meet in groups of three or four. One person would read to the others from the Introduction to a Devout Life by the servant of God, Bishop Francis de Sales, and from the Imitation of Christ. This was done in an edifying manner. We even succeeded in persuading a good number of our people to hold spiritual conferences two or three times a week on various subjects, especially on the occasions of offending God and the particular means of resisting them. From the responses of the passengers and sailors, we were keenly aware that Our Lord was among us in this. At the end, summing up what had been said, we would add a few simple words of our own and conclude with a story from Holy Scripture or some example from the lives of the saints.

After supper we would each go with a separate group on deck to contribute to good conversations and discourage bad or useless ones. In the same vein, when anyone had sworn or said something indecent, it was the practice for him to hold out his hand and receive a rap on the knuckles after he had promised to make amends. This was done without severity and by common consent. Having given sufficient time to conversation, we returned to our little cabins, where five or six little boys would often come to visit us for spiritual discussions of the stories we had been telling them, applying them to their own benefit. Then we would recite the rosary, one group answering the other.

That, Monsieur, is how we used our time during the journey. However, if God granted us the grace of following this little program during our voyage, you should know that the zeal of M. de Flacourt, our very wise
Governor and Commander, contributed greatly to it, since things could not have gone so smoothly if we did not have the support of his authority. We certainly owe to his piety the better part of the joy of our journey.

(5) A brief description of the island of Madagascar and its inhabitants.

Before reporting what we have done in this country, I think it is necessary to give a short description of the island, its inhabitants, and their customs and mores, so that you can see the state in which we found religious matters.

The island of Madagascar is also called Saint-Laurent because it was discovered on its feast day. It is six hundred Italian miles long, two hundred miles wide in some places, and four hundred in others. It is fourteen hundred miles in circumference. It is very hot but not unbearable.

It is divided into several regions separated by very high mountains. People who have seen much of the country assert that it has more than 400,000 inhabitants. Our hut is on the tip of the island in a place called Taolagnaro. We are near the Tropic [of Capricorn] at 25° latitude; consequently, our seasons are the opposite of those in France.

In each region there is an influential person, acknowledged as the chief, and he is like its little king. The vassals of these petty kings number three to four thousand men. Their wealth consists in three to four thousand head of cattle, which belong to them, and in the tribute paid by their vassals, which is one-fifth of their food supply of rice and roots. The title of king does not really fit because they are not truly absolute monarchs, and also because they live so poorly that the most insignificant seigneur in France lives better than the most influential person in Madagascar. Royalty is not inherited by the children, if they are not adults when their father dies. There are other influential persons under these petty kings, who are almost as powerful and rich as they. All these important persons are carpenters.

There are two types of inhabitants. Some are black and have kinky hair, like the man baptized in Paris, who works for the French and is still a Christian; these are the original inhabitants of the country. Others are white and have long hair like the French; they came from Persia about five hundred years ago. In some regions they have made themselves the masters of the black men, as they are here where we live; in other parts they are under the black men, as in Matatanes and elsewhere. They say that their genealogy can be traced back to a man named Ramini, begotten from the foam of the sea, and that this great person was a friend of Mohammed.

Throughout the island, most of the people live in villages at the foot of the mountains, from which water falls in such quantity that rivers are formed and empty into the neighboring sea. There are some wanderers called Ombilambo, who are rather wild and live in the woods, stealing
whatever they can; they run away as soon as they see a stranger. There are no towns, fortresses, or inns. All the houses are built of wood and covered with leaves, and are very low. The doors are so small that a person can barely get in and out through them. The fire is lit and the cooking done in the house, which has no chimney. They have no beds or chairs except the wooden floor on which they sleep. They eat and drink on a mat made of rushes.

The food of the country consists of rice, beef, mutton, and goat in rather small quantity. In our area there is plenty. Farther on, where we go to trade, poultry is common. There is no wheat or wine, but they make a certain drink out of honey. Roots, beans, watermelon, lemons, and oranges are plentiful. There are no animals for hunting, except for a few wild boar and bulls, and there are very few waterfowl.

The rivers abound in fish, but almost everywhere it is very risky to cross them because there are so many crocodiles, and they are dangerous.

Almost all the inhabitants go bareheaded and barefoot. They wear no underwear, and their clothing is different from ours because they wear a pagne, which is a piece of cloth around one and a half aunes 8 long and three-quarters wide. The women also wear pagnes that are sewn together and hang from shoulder to feet. Although the shape of the robe is similar, the quality, however, is different, for each one dresses according to his or her class: influential persons wear silk; the others, cotton. Children go naked until they are seven or eight years old. They all have their ears pierced, and they fill the very large holes in them with a piece of wood shaped especially for this purpose, which they embellish with gold or an oriental shell, depending on their social rank. They also adorn themselves with harris, out of which they make bracelets.

They live a long time. There are many elderly persons around, and they say they are so old that their years cannot be counted.

(6) The sect or religion of the country and their superstitious observances.

Although these people have no specific, structured religion, since nowhere on the island can any temple or priest be seen, there are, nevertheless, certain superstitious ceremonies and observances. These were introduced around five hundred years ago when the white people, who are really Kafirs, came from the coasts of Persia to win over the natives. They found them simple by nature, having no laws or religion, and they easily attracted them to the superstitions of Mohammedanism. Certain

8French measurement of 1.88 meters, or 3.92 feet. These pagnes were about six feet long and three feet wide.
people still practice some of these, such as not eating pork, offering cattle in sacrifice before eating them, and others which I shall mention later. A certain kind of idolatry still persists.

First, they say that Zanahary, that is, God, is master of all, but they confine him to heaven where, they say, he is like a king in his kingdom. In some places, however, since they know God and the devil by name only, they give preference to the devil in their sacrifices, offering him the first share. "This is for Andian Rabilo," they say, meaning his lordship the devil, "and this part is for Zanahary," meaning God. I do not know the reason for this, unless they fear one more than the other, because they say that some persons among them are possessed or at least beaten by Zachare and Drimi, which are the names of devils in this country.

The important people allow themselves to be called gods, and when they want to praise the French they call them Zanahary, but the French do not permit this. The most intelligent among the white people have a limited knowledge of matters concerning the creation of the world, the sin of our first parents, and other similar things. They say that the wicked, generally speaking, will go into the fire, but they do not know where or for how long.

Then there are the Ombiasses. This word means writers, and they are so called because they know how to read and write in Arabic. They are respected as are priests among us. They are the masters of the ceremonies, customs, and superstitions of the country. The people fear them because of their handwriting and their books, in which there is not much development, reason, or doctrine, but only here and there that God is great, and something from the Koran, which they call Al Koran. The remainder of the contents of these books is composed of illegible scribbles, which these writers make the people believe are capable of curing illnesses, foretelling future events, and finding lost articles.

The custom of circumcising children is general all over the island, not for religious reasons but for purely human motives. It is not done when the child is a week old; in some places they wait a year, in others two, three, four, five, six, or even seven years after their birth.

This ceremony is performed by the Ombiasses at a public gathering. Fathers and mothers bring their children, along with food, such as steer and capons, to be given to these writers. As soon as the child is circumcised, . . . blood from the slaughtered steer and capon is put on the wound. The great general circumcision takes place in the Friday year. They distinguish years as we do the days of the week, and we are now in the Friday year.

The white men observe a kind of fast in two different months; it consists of not eating between sunrise and sunset, but they eat enough all through the night to last for the whole day. They abstain from eating beef and
drinking wine, but capons and brandy are not forbidden. If anyone does not wish to fast, he can be exempted by having someone else fast in his place. They cannot give any origin or reason for this superstition, except that it is a custom of their ancestors, and it is stated in their books that those who fail to observe it will go into the fire.

They practice another superstition, called Missmuth, meaning the banquet gathering, which is held when an important person has a new house built or an old one restored. This is one of their principal feasts, and I will describe it here for a better understanding of what follows. This is what happens at that ceremony: when the time fixed for entrance into the new or restored house arrives, the important person's subjects assemble and present him with gifts. Some bring cattle, others bring honey wine, earthen pots, and other household utensils characteristic of the country.

The chief has the gifts accepted by one of his men, who points at them one at a time, indicating to him who gave what. Then the chief, standing on the threshold, makes a speech, wishing them temporal happiness so that they might prosper and live for a long time, and he encourages them to go on living and to keep up their services and gifts. The other Roandries, or chiefs, who are of lesser rank than the king but the most important chiefs in the region, also come on this occasion, accompanied by some of their subjects, to present their gifts. When they arrive, they hold maneuvers with halberds and iron-tipped spears, the weapons of the country. Then the master of the house steps forward and, pointing a javelin at their heart, embraces them, while both shout with gladness.

After two or three days have passed receiving the people and their presents, and the day arrives that has been fixed for entrance into the house, fifteen or sixteen cattle are brought in and the men grab hold of them, no matter how enraged they may be. They are brought down, their feet are tied together, and their horns are stuck into the ground. The men hold them ready to be slaughtered, while stroking their necks. In the meantime, three or four Ombiasses advance gravely, dressed in fine robes with rich belts whose ends they put over their shoulders. Holding a big knife, they go towards the place where the cattle are being held, and they circle them three times. On the first round they throw sand from the sea on them; on the second, grass taken from the seashore; on the third, sea water. Then they slaughter them quickly and collect the blood in wooden bowls, to be presented to the chiefs, who will mark their foreheads and chests with it, praying that it will bring them happiness and long life. Next, the master of the house, holding a large knife, walks at the head of a procession, followed by the important guests. They go around three times, passing above the blood of the animals, and all enter the house, where they go around three more times, shouting with joy and stamping their feet.
loudly on the floor to show that the house is solidly built and safe to live in.

After that, the Ombisses, with wax torches carried before them, come forward solemnly bearing their sonatra, that is, their books, which I have already mentioned. As they pass, they strike fear into the people, making them give place to them, threatening them with some catastrophe that will befall them if they do not move back fast enough. I was present at this extravaganza, which caused me to smile. They tried to make me move back like the others. "No," I said, "I am not afraid of your books; they are only paper and ink and cannot hurt anyone, no more than the dust at your feet." They were amazed at my words and contempt of their ceremony, but they never explained anything to me, as has happened on many other occasions where I criticized their fraud, by which they deprive the people of their possessions. Those present said that the Ombisse of the Vazaha, meaning the French priest, far surpasses their writers in knowledge and doctrine, and that most of the French surpass the black people in ability. When these book bearers reach the house, they circle it three times, sprinkling it with blood so that it will last longer and nothing will harm those who live in it. Then the Roandrie goes to the door and, seated on the floor, preaches to the people to encourage them to go on serving him. He goes around distributing about four to five hundred cattle to feed four to five thousand persons. The skin is eaten along with the meat, as we do with pork in Europe. That is how the morning is spent, and everyone goes off to boil or roast his share of meat.

Meanwhile, the wives of the Roandries prepare the banquet for the chief's household, and have slaves bring three or four hundred portions of rice and meat on leaves that they hold in their hands. Other larger portions on large leaves of various shapes are brought in by some men; these leaves are made from red bark.

Finally, around two o'clock in the afternoon, everyone assembles once again in front of the chief's house. They dance to the sound of a drum, made from a hallowed-out tree trunk and covered with skin. The drum is beaten on one end with a stick and on the other by hand. With grotesque movements, they sing of what has happened in the country. In the meantime, a large quantity of honey wine is brought in and distributed to the crowd. In this drunken confusion the day and the ceremony ends, and the next day everyone returns home.

I inquired of an Ombisse the reasons for each detail, and the only answer I received was that it was the custom of their ancestors. They have other festivals or gatherings which include a banquet; for instance, before and after the rice harvest.
To the preceding ceremony I will add what they do to deliver possessed persons. Some time ago I went to a place thirty or thirty-two miles from here to give instructions in a rural area. Someone came to tell me there were two possessed women there. I saw no sign of possession, just sad faces. I was also told that they could not speak. I wanted to see how they acted on this occasion, which was as follows: someone ran to get an Ombiasse, who immediately had a javelin handed to those present and to the two women. Then this exorcist took the lead in a dance, which was performed with such gestures that it looked like they were trying to fend off with their feet and hands something that horrified them. Once they were all in a frenzy from the dancing, the old faker of an Ombiasse pretended to throw his javelin into a container filled with water and had the women drink from it. Then he struck them with his knee to chase away the devil, who had never been there; for this was, in my opinion, only a case of melancholy, which this strapping fellow dissipated by the liveliness of his dance.

That is how they perform their miracles, to make people respect them, not forgetting to be well paid, especially when the patients are wealthy. The following shows how they cure people: first, they put on a worried and puzzled air and, taking a plank, they spread sand over it, on which they make a large number of dots at intervals, which they call Sakilo, and they frequently count them to learn the outcome of the illness. They sell some of this sand inside a piece of wax, which they make the person wear around the neck to obtain good health. Then they send for a large number of cattle and capons, and they say that this one should be taken instead of that one. The important thing is that they always choose the best ones, with the thought in mind of eating their share. After that, they do some writing on leaves, entwining the letters, and they have the sick person take a drink of water. If the sick person recovers his health naturally, the cure is attributed to this foolishness. Who would not pity the simplicity of these people, who allow themselves to be deceived in this way at their own expense? Who could refrain from a just indignation against these cheats, who are well aware that these things are futile and irrelevant?

What is more directly contrary to the honor of God, and which will be more difficult for us to eradicate, is an equally ridiculous and damnable kind of cult that the chiefs of the country and their subjects render to certain idols which they call olis, or ointments. The Ombiasses make and sell them. These little idols are fashioned from a piece of wood or a hollowed out root, which they attach to a belt. They put powder and oil in them. Some they shape like little men, pretending they are alive and capable of granting them everything they wish, such as good weather or rain, and preservation from diseases and enemies. They do not fail to feed them, sometimes honey
or the heart of a special fowl. Since I often showed them that these olis were inanimate objects which cannot eat and have no more powers than any stone picked up at random, this makes them angry; and since they cannot prevent me from pointing out their abuse to them, they try to change the subject. When they are pressured, they admit in private that this is true but that, if those objects are dead, their souls are with God. Everybody has some in their house and they carry them with them to the country; they have recourse to them in their needs as we do to God. When in doubt, they never do anything without seeking their advice. Then they believe that the first thought that comes to mind has been suggested to them by their olis. When they sow their rice and other vegetables, they take their olis to the fields, sacrifice an animal to them, sprinkle their field with the blood of this victim, and pray to their olis to give them a bountiful harvest of good rice.

When they want to cross rivers, they first turn to their olis, asking them to protect them from the crocodiles. Then they address the crocodiles themselves and make a speech to them saying aloud, "Listen, you know very well that neither my family nor I have ever done any harm to your father and mother, or to you yourself. I beg you not to do any harm to me." Then they accuse themselves of any evil they have done saying, "It is true that I stole this and that but I will make restitution." Then they throw water and sand to the four winds and cross confidently. Whenever someone is caught, they say that his olis were no good. I tell them that, if they abandon this abominable superstition, they need only have recourse to God, who is all-powerful, and attribute to His goodness what they attribute to this idol.

Thanks be to God, most of the people around here have been undeceived of this. God Himself, who is always jealous of His own honor, does not let these abominations go unpunished; for, as He formerly did in Egypt, He sends such an extraordinary swarm of locusts that they fill and darken the air at the same time, like the thickest flakes of snow seen in winter in the northern regions. Even as I write, the land is covered with them, et comedunt fructus terme eorum et omne frumentum; afterward, the ground looks like fire had swept over it. The Ombiasses and some of the chiefs, far from acknowledging that this is a chastisement by which God is punishing their idolatry, make the people believe that they have the power to cause the locusts to come and to keep them away, and when they are not given what they demand, such as rice and other things, they threaten...
to summon the locusts. If they do arrive after that, they say to these simple people, “Did I not tell you so?” And when the insects have devoured everything and go elsewhere, they boast of having chased them away. There is good reason to hope that God in His goodness will deliver these poor people from this plague, if they submit to the yoke of faith and the observance of His Commandments.

(7) The secular customs of the country.

They make war among themselves to have one another’s cattle.

The chiefs keep their slaves like dogs. They sell the men at the same price as cattle, and children for the price of calves.

Wherever the white people are the masters, they reserve the right to slit the throats of animals they want to eat, so a black man is not allowed to slaughter his own animals. These slaughterers are usually Ombiasses, who get a share of the animal that is killed, and it is not the smallest share that they take. In places where the black people have remained the masters, the whites would not dare to slaughter the animals. This custom is one way to prevent theft and to assure that the chiefs have more cattle when their subjects die because they take everything, leaving nothing for the children of the person who worked all his life to accumulate something.

The stratagem used by the chiefs to keep the lowly always in subjection is that they have seized the best lands, where they sow their rice, vegetables, and other crops, and they deprive them more and more of their remaining possessions, impoverishing them and obliging them to have recourse to their [the chiefs’] storehouses, which are well stocked.

Thieves are punished in different ways: if they are chiefs or heads of a village, they may buy their way out by giving cattle; if they are poor, they are killed or, if they are spared, they, their wives, and their children become the slaves of the man who was wronged.

The most common vice of the country is sexual indulgence. Not all forms of it are considered dishonorable, but if a man is caught in adultery, he is given the same punishment as a thief: if he is rich, he can buy his way out; if he is poor, he is put to death or becomes a slave.

A murderer can also buy his way out: if he is poor and friendless, he becomes a slave or is put to death, but even if the son of a chief were to kill his father, he would not be put to death.

Relatives may intermarry, except in the first degree. Marriage is not permanent; couples may separate by mutual consent and each may marry someone else, as often happens. Polygamy is permitted, although it is not widespread, but a large number of the chiefs practice it because they can afford to feed several wives.

Among the black people, no great ceremony is attached to marriage, except that the choice is up to the couple and not the parents. The husband
usually purchases his wife, giving the parents a few cattle or something else for her. But the chiefs have a big gathering of relatives, friends, and subjects on both sides, and frequently the agreement and promise of marriage is arranged by the parents at the birth of the boy and the girl. They marry very young. Cattle are killed on the wedding day, as on their Missanaths. In the presence of the relatives, the Ombiasse wish them all kinds of temporal goods. Their hair is tied together and, while they hold hands, the husband puts his knee on that of his bride. Then a banquet follows and the ceremony ends with dancing.

The older Frenchmen tell me that mothers abandon their babies born on a Saturday between sunset and cock crow, and these poor exposed children die unless, by chance, someone finds them, as sometimes happens here. The excuse these unnatural mothers give for this inhuman act is that this period of time is unlucky, and if these babies were to live, they might kill their fathers and mothers. Still, they sometimes let them live, but they make them serve their brothers and sisters.

It is also said that mothers on Saint-Marie Island, at the tip of this one, likewise abandon their babies born on the three days of the week they consider unlucky, but I have no firsthand knowledge of that because it is done in secret, as do unnatural mothers in Europe in order to preserve their honor. They say that is common in this country too, when the mother is from the upper class and has conceived by a slave.

No name is given to children before the age of six or seven, except nabo (puppy) or lambo (piglet) for the boys because at that age they are more like animals than people. When they are a little older, however, an Ombiasse observes the planet under which the child was born and gives the boys the name of Radama, which means Adam, or names of the prophets Raby, Ramose, Elijah, or Moses. Girls are given the name of Rahona, which means Eve; or Ramary, or Mary, or other names indicating that they are beautiful, very rich, and will live a long time.

Funerals are held according to the rank of the deceased. If the person is an important Roandrie, he is buried in a beautiful robe. His face is left uncovered and adorned in the custom of the country with a necklace made of coral and beads of gold and silver. Relatives and friends of the deceased meet to pay their respects, and all of a sudden they throw off their weapons and shields, go over to the corpse with their heads lowered, and weep sincerely while singing mournful chants. Perfumes and aromatic wood are burned; then they carry the corpse to the place destined for the burial. Once they arrive, they redouble their cries and groans, and bury him. After that, some cattle are slaughtered, and they rejoice far more than they had grieved. Immediately the carpenters, who are all chiefs in this region, start building a sort of house over the pit, and a large group of slaves bring in
a huge stone in the shape of a pyramid, which they raise in front of the burial place. On top of this pyramid they place a steer's horn.

This same ceremony is generally observed at the death of all kinds of persons, except that the pomp of the funeral increases or diminishes according to the rank of the deceased. Rich and poor alike bring the first fruits of their harvest to their father's grave and leave fruit trees around the burial place. No one dares to pick the fruits there. When they have a bad dream, they have an animal slaughtered for the intention of their dead father.

In the region where we live, they have been ignorant until now of what becomes of the soul at death and whether it is separated forever from the body. Now that we are telling them what faith teaches us, they are truly amazed, especially to hear us talk of a blessed or wretched eternity.

So that is what we have been able to learn about their mores and superstitions, both from asking questions and from observing most of them. There are many other areas at the tip of the island, of which we have no knowledge. It is said that there are Portuguese in one place and Dutchmen in another. When we have traveled all over the land and gone around the island by boat, we will give you all the details of this. But even if there were no areas or people other than the ones we know, would not this vast number of sheep without a shepherd, exposed to the fury and cruelty of the wolves, be enough to soften and move anyone to Christian compassion? Bear in mind especially that they are well disposed and that the nets of a poor fisherman and sinner like me are incapable of holding such a large number of fish, unless some zealous and astute workers come to my aid. This will be evident from what I shall say in the following pages.

(8) The state in which we found matters pertaining to the Christian religion.

Having spoken about the country, the inhabitants, their customs and superstitions, it is fitting to describe to you the state in which we found matters pertaining to our holy religion, since we have come here to propagate it. The gentlemen of the Company of the Indies had heard about this island from some heretic, who had the aptitudes necessary to establish himself here. The first time, they were obliged to entrust to him the leadership and instruction of those they were sending here. With the exception of nine or ten heretics, these men were all Catholics, whom the commanding officer had brought there. These gentlemen have always had some priest to serve the spiritual needs of the French; we came across one named M. de Bellebarbe. He worked there as best he could but made little progress because he did not have the support of the commanding officer who, allowing Mass to be said for the Catholics, had the sermons preached in his own home. This, coupled with some domestic disorders, kept the
unbelievers from going either to the prayers of the Catholics or of the commanding officer because they were surprised to see two kinds of religion among persons of the same country. These gentlemen have removed for me this obstacle to the advancement of God's glory by recalling this commanding officer and forbidding any heretic to board the vessel for the crossing. M. de Flacourt, one of these gentlemen, was put in charge and proceeded on this voyage as much for the glory of God as for the service of that company; it is to be hoped that the blessing of heaven will be on both. And God, in His great mercy, has chosen us as workers to look after the souls of the Frenchmen in this country and to work for the conversion of the unbelievers.

We found in this region only five children who have been baptized: a little girl who had been abandoned in the woods, the illegitimate son of a Frenchman, and three little slave girls brought back from the war and saved from the massacre. The latter were baptized by a deacon, who has died.

(9) Our occupations in this country.

We first tried to edify and win people over by gentle, pleasant conversation. God in His goodness has been pleased to make use especially of this means for the conversion of five heretics. Our first task was to prepare the French we found here to gain the Jubilee for peace. Next, we applied ourselves to learning the language of the country. We had great difficulty in this because the dictionary we were lent on the ship contained very few words and was neither well-prepared nor correct, and there is a big difference between the pronunciation and the written word. Also, it is one thing also to know the meaning of an isolated word and understand how it is being used in the construction, and to recognize and understand it in the speech of the natives. That is why we were obliged, with great difficulty, to bring together the interpreters, who had a hard time finding words to explain our faith in a country where people never speak of religion. We have tried to train two men, whose names are Claude Hastier and François Grand-Champ. The latter does a better job at explaining things.

As soon as we were able to stammer a few words, we began to instruct the unbelievers. The black men among them are much more docile than the white men, who consider themselves very intelligent and do not listen when matters of faith are mentioned. If they do listen, it is only through curiosity and with indifference. In exactly the same way, the Roandries confirm in themselves the words of Our Lord, Vae vobis divitibus,10 and

10Woe to you rich. Cf. Lk 6:24. (NAB)
Abscondisti haec a sapientibus et prudentibus et revelasti ea parvulis. Because, after these good black people listen carefully, they say to one another, "So, we must not swear any more, nor work on Sunday, nor steal.

These chiefs say that their slaves are incapable of learning how to serve God; they would like to prevent us from instructing them, and to keep them in ignorance for fear lest their own malice be revealed.

But because you, Monsieur, perhaps want me to describe here a few particular cases by which you may understand more clearly the way we want to instruct these poor barbarians, and how they, on their part, correspond with God's grace, I shall recount some of them here.

(10) Some details about the instruction of the islanders from December 15, 1648 until after Easter 1649.

I had heard that the chief of this region, named Andian Ramach, had spent three years in Goa and was brought back here by the Portuguese when he was seventeen; he is fifty now. Six days after our arrival, M. de Flacourt sent me and a few Frenchmen to see him in Fanshere, where he lived, a journey of one and a half days from here. He gave us a good welcome, made three Signs of the Cross on his forehead, mouth, and lips saying, Per signum sanctae crucis de inimicis nostris libera nos, and said the Pater, Ave, and Credo in Portuguese. Through the interpreter I asked him why he was the only one in the region who knew how to pray to God, and why he had not taken care to have his subjects instructed. He replied that they were incapable and that there was no priest to instruct them. I answered him that I had come to see him because I wanted to serve him and all his subjects as well and that they would be capable of learning, once they were taught as he was. He told me he was happy about this and would come to prayers whenever I had them in his village. Other chiefs there told me the same and asked me to come and instruct their children. This petty king said he had been baptized in Goa, in a college where there were several priests; he had been ill and Baptism restored him to health, after which he made his confession and received Communion once. Then he was brought back here by a Portuguese trader, accompanied by two priests who lived on a little island about two leagues from here. Still to be seen there are the walls of a house, built by the Portuguese more than a hundred years ago, as attested by the inscription on a marble cross. One of these priests died, and the other returned with the trader after baptizing

---

11You have hidden these things from the wise and the prudent and have revealed them to children. Cf. Mt 11:25. (NAB)

12Through the Sign of the Holy Cross, deliver us from our enemies.
just one man, as I mentioned, who has three crosses tattooed on his stomach. Eight years later, Andian Ramach reverted to his superstitions. After more conversation on both sides, I made much of the young people, extending my hand to them, in the custom of the country, while stammering a few words of their language. Then I gave them little presents of glass bead bracelets, which delighted them. They called me their father, and I said they were my children. Each one scrutinized me closely, and when I went to recite the Divine Office, they came to watch me pray and stayed around me.

This first journey filled me with joy and hope. On my return, I consoled my dear companion with all the good news. We spent Christmastide by gaining our Jubilee, administering the Sacraments, and preaching to the French, as we are accustomed to do. When the feast of the Epiphany arrived, we began to baptize the children, in order to correspond with the mystery of the vocation of the Gentiles. M. de Flacourt named the first one Peter, and thus he became the first stone in our spiritual Church.

About this time, a ship left carrying twelve Frenchmen sent to live at Sainte-Marie, a little island two hundred leagues from here, where Roandrie is the lord. There are fourteen villages and around six to seven hundred inhabitants, who are very sociable. They speak about the same language as here. This region is unhealthy and, although the land is good for farming, it is difficult to clear because the woods are so thick. M. de Bellebarbe had been sent there to look after the people, and I asked him to prepare the way there as best as possible for Christianity, but he did not stay long and now he has gone back to France.

Some time later, when we had learned a little of the language, we spoke to the natives about learning how to pray to God. They were ashamed and excused themselves saying they were incapable. Taking their hands, we had them make the Sign of the Cross and say the words. After that they were delighted to have said and done what they had formerly believed was impossible. We did the same with the young people, and on Sundays we would teach them a little Christian doctrine through our interpreter. In a short time they were freed of the mistaken idea they had of being incapable of learning.

Several Roandries from the environs came to see the commanding officer and gave him some small gifts in the hope of receiving better ones, as is the custom of the country. We took advantage of the curiosity of these chiefs to entice them, along with their slaves and vassals who were accompanying them, to come and see our chapel. There, through an interpreter, we spoke to them about our faith. They said that these were beautiful things and they wanted to learn about them. Some had gone to the High Masses and were asking what they were, and why, when the priest
finished chanting, all the Frenchmen answered with one accord. We replied that we were all of one mind in presenting our needs to God and in singing His praises together. Someone told us that formerly in this land their ancestors had large houses, where they used to assemble as we do in our churches, and that on Friday, after singing as we do, they slaughtered cattle, sheep, and goats for a public banquet. However, wars had done away with these things a hundred years ago.

I took the opportunity from this to tell them that we would teach them a more excellent way to pray to God than that of their ancestors, which was only worldly, and how to serve Him as He commands us to do, without having to have banquets.

The most knowledgeable of the Ombiasses in this region, who was fifty years of age, was here with the others. We asked him, through the interpreter, how he was serving God. He told us that Ramofamade, meaning Mohammed, was their prophet, and Moses was ours; that we did well to follow the law of Moses, and they, that of Mohammed. He told us the story of our first father, Adam, almost as it is in Genesis, except for one irrelevant detail, namely, that there was one river of milk, another of honey, and a third of wine, and that the reason God became angry was because of the stench that arose when Adam and Eve emptied their bowels in the garden. He added that some of the children of Adam were white and were great lords from whom the French and the white men in this country were descended; the others were black and were slaves from whom the black men trace their origin. We spoke to him about Jesus Christ, Son of the Incarnate God. He replied that their books made reference to a prophet named Raisse, who had come to earth directly from God, without being born among men, and that he was greater than Mohammed, who had yielded to him. When we told him that this person was Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whom we adore, he replied that God had no son and was alone, but that they, like us, also hoped to get to heaven by observing their ceremonies. However, none of the interpreters were capable of explaining the mystery of the Trinity, as I hope we will be able to do with time, using the similes and manner of speaking of this country.

At the conclusion of our visit, he said he was pleased to learn about our beliefs and to leave his fifteen-year-old son with us so he could learn from him later. I gladly accepted his offer, but that little rascal was unwilling to stay. He told me his father would not allow him to drink wine until he had learned their superstitions.

That is what I learned from the most knowledgeable man in the country. However, he never says a word about God to the black people, but is content to dupe them with his oils and salis. If anyone could win over an Ombiasse like him and divert his attention from the small profits he draws
from his friends, everything else would soon follow. But good interpreters are needed who can understand and convey the reasons on both sides. This can be done only through long practice because the language has no rules of grammar, and the French have not been living in this country for long. I hope, with time, that God will grant us the grace of overcoming these difficulties.

My first visits to the rural areas were made during Lent to some sick Frenchmen three or four leagues from here. As we passed through the village, the natives gathered out of curiosity to see a little watch I had borrowed. They admired it and thought it was alive, and they were saying that we were gods. This obliged us, like Paul and Barnabas, to tell them that we were men like themselves. From this I took the opportunity to speak to them as best I could about God. These poor people likewise said that they were incapable of learning, and when I tried to have them make the Sign of the Cross, they ran away. When one of the braver ones, the village chief, had made it and pronounced the words, each of the others then asked to do so.

(11) Visits made to the rural areas from Easter time 1649 to the month of June.

When the Easter feasts were over, I learned that Andian Ramach was having a Missanath at his house, which had been repaired. I thought it a good idea for me to be there to see what went on in this ceremony and take the opportunity to speak about the faith to such a large crowd, in the presence of the king and other chiefs who would be there. I brought an interpreter with me in order to speak more easily to them. I asked the king to tell them himself what he had learned, since they had greater confidence in him. He promised me this several times but did nothing, and by waiting for him we lost the opportunity because of the great confusion of the banquet. However, I spoke to the local chiefs and the Ombiasses who were in his house, and I had another advantage in this visit because the people saw that I was always near their king and thought I was in good standing with him. Since then, this has been very useful to me because I was able to say to them in all truth that their king had asked me to instruct them. He himself entreated me to come and live permanently with him and to give him the Office in Portuguese, and he would pray to God as he used to do. On leaving, he told me to write to Louis de Bourbon to give him a fine gift. I told him that the latter would not fail to do so, if he would become a good Christian again and do his part, along with us, for the salvation of his subjects. I also said that, if we came to live with him, we would not be a burden to him. The people here are so parsimonious that it would be better to give them something than to take anything from them.

On my way home, one of the village chiefs, named Ramanore, had
someone ask me to come into his home and to ask God to restore his health. He was, after the white men, one of the most influential men in the country and, in the past, had come to the instructions given in our house, after trying all the superstitions of the Ombiasses to no effect. When I explained to him that God often permits bodily ills for the salvation of our souls and that He was all-powerful and could cure him, if he abandoned the superstitions of his country and was willing to serve God as we do, he immediately asked us to instruct him. I assembled the villagers to come and listen. Through the interpreter I had brought with me, I told them the essential elements of the faith most necessary to salvation. After listening to everything, the sick man said that his heart was relieved and that he believed everything he had just heard. He also said he had great compassion for the Son of God, who died for us, that he would thank Him for this, and would never forget it. He asked if Jesus Christ was powerful enough to restore him to health. "Yes," I said, "if you believe with all your heart and that your soul will be cleansed of all your sins by holy Baptism." He sent for some water and urged me to baptize him. However, fearing that he was seeking bodily health more than spiritual—which later happened—I put him off saying that proof was needed that his desire to serve God was genuine and that it would be apparent if he would see that both he and his whole family were thoroughly instructed, once his health was restored, as I was hoping Our Lord would do for him.

When his wife heard the Commandments of God explained, she said that for a long time they had had recourse to God in everything, especially in planting and harvesting their rice, when they would raise their eyes to heaven and say to God, "You are the One who can make what I am harvesting grow; if You needed it I would give it to You, and I shall give some to those in need, like the Frenchmen who come to my house, and the poor slaves." That made me think of Cornelius, but I had not had any vision telling me to baptize the man.

Everyone present was delighted with what they had been told, and said that these things were worth more than gold and silver, which could be taken away from a debtor—"But who could take this from us? We shall still find it in our hearts when we awake from sleep." In these conversations I perceived that, even though the Holy Spirit had not visibly descended on them, He was nevertheless making Himself clearly felt by the light He was shedding on their souls. I said good-bye, leaving to the sick man the hope of a cure and to everyone that of being instructed. Shortly afterward, I heard that this simple man had recovered his health, but was in no hurry for me to give him instructions as he had promised, although he still professed to have this desire. I think that human respect and the fear of being on bad terms with the chiefs whom he serves are the cause of his
putting it off. He is leading a good moral life, and I have baptized two of his children since. Some later said that I should have baptized him, and his good health would have given credence to his baptism, but I felt he would have given more if he sought it earnestly when he was in good health.

(12) Some visits we made during June and July, and the death of Monsieur Gondrée.

Around the Rogation Days, M. de Flacourt was going to Fanshere and wanted one of us to go with him. M. Gondrée went and suffered a great deal from the heat and the journey on foot, and from abstinence also, since he had eaten only a little boiled rice, which left him in a weakened condition. He came back with a fever and unbearable pains in every joint. At the height of all his ailments he showed great constancy and truly Christian sentiments.

During the feast days around Pentecost, although I was greatly distressed by the illness of this good servant of God, Our Lord gave me the strength to satisfy the devotion of the French and of our catechumens, hearing confessions, preaching and saying Mass in the morning, having Vespers in the afternoon, and instructing the islanders.

I baptized two young women, who were married to two black men. One of the men had been baptized in Paris by the Nuncio, and the other in Nantes. This consoled our patient, who received Extreme Unction with great devotion. He said his great sorrow was to abandon these poor unbelievers. Then, with great fervor, he exhorted the French to the fear of God and devotion to the Blessed Virgin, to whom he himself was very devoted. He asked me to write and thank you most humbly in his name, Monsieur, for the favor you had done him in admitting him among your children and bearing with him, and especially for having selected him from among so many others more capable, to be sent here. He also requested that the members of our Congregation thank God for this in his name. Then he said to me, "I leave you this warning as my last will and testament: that you will suffer much in this country, and not just a little but a great deal." He spent part of the night making continuous aspirations to God and, with a smile, gave up his soul to Him on the fourteenth day of his illness.

He was buried the next day amidst the tears of all the Frenchmen and of the unbelievers. The latter said that, until we arrived, they had never seen men who were not angry or irritable, and who taught them heavenly things with as much ardor and gentleness as we were doing.

Please pause here to imagine the sentiments of my poor heart in the loss of the person whom I loved as myself. Everything about him was pleasant and he was, after God, my sole consolation in this country.

I asked Our Lord Jesus Christ for the deceased's share of the grace
needed to do alone the work of two. After his death I experienced the effect of his prayers and a double strength of mind and body to work for the glory of God. Then the fear of dying before I had put the work of God in order spurred me on to do what was most necessary: to write instructions in the native tongue on what must be believed and done, in order to familiarize myself with them and to leave them for those who will come after me, in the event that God should take me. After great difficulty trying to express religious matters in a country without religion, I finished what was most necessary and sent a copy to M. Bellebarbe at Sainte-Marie so he could use it, but he was unable to do so because he had no interpreter.

Once I had the instructions written down in order, I assembled the faithful of our congregation on Sundays and holy days. They were amazed to see me speaking their language in such a short time, even though I could only stumble through the most elementary things I had learned. The children of one of the chiefs, named Andian Panole, who lived about two hundred leagues from here, had come here on some business. They came to see us and stayed for the instructions. When it was time to leave, they said they wanted to be instructed also and would report to their father what they had heard about our religion. I gave them the hope that in time we would go there. We would profit greatly there because that area is better and more thickly settled than our region, and the inhabitants are very interested in coming to the prayer service of the French who go there to trade.

I lose no opportunity to announce Jesus Christ, either personally or through someone else, to the black people who live in the distant places where the French go. After exhorting the latter to go to confession and Communion before leaving, I recommend to all of them the fear of God and tell them to give good example to the unbelievers. I instructed the most intelligent among them not to lose any occasion to speak about our faith, and I gave them in writing the necessary instructions for this.

In June I went to the country to see if the celestial seed I had sown in the villages was beginning to spring up. I learned that a solemn assembly was being held in Fanshere for entry into the house of Andian Sero, who people think should succeed Andian Ramach. He had heard that the village chief, Ramanore, whom I mentioned previously, had been cured immediately after I had visited him, so he pleaded with me to go to his house to pray for the health of his grandson. "What do you want me to do?" I asked. "Do you think that God can cure him without the oils of this region?" (because it is one of the most superstitious.) "Do and say whatever you want," he said, "provided my boy is cured." Lifting my heart confidently to God, I went to see Andian Ramach and said to him, "You are well aware of what Baptism is and how you received health of soul and body from it.
Now your grandson is ill. If you want me to baptize him, send for your son-in-law, your daughter, and the child. I will explain Baptism to them, and you can give him whatever name you choose. "So he did this and called him Jerome, and he told me to pronounce carefully the words, which he pronounced also. I indicated through the interpreter that the child would be bound to live as a good Christian, and the father said to me, "I give him to you and, when he grows up, I want you to be his father and mother." Then I baptized him, explaining to the Roandries present that, although children were baptized without any preparation on their part, adults, nevertheless, had to be instructed beforehand.

Shortly afterward the child regained his health and, by the grace of God, none has died here after Baptism, as has happened in Canada. That is why the pagans are not opposed to our baptizing their children, believing that this will keep them healthy, after what happened to a black man, whom I told that his child would die if he had him circumcised, which is what happened. Later, he came to me with his wife and said to me in tears, "You were right in what you said." These poor people wept for the loss of their child's body, and I for his soul.

Before I left, Andian Ramach spoke to the people about the Commandments of God. I confirmed what he said and offered to instruct them. The Roandries who had come to the celebration said that they wanted to be baptized before leaving. I entered the new house, which I found filled with the Roandries’ wives. I spoke to them about the faith. They replied that the Ombiasses of the area exempted women from learning because they were incapable. But when I told them that the women in France are as well taught to serve God as the men, they said they really wished there were some here to instruct them.

(13) Other visits made during August, September, October, November, and December.

Since the death of my dear companion, on whom I was relying and to whom I entrusted the care of our house and the surrounding area, I am unable to go as far afield as before. I have to be home on Sundays and feast days to celebrate Holy Mass and the Divine Office, and preach to the French and give instructions to the unbelievers in the environs. That is why my rounds last only six days.

In August I went to the mountains closest to us. During the day I gave instructions to the villagers and, in the evening by moonlight, in addition to them, to the others who were returning from work. I was greatly consoled on the one hand to see that they believed with all their heart, and with tears in my eyes I would say, Quid prohibet eos baptizari?  

\[13\] What is to prevent them from being baptized? Cf. Acts 8:37. (NAB)
fearing that they might make a wrong use of Baptism, since they had no priest to maintain them in Christian piety, I put everything in the hands of God’s adorable Providence. I would have baptized some children but I was afraid we could not tell them apart from the others, especially since the pagans change dwellings quite frequently. I think also that it is advisable to give them some kind of distinguishing mark.

Those I have baptized in our neighboring villages are recognizable, and in their area they are called by their baptismal names of Nicolas, François, Jean, etc.

It would be too long and boring for me to try to list the names, journeys, villages, and people to whom I have announced Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the details of what took place. I can tell you that we could not wish for any greater openness to the reception of the Gospel. All are complaining that, since the French have been in their country, they have never mentioned the faith to them, and they have a holy envy of those who live near our house.

I shall report only what took place on a few particular occasions. At the end of November I went to visit the villages on the other side of Fanahere. I had brought with me a large picture of the last judgment, and of heaven and hell. In each village I declared that I had come so that their eyes might see and their ears might hear things for their salvation. After explaining what they had to believe and the Commandments of God, I showed them the dwelling places of eternity and urged them to choose the one above or the one below—heaven or hell. “Tsary aminy Rabilo; aminy Zanahary taiko aneha,” they cried out. (That means, “I will be careful not to choose to go with the devil; I want to live with God.”)

They told one another that their Ombiasses made no mention of God to them and visited them only through self-interest and to deceive them, whereas I taught them free of charge. They admired the way we were able to make figures on paper. When they heard about the sin of our first parents, some of them cursed them saying, “Oh! how wonderful it would have been to remain as God had created us, without having to work or be subject to the ills of this life and to death!” Others were angry with the devil, saying that if they could catch him, they would burn him. When someone would arrive late, after the picture had been folded up, they would say to him, “Ah! you have not seen the treasure!” And we had to unfold it and explain all over again.

On my way home, I passed through Fanahere and showed my pictures to the king, who was familiar with them and explained them. Then I asked to be allowed to baptize the children in his village and to forbid circumcision. He told me he would not stand in the way of Baptism, but that I should let them perform circumcision. A little patience is needed to set
them straight with time. If we can reconvert this petty king to his pristine state of being a Christian, the other chiefs will follow him, and our arms will be dropping with fatigue from baptizing. Since the white men are the least disposed to accepting the Gospel, and among them are the chiefs and the Omblasses, I tried not to lose any opportunity to speak to them about the faith because if they can be won over to God, the rest will be easy.

That is why, when I went to the tip of the island, two days’ journey from here, where I was extremely consoled to see the people so well-disposed, I went to see Andian Madamboro, the king’s elder brother, who had been displaced by his younger brother. This chief is an Ombasse and is very superstitious; people attribute to him the power to summon and to dispel locusts. He first asked me for a remedy for gout, from which he was then suffering. After I had told him that God alone could cure him, or give him patience in his pain, I evangelized him about Jesus Christ. I told him he had to believe in the One whose picture he was holding; he took it and kissed it, placed it on his head and heart, and asked me to stay and instruct him. All I could give him was some hope. I wanted to see his books, which were all blackened with smoke. All those present took hold of my cassock and cried out, “What are you doing? You will bring us bad luck; wash your hands and your mouth.” Scoffing at their fear, I picked up those books, in which I saw only some poorly sketched figures. When I asked him the meaning of the writing, he said it was the names of the planets. I told him that all those superstitions and deceits by which he was deluding the people had to be abandoned. He replied that he knew no evil and did not intend to serve the devil but to observe the customs of their ancestors. He said that I should teach him something better and he would leave all that aside. He told me to come and see him often, provided it was not on a Friday. On that day he spoke to no one because he had observed that anyone who spoke to him on that day came to some harm as a result of some catastrophe. I told him I would try to come precisely on that day, on which Our Lord Jesus Christ had redeemed us by His death. I had him make the Sign of the Cross and left him in these good dispositions.

Next, I went to visit Andian Machicore, the king’s son-in-law, in another village. (People attribute to him the power of summoning the rain; one time it did rain, and they presented him with some cattle in thanksgiving.) In my conversation with him, in the presence of several inhabitants of the locality, he asked me if it would rain soon because their rice was all burnt up for lack of water. I noticed that the moon was pale and the sky was clouding up. I told him that, in my opinion, it would rain soon but that I really knew nothing for certain because that was up to God alone, who sends and holds back the rain as He pleases. “But you,” I said, “if you have the power to summon the rain, why do you let the country’s rice and
your own rice dry up and be lost?" He attributed this power to his olis, who all have their own names. I remember one whom he called Andian Valotomboko, meaning "the Lord who is eight feet tall." I was a little incensed and rightly indignant against these pieces of deceit, and said that it was devils whom they were honoring in these ridiculous figures, the inventions of magicians to transfer to demons the honor belonging to God alone. Et loquebar de testimoniiis tuis in conspectu regum et non confunderebar. There is no danger in telling them the truth, since they would not dare harm a Frenchman, still less me, who converse gently with them without, however, flattering them when it concerns the glory of God.

The greatest difficulty will be to convert these arrogant men, who are incapable of reasoning. There is no learning in this country; custom and temporal interest triumph over reason. Still, this should not surprise us in persons who have only a spark of knowledge, since some persons in Europe who are highly enlightened find it just as difficult to extricate themselves from vice.

Some time ago, I went to a place on the other side of the mountains, called the valley of Ambolo, where there is only one chief. He and all his subjects, around four thousand in number, are black. There is no Omblasse, but they go there to sell their olis. While I was at the king's house, I showed him the picture of the last judgment, saying that this is how God would burn polygamists, including him and his wives (he had five of them). His expression changed; he begged me to come and instruct him, and said he would oblige his vassals to accept the Gospel.

At Christmastide I visited the region of Anossi, where there are around ten thousand people. I have only two more visits to make in order to set ways right, in omneem locum in quem est ipse Dominus venturus. I shall go as soon as possible so that those who come after me will at least find the land cleared. This has been done at the cost of great fatigue, but He who gave the Evangelists nivem sicut lanam makes the heat here seem like a gentle dew to those who are in the furnace of charity.

---

14 And I spoke of your decrees before kings and I was not ashamed. Ps 118:46. (D-RE) Cf. Ps 119:46. (NAB)
15 Into every place to which the Lord Himself intended to come. Cf. Lk 10:1. (NAB)
16 Snow like wool. Cf. Ps 147:16. (NAB)
Conclusion

The ship is ready to weigh anchor now, after time has been given me to make these remarks. In conclusion I shall tell you, Monsieur, that all these poor persons who are pining away await only the aquae motum and the hand of a few good workers to plunge them into the pool of Baptism.

How often, while evangelizing in the rural areas, have I not wept on hearing these poor people cry out, “Where then is that water you promised us, which cleanses souls? Have it brought here and say the prayers.” But I am holding off, fearing that they are asking for it for material needs, like the woman who, so as not to have to go to the well, asked Our Lord for the water that quenches thirst, but was not yet familiar with that which extinguishes the fire of concupiscence and gushes forth to eternal life.

I mentioned at the beginning that we found five baptized children. Our Lord has been pleased to add to this fifty-two others. Although there are many adults who are adequately prepared, I am delaying until we can marry them immediately after Baptism, to remedy the vice of the country, as we did with those who had been baptized in France. Meanwhile, I will be careful to see that none of those who are well enough disposed will die without Baptism. Some time ago, I baptized an old woman who was seriously ill; God had made manifest in her the effects of His grace by the deep sentiments of His goodness which He suddenly gave her. She was the first in this country to go to a blessed eternity, and her body was the first to be buried in the French cemetery.

On the feast of the Purification, we blessed and laid the cornerstone of the church we are going to build for our dwelling, after thanking God for choosing us to erect a temple to His Divine Majesty in such a large kingdom, where there is no trace of a church, even though there are more than four hundred thousand souls, who can be hewn as living stones of the spiritual edifice we hope to erect to His glory.

I shall await help and orders from you and from the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. In the meantime, if I cannot make much progress, I will try not to let what has already begun be lost. Where are all those Doctors, as Saint Francis Xavier used to say, who waste time in Academies, while so many poor unbelievers petunt panem, et non est qui frangat eis? May the Master of the house provide for this! Unless there is a large number of priests to give instructions and maintain the

---

18February 2, Feast of the Presentation of the Lord.
19... look for bread, and there is no one to break it for them. Cf. Lam 4:4. (NAB)
good results, we can advance little; even though the people are ready to believe and are easily attracted to the bosom of the Church, their attachment to transitory things may, like thorns, stifle the seed sown in their hearts. And although they receive it joyously, cito arscit, quia non habet humorem. I feel sure, Monsieur, that all the members of our Congregation tremble with joy at the news so agreeable to their zeal, and desire to cooperate with God in the conquest of this new kingdom for Jesus Christ. Out of compassion at seeing me alone in such a distant country, able to administer the sacraments to others but incapable of receiving any others myself except the Eucharist, they will, I am sure, beg God's goodness to strengthen me in His grace.

What could console me the most after God would be to learn the most important events that have taken place in our Congregation for the good of the Holy Church and the glory of God. I shall continue to pray for you, Monsieur, that before He calls you to Himself, He may be pleased to have you see your children multiplied like the stars in the firmament, and that all of them may be the fathers of several generations for heaven, where I hope to see you, through the merits of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the assistance of your prayers and those of all our confreres. I am, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

CHARLES NACQUART, I.A.C.M.  
Apostolic Missionary on this island

Fort-Dauphin, Madagascar, from Taolagnaro, residence of the French, February 5, 1650

1180. - TO GUILLAUME DELATTRE, SUPERIOR, IN AGEN

February 6, 1650

I feel certain that what was imputed to you about the Jesuit Fathers is simply calumny and that you would not wish to offend a Company that is so holy and useful to the Church of God. I praise God that people have also recognized the truth. I hope that what

20 It soon withers because it has no moisture. Cf. Lk 8:6. (NAB)
happened will serve only to bind you more closely to these Fathers, toward whom I wish you to manifest great esteem, affection, and deference, as I am endeavoring to do here, and I do so with much consolation.

1181. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

... And I—the most uncouth, the most ridiculous, the most stupid of men among these persons of rank to whom I could not say six consecutive words without letting it be seen that I have neither wit nor judgment—how have people put up with me until now, if that is the case, in the position I hold? But what is worse, I have no virtue that even comes near the person in question.

1182. - TO MATHURIN GENTIL, IN LE MANS

February 9, 1650

No one has complained to me, as you seem to think, about the room in which you had the floor leveled. All I know about it is what you yourself have written me, but that is enough to make me think that the Superior\(^1\) is not happy with this renovation nor with the others done in his absence. This gives me good reason to ask you not to do anything of importance without consulting him. If he does not agree to the matter, but you think it is necessary or very useful,

---


\(^1\)This Missionary had complained about his new Superior, saying that he was not refined enough. After praising the Superior as he deserved, Saint Vincent added the above words. If, as seems probable, the Superior is Pierre Watebled, then the letter was written in 1650. Cf. nos. 1190, 1191 and 1202.

Letter 1182. - Reg. 2, pp. 307, 132. The second fragment, which was perhaps the first in the original, begins with the third paragraph, "I am glad...."

\(^1\)Antoine Lucas.
let me know your reasons and his; we will decide whether it should be done or put off.

I rarely receive letters from M. . . and he has never mentioned you, at least not in the way you think. Furthermore, I would not allow such persons to attempt to inform me of what goes on within the Community, which is none of their business. Besides, you are too wise and discreet for people to find much fault with your actions. But if someone were to criticize them without good reason, should you not be glad to suffer something for justice sake, since Our Lord has said that those persecuted in this way are blessed? Please keep your heart in peace, Monsieur; you belong to God, by His grace, and are determined to live and die for His greater glory. Is not that a great happiness and a reason to rejoice unceasingly, whatever troubles you may have?

I am glad you have anticipated the intention of the Bishop of Le Mans regarding the tax on your chapels. I see clearly that this could be settled some day in a court of law. For now, I see a certain risk to be feared in that. This is why I ask you to pay this tax, without prejudice to your rebate. For several years we paid the one levied from the beginning on Saint-Lazare, while awaiting an opportune time to get ourselves exempted from it, as we have done since. At first we were satisfied with registering a complaint, sometimes with the Bishop of Paris, sometimes with the commissioners of the Clergy, and sometimes with others, trying to influence them in this way to relieve us of this burden at their convenience. Perhaps a good mission, which will satisfy the Bishop, is all you need to win his benevolence and, through his favor, rid yourself of this excessive tax because your claim is indeed just.

---

2Philibert de Beaumanoir de Lavardin.
Monsieur,

Your holy blessing, please!

Fearing that the letters might be read and diverted, I am keeping this one from the packet and am entrusting it to a friend to have it delivered to you in person because of what you will find in it, which I did not think advisable to include in my journal. This letter is a kind of spiritual communication to ask your advice with regard to situations that have arisen, so that I may know how to act in them. It will also reveal to you what sort of person one must be to live in this place. I recall that you wished me a share of O[ur] L[ord]'s patience, and I shall tell you here the little difficulties I have encountered, giving me cause to exercise it.

You told me that these Gentlemen would provide us with what was necessary not only ad victum but also ad vestitum. However, according to what M. de Flacourt has told me both in La Rochelle and here, he has no intention of furnishing any clothing. So, in order not to upset him, I spent for fabric, linen, and other small necessities in La Rochelle about two-thirds of the money you had sent us. Otherwise I would no longer be wearing anything indicating that I am a priest, no more than does M. de Bellebarbe, who is now dressed in grey. Except for the ten écus I have left, I spent the remainder here for necessities and to supplement the inadequate amount given me to go and visit the sick in the rural areas. Please have this clarified, if you are sending anyone here, and get everything spelled out in detail to avoid any misunderstanding. I preferred to spend everything rather than have the slightest disagreement, and I borrowed one hundred francs from the captain of our ship, as I shall tell you in an express letter for him.

I have found it very difficult to practice what you wrote me about being gentle and respectful in conversation, while remaining faithful to the interests of God and not betraying my conscience. As you are aware that the conversations of people of the world are all too often about things that should not be heard by a priest, when impurity and scandal, usually aimed at priests or others, form part of the talk, I have tried my best to change the subject as gently as I could. By trying to be faithful to God and my conscience, I have made myself obnoxious; but, of the two, I have chosen...
to please God rather than others, for fear of losing the prerogative of servant of Jesus Christ. Only M. de Flacourt has criticized this; the others were glad and were grateful to me for it. Innocentes et recti adhaeserunt mihi, quia sustinui te, Domine.  

When people work here on Sundays and holy days without permission and before Mass, I have told them that the custom of the Church has to be followed, which is that this is not to be done without necessity or without a dispensation, and after Mass. For doing this, I am considered as someone who wants to lay down the law and to infringe on the temporal through ambition.

When, to remedy the complaints and murmuring of several people, I notified the person who could put an end to them, I was looked upon as the cause of all this.

When, out of compassion, on hearing the sick who were complaining of dying for lack of food and medicine, I went respectfully to the father of the family on their behalf, I was dismissed in only God knows what way, as if I had made them say those things. It is a shame to see so little organization in this that those who had been promised in France remedies during their illness have to sell their shirts, made from cloth brought from France, for some poultry, which cost less than a sou in the money of this country; or, if they have sores to dress, they have to tear up their underwear. How can we stand by and watch this? You will find enclosed a letter addressed to members of the Company in Paris. Please read it, but do not show it to them unless I am calumniated. I have reason to fear that this may be my payment for the small services I have rendered to these Gentlemen, after risking my life on land and sea. Nothing, however, is lost in the sight of God.

What will have to be done with regard to these wretched wars which I mention to these Gentlemen? People here say that many excuses will be found for the past and for the future. I am well aware that only false pretenses exist, capable of destroying the work of God and of jeopardizing the salvation of those who perpetuate them. If war is waged, it is only to put by a few commodities. There is not much to be done for religion in this country, with a Governor pious in appearance only, who thinks of nothing but temporalities. Not only words are needed but a person who, both by example and authority, contributes effectively to the designs of God, which are of such great consequence, as [you] can imagine.

--- 571 ---

--- 571 ---

3The innocent and the upright have adhered to me because I have waited on you, Lord. Cf. Ps 25:21 (NAB) Ps 24:21 (D-RB)

4This letter was published in Mémoires de la Congrégation de la Mission, vol. IX, pp. 94ff., taken from a copy preserved in the Archives of the Mission, Paris.
Saint Francis Xavier accomplished much by his virtue and zeal, but the authority of those who supported him and supplied him liberally with necessities contributed a great deal to this. There is no punishment here for Frenchmen who are scandalous, nor for those sordid men and women who serve the settlement. The French simply say, "I will not go to confession." And people say that the others are dogs. Is there no way for these Gentlemen to establish some sort of justice?

I have no cause for complaint about my food, which, if anything, is too good. But if a native or some little children have to be enticed with presents, people say that this is being too indulgent. Because of this pretext of avarice, I have no bait to fish for men, and yet it would cost very little to supply amply what is needed, as you will learn better from those who have lived here rather than from what I could explain to you in writing.

Because I accepted a piece of glass from one of the natives, I am being suspected of wanting to establish trading in this country. And I was only planning to use it for a small cross to be put in the church! The workmanship would have cost more than the material was worth, and it would not have been even four fingers long and two wide. I gave it away when someone asked me for it because I care about as much for precious stones as I do for straw.

When Monsieur had not had his beard trimmed on Sunday, Mass had to be delayed. He complained to me about being inconsiderate in not notifying him so he could take his time, and said that some day there would be other priests here. I explained to him that I had told his servant to be careful to inform me before the last bell if he was not ready. After everyone has assembled and the priest is vested, it is too late to let me know.

He has often repeated that there are monks who have offered to pay their own way and to take care of all their own expenses here and that he would tell the Company that there was no danger in allowing all sorts of them to come! I do not know if he is doing this as a reproach to me or has something else in mind. I replied that all I wanted was that God would send those who would render Him the best service. Others would meet as many obstacles as we do, and their number and diversity would only cause confusion.

All this, joined to the difficulty I find with the conduct of the French, causes me to suggest that you consider whether it is advisable for us in future to be responsible for the French who, from now on, will be placed in several settlements that are disorganized and in unhealthy districts, at a great distance from one another. How can we manage all that and the natives? Would it not be better for these Gentlemen to have some good secular priests on salaries, and that there be enough of us to establish a Community, live in places where the chances for winning souls seem more
likely, and work only with the natives? It is futile to talk about the Rules of the Mission or about recollection to one lone priest—or even if there were two of us—in a settlement where the French make a racket of drunken brawls, songs, and their work, and all the confusion involved in the care we must take in our life and conversation with lay persons.

Certainly, you will do whatever you think best about this; as for me, however, I am very weary of it all, and I do not think we can do anything much for the natives unless we are completely disengaged from these Gentlemen in order to work only at giving missions. Furthermore, it is against our Rule to have parishes, and we cannot do both well. You know what confusion this has caused in Richelieu, even though there is a large Community to do the work in both of these. In addition, I think that in future the French will marry native women and go to live in distant, isolated places. How can we take care of all that?

Andian Ramach has often told me that we should go and live with him in Fanshere. That is the place to make a settlement of six priests to give missions in this region. With the aid of a good interpreter, we could do this little by little in the villages. A school could be opened there for children, of whom we would have a large number of an age when they would be capable of learning, and it would not cost much to feed them. No linen or clothing are needed as in France; they go around completely naked, except for a loin cloth, made of drugget, with which they cover themselves. They are used to sleeping on the ground and living on rice and roots native to the country.

I do not know what to tell you about the girls; some virtuous widows or young women from France would be needed to take care of them. However, that would be one more problem for us because you know the obtrusiveness of this sex. Daughters of Charity who are well-grounded in virtue would be suitable, but they should not live in the same place as we do, ne cedereant uxoribus sacerdotum by these naturally suspicious people and by the French. But it is imperative to instruct them and to help curb the dissolute ways of sexual excess by instilling modesty in the girls, who even from childhood are everywhere as shameless or even more shameless than the little boys.

From this younger generation good marriages could be made, and their children would be even better Christians than their parents. We will have to do here what is done to reform a Community; we will do what we can with the older people, but it is the children who will instruct their parents

---

5Lest they be suspected of being the wives of the priests.
and reform the country. People say the same to me everywhere: "We are too old; come and instruct our children." The children would like nothing better, even though they are very undisciplined. Their parents love them so much that they spoil them and let them do as they please without punishing them.

Four coadjutor Brothers would be needed; one of them should be a pharmacist and know surgery, with some experience in caring for the sick. He should bring a supply of the necessary medicines because there are none at all in this country. The other should be a tailor and should bring linen and other cloth for us, druggest for the little boys, and colored cassocks if we are going to have a school. The third one should be able to instruct young people, with the aid of an interpreter, and have classes to teach them to read and write in the French characters so as to introduce the custom. Here they read and write in Arabic, which is too difficult. For this purpose you can have printed just one hundred copies of the catechism I am sending in that language, while waiting for a better one or until strongly bound prayer books with large type can be printed. The fourth Brother should be a steward and should bring all the supplies needed for our Communities because all we have here is what is imported, except for beef, rice, and edible roots. In addition, we need enough money to buy everything, until the time when we can take as much land as we need to plant crops, with the permission of Her Majesty and the Gentlemen. This can be done without detriment to the Gentlemen from France or to anyone else because there is plenty of land.

Boiled rice, as it is eaten in this country, is not very nourishing, and it is not easy to get used to it. Honey wine is not good for the health and is very rare. Pure wheat flour can be brought from France. It keeps for three or four years and can be used for consecratable matter, for making bread at sea, and for baking it here in a small oven. Good-keeping wine is needed for Mass and for preserving one's health in this country where, without proper nourishment, medicines, and other provisions, people are very subject to serious illness and death, as you can learn from persons who have been at sea and from those who have lived in this country. To trust fine promises, as we did, makes it disagreeable to have to purchase things from the French at four times what they would cost in France. Sometimes even things that could easily be brought from France cannot be found here at any price and yet are necessary, so I have had to do this to stay in good health, without however pampering myself. What would be even better is

---

6A fabric woven from wool, cotton, or silk, and used at times for clothing.
to have something to offer some relief to the sick French or to the natives. It is so sad not to be able to help those who are doubly afflicted by illness and poverty, when it would take so little to save their lives. There should be a well-run hospital established here by those Gentlemen; it would save many lives, to their own advantage.

Besides what can be shipped from France, a sufficient stock of local products should be procured; you can get information about this only from someone who has experience with this country. I was hoping to send you a person who knew the language of the country to inform you about matters, but he was refused passage, even though he is one of the oldest residents. I do not know the reason for this or if he is suspected of something, but he is our best interpreter and has willingly given himself to God to remain with me until he can get away, which will be at the arrival of the first ship, after this one returns.

I think it would be well for us to have permission to accept some Frenchman here after his term of service is up, if he feels called to the service of God; there are two or three here who have requested this of me. They are all well-disposed and have a basic knowledge of the language and lifestyle of the country. With so much work to be done, we can never have enough; many die and we have had fifty-seven deaths among us in twelve or thirteen months. Even though those who are truly called present themselves, unless we have this permission people will say we have corrupted them. They think I have done so with this interpreter, who volunteered on his own and has always continued through devotion, although he has been offered wages, which he has refused in order to work with me. I could do nothing unless he was with me all the time; one cannot have two masters, so one must choose the better one, which is God.

Two good carpenters and a joiner are also needed to build churches and wooden houses, and they should bring from France locks, padlocks, and nails, all ready made. In a word, they should bring whatever is necessary for housing and furnishings in this country, where as much can be found as in a desert. It would be a good idea as well to bring whatever can be planted and grown in France, such as wheat, vines, grains, seeds and kernels, legumes, etc. However, everything must be kept airtight because the sea air spoils many things, but should be exposed to the fresh air occasionally in good weather.

When I have gone to the country, I have always had a Frenchman with me, interpreter or not, who carried a gun, for no other purpose than self-defense, if we are attacked by thieves or drunkards. I think it would not be a bad idea to have some lay persons with us in the settlement, if we make one, so we can defend ourselves in case of necessity. The fear of our weapons keeps everyone in check, and they will not dare approach if they
see a firearm, no matter how large their number. Some of the French have been massacred for lack of vigilance.

That is what is most necessary for making a settlement, and I think there is no other way to subsist. I am ashamed at having specified so many things which, in France, we can do without and mortify ourselves; but since we have bodies to serve as instruments in the service of God in this country, where there is such a great need of workers, we must procure the wherewithal to survive, since it is so hard to come by.

Matatanes is the best place to make a settlement as soon as possible, in order to spread our religion effectively. It is in the center of the island, where the French resided, and is a very pleasant place in which to live. All the best people are there, and the Ombiasses come from there. In addition, it is easy to go all over the country from there. Presently no Frenchman has Her Majesty's permission to settle there. With regard to spiritual matters, that is where the best harvest in the whole country and those most capable of instruction are to be found. About a dozen priests would be needed, along with the interpreter I mentioned who has lived there, because there are slight differences in language according to the region, as in France we have the dialect of Picardy, Normandy, etc. One of our men who knows Arabic, or who can at least read and write it well, would be most necessary. I am going to try to learn to read and write it from an Ombiasse who will teach me, so I can understand what is in their book and write out something for them by way of instruction. I do not know, however, if I shall succeed in this.

The means of subsistence in Matatanes are the same as mentioned above. The problem is that only three or four persons at a time can come on the boat, and it takes a long time to recover a dead person such as I have been, left all alone.

If you ask what qualifications are needed in workers for this country, you will be a better judge of that than I, who am unworthy to be included among them. I shall simply give you my own opinion, which is that the qualifications are those required by Saint Francis Xavier; that is, persons are needed who excel more in virtue than in knowledge. The knowledge required is that which God gives to the saints. If there are no good preachers, no matter, except that the French have to be taken care of. In that case someone potent in opere et sermone 7 is needed to control these undisciplined people who have been thrown together, most of them sent to this country by their parents, who do not know what to do with them, or who came here on their own because of dissolute living or curiosity. When

7... mighty in deed and word. Cf. Lk 24:19. (NAB)
they see that their hopes of finding a good country here are dashed, all they do is curse the day they came. Even when their time is up, they have to remain just as long again because there is no ship to take them away, as they had been promised. I leave you to imagine what sort of life they lead in such desperation in a country where it is so easy to yield to corrupt nature. Nothing would give us greater pleasure than not to have to take care of such persons, on whom we often only waste our time and are repaid by ingratitude and calumny. They act like madmen toward the doctor who is trying to cure them, becoming annoyed with him instead of taking his remedies.

If we had only the natives to instruct, all we would need are a few catechists, even someone with a good memory who might not want to be a priest but who had a facility for languages and was capable of learning this one quickly. This is easy for a person who has nothing else to do because the pronunciation is not difficult. All that is required is a good memory for retaining the words, which are neither declined nor conjugated and which, in time, can be compiled into a dictionary and a grammar, I hope.

This can be done when we have our own interpreter and are living away from this place of confusion, where we are under orders to those who are always suspicious. Rather than helping matters they hinder them and would think they had done themselves great harm in giving us an interpreter, whom they put to work at trifling tasks instead. I mean that a layman, guided and formed by a priest, will be able to do the teaching until such time that the priests, who are occupied more with the Office and other things, will be able to teach on their own, without using interpreters. I could never learn the language perfectly here without living among the natives. I know a little of the vocabulary of the catechism, which I have studied, but I cannot completely understand their arguments without an interpreter. Long practice is needed in the beginning for a thorough understanding of the true meaning of the words.

Good health and strength are required of those who will be working here, both because of the fatigue of the long sea voyage and because of the lack of conveniences here in the rural areas. We have noted that the youngest and most robust are the ones who die rather than those who are of average strength but are in good health. Persons thirty-five, forty, or fifty years of age are healthier than those who are younger, because the country is so hot.

The danger to chastity is not so great as people think. We should not go out alone and should be serious-minded and on our guard, although the solid practice of chastity is required on many occasions when we are exposed to losing it.
Impatient natures like mine are not very suitable, even less are those persons who ask to come here through caprice and who might act accordingly; bene patientes ut annuntient, especially here where the people are unaided in understanding these new subjects.

It is hardly possible for someone to live alone, as I do, without a companion. I recall that Saint Xavier asked for persons of extraordinary virtue for such a situation, and you know that this does not apply to me.

There is no reason to fear persecution or danger when we have an armed Frenchman with us, but there is little security in being alone, particularly if we were to go to places where these poor people have been pillaged and burned. They will always be distrustful and difficult of approach; at the sight of one lone Frenchman they flee like a large flock of sheep before a single dog.

Toward the center of the country, some chiefs were killed when war was waged on them, and women and children as well. It is also said that, without waging war, it will be impossible to get cattle to supply the settlement in future. Some people say that the only way to master the people is to slay the leaders and that this is the best way to establish religion, as the Portuguese have done. Quod si sequum est, judica. How can we remedy this if we remain here? I have always opposed to this the example of Our Lord, who did not command the Apostles to raise armies to establish Christianity, but to be lambs among wolves. Although the white people have become masters either by ingenuity or by force, all we have to do to destroy all the power of the influential persons is to live here and allow the black people to continue to enjoy their possessions and acquisitions. In truth, the former are rich only at the expense of children who have been deprived of their paternal inheritance. In addition, they make an advance of animals to the village mayors, and they profit from this after the latter's death, taking everything they find that belonged to the deceased.

I can assure you that, if we open our school here or in Matatanes, there will be no need of wars to maintain it; we can trade things native to the country for all the animals and other victuals necessary which cannot be brought from France but which grow here. I myself bought six cows, costing me about one écu apiece, and a few hens so I could have eggs on Friday and Saturday, along with a little milk, so as not to be obliged to eat meat. Meat is eaten almost all the time, including during Lent, not only at the Governor's table but in the homes of all the French. In this they live like Huguenots because they are careless about getting fish and other

---

*Very patient in order to teach.*

*You be the judge whether this is just.*
things that pious persons could easily obtain. Most of them have no scruple about this, even though I have often made it clear to them that I dispensed only those who were ill, or who had done their best but could not make provision for this, or, lastly, those who in conscience had a legitimate excuse before God.

I am obliged to let all that go since I have been unable to remedy it. They all send me to the person in charge, and whenever I have discussed it with him I have been reproved; he says that if he has any commodities it is not for that purpose. It would not take much, if not for everyone, at least for his own table. It is only a lack of organization, and that would be easy to arrange. Up until now I have not broken abstinence, except that, because no one is willing to take the trouble to make butter, as I shall try to do when I can, I have permitted myself to use beef tallow, or oil from the fish which I myself have very often caught off the rocks. This causes me to reflect on the spiritual catch of the Apostles, who sometimes went fishing for a living, and our good God has provided me with what I need to live.

What should be done about fast and abstinence for the French and for the natives who will become Christians? Please give me a little advice on this because it bothers my conscience. All they have to do is to drop a net into the sea. I know that anyone who can do something but refuses is unworthy of absolution. There are some who are legitimately excused, but those who can fast and abstain are giving in to their appetites, lack of piety, and negligence, under false pretexts of being unable either because of the Company or for fear they may fall sick and die. What can we say to that?

Instead of preventing the natives from working on Sundays and holy days, trading is done on those days. They say it is better for them and for the Christians among them to work, and they need the French to oversee them. Most often their work is not necessary. If the French ask for time off to go away, they are given Sundays and holy days. They leave the day before and will miss Mass for trifling matters saying that, if they were given other days off, they would not use them. What can we do about that?

You can imagine from all this the disorder which exists, and the pain my poor heart has felt from the whole situation. This has caused me to say many times that, were I not here through obedience, usquedum dicatur mihi,\(^1\) I would have shaken off this yoke, too heavy for a pygmy, to transfer it to broader shoulders, especially because of M. de Flacourt's treatment of me, although he is beginning to see the truth and innocence of what he had imposed on me. Do not say a word to him about this, unless he

\(^{10}\)Until I am told [otherwise].
mentions it first (which I fear, even though he said pax, pax to me). If he
does not say anything, I can assure you on my part that I have drunk the
bitterness of this chalice through that of O[ur L[ord] and the Apostles,
experiencing in this the prediction made to me by my dear companion in
his testament shortly before his death. When I asked him what he was
leaving me before dying, he replied, “Sufferings. Oh! how you will have
to suffer! It will not be for a short time, but I assure you that all will be
well.” Oh! how happy I am about that. It is very little compared to what
will perhaps have to be endured in future to imitate the vessels of election
who were chosen to carry the name of Jesus to the Gentiles.

If M. de Flacourt complains about me, I know he is alone in this because
everyone else, even the most dissipated, would be ready to give me their
hearts and their eyes. Ask pardon of him for me for the harm he will tell
you I have done. I shall accept your reprimand for it because, even though
my conscience does not reproach me except for my personal laziness in
God’s service, I have tried not to fail with regard to the neighbor. Still, I
do not consider myself virtuous because I know I am a man and the weakest
and the most at fault of anyone you could send. God knows that I am not
lying. What I have always most dreaded has happened to me in the choice
made of me, not in my being sent here, for I had no difficulty rising above
the objections of flesh and blood to submit to obedience, once I knew God’s
Will, but because you have placed the responsibility on the weakest man.

I have always been convinced, and still am, that I was sent only as an
explorer and that you will send the one quem missurus es,11 whom I shall
not be worthy to obey, if you send some priests by the next ship. I am well
aware that it is useless to anticipate what will not happen, that I might
have no authority over anything, but do my utmost to be submissive and
to carry out whatever is ordered me by those whom you will give me as
Superiors. I know you are too sensible to give me the last place and not
put me at the helm, and that, in the event you do establish a Community
here, you will take good care not to remove an inferior member from his
place, causing him to groan continually until he is put back there. You
would also not want to be responsible for the faults I might commit in a
work of such great consequence, since I have neither the knowledge,
judgment, nor experience to guide me in such thorny matters. As people
say, if the foundation is badly laid, many preposterous things will ensue.
A skillful architect is needed to lay the foundations here; I have every
reason to believe that I have been alienated from the others by my
foolishness.

---

11Whom you will have sent. In other words, “someone else.”
I am not saying this through false humility so as to wheedle some authority out of you in any way, because nothing is more apt to discourage me than to find that I am not under the authority of a Superior. If you do not send me one, which I have no doubt you will do, I think I will have heart failure because I have already done too much harm, without adding to it my own loss and the loss of the salvation of many people; whereas, if someone gives me orders, I think I shall be saved from that death which is my own will. Then, with a joyful heart I shall run in the path of obedience with nothing to weigh me down, once I find myself freed from this burden, which I dread more than any difficulty imaginable. I see in it no possibility of working out my salvation, which I must prefer to that of everyone else; but I do not fear shipwreck in the vessel of obedience.

I ask you to summarize the main points of what I have written above and remedy the situation through the person you will send. You can inform him fully of it either verbally or in writing.

Regarding what is needed in temporal matters, if you send three or four priests and two or three coadjutor Brothers, that will be the most you could get through, and as many on another voyage. Make inquiries and see that those who are coming get information, not just from hearsay but from someone who has been here and knows what is needed. Above all, see if it is advisable to continue the care of the French. If there is one reason in favor of this, there are two against it. No matter how hard we try, nothing will ever be to their liking. Furthermore, of all the men, the one here is the most difficult to talk with and to satisfy because of rash judgments, suspicions, or unfounded reports.

If there can be no separation, and we have to remain in the settlement, give orders that things be made clear before the men leave France, without waiting until they get here, because we dare not open our mouths, no matter how gently we speak, lest we be dismissed in front of everyone. Furthermore, our Institute was not founded to be dependent on anyone or to live from hand to mouth as I do here, mixing with lay people who, at meals and in everything else, respect no other rules, time, or standard but their own appetite. All our time is wasted in this, and the mind languishes all too quickly with their frivolous conversation.

This letter is a mass of confusion, written in fits and starts. I had hoped to put it into better order, if the ship had not been ready to leave. Extract an antidote from all this poison and tell me what to do about all my mistakes, if you are still going to have me stay in this country. Possibly, if God had kept M. Gondrée alive, I might have given you this report in person, not with the intention of leaving the country but to return to it in a better frame of mind. If you think it advisable for me to make a trip to France by the next ship, it will take four months to get there, as much time
in France, and the same to come back, never to leave again because we
would be firmly established here. May God's Will be done in everything
and everywhere!

M. de Flacourt is staying another three years, and when I wrote this I
thought he was on his way back. He had made preparations but suddenly
changed his mind. I did not ask if he would send any more priests or if
schools would be opened here. I did tell him, however, not too long ago,
everything I felt about this and the means I thought necessary. Since he
listened to me coldly, however, I leave it up to him to tell those Gentlemen
whatever he pleases. They will notify you, as you will notify them, of
whatever you think most necessary in what I am writing you, leaving out
what is superfluous.

I realize I will not be able to go too far away, but I will try to dispose
the fathers in the villages around here to have their children baptized and,
when I can, I will visit those I have already seen. Are we going to have a
Portuguese interpreter for Andian Ramach, and what will be needed to
build a church there, and will God grant me the grace of bringing him
around? Could we give him some presents to win him over, such as some
olive-shaped cut glass, some silk, a silver cup, or some silver trinkets and
a few gold beads, false pearls or coral for a rosary he asked me for, and
an Office book in Portuguese? We would give him these things little by
little to remain on friendly terms with him and to entice him to listen more
closely and be receptive to the ways of salvation both for himself and for
many others. Might we also have something similar to win over an
Ombiasse and, when we have instructed him and dissociated him from his
olis, make use of him to attract those whom he had formerly deceived? One
or two hundred livres would go a long way for this purpose, both for the
king and for the Ombiasse.

God knows what could come of all this and how many souls we would
gain, one of which is worth more than all the treasures on earth. Those
Gentlemen will have difficulty approving this method, but I think it is quite
appropriate for persons attached to their own interests, as are the people
here. I am really afraid that the hue and cry will be raised that we are
incursing heavy expenses for ourselves and for religion, which is the
principal reason for making land grants on this island. I also fear that they
will report all this in order to be exempted from import duties on ships and
merchandise arriving in France, and are not sufficiently concerned about
contributing in some small way to God's work. May He grant that this be
not so!

I do not know whether you will send any Missionaries to Sainte-Marie,
where there are some French, but there is no way to communicate between
here and there except by sea. It is very unhealthy there, and good food is
essential in that place because of the poor air and frequent rainfall. The
language is somewhat different and, with the help of a few French here
who have lived there, I will try to use the vocabulary of that region in the
catechism already compiled in the language used here. People say that the
French will be making several settlements, including two large ones. One
of them will be at Antavares, near Matatanes, a three-day journey from
here. You can decide, from what I have suggested, whether you will entrust
the care of the French to some Priests of the Mission or to secular priests.
May everything be for the greater glory of God, in whose love I am, with
all my heart, Monsieur and Most Honored Father, your most humble and
obedient son.

CHARLES NACQUART, i.s.C.M.
Mission of Madagascar

Fort-Dauphin, February 9, 1650

1184. - TO THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY, IN VALPUISEAUX ¹

Paris, February 10, 1650

My good Sisters,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I was consoled greatly to receive your letter. I beg Our Lord to
restore Sister Perrette to health and to keep Sister Marguerite well
so that together you can continue the services you are rendering to
God.

Thank you for your charity toward us in watching out for our
little possessions, and for the trouble Sister Marguerite has taken
to check the books and linen. If some have gone astray, we must
have patience and try to save the rest. Yesterday morning that poor
man came to the door to pick up his belongings, without entering
the house or speaking to anyone except the porter. You can rest

¹ Commune in the district of Elampes (Essonne). The Daughters of Charity had been
established there in 1648.
assured, Sisters, that you will never see him over there again with my consent, and if he is so inconsiderate as to return, please let me know immediately so I can see that he goes away. I do not think he will come to see me any more, and I will be glad of that.

I beg Our Lord to give you His peace and His Spirit, and to grant me a share in your prayers. I am, in His love, my good Sisters, your affectionate servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
I.s.C.M.

Addressed: To the Sisters of Charity, Servants of the Sick Poor, in Val de Puiseau

1185. - TO RENE ALMERAS, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

February 11, 1650

I am distressed but not surprised by M...’s manner of acting. Those who have once faltered in their vocation rarely return to the point where they should be. There is usually a certain basic resistance to regularity in those persons, causing them to lose heart at every turn. The worst of it is that they have a bad influence on others so that, since misery loves company, they have grounds for presuming they are right. For a long time now I have been determined not to accept any more of them. Recently we have dismissed two, who are begging to return, but God has granted me the grace to stand firm. What you tell me about M... strengthens me in this resolution, and to that I shall add that it is better to let him go a second and last time than to keep him, if you are not morally certain that he will change his ways.

Letter 1185. - Reg. 2, p. 266.
Most Honored Father,

I think the Bailiff informed you yesterday of the state of that unpleasant business, which seems to depend entirely on how Monsieur Lesguier will explain to Monsieur d'Emery the Queen's wishes in this matter, in keeping with a new order he received from Her Majesty. I most humbly entreat your charity kindly to let me know whether someone should speak to him, and who should do it. It should, however, be done today. What compels me to leave no stone unturned is that, in addition to this fee, twelve to fifteen hundred livres will be required for the expenses of his reception—even two thousand livres, we have been told.

In the name of God, Most Reverend Father, reflect a little on whether thought should not be given to persuading these Ladies to stop taking in new foundlings, so we can pay the debts and bring back from the country all the babies who have been weaned. I assure you in conscience that we can no longer withstand the pity these poor people arouse in us when they ask us for what is justly owed them, not only for their services but for having advanced their own money, and then seeing themselves faced with dying from hunger. Three or four times they have been obliged to come from great distances without getting their money. We owe a large amount for the wet nurses' food and often for seven or eight babies who have been weaned, as well as for money we have borrowed. Still, it is not self-interest that causes us to speak up, although, if this continues, we will be obliged to use up what we have because we cannot refuse to give them something, however little it may be.
Please forgive me for badgering you as usual, and do me the honor of believing always that I am, Most Honored Father, your most humble and very obedient daughter and servant.

L. de M.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

1187. - ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC TO SAINT VINCENT

Mercuès, February 15, 1650

Monsieur,

After thanking you most warmly for the trouble you have so kindly taken for us in the Sainte-Geneviève affair, and asking you most humbly, as I now do, to continue your care and assistance for us in this matter, allow me now to tell you confidentially and in all confidence that Father Vitet, syndic of Chancelade, is so strongly determined to see this business [end] quickly that there is nothing he will not do or risk for this purpose. Since he sees that Rome is opposed to it and that an appeal by writ of error to the Parlement is one way to proceed, he has decided to take it that far at any cost. That is why, first of all, the monks of Sainte-Geneviève gave us notice of the appeal lodged by them against the Beauvais decision and had a writ issued against Grosbois. He sent it to me along with several reports containing various cases of appeals by writ of error, and wrote me that an appeal had to be presented to the Parlement to obtain a brief addressed to the Abbot of Grosbois,¹ together with orders from Cardinal de La Rochefoucauld.²

Letter 1187. - Archives of the Diocese of Cahors, Alain de Solminihac collection, notebook, copy made from the original.

¹Grosbois or Grosbois, a Cistercian monastery in the Angoulême diocese, near the Périgord border. Jean de la Font had been its Abbot since May 18, 1641.

²François de la Rochefoucauld was born in Paris on December 8, 1558. He became Bishop of Clermont on October 6, 1585, Cardinal in 1607, Bishop of Senlis in 1611, and Commendatory Abbot of Sainte-Geneviève in Paris in 1613. He resigned his bishopric in 1622 to dedicate himself entirely to the reform of the abbey dependent on the Benedictines, Augustinians, and Cistercians. With that end in view, he obtained from Pope Gregory XV on April 8 special powers and the title of Apostolic Commissary. Supported by such men as Saint Vincent, Father Tarrisse,
I sent the copy of this brief and the above-mentioned reports to Paris to have them examined by Messrs. Camus and Montelon, and had them examined again here by my lawyer from Cahors, who is a reputable person. His advice concurs with that of Paris; namely, that there are no grounds for an appeal by writ of error in the brief obtained by the monks of Sainte-Geneviève addressed to the Abbot of Grosbois, but that, because it was misstated and contained omissions, His Holiness had to be petitioned to have it declared null and void. In addition, an appearance had to be made before the Abbot of Grosbois to require him to refer us to His Holiness, given the invalidity of the said brief. . . . who may appoint him and, in case of a refusal, to declare solemnly that we were appealing it, and list the nullities of this brief.

I sent Father Vitel the opinion of the above-mentioned lawyers in Paris and Cahors, along with the act that had been drawn up, with an order to follow this opinion exactly. He replied that he had received it but persists in saying that an appeal by writ of error to the Parlement is necessary. By my order, my Vicar-General wrote to him and to the Prior of Chancelade that I found the proposal very strange and was surprised that he did not follow the orders I sent him. These had instructed him, among other things, not to produce any documents before the Abbot of Grosbois, following the advice of the Council. He went off and made that demand of the Abbot, who refused to comply with the referral but ordered that the parties produce the documents within three days, whereas, at the same time, Father Vitel was supposed to have made the act of protest of appeal, following the orders he had about it and the advice of the lawyers. He produced our decree from the Council, contrary to the specific prohibitions he had, and from there went to the Crown to have notice given to the monks of Sainte-Geneviève of the protest of appeal, in the event that the said Abbot of Grosbois should disregard it. Then he went back to Grosbois, where he found that the Abbot had already handed down the decision.

On his return to Chancelade, the Prior wrote to me here. I replied that I was quite surprised at the proceedings of Father Vitel, who ignored the opinion of the Council in order to follow his own opinion and produce the documents, contrary to the specific prohibitions he had. He excused himself in a letter, saying that things could not have been done otherwise

and Father Charles Faure, he restored order and discipline in the monasteries. The Cardinal died February 14, 1645; Saint Vincent was with him to prepare him to appear before God. He was buried at Sainte-Geneviève but his heart was given to the Jesuits. (Cf. M. M. La Morinière, Les vertus du vray prélat représentées en la vie de l'Éminentissime cardinal de la Rochefoucault [Paris: Cramoisy, 1646]; Lallemand et Chatonnet, La vie du Révérend Père Charles Faure, abbé de Sainte-Geneviève de Paris [Paris: J. Anisson, 1698].)
because the monks of Sainte-Geneviève, rather than the said Abbot, should have been given notice of these protests. This is most impertinent and quite ridiculous.

I sent him word to come and see me here. When he did, I asked him why he said that notice of the protests should have been given to the monks of Sainte-Geneviève instead of to the Abbot of Grosbois and why he had not followed our orders. The only answer I received was that he shrugged his shoulders and bowed his head. Because he alone has fostered this affair and is the only person we have who understands it well, I did not want to reprimand him as he deserved. I treated him very gently for such a fault and told him he had to go to Paris to appeal to the Privy Council against the above-mentioned decision. During the time he remained here, his appeal by writ of error was always on his mind and he spoke of it from time to time, as well as of the decisions handed down by the Abbot of Grosbois and Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld.

I refuted all these propositions and reminded him of what he had reported to me on his return from Paris after he had obtained our decree of July 1647; namely, that all our friends in Paris had told him not to appeal to the Parlement because the monks of Sainte-Geneviève had close contacts with it, due to the large number of their monks and boarders related to those who might be our judges. This is only too true.

Before he left here, I had orders and some advice written out for him, which I gave him to be used in the prosecution of this affair and told him not to do anything without seeking counsel and following it. At the same time I added that he should not take this matter to the Parlement where, as he himself had told me, our friends in Paris were advising us not to go. I also put forward some personal reasons of my own, which compel me not to take it there.

When he arrived in Paris, he consulted with Messrs. Camus and Montelion, according to our orders. They found that we had solid grounds for appealing to the Council against the decision of the Abbot of Grosbois. By the next mail he wrote to the contrary that M. Montelion was of the opinion that an appeal should be made to the Parlement and that M. Camus had not yet made up his mind. By another mail he wrote me that everyone was in agreement about an appeal by writ of error to the Parlement of Paris, both against the decision of Grosbois and the orders of Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld. He also stated that he was having letters of appeal drawn up to that effect and even in anticipation of a writ which the monks of Sainte-Geneviève had him give to this same Parlement.

I leave you to imagine my surprise at this news. Immediately I sent my Vicar-General to Cahors to consult with our lawyer about what we had to do. I cannot tell you how amazed he was at these proceedings. Within
the hour he drew up an act of repudiation of them which I sent to Monsieur Lefèvre, my attorney in Paris, to have notice of appeal given to the monks of Sainte-Geneviève. I also wrote a long letter to Father Vité, telling him how astonished I was that he had brought this affair before the Parlement against our orders. He wrote back to me excusing himself, saying I had my Vicar-General write to him three times to say he should follow the Council's advice and that I had even told him this myself. This is true, but he said nothing of his being expressly forbidden to take this affair to the Parlement.

He has written a letter full of complaints to my Vicar-General, and he wrote it in a troubled frame of mind because it contradicts what is in his other letters. After a long outburst, he told him to send him a little money so that he will be able to retire at the same time because, after the repudiation I made, he would no longer dare to show his face.

Please note that the letters he had decided to present to the Parlement on appeal and anticipation have not yet been presented, since the Council's advice was to wait until the writ served by the monks of Sainte-Geneviève had expired. Therefore, there is no repudiation and revocation, since no action has yet been taken by the Parlement.

Instead of keeping the said repudiation quiet, however, he went and made it public. He also showed my letter and those of my Vicar-General to Messrs. Camus and Montelon and sent word that they thought it a very bad thing that I had their decision reversed by a lawyer from Cahors. I had written him and sent him the repudiation, asking him to get quarterly letters from the Parlement for a four-month delay in our petition before His Holiness, prohibiting the parties from attempting anything in the meantime, and to notify the monks of Sainte-Geneviève of this. He gave us no reply to the above, so that I now find myself very much at a loss and I greatly need your advice and assistance because, as I have already told you, I have no one who understands this business as well as he does. Father Parrot, his companion, is as much deputized as he is but does not understand it as well. The other man always conducted the business alone, without allowing Father Parrot to get involved, and also has all the documents in his possession.

I beg you, in the name of God, to work at bringing this person around and, if possible, make him dismiss any further thought of going to the Parlement, or even to the Council at this time because the latter would refer us back to the Parlement. Get him to go through Rome instead, following my express order to him about this, pending the time when the Council will recover its authority.

He took you by surprise in leading you to believe that the decree of registration of the erection of the Congregation of Sainte-Geneviève stated
that the Congregation could be established in other houses only with the consent of the diocesan bishops, together with that of the abbots and monks in them, as you wrote me. As you can see from the wording of the enclosed decree, please note that this is not what is said with regard to the houses which are presently under that Congregation. Now, by the decision of the Abbot of Grosbois, our houses are included in this and, although we are appealing, this decision holds good until we have it suspended, and our lawyer from Cahors, who is very clever and prudent, has always believed that this was just the beginning.

As for me, I must confess that I have always felt that this decree was very prejudicial to us, and everyone else to whom I have shown it has the same opinion. Yet, Father Vitet acts as if this decree is a triumph and noises it abroad as a victory for us, and under this pretext wanted to constrain me to consent to bringing the affair to the Parlement. If he had not given, as he did, the decision of the Abbot of Grosbois, it seems that the above-mentioned decree could be favorable to us. But in the present state of affairs he will never convince me. Nevertheless, even if the Grosbois decision should not stand, I would be very cautious about going to the Parlement because, since there are clauses inserted in the said decree proprio motu, the Parlement will remove or interpret them as it sees fit, both in general and with regard to details.

He also took you by surprise by telling you that we had made an appeal by writ of error. This is not so because it is only a simple act of declaration for appeal. Were it not up to the Council, a petition would be required for that and a decree to have the parties subpoenaed. Were it up to the Parlement, letters would be required. Now, none of this is the case, so we have full liberty to lodge an appeal in Rome, as must be done, which I told him to do before and which I ask you to give him strict orders to do, forbidding him explicitly to go to the Parlement. If you want to give him the reasons for this, here they are: the monks of Sainte-Geneviève have such close contact with a good number of monks or boarders that we would have all their relatives petitioning against us because of problems arising from the nature, circumstances, and ramifications of this affair.

Most of our statements of grounds of appeal are on spiritual matters, observances to be regularized, or the spirit of the Rules. No lawyer in France is capable of pleading this case, not even the Assistant Public Prosecutor, and I do not think that even the lay judges can hear the case. It would take more than two hearings to plead it properly because the

---

3 On his own initiative.
monks of Sainte-Geneviève would do all they could to magnify it and get it into a muddle.

I have some very strong reasons for not going to the Parlement: (1) you know about the censure of the book, Libertés de L’Eglise gallica De; I was one of the members of the commission who had it condemned, along with the Archbishop of Sens and the Bishop of Uzès; (2) the way I have acted in this area for the service of the King; (3) an intendont of finance wrote me from Paris that everyone had heard of me. There are also many other personal reasons. If, after all that, you cannot bring this person around, please let me know and, in the meantime, send for young Lefèvre, my attorney at the Great Council, to get from the Parlement as soon as possible the quarterly letters mentioned above and send them on to Rome.

I would like very much to be able to tell you what is driving that man to see a quick end to this affair, for better or for worse, and to risk everything for that purpose, but it is a mysterious secret which was told me confidentially and which I have repeated only to my Vicar-General, who is writing this to you under my authority. I cannot put it in writing but would like very much to be able to whisper it to you; it originated only about two years ago. So please be wary of this man and inform yourself from time to time of what he has done in this business. Do not give him permission to leave until he has compiled the quarterly letters and sent them to the Court of Rome to obtain the brief, get the commissioners I indicated to him, and wait a little longer to see if the monks of Sainte-Geneviève will stir up anything in the Parlement.

I am writing you another letter through Father Vitet. When he brings you my letter, please tell him whatever the Holy Spirit inspires you to say. Be careful in speaking to him not to let him know that I gave you any reports.

I have been assured that the most renowned Doctor and Regent of the University of Toulouse has begun to teach the doctrine of Jansenius, starting with the first article of his errors. I was told also that the Bishop of Comminges preached there three times on this doctrine. The following day, an anonymous person wrote him a letter refuting everything he had said.
One of the Oratorian Fathers preached recently that Jesus Christ did not die for the damned and probates. That town will cause us trouble. I pray God to have mercy on His Church. I cannot sufficiently admire God's goodness toward my diocese; with all the dealings we have with people in Toulouse, those who return from there or from Paris are not tainted in any way and simply say that there is some new religion that is setting people at variance. Then, it is hushed up in such a way that, by the grace of God, I do not see a single person in my diocese who is upset by it, nor speaks about it, nor does not follow my opinion entirely in matters of faith and the teaching of the Church. I praise God for this and ask Him kindly to bestow on you all the graces I wish for you.

I am embarrassed at having written you such a long letter but necessity has obliged me to do so. I feel it my duty to tell you confidentially that Father Vitet's great passion for seeing our business settled quickly, for better or for worse, is not because he has any love for the monks of Sainte-Geneviève—on the contrary, he has a strong aversion for them—but it is so that, if the outcome is successful, as he sincerely hopes, he can act upon the mystery I mentioned to you, which I cannot put on paper and which would require a great deal of time. If he does not succeed, he is assured of retiring on a good benefice. That is why he is risking everything to terminate matters. When you have read my other letter, which Father Vitet will give you, I think it is advisable for you to show it to him or to read it aloud to him, and use this opportunity to speak to him.

I am, Monsieur, etc.

ALAIN,
Bishop of Cahors

1188. - CHARLES NACQUART TO SAINT VINCENT

Fort-Dauphin, February 16, 1650

Your holy blessing, please!

After all the letters I have written you, this one will inform you that a big change almost took place. You will learn that during Mass on Septuagesima Sunday, as I was reading the Gospel of the workers sent into the

vineyard, this vineyard to which I have been sent seemed so vast to me, and I saw such a great need of workers, that all during Mass I felt deep in my heart that it must not be left to wither for want of workers, since so long ago the Master reproached the lazy saying, quid hic statis tota die otiosi? Ite in vineam meam. This caused me to reflect that assuredly God was asking something more of me than I had given to this in the past.

Now, I think that, apart from the fact that I received this as an inspiration, begging O[ur] L[ord] that it might have its effect, this stemmed from the sadness I felt at having made so little progress and from seeing that I would do even less in future. But, examining the reason why I had been sent—for the French and for the natives—working for the former with little success and unable to do more for the latter because I was alone; in addition to my negligence, ignorance, and incompetence, I found that I was lacking the necessary temporal assistance which could be given. I felt this was because M. de Flacourt was so occupied with temporal administration that he scarcely bothered to contribute to spiritual advancement, since he was on the eve of his departure or, when he changed his mind about going, to write to France.

He mentioned nothing to me, although when I had proposed to him my idea about reestablishing the baptized king, making a settlement at Fanshere, and opening a seminary, he said that it would be very costly for the Company and that it was an undertaking fit for a king. Furthermore, although he and all those Gentlemen in Paris wanted to contribute to this to the exclusion of anyone else, I saw no sign of that, other than the small instances of aversion he had manifested in my regard for no reason. He was unwilling to give me an interpreter to work exclusively on a translation of the instructions, which we had to do by fits and starts, and even took away the man who was so eager to remain with me free of charge and without a salary from anyone. What is more, I felt I could not do without him, so that at least, since I was alone, I could do my best to prepare with him the instructions to be put in writing in this language, not only for myself but for posterity.

This boy is the one who speaks it best, and God has given him the grace to make himself clearly understood in these matters. In the beginning he found them difficult because he was not accustomed to them. He had never spoken about them and could hardly ever go to the country or leave the settlement any more. Without a good interpreter, not only would I be unable to instruct the natives of the settlement, who are quite familiar with

---

1 Why have you been standing here idle all day? . . . Go to my vineyard. Cf. Mt 20:6-7. (NAB)
the mysteries but need an explanation of other matters necessary to
salvation, but I could not tell them things clearly nor understand their
arguments.
All that made my heart ache very much, seeing that I would be only
useless on my own. I was even apprehensive about my letters being
considered suspect and being withheld, to prevent all that I proposed to
do in this country from being carried out. Indeed, I felt we needed
something like a lightning bolt, enclosed in the cloud that surrounds it,
which causes a stir by breaking it up in a rain of tears and flashes of prayer
and groaning, as I am experiencing right now. For a long time I held back,
afraid of vexing the person to whom, through cowardly deference, I dared
not express my feelings freely. I was fearful of spoiling something in such
an important matter, and sometimes of losing the honor of continuing such
a beautiful work for the entire Company, as has happened with the good
Capuchins on Saint-Christopher Island. So, I saw only two or three ways
to remedy these two extremes. They came to me in the presence of O[ur] L[ord],
and I shared them with three persons whom I thought would give
me the best advice.
I took as my intermediary Captain Le Bourg, who prepared everything
for the peace that follows. This is what I did, immediately afterward, with
a heart filled with confidence that God would make everything turn out for
the best. I prepared with all possible respect to tell M. de Flacourt, whose
decision I promised to obey in the way he would give it, saying to him,
"Monsieur, you know the plan of God, of your Gentlemen, and of my
Superiors regarding this mission. It has a twofold goal toward which I
must work: first, to render you and the entire French settlement the service
of my profession; and second, to win over the natives and the other
inhabitants of the country. We must have the means to attain these two
goals. If the first one is not as it should be, you can see that I am doing all
my limited power allows, although quite badly, and I cannot complain of
anything in that except of my own negligence and inefficiency, which lead
me to wish for someone else more worthy.
"As for the second, although I have the good will to do all I can to
accomplish it, I am new here and do not know the language. I cannot do
it without an interpreter who would be assigned to do only that, without
being interrupted as I have been until now. The person best suited to this
work has been sent to milk the cows and to labor in the fields, even though
he would like nothing better than to give himself to God for the other work.
He has told me many times that he could not serve two masters. You can
get other persons to take care of your temporal needs, but he is the only
one I can find whom God has disposed to do to this work. Otherwise, I
shall waste my time while waiting for some priests, who will find nothing
ready. I thought about sending them many things on the first returning ship but I have not been able to do so. Besides, those who might be sent are not informed about the needs of this country, and this cannot be put into writing as well as it can be said. When I write, I shall perhaps be suspect; nevertheless I must express my sentiments freely to my Superior, to whom I must communicate my interior state, and whose advice I must ask regarding our behavior and that of the persons entrusted to my care.

"There are only two ways to do this, and you will tip the balance to whatever side you think best: either I make a trip to France to say what I think before God is necessary for His glory in this country, or I write with the assurance that I am not suspect; or else, if I remain here, that I have the simple necessities which are in your power to grant me; that is, since I have to trust you, you must trust me; your influence should sustain mine and vice-versa. In a word, allow me to take the interpreter and go far enough from the fort, away from the noise, where I can live on my own and carry out the duties of the profession of a wretched Missionary such as I am."

His conclusion at that time was that I should go to France. Although that other good priest was very anxious to return home, knowing that my intention was to advance matters and to recruit as many workers as I could for the good of everyone, he gave his consent before M. de Flacourt, who was satisfied with this. So it was all settled that he would remain behind. I left everything at his disposal and packed my bag as lightly as possible.

M. de Flacourt asked me to say farewell to the French after Vespers on Septuagesima Sunday, which I did, telling them why I was going. They had mixed feelings about this and so did I because I was finding it difficult to leave and to undertake the round trip, which is so long and dangerous. The crew was happy to have my company; the people in the settlement wanted, on the one hand, to keep me to render them service; on the other, they gave their consent because of the Gospel, which required workers promptly, and I was going to recruit some who would have what it takes to cultivate this vineyard, while bearing the burden and the heat of many days.

So, here was this poor priest, torn in several directions by his own mixed emotions and those of others. Still, even though the decision had been taken and accepted by all parties, I remained indifferent, entreating the Master of the vineyard to tell me to go in the morning or wait until noon, so as not to lose the value of obedience to His Will alone. Deus scit quia non mentit, and that I held nothing for certain, except that He would do

---

2M. de Bellebarbe.
3God knows I do not lie. Cf. 2 Cor 11:31. (NAB)
everything for the best and that He had ways and means to assure the outcome of the designs of His Providence, which were infallible and irresistible.

The following day I offered Holy Mass for that intention. No answer. I sent my bag to the ship and was prepared to be the bearer of my own letters. And suddenly, all the plans were changed: I was told that I had to stay behind to satisfy those who were not happy with the priest who was remaining, although he was quite capable of doing a decent job of looking after the needs of the settlement. The natives themselves came to me and said, “What! you are going away! Who will help us pray to God?” And that shackled my will, which remained a prisoner of the Will of God voiced by the people.

However, my other request, to live alone with the interpreter, was granted me, without any prejudice to M. de Flacourt’s respect and friendship. Rather, it increased them and gave the latter less reason to find so much fault with him. So, our hearts are united again, with a mutual promise that this will be for God’s greater glory. They are going to build a little rectory for me near the church. Now, however, that poor companion, who is to act as my tongue, is ill with pleurisy, which he said was a result of sadness at the thought of being separated from me. However, the desired news that I am staying, plus the bloodletting and the good treatment I am giving him, has already half cured him of his illness, since he says that the cause of it has been removed.

God grant that there will be no changes! I do not know if this country is the cause, but we see many chameleons here who change color less often than certain persons change their mind and mood. Sometimes we are in favor; sometimes not; but we are more often out of favor than in. Despite the fact that things seem good, I am not above suspicion of having led that interpreter astray for some purpose disadvantageous to those Gentlemen. But what else could I do except spend all my time with him learning the language and instructing the natives? The honor for this will redound to them, as it did to M. de Montmagny* in Canada. Oh! if only someone like him were here!

I greatly fear that, to all appearances, those Gentlemen will be satisfied with making fine suggestions for the conversion of this country and cause us to waste our time by putting off too long what could be done without delay. If you see no probability of one or two settlements being maintained, as I mentioned, either by them or by someone else, is it worth the trouble to unsettle some poor priests and go to such pains to send them off to die

*Charles Huault de Montmagny, Knight of Malta, Governor of Canada. He was very zealous for the propagation of the faith.
so far away, in order to serve such undisciplined settlements? Do we not have enough French on our doorstep? Does it not suffice for them to have a priest, whom they could maintain and whose wages they could pay, without our being captives and held back from working properly for the conversion of the natives, who ask only for that?

Look at my recent letter addressed to those Gentlemen, in which I propose means to them that are perhaps too much to their advantage and too onerous for you. Do what you please with it; my conscience is clear now that I have said what I know and have done all I can.

If you take the trouble to write to Madame Gondrée, address the letter to Captain Le Bourg in Dieppe. If you want to write a little note to my poor father, if he is still alive, the address is on my letter to him.

Do not let God's plan for this country grow cold, even if these Gentlemen look on that as unimportant. Providence will furnish you with the means of carrying it out in other ways, which you will find out from Captain Le Bourg. That would perhaps be best, if it is possible.

Will not everything I have reported about this country suffice to put the entire Company, and especially our seminarians, into the plan of learning Saint Peter's trade of making and repairing nets suitable for fishing so many souls? You sent me to cast the nets, but only fifty-seven fish have been caught, and they are all small except for three big ones. Yet, there are so many to be caught that I am sure you will put to sea persons who will succeed in filling the nets to the breaking point.

I shall not mention M. Maillard, who has asked so often to come. He has the requisite dispositions of spirit and he is healthy. I think his voice is a little weak, and he is subject to constipation, but he is well-suited to teaching small children; he is also a good steward. I leave all that to you, wishing to have only those persons whom O[ur] L[ord] has prepared well to become fishers of men, who know what to do in the organization of this work, and who can resolve the difficulties that arise here, where it is not easy to write for guidance concerning them.

I have every reason to cast myself at the feet of O[ur] L[ord] as a poor fisherman and a great sinner. Please cast yourself there so that He will not withdraw from me, although I give Him only too great reason to do so. When you choose to relieve me of this crushing burden, if it is necessary for me to go and do penance for my faults, let me go to the seminary, where this monster will be reformed by the example and fervor of those at whose feet I may humble myself, in order to obtain, through them and through you, hope in the grace and mercy of O[ur] L[ord]. In His charity, I pray that our hearts may be impelled to carry out His plans for the Company.
In His love I am, Most Honored Father, your most humble and obedient son.

CHARLES NACQUART, I.S.C.M.
Mission of Madagascar

1189. - CHARLES NACQUART TO SAINT VINCENT

Fort-Dauphin, February 16, 1650

Monsieur,

Your holy blessing, please!

Blessed be God if the person for whom I am writing this letter is himself the bearer, as he promised me. In besides my obligations toward him for being the recipient of so much pleasure, honor, and affection, and for the gift of so many commodities both on his ship and for more than a year during which he had to reside on the coast, taking compassion on me, as a good father does for his son in need, he has also urged me to accept one hundred francs for any needs I might have in this country. If I had to repay him a hundredfold or if he was willing to accept it, who could doubt that you would not give it to him? But he will accept just the amount given, which I shall use only for what I need and to avoid what you are aware of and which he can tell you.

O Monsieur, warm my heart by welcoming him, not as he deserves and as I would wish, but with all possible cordiality. Assure him that, if the opportunity arises of rendering him any service, you will do it or have someone else do it as if it were for my own father. I am so well acquainted with his natural goodness that I know only too well how much he has contributed to the work of God in this country, and not only in spiritual matters. I have discussed them with him and have accepted his opinions with the respect due to a man who has been my best advisor in this country and has acted as my intermediary, as I mentioned elsewhere. But if he were to be the one in charge of the next ship to come, since he is quite capable of doing so, I know of no one better suited to explain everything to you and to fulfill the promise he made of furnishing some small temporal provisions, if he returns. Even if he is not the one, he would not fail to give someone else advice on this, and even a report. If he were in Dieppe, he would acquire himself faithfully of furnishing whatever he could.


1Captain Le Bourg.
So much for singing his praises. Since he is so deserving, may God grant that someone might procure for him a commission as King's Captain, which would only take a word to request that it be granted by Her Majesty, Regent and guardian of the kingdom. If you can do anything for this loyal man, in this matter or in anything else, you will be doing a favor for a man who will not be ungrateful, and I will consider it as done to one who is, in the love of O[ur] L[ord] who will be his reward and yours, Monsieur and Most Honored Father, your most obedient servant and very affectionate son.

C. NACQUART,
L.C.M.

In the event that he is not the bearer, I know that you will thank him by letter and will see that he receives the amount mentioned, without being any less zealous in doing him a favor whenever the occasion arises. Please God, I shall see him again in this country at the next embarkation, accompanied by four priests and three coadjutor Brothers! Et sic deinceps diu usque impleatur numeros fratrum nostrorum. ²

1190. - TO LOUIS RIVET, IN SAINTES

February 20, 1650

Thank you for the advice you gave me. I am writing¹ to the person and I hope he will reform his manner of acting. This is a passing storm, stirred up by age and passions. Thank God he is fundamentally good and deserves to have us bear with the weaknesses of nature, as you are doing. I thank Our Lord for this; you honor His patience by the patience you exercise with regard to the failings of others, putting up with them as He put up with the boorishness of His disciples and puts up daily with the greatest sinners like me. O Monsieur, how consoled I am that you are

²And so for a long time to come, until the number of our brothers is complete.

¹The letter referred to here is most probably no. 1191. See also no. 1202.
working constantly at the acquisition of virtue! Your love for it is apparent in the distress you experience because others are not working hard enough at it. When, in addition, I reflect on your constant zeal in the ministry of the Gospel in order to win souls to Jesus Christ, I cannot esteem and cherish your own soul highly enough. The tender affection I conceived for it long ago leads me to offer it frequently to God that He may sanctify it more and more and, through you, save the people whom you serve.

It certainly is very difficult, Monsieur, to find accomplished superiors. True, yours is inexperienced and not very prepossessing exteriorly, but he is wise and virtuous, as you yourself acknowledge. This has always led me to hope that Our Lord would supply the rest until, through practice, he has acquired part of what he lacks. I ask you, Monsieur, to do whatever you can, by word and example, so that the Community will have confidence in him and be attentive to our little observances. I will recommend to him that, on his part, he act more humbly and gently. It seems to me that this will be easy for him, since he is very much inclined to do so.

1191. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION, IN SAINTES

February 20, 1650

I cannot refrain from telling you how consoled I am that you are devoting yourself almost continually to the salvation of souls, that your own soul is advancing in the love of God by this means, and that His Infinite Goodness is pleased to bless your labors. I certainly thank Him for this with as much gratitude as he has given me esteem and tenderness for you.

I am also writing to you for another reason. I am wondering whether I answered the letter you wrote me some time ago. On the one hand, I know I intended to do so, and only the great pressure

⁡Pierre Watched.

of business could have caused me to omit this obligation. On the other hand, however, seeing that, no matter how hard I try, I am late at least with certain replies, I fear I have committed this fault in your regard. If this is the case, Monsieur, I ask your pardon, and if it is not, please let me know.

You made your interior communication to me in that letter. It gave me good reason to praise God for the zeal He gives you to correct the faults within your Community, and particularly for the good dispositions He has granted you in serving Him. Because man’s state changes every day, especially in persons like you, who are striving for their own advancement, I ask you, if you still want to continue to make your communication to me, to make it according as you find yourself right now. I assure you that I will reply each time you write, not only for what concerns your interior life, but for anything else. Thanks be to God, I try to do so for everyone. How much more, then, for you, who are for me what Our Lord alone knows. In Him I am at your service as much as I can be. Please have no doubt about that.

If, nevertheless, you prefer to open your heart to M. Watebled, so as not to deviate from the common way, I shall be consoled by this and you, I hope, will be satisfied because, since Our Lord approves of the trust you have in your Superior as the representative of His Divine Person, He will inspire him to say whatever is most appropriate for you. Although he may not have the experience I have nor all the other good qualities desirable in a person in authority, do not, on that account, Monsieur, neglect any part of such a holy practice nor of any of those God is pleased to prescribe for us in our state. They have great value if they are performed in a spirit of love and obedience, and you know the danger of following other lights.

I mention this to you only to excite us to gratitude for the grace God has bestowed on us, in giving us the determination to walk in the path traced out for us by Our Lord and the saints. Let us ask Him for the grace of persevering to the end. I am inclined to believe that human nature inspires you with many thoughts contrary to the esteem and deference you owe to M. Watebled, but I am also
inclined to believe that you rise above these base feelings and profit from this repugnance, and this increases the merit of your fidelity. True, he is still new in the office and does not have the demeanor or perhaps the gentleness it requires, but I can assure you that he is one of the souls closest to God that I know, and we have always remarked great virtue in him. It is not easy to find perfect men in whom there is nothing to criticize. What is lacking in this servant of God is little in comparison to what he possesses, and Our Lord will compensate for what he lacks in your regard, if you see Our Lord in him and him in Our Lord, as I beg you to do with all my heart.

1192. - TO SISTER JEANNE LEPEINTRE, IN NANTES

Paris, February 23, 1650

My good Sister,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I was greatly consoled to receive your letter but, on the one hand, it distressed me to see you continually inconvenienced by your restricted living accommodations. If God Himself does not provide some solution to this, it must not be sought elsewhere. Nevertheless, go see M. d'Annemont¹ and tell him the inconveniences arising from living in such close quarters and having so many patients. He can bring this to the attention of the Administrators and consult with them to see if some place might be adapted for use nearby or above the wards to give you a little more freedom.

I was also consoled by your earnest request to be relieved of authority; it is good for anyone in charge to ask, from time to time, to be relieved, even though the person must remain indifferent,

Letter 1192. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original signed letter.
¹Chaplain of Maréchal de la Meillenaye.
which is what you are doing, thanks be to God. Continue to be firmly grounded in this practice, always entrusting yourself to the care of Providence, who will remove you from this office whenever it is expedient. While you are in it, He will give you the necessary graces to carry it out well. Yes, Sister, rest assured that, when you remain thus in the state in which obedience has placed you, the merit of this same obedience extends over everything you do, giving each action inestimable value, even when things do not turn out as you wish.

It is true, Sister, that spiritual direction is very useful. It is an occasion for advice in difficulties, encouragement in weariness, refuge in temptation, and strength in dejection; in a word, it is a source of well-being and consolation, when the director is truly charitable, prudent, and experienced. But are you well aware that where men are lacking, the help of God begins? It is He who instructs and strengthens us; He is our All and leads us to Himself by Himself. If He does not allow you to have a spiritual father to whom you can have recourse in every circumstance, do you think it is to deprive you of the benefit of the direction of such a father? Not at all. On the contrary, it is Our Lord who takes his place and in His goodness directs you Himself. It would seem that He has done so until now, and you can be sure He will do so until He provides otherwise. I have always noticed this particular attention of Providence for many pious persons deprived of similar help from men. I could quote you many beautiful examples of this and tell you some wonderful things on this point, but this is not necessary for you, who have no doubt of it and who have daily experience of the effects of the divine protection.

We are not yet able to recall Sister Henriette; please be patient with regard to her.

It is much to be desired that you all have one and the same confessor. I think M. Cheneau is quite capable of this and is a very upright man. So, from time to time, continue to try and persuade this Sister to go to confession to him so that, if she goes to someone
else, the Bishop of Nantes\(^2\) will know that it was neither on your orders nor with your consent.

I see clearly that what has kept you from making your little regulations and from following the recommendations I left for you are the little troubles you have endured up until now. I hope that God in His goodness will give you in future more peace and grace to be very exact, and that you will give the example in this to our Sisters.

If admitting boys into your kitchen is a necessary evil, you must bear with it for the love of God, who permits it. If it can be avoided, wait for the Administrators to take care of it, and for this purpose ask M. Truchart about it from time to time. Nevertheless, be submissive to whatever the outcome will be.

You say they have given you a spy, who is upsetting you. I admit that this is painful, but after the effort you have made to free yourself from this servitude, you must be patient. Alas! my Daughter, I do not know anyone who does not have someone watching him. The most influential persons have them even in their bedrooms, and the world is in such a wretched state today that for almost everyone we see, there are as many spies. This should be a reminder to us that we should act with great reserve and in the presence of God. I would like to believe that you and our Sisters act in this way and that this will cause those very persons who spy on your actions to proclaim your virtue abroad.

Have you had set up in your room the enclosure to be used for your little meetings, as we found advisable when I was in Nantes? If you have, can you not have a little recreation there every day? Please enlighten me on this. Meanwhile, I approve of your tact in giving a little liberty to our Sisters to laugh and talk when the occasion presents itself, if you are not taking an hour or so to recreate together; you need a little relaxation from your constant work.

---

\(^2\)Gabriel de Beauvau de Rivarennes.
I praise God that your sick Sister is better and that all the others, you in particular, are in good health.

I greet each and every one of you with all possible affection. Please ask God to have mercy on me. On my part, I often offer you to Him that He may give you the strength and generosity of spirit to overcome the difficulties to be encountered in the service of God and of the poor. May He be in the end your eternal reward in heaven. I am, in His love, my good Sister, your affectionate servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Sister Jeanne Lepeintre, Servant of the Poor and of the Daughters of Charity of the Nantes Hospital, in Nantes

1193. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN RICHELIEU

Paris, February 23, 1650

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I asked the Duchesse d'Aiguillon for the canonry that is vacant, or about to be vacated, in Champigny,¹ for your doctor's son. She told me she had promised to give it to a young man from Tours, but that she will be glad to oblige the doctor on another occasion. I will be on the alert for this, hoping to be able to render him service, as I am bound to do. I greet him most humbly.²

I told you that the Lady³ highly approves of the change to be made at the Champigny hospital, the withdrawal of the chaplain,⁴

---

¹Champigny-sur-Voue, commune in the district of Chinon (Indre-et-Loire).
²These words, from "as I am bound to do," are written in the Saint's hand.
³The Duchesse d'Aiguillon.
⁴M. Romillon.
the establishment of our Sisters, and all the other things you pointed out to us for the sake of order and the good of the poor. Make arrangements for all that, while waiting for Mademoiselle Le Gras to prepare two of her Sisters for you, which I already mentioned to her. We will let you know when they will be able to leave. The Lady will approve of what you say should be done with that girl who is staying at the hospital. Still, before putting her out, please wait until I talk to her once more to find out exactly what she wants.

Since writing the above I spoke to the Lady again. She agrees that the girl should be removed from the house, and even that she should not go near it, on account of her disorderly life.5

When you wrote to M. Drouard, I do not know if you suggested the vacant land in Richelieu for the building. If you see that the inhabitants and the interested parties are disposed to accept that, write to Monsieur Drouard, if you have not already done so. As for me, I do not want to broach the subject with the Lady. It is advisable for you to send me the letters unsealed.6

I shall find out from Mademoiselle Le Gras and let you know whether she is willing to accept the girl from there, who is asking to come to the Charity.

I received the copy of the Bois-Bouchard lease. I must confess that I cannot understand the terms of it. That house with its dependencies has an estimated income of between one thousand and eleven hundred livres, and your lease is drawn up for only one hundred ninety-five livres. So the reserves you have set aside would have to give you eight or nine hundred livres a year, which I cannot believe. If that were the case, was it necessary to draw up a lease of the rest for such a trifle? There must be some misunderstanding about all that. Please, Monsieur, clear it up for me as soon as possible.

With regard to this, I repeat the request I made you not to change anything or start anything new in matters of importance. Well-

5This last phrase is written in the Saint's hand.
6This last sentence is written in the Saint's hand.
regulated Societies, particularly the Jesuits, have as a maxim that, when a new Superior goes to a house, he should leave things the way his predecessors left them, especially if the Visitor has been there. If you tell me that you acted in that way in Richelieu, as you have already written me, and that I allowed you to draw up that lease, I would like to remind you, please, that it is true that I actually gave you that permission, but this lease is drawn up quite differently from what you proposed to me. I await word from you on that matter, as also on the state of the Community, whom I greet along with you, Monsieur. I am in Domino your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

At the bottom of the first page: M. Codoing

1194. - TO MATHURIN GENTIL, IN LE MANS

Paris, February 23, 1650

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
I am glad you are exempt from that clergy tax this year because of the payment you made; we shall see about another year.

Since the eight hundred or one thousand livres you want to borrow are to be used to pay off your debts, and since the ordinations are approaching and you are making no preparations, for lack of funds, I think you should borrow another thousand livres to buy beds and the other things you should have. Perhaps M. de Beaugé could give you both these amounts at the same time, or you could go elsewhere to get whatever he refuses you. I will have a power of attorney drawn up for you for this purpose and send it to you.

Letter 1194. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.
right away. If M. Beaugé were willing to accept as payment, or as part of it, the modest revenues you mention, I approve of our giving them to him, but I strongly doubt that he will.

Let me know how much money M. Planchois wants from you to give up half of his pension, and the amount of the pension. Even if you come to an agreement on that, I do not think the first settlement made with him should be dropped in drawing up the new one, as you say, because it must be affixed to the King's patents verified by the Parlement,1 and nothing in it should be touched, especially since these patents mention it.

I will have our ledger checked to see if M. Planchois is right in saying that he gave two receipts for the sum of eighteen livres and that you are counting them twice, so that if he has received them only once, we are not doing him a wrong. I am waiting to hear from M. Lucas2 about his mission.

I wish all of you perfect health and many blessings on you and your work.

I am in Domino, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

At the bottom of the first page: M. Gentil

1195. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 16451 and 1660]

If Mademoiselle Le Gras wishes me to go to the parlor, I shall

---

1January 15, 1650. (Arch. Nat. MM 535.)
2Antoine Lucas, Superior of the house.

Letter 1195. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.
3Brother Ducournau, mentioned in this letter, became Saint Vincent's secretary in 1645.
gladly do so, although I have chills, and experience has taught me not to go out in the air in this condition or I will get chills again, which are followed sometimes by fever. Nevertheless, I shall do whatever Mademoiselle pleases. If she chooses to write me what she wants to tell me, I shall receive it in the spirit Our Lord has given me to do whatever she thinks I can do for God. I shall soon send you Brother Ducournau.

1196. - A PRIEST OF THE MISSION TO SAINT VINCENT

I must give you a report of the results your prayers and Holy Sacrifices have produced both in Joigny and in Longron where we are now giving the mission. I have nothing to say about Joigny, except that I admire the regularity of the inhabitants in going to hear the sermons and catechism lessons and their diligence in rising early, for sometimes we began ringing the bell for the sermon at two o'clock in the morning, yet the church was full.

I must admit in all frankness, however, that I find that things go better in the rural areas than in the towns, and that I see there more signs of genuine, sincere repentance and of the uprightness and simplicity of early Christianity. These good people usually are in tears when they come to confession. They consider themselves the worst sinners in the world and ask for greater penances than are imposed on them. Yesterday a person who had made his confession to another Missionary came and begged me to impose on him a greater penance than the one given him and to order him to fast three days a week for this entire year. Another asked me to give him the penance of walking barefoot on the ground during the time it was frozen. Yesterday, also, a man came to see me and said, "Monsieur, I heard in the sermon that the best way to stop swearing was to kneel down immediately before those in whose presence one had sworn. That is what I have just done because as soon as I realized I had sworn, upon my word, I got down on my knees and asked God's mercy."


1Grand-Longueron, a hamlet in the commune of Champlay near Joigny (Yonne).
1197. - TO SAINT LOUISE

I do not have a fever, Mademoiselle, I have only the congestion I had but it is much less now, thank God. I have just taken a purgative for the fourth time and I think that is enough.

I did not forget you today. God has granted me the grace of celebrating Mass for your intention.¹

I am pleased with what you tell me about the Chancellor’s wife.²

It would be well for you to be at the meeting³ here tomorrow and to see Madame de Marillac⁴ in the morning. If you cannot do both things, please postpone the visit to this good Lady until Tuesday.

Good morning, Mademoiselle. I am . . .

V. D. P.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

1198. - TO MATHURIN GENTIL, IN LE MANS

Paris, March 16, 1650

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am sending you the two documents you requested. The first is a copy checked against the original of the verification of your establishment.¹ The second is M. Planchois’ receipt for the last sum

Letter 1197. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.
¹It was probably Saint Louise’s feast day or the anniversary of some memorable event in her life.
²Madame Ségur.
³The meeting of the Ladies of Charity.
⁴Either Marie de Creil, wife of René de Marillac, or Jeanne Potier, wife of Michel de Marillac.

Letter 1198. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.
of money, amounting to twenty-four livres, which I had him given in two installments, on what you owe him. I told him we will give him nothing more and that he should see you. As for the arrangements he suggested to us for half of his pension, we did not come to any agreement on that, as you can imagine. On the contrary, I informed him that we could not possibly consent to that, and he is no longer expecting it.

M. Pousset has not written me to assist him with any business in the Parlement. Besides, I cannot render him any service of that sort because I never apply to the judge for anyone, and I am not permitted to do so. If, however, I could be of some help to him on another occasion, I would gladly do whatever I can.

We have two seminarians qualified to render service to the Church, which they are actually already doing; one, whose name is [Louis] Champion, teaches ethics at the Collège des Bons-Enfants and the other, [François] Fournier, at the Agen Seminary. The first one is from Châteaudun and the other is from Laval, in the Le Mans diocese. Both of them are the right age and are working at the acquisition of virtue. They have received only tonsure. Would you or M. Lucas please ask the Bishop of Le Mans for dimissorial letters³ ad omnes⁴ for them, if possible? I am afraid I cannot send you today their letters regarding tonsure but will do it some other time.

Be very careful, Monsieur, not to remove the locks the Administrators have put on the granaries, as you proposed to me, nor have a key made to open them. You must not on any account go to court against them but live on the best possible terms with them, even if they might be planning to deprive you entirely of those granaries. If you live on peaceful terms, they will not do so. Peace is worth

---

²The secretary left a space for their first names, which he did not know or had forgotten.

³Dimissorial letters are statements giving a subject permission to be ordained by a bishop other than his own Ordinary. Exempt religious cannot be ordained by any bishop without the dimissorial letters from their own major Superior.

⁴For all [Orders]. Saint Vincent appears to want the Bishop of Le Mans, whose Champion and Fournier were born, to furnish letters testifying to their freedom to receive Orders at that time and in the future.
more than all worldly possessions; in addition, God rewards it even in this life. I ask you to work at this and do not even think about giving any revenues as payment, nor sell or exchange or do anything else with them, so as not to break up the house in any way. Instead, take the necessary steps yourself to prevent these insecure revenues from being lost.

I am so busy that I have no time to write to M. Lucas. I have just about enough time to embrace him, and the whole Community along with him. The Community here is getting along fairly well.

I am in Domino, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.e.C.M.

At the bottom of the first page: M. Gentil

1199. - TO ANTOINE LUCAS, SUPERIOR, IN LE MANS

March 23, 1650

Your proposal about the Laval Priory is contrary to our maxims and our custom of not seeking any establishment, directly or indirectly. Providence alone has called us to all those we have, through persons having the right to do so. If the Company has faith in what I say about this, it will be inviolably preserved through this reserve. If that gentleman brings it up again, tell him that I gave you this answer.

I have asked the procurator¹ of your house to leave things as they are with the Administrators and to beware of touching the locks on the granaries, still less to initiate any lawsuit. Peace is

Letter 1199. - Reg. 2, pp. 58, 123. The second part, which begins with the words, "I have asked," may have been the first part in the original.

¹Mathurin Gentil.
worth far more than anything they might take from you. If we bring it about in others, is it not only right to preserve it among ourselves, so as not to be rebuffed with that reproach which we read in yesterday's Gospel, "Physician, cure yourself?" 2 In the name of God, Monsieur, let us bear with losses like that rather than give scandal. God will take up our cause, if we practice Our Lord's counsel.

1200. - TO RENE ALMERAS, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

March 25, 1650

If the house in Rome has been orphaned, as you say, by the absence of M. Dehorgny, Our Lord will be its Father, Counselor, and Protector. Have no doubt about this but redouble your trust in His goodness and let Him act. He Himself will be that energetic man of grace who you think should be put in your place. You know, Monsieur, that the outcome of matters depends entirely on Him, and I know that, if it had depended on us, what you had undertaken would have been very successful, especially since you brought to it all the prudent foresight, care, and diligence one might expect of a virtuous man. The works of God are not accomplished when we wish them, but whenever it pleases Him. Do you think that the Jesuits neglected anything when they came to Paris to obtain a prompt permission to establish themselves here? Not at all. Yet, they went four years without seeing any results from their applications and their cleverness. The Oratorian Fathers have been in Rome a long time. Have they been able to get permission for some small establishment of their own? No, they are at Saint-Louis but are subject to the Confraternity. 1

2Cf. Lk 4:23. (NAB)


1Beginning in 1618, of the twenty-four priests who constituted the corps of chaplains for
God often delays the conclusion of a holy endeavor so that those involved in it might merit its grace by the length of the work, their patience, and their prayers. This is why I beg you not to grow weary in yours. Although He may delay, He will reveal that it is pleasing to Him, if it is done, nevertheless, in a spirit of resignation regarding the outcome.

1201. - TO FATHER BLANCHART

Saint-Lazare, March 26, 1650

The R[everend] F[ather] General of the Congregation of Sainte-Geneviève is most humbly requested by his servant, Vincent, to give a favorable reception to this gentleman, who wishes to speak to him of an affair pertaining to his salvation.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.e.C.M.

1202. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION, IN SAINTES

March 27, 1650

I am answering your letter of March 16. I am too greatly distressed for having put off writing to you before this to fall into this same fault again. I ask your pardon for this right now, most humbly prostrate in spirit at your feet.

It does not surprise me that you have been tempted because that
is the distinctive characteristic of those who are trying to serve God. Our Lord Himself was tempted and, since He was, I do not know anyone who can be exempt from this. I would be amazed to know someone who was. The great benefits of grace, like those of fortune, are preserved only with difficulty, and the devil takes great care not to leave you in peace. He will not fail to turn you aside from your holy resolutions, if he can do so, because they involve the salvation of a great multitude of souls, whom you could free from his tyranny by the strength of the holy Word you proclaim to them and by the grace of your vocation.

God has great plans for you, directed toward helping you do what Jesus Christ did when He was on earth. This requires you to resist temptation vigorously, with special confidence in the assistance of His Divine Goodness. Courage then, Monsieur. Be faithful to Him, and the Divine Goodness will be favorable to you. I beg Him most humbly to grant you this grace and to make known to you the esteem and affection I have for you, assuring you that they are far greater than you can imagine.

As for your difficulty in making your interior communication to M. Watebled, it is good for you to make the effort to overcome yourself, bearing in mind the communication the Son of God had with the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph, and later with the Apostles, and even with the Scribes, Pharisees, and magistrates. If God has not endowed this good priest with much external grace, he has enriched his soul with great virtue, as you yourself acknowledge. If some persons in the town are surprised that others submit to him, they are persons who feed their eyes on corporal grandeur. You, however, penetrate more deeply into things and know how precious and worthy of veneration is a pure soul who is the temple of the Holy Spirit, totally dedicated to God’s service. You must not stop at these material externals, nor even submit to a man because of his virtue, regardless of his sanctity, but to God alone, whom you see in him. This is what I ask you to do with regard to M. Watebled and to whoever may succeed him.

I really think, Monsieur, that a sedentary life is harmful to you.
This comes from being hot-blooded and quick-tempered, and these are moderated with age and not by any change of residence. We take our temperament with us wherever we go, and this impetuosity and hastiness are sources of boredom and unrest. There are some persons who are content with everything and others who are scarcely content with anything. These latter need patience to bear with themselves.

I think this letter will reach you when Lent is almost over, so it would be useless to offer you any remedy for the indisposition it [Lent] is causing you; besides, you do not want to be dispensed from its obligation.

I beg Our Lord, Monsieur, that we may be able to die to ourselves in order to rise with Him, that He may be the joy of your heart, the end and soul of your actions, and your glory in heaven. This will come to pass if, from now on, we humble ourselves as He humbled Himself, if we renounce our own satisfaction to follow Him by carrying our little crosses, and if we give our lives willingly, as He gave His, for our neighbor whom He loves so much and whom He wants us to love as ourselves.

I have the utmost confidence in your prayers.

1203. - BALTHAZAR GRANGIER, BISHOP OF TREGUIER,
TO SAINT VINCENT

I want to thank you for the faithful ministry of your four priests during my mission here. Their ability, zeal, and assiduity in preaching and hearing confessions were so great that the results have been very successful. I can say that all the inhabitants of this place, of every age, sex, and rank, have been converted, and I have good reason to praise God for


1Balthazar Grangier de Liverdii.
having given me, through your instrumentality, such good workers. M. . . is gifted with a moral vigor in the pulpit that is irresistible. I have already booked him for the mission in . . . next year.

1204. - TO A BISHOP

[Between 1646 and 1652]

Excellency,

Since a member of a religious Order in this city has written a thesis in which he has put forward a proposition that savors of Jansenism and has been condemned by the Sorbonne, the Chancellor has banned the meeting and discussions that were supposed to be held on this subject. The Superior raised some objections about this, so he sent for him and told him that, if he acted contrary to this, he knew how to recall him and all his men to their duty. He ordered him to go and see the Nuncio, who severely reprimanded him for not preventing this thesis from appearing, and he threatened to have him chastised, along with all his men who were promoting this doctrine, and to write to the Pope and the General about it. This Superior and his whole Community then punished this religious themselves, declaring him incapable of holding any position of authority in the Order and deprived of active and passive voice. Then, they expelled him from their house. This leads us to hope that, henceforth, if matters are controlled in this way to prevent such ventures, this pernicious doctrine could finally be dispelled.


1Saint Vincent speaks here of Jansenism in a very decisive and dogmatic manner—unusual for him before 1646. On the other hand, the letter would seem to date from the time he was a member of the Council of Conscience (1643-1652).

2Pierre Séguier.
A year or so ago, I had the honor of writing to you about the election of . . . as Abbot of . . . so that you might take the trouble of coming to Paris to inform the Queen of the qualifications of the person and the needs of the abbey. However, because of some inconvenience which prevented you from coming, you were good enough to point out to me in a letter the just reasons for preventing this election from taking place. The matter has dragged on since that time, because of the opposition of two monks among the electors, called to the election a day later than it took place. This opposition has just been dismissed unexpectedly by the Parlement, to the satisfaction of the person elected. This has put him in even hotter pursuit of his confirmation, and he is pressing hard to have his letters patent sent.

Because he has the support of many powerful persons, there is reason to fear that he may succeed. That is why your presence here is greatly to be desired, so you can say a few words to the Queen about the matter and add some weight to the reasons for preventing this wrong. I know that Her Majesty, who has great respect for you, will approve of this. The Keeper of the Seals thought it a good idea for me to entreat you, as I humbly do now, to come as soon as possible, for the love of God. I trust you will do so, knowing how much you have His interests at heart. Perhaps it is on this occasion, as you have done me the honor of writing me, that the reform of that house and of those affiliated with it depend, and that Our Lord wills that the merit of such a desirable outcome be imputed to you, who are one of the Prelates in the kingdom with the greatest zeal for the glory of His Church.


1The period during which Saint Vincent was a member of the Council of Conscience.
INDEX

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABEILLY, Louis: 866</td>
<td>BAJOUX, Emerand: 842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADNIRAIULT, Claude: 1167</td>
<td>BALIANO, Pietro Paulo: 1045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIGUILLON, Marie de Vignerod, Duchesse d': 829</td>
<td>BANCE, Jean: 1022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALAIN, Jean: 842</td>
<td>BARBIER, Louis: 1092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALBERGATI-LUDEVISI, Niccolò: 862</td>
<td>BARILLON, Antoine (MORANGIS): 852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALMERAS, René [the Elder]: 843</td>
<td>BARREAU, Jean: 829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALMERAS, René [the Younger]: 832</td>
<td>BARTET, Isaac: 992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANGIBOUST, Barbe: 836</td>
<td>BARRY, Edmund: 877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANNEPONT, M. d': 937</td>
<td>BAYLENS, Jean-Henri-Gabriel de: 992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARNAULD, Antoine: 1043</td>
<td>BEAUMONT, Pierre de: 854a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTHUR, Richard: 876</td>
<td>BEAUMONT-CARRA, Anne-Catherine de: 949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AULMENT, Charles: 977</td>
<td>BEAURE (BOREAU), Jean: 1116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUMONT, Antoine de Villequier, Duc d': 883</td>
<td>BECU, Jean: 882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTHIER, de SISGAU, Christophe d': 1008</td>
<td>BERTHE, Thomas: 870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUX COUTEAUX, Lambert: 882</td>
<td>BERTIER, Pierre de: 988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BOURDET, Jean: 832
BOUARD, Marie-Augustine: 1096
BRANDON, Philibert de: 922
BRIENNE, Louise de Béon,
Comtesse de: 910, 1090
BRIN, Gérard: 833
BRISACIER, Laurent de: 1068
BRUGIERE, Sébastien: 974
BRUNET, Jean-Joseph: 1037
BURGLOISE (BUGLOSE),
BUGLIOSE, Guillaume: 843
BUVARD, Marie-Augustine: 1096
BUSSON, Simon: 1125
C
CAIGNET, Antoine: 995
CALLON, Louis: 847
CARCIREUX, François: 1103
CARCIREUX, Paul: 1068
CARE, Claude: 973
CASIMIR, Jan: 992
CAULET, Frédéric-Etienne de: 878
CHAHU, Jeanne-Marguerite: 1114
CHAMBRES des COMPTES: 866
CHAMBRES des ENQUETES: 1092
CHAMPIGNON, Louis: 875
CHANTAL, St. Jean Frances
Précepteur de: 1103
CHARLET, Étienne: 849
CHARTON, Jacques: 851
CHAVIGNY, Léon Bouthillier,
Comte de: 1043
CHEVALIER, Paul (SAINT-AIGNAN):
1039
CHIROYE, Jacques: 907
CHOLIER, Pierre: 1086
CHRETIEI, Jean: 829
CODOING, Bernard: 829
COGEE [COGLEY], Marc: 879
CONDE, Charlotte-Marguerite
de Montmorency, Princesse de: 1010
CONDE, Louis II de Bourbon,
Prince de: 1092
CONSTANTIN, François: 1028
COQUERET, Jean: 993
CORNAIRE, Guillaume: 1074
CORNEL, Nicolas: 993
COSPEAN, Philippe: 949
COUNCIL OF CONSCIENCE: 866
COUR des MONNAIES: 1160
CRUOLY [CROWLEY], Donat: 1021
CUISSOT, Gilbert: 842
CUISSOT, Jean: 842
D
DAUTEUIL, Marthe: 889
DAVID, Toussaint: 1088
DEHORGY, Jean: 829
DE LA PLACE, Jean-Baptiste: 1046a
DELETRA, Guillaume: 843
DELESPINEY, Gabriel: 1110
DELVILLE, Guillaume: 866a
DES JONCHERES, M.: 831
DES NOYELLES, Philippe: 832
DUFFE, Jean: 1083
DIMISSORIAL LETTERS: 1198
DOUTRELE, Michel: 1068
DROUARD, Bertrand: 894
DROUWO, Sébastien: 840
DUBUC, Louis: 879
DU CHASTEL, Pierre: 1014
DU CHESNE, Pierre: 882
DUCHEINE, René: 974
DU Coudray, François: 843, 870
DUCOURNAU, Bertrand: 831
DUFOUR, Claude: 832
DUMESNIL, Charles: 1018
DUFRESNE, Denis: 1039
DUIQUIN [DUQUAIN], Bertrand: 877
DUMESNIL, Jacques: 1093
DUNOTS, Humbert: 829
DUPONT, Louis: 985
DURAZZO, Stefano: 829
DUVAL, André: 993
DWYER, Edmund: 876
E
ENNERY, Jean [McEnery, John]: 1083
ESCART, Pierre: 1088
F
FARGIS, Charles d'Angennes de: 1083
FARMERS GENERAL: 842
FERET, Hippolyte: 866
FERRIER, M.: 1026
FLAOCOURT, Étienne de: 1020
FONDIARE, Pierre de: 1068
FONTINES, Louise-Eugénie de: 866
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fonteneil, Jean de</td>
<td>857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fouquet, Bishop Françoise</td>
<td>980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fouquet, Madeleine-Augustine</td>
<td>873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fouquet, Marie de Maupeou</td>
<td>873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foure, Jeanne</td>
<td>1088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fournier, François</td>
<td>1124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francillon, François</td>
<td>1057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frenville</td>
<td>965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fronde</td>
<td>1121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallais, Guillaume</td>
<td>839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gautier, Denis</td>
<td>906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gazez, Bernard</td>
<td>1167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genezet, Jean</td>
<td>1091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentil, Mathurin</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gessemaume, Henriette</td>
<td>973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get, Firmin</td>
<td>1004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gicquel, Jean</td>
<td>1157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gigot, Denis</td>
<td>985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilles, Jean-Baptiste</td>
<td>922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gobert, Evrard</td>
<td>907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Godescalc,</td>
<td>1043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gondi, Archbishop Jean-François</td>
<td>860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gondi, Jean-François-Paul de,</td>
<td>832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gondree, Nicolas</td>
<td>1020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goret, Jean-Pascale</td>
<td>829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goulas, Louise (Romilly)</td>
<td>1130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grimal, François</td>
<td>870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grimaldi, Gerolamo</td>
<td>867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guébriant, Jean-Baptiste de Budes, Comte de</td>
<td>848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guébriant, Renée du Bec-Crepin</td>
<td>848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guerin, Julien</td>
<td>834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guerin, Mathurin</td>
<td>1097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurlet, Claude</td>
<td>985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habert, Germain</td>
<td>1025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellot, Elisabeth</td>
<td>841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herve, Charlotte de Ligny de</td>
<td>998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huguet, Benjamin</td>
<td>1083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingoli, Bishop</td>
<td>849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.e.C.M. :</td>
<td>829</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

J
- Jacobins : 1170
- Janissaries : 951
- Jegat, Bertrand : 832

L
- La Coste, Gaspard de Simiane de : 1027
- La Croix, Jeanne de : 1024
- Laisné, Nicolas : 897
- Laisné, Pierre : 897
- Laisné DE LA MARGUIERIE, Elie : 921
- Lambert, Marie : 1018
- Lambert aux Couteaux, 882
- Lamoignon, Madeleine de : 910
- Lamoignon, Marie des Landes de : 910
- Larcher, Antoinette : 973
- La Rochefoucauld, François de : 1187
- Lasnier, Guy (Vaux, Abbé de) : 833
- Lavardin, Philippe de Beaumanoir : 1141
- Le Blanc, Georges [White, George] : 842
- Le Bourgeois, Jacques : 1074
- Le Boysne, Léonard : 1116
- Le Gentil, Claude : 1065
- Le Gras, Louise (de Marillac) : 830
- Le Gras, Michel : 833
- Le Gras, Simon : 868a
- Le Gros, Jean-Baptiste : 1088
- Le Peintre, Jeanne : 837
- Le Rogeux, François : 829
- Le Roy, Marie-Agnès : 873
- Lesage, Jacques : 870
- Lescot, Jacques : 940
- Le Soudier, Jacques : 843
- Le Soudier, Samson : 832
- Le Stocq, Guillaume de : 1029
- Le Vacher, Jean : 996
- Le Vacher, Philippe : 877
- Levasseur, David : 882
- Levasseur, Martin : 1139a
- Le Vazeux, Achille : 1139a
- Lhuillier, Hélène-Angélique : 866
- Lionne, Hugues de : 994
- Livre : 842
- Loret, Julienne : 1007
- Lucas, Antoine : 877
- Lucas, Martin : 842
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAIGNELAY, Marguerite de Gondi, Marquise</td>
<td>1018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAILLARD, Antoine</td>
<td>1022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANCEAU, Simon</td>
<td>1028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARILLAC, St. Louise de</td>
<td>830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARTIN, Elisabeth</td>
<td>937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARTIN, Jean</td>
<td>829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATHURIN FATHERS [Trinitarians]</td>
<td>852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAUPAS DU TOUR, Henri</td>
<td>976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAUPÉOU, Madeleine-Elisabeth</td>
<td>1062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAZARIN, Jules Cardinal</td>
<td>835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MERCY, FATHERS OF [Mercedarians]</td>
<td>852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MICHEL, Guillaume</td>
<td>832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIKPOIX, Armand Dupayré, Marquis</td>
<td>878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOLE, Mathieu</td>
<td>1092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOLINA, Antonio</td>
<td>1064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOLINA, Luis</td>
<td>1043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONTCHAL, Charles</td>
<td>949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONTMAGNY, Charles Haussel</td>
<td>1188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MORANGIS, Antoine (BARILLON)</td>
<td>852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACQUART, Charles</td>
<td>868a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NESMOND, François-Théodore</td>
<td>1092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEUFVILLE DE VILLEROY, Ferdinand</td>
<td>862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEUFVILLE, Nicolas</td>
<td>887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NICOLAS, Brother</td>
<td>829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NODO, Sébastien</td>
<td>829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOUVELLY, Boniface</td>
<td>829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'BRIEN, Dermot</td>
<td>877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLIER, Jean-Jacques</td>
<td>1025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORLEANS, Gaston</td>
<td>1092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORSIGNY</td>
<td>829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARLEMENT</td>
<td>832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARRE, Jean</td>
<td>1102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARTICELLI, Michel, Sieur d'Emery</td>
<td>1186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PATRIARCHIE, Salomon</td>
<td>877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAVILLON, Nicolas</td>
<td>880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PENITENTIARY</td>
<td>851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERDU, Jacques</td>
<td>879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEREYRET, Jacques</td>
<td>993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERRAUD, Huges</td>
<td>870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERRETTE, Sister</td>
<td>835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERRCHEL, François</td>
<td>883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PISTOLE</td>
<td>897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POISSON, Geneviève</td>
<td>918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLLALLON (POULAILLON), Marie de Lumagne</td>
<td>1009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PORTAIL, Antoine</td>
<td>832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRESIDIAL COURT</td>
<td>1101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGNARD, Mathieu</td>
<td>1092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RETZ, Jean-François-Paul, Cardinal de</td>
<td>832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RICHIELIEU, Armand-Jean Duplessis, Duc</td>
<td>1010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RICHARD, François</td>
<td>840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIVET, François</td>
<td>1113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIVET, Jacques</td>
<td>1111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIVET, Louis</td>
<td>906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROBIN, Jacques</td>
<td>1167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROMILLY, Louise de (GOULAS)</td>
<td>1130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROUSSEAU, Marie-Renée</td>
<td>833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROYER, Charlotte</td>
<td>1103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROYER, Nicolas</td>
<td>868a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROYER, Ponce</td>
<td>868a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUMELIN, Michel Thépaut, Sieur</td>
<td>1108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAINT-AIGNAN, Paul Chevalier, Chanoine</td>
<td>1039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAINT-ALBIN, Jeanne</td>
<td>1101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAINT-CHARLES</td>
<td>829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAINT-CYRAN, Jean Duverger de Hauranne,</td>
<td>1043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAINT-MEEN, Louise de Crussol, Marquise</td>
<td>1063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANCY, Achille de Harlay</td>
<td>839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOMBERG, Anne de la Guiche, Duchesse</td>
<td>1156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCOLIEGE, Anne</td>
<td>836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEGUENOT, Claude</td>
<td>1025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEGUIER, Madeleine Fabri</td>
<td>969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEGUIER, Pierre</td>
<td>1043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENAUX, Nicolas</td>
<td>879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENECEY, Marie-Catherine de la Rochefoucauld, Baronne de</td>
<td>1026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERRE, Louis</td>
<td>967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SETIER</td>
<td>1086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKYDDIE, John</td>
<td>876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOLMINIAC, Alain de</td>
<td>843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPINOLO, Jean-Baptiste</td>
<td>1071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAGGOT, Philippe</td>
<td>1022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VALENCAY, Léonor d'Etampes de</td>
<td>1021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VALOIS, Patrice [WALSH, Patrick]</td>
<td>958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAUX, Abbé de (LASNIER)</td>
<td>833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VENTADOUR, Marie de la Guiche de Saint-Gérand, Duchesse de</td>
<td>1155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERONNE, Alexandre</td>
<td>918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERTRAMON, Marie Boucher d'Orsay, Dame de</td>
<td>1156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICTORIUS, Antoine de (AUMONT)</td>
<td>883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VILLEROY, Ferdinand de Neufville</td>
<td>862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIOLE, Madeleine</td>
<td>915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WALSH, Patrick [VALOIS, Patrice]</td>
<td>958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WALSH, Thomas</td>
<td>1060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WATELLED, Pierre</td>
<td>995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WATER, Jacques</td>
<td>870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITE, George LE BLANC, Georges</td>
<td>842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VACHEROT, M.</td>
<td>833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZELAZEWSKI, Casimir</td>
<td>887</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>