SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

CORRESPONDENCE
CONFERENCES, DOCUMENTS

CORRESPONDENCE

VOLUME IV (April 1650 - July 1653)

NEWLY TRANSLATED, EDITED, AND ANNOTATED
FROM THE 1921 EDITION
OF
PIERRE COSTÉ, C.M.
With deepest affection and gratitude
we dedicate this volume
to
REVEREND RAYMOND CHALUMEAU, C.M.
former Archivist of the Congregation of the Mission
SCHOLAR — MENTOR — FRIEND
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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Although the project has undergone many delays, each has contributed in some way to the overall quality of the work. The appearance, in 1983, of the revised edition of Saint Louise de Marillac’s writings\textsuperscript{3} has permitted us to check her letters to Saint Vincent and her spiritual writings for any corrections which may have come to light. We have also adjusted all the footnote references to the appropriate indication as given in the new edition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTE TO THE READER

The editors felt that it was not necessary to reproduce in each volume the lengthy “Introduction to the French Edition” and the entire “Introduction to the English Edition,” which appear at the beginning of Volume I. They would like to remind the reader, however, that these introductions contain valuable information regarding the background and major sources of the letters and facilitate an informed reading of the correspondence.

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Special thanks should be given to Vincentian Fathers Raymond Chalumeau, former Archivist of the Congregation of the Mission; Thomas Davitt, Ignatius M. Melito, and John E. Rybolt for their dedication in reading the manuscript of this volume and of the two preceding ones. Their expertise in history, theology, Sacred Scripture, and/or English, and their knowledge of Vincentian history and spirituality have allowed us to correct errors, clarify the text, and make stylistic changes which render it more readable. By the invaluable contribution each has made to this translation of Saint Vincent’s correspondence, they have merited the gratitude, not only of the editorial staff, but of all who will be enriched by reflective reading of the Saint’s own words.
Monsieur

Je vous remercie très humblement de ce que vous avez eu l'aimable de me faire pour le bien de la congrégation de Bayonne. Je vous engage de me dire dans lequel vous pourrez me recevoir pour une conversation.
de Religieuses de la juridiction des Réguilens: Il
semble qu'il est fort rencant à Votre désir—
B conforme à lais que je vous ay mouye démir—
de St-Paul. C'quant pourray faire sey est à
Rome pour votre serviez et le bien de la maison—
qui vous reclame, teferay aue grande dévotion
comm. étant en l'amour de Notre Seigneur—

Monsignore

Vos reverkund estoy obeig sevem

VNCERI DEPAUL

per moy des-est mission.

lettre 1361 — Letter written by Brother Ducournau, secretary, and signed by Saint Vincent.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received a letter from you a few days ago; I could not answer you sooner because of my business affairs, and I do not know if my inefficiency will last forever in your regard. I beg God not to allow this for I am very anxious to be of service to you, and I await the opportunity to do so in a matter proportionate to your merit and to my affection.

God knows what a consolation it would be for the Prior and me to see you here again. Since, however, this is not possible, without inconvenience to you and prejudice to the parish His Divine Goodness has entrusted to you, I think you should not come here about the matter you proposed to me. It will suffice for you to write to one of your friends who understands better than we what has to be done to have you named an abbey graduate, and get him to do


1Pastor of Saint-Jacques parish in Neufchâtel-en-Bray, where Saint Vincent had personally established the Confraternity of Charity on November 12, 1634. This was also the birthplace of Adrien Le Bon, Prior of Saint-Lazare, who is referred to in this letter. (Cf. V. E. Veuclin, Saint Vincent de Paul en Normandie [Betreux: Veuclin, 1890].)

2Adrien Le Bon, former Prior of Saint-Lazare.

3Could this refer to the distinction between diocesan school and monastic school? The abbey referred to is Saint-Ouen (cf. vol. VI, no. 2256, where Saint Vincent requests evidence that M. Horcholle is a graduate). Situated in Rebais, near Maus, Saint-Ouen was a royal abbey and
it. In the event that you do not know anyone in Paris who can take care of this little piece of business, we will try to have it done, if you send us the documents and instructions needed to carry it through. I must insist that I, personally, have no experience in such matters but am most willing to give expression to you of the grace God has granted me of making me, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
I.s.C.M. 4

At the bottom of the first page: Monsieur Horcholle

1207. - TO JACQUES CHIROYE, 1 SUPERIOR, IN LUÇON

April 3, 1650

When I wrote to you, saying that the Bishop of Luçon was to be obeyed, I meant in those things that pertained to his service or his good pleasure. Now, he cannot receive either of the above from all your harassments, undertakings and expenses, which you were incapable of bearing on your own. If I have asked you not to do anything without orders from us, it is so that you will not incur expenses greater than you can meet. I ask you once again to abide by that.

an important intellectual center of the Middle Ages; it was suppressed at the time of the French Revolution.

4Saint Vincent subscribed the initials i.p.d.i.M. (indigne prêtre de la Mission) [unworthy priest of the Mission] to his signature. It has been traditional in the Congregation of the Mission to append to one's name the Latin of this phrase, indigfus sacerdos Congregationis Missionis, or the initials, i.s.C.M. The editors have adopted this traditional practice, substituting the Latin initials for the French used by Saint Vincent.


1Jacques Chiroye was born in Auppegard (Seine-Maritime) on March 14, 1614 and entered the Congregation of the Mission on June 25, 1638. He served as Superior in Luçon (1640-50, 1654-60, 1662-66), and Crécy (1660-62). He took his vows on March 9, 1660 and died on May 3, 1680.
The regularity and good order of the house should be our primary aim, to which you owe particularly your care and example, and I fear that these domestic difficulties may ruin them. In this we shall find peace, union, progress in virtue, and the grace to perform our functions well. We must, then, apply ourselves to this in preference to everything else, without neglecting other things. This is the maxim we should prize.

You ask to get rid of either the Brother or the servant. All the same, it must be borne in mind that one is our brother and that the servant does not always have to be in the house. That is why I ask you to give preference to the child of the house over the hired hand: keep the Brother to help you and dismiss Jean. I hope that Vincent will gradually give you satisfaction.

I am very worried about M...'s illness. Please tell him his ailment concerns me deeply and that I shall often ask God to restore him to health or give him the strength to make good use of his illness. I am not giving you any advice about him because I feel you will spare nothing for his relief. The laborers of the Gospel are treasures who deserve to be well taken care of.

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Vincent Lescot, born in Argenteuil (Val-d'Oise), entered the Congregation of the Mission as a coadjutor Brother on June 28, 1644, at eighteen years of age, and took his vows on September 29, 1646.
Most Honored Father,

Yesterday I had the honor of seeing Madame de Lamoignon. Her

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1Saint Louise de Marillac was born in Paris on August 12, 1591. Her father was Louis de Marillac, brother of the pious Michel de Marillac, Keeper of the Seals (1616-30), and of Maréchal Louis de Marillac, renowned for his misfortunes and tragic death. She married Antoine Le Gras, secretary of Queen Marie de Médicis, on February 5, 1613, and they had one son, Michel. Antoine Le Gras died on December 21, 1625. The devout widow had implicit confidence in her spiritual director, Vincent de Paul, who employed her in his charitable works, eventually making her his collaborator in the creation and organization of the Confraternities of Charity. The life of Louise de Marillac, whom the Church beatified on May 9, 1920, had been written by Gobillon (1676), the Comtesse de Richemont (1883), the Comte de Lambel (n.d.), Monsignor Baunard (1898), and Emmanuel de Broglie (1911). Her letters and other writings were copied and published in part in the work entitled: Louise de Marillac, veuve de M. Le Gras. Sa vie, ses vertus, son esprit (4 vols., Bruges, 1886). Saint Louise was canonized on March 11, 1934, and on February 10, 1960, was named the patroness of all who devote themselves to Christian social work. Therefore, in this English edition of the letters of Saint Vincent, “Saint” has been added to her name in titles of letters and in the footnotes. To the above bibliography should be added some of her more recent biographers: Lady Alice Lovat, Life of the Venerable Louise de Marillac (Mademoiselle Le Gras) (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1917); Monsignor Jean Calvet, Louise de Marillac, a Portrait, translated by G. F. Pullen (1959); Joseph I. Dirvin, Louise de Marillac (1970); the compilation by Sister Anne Regnault, D.C., editor: Louise de Marillac, ses écrits (1961), of which the section containing the letters was translated by Sister Helen Marie Law, D.C.: Letters of St. Louise de Marillac (1972); and the revised edition of this latter work entitled: Sainte Louise de Marillac. Écrits spirituels (Tours: Marié 1983), ed. Sister Elisabeth Charpy, D.C.; and translated by Sister Louise Sullivan, D.C., Spiritual Writings of Louise de Marillac, Correspondence and Thoughts (Brooklyn: New City Press, 1991). Hereafter this work will be cited as Spiritual Writings followed by the appropriate letter and number, e.g., A2 or L. 350. This reference applies to both the French and English editions.

2Date added on the back of the original by Brother Ducournau.

3Madame de Lamoignon, born Marie des Landes on September 28, 1576, married Chrétien de Lamoignon, President Judge of the Parlement of Paris, on June 10, 1597 and died on December 31, 1651. Their son, Guillaume de Lamoignon, became Chief Justice of the same Parlement; their daughter, Madeleine de Lamoignon, was well known for her piety and dedication to the unfortunate. Saint Francis de Sales considered Madame de Lamoignon one of the holiest women of her time. She joined the Ladies of Charity, probably after her husband’s death in 1636, and was elected President in about 1643, on the retirement of Madame de Souillac. She held this post until her death on December 30, 1651. Along with Madame Goussault and the Duchesse d’Aiguillon, she is ranked among Saint Vincent’s best supporters. When the Saint used to enter her house, people said that “the father of the poor is going to visit
daughter asked me what the Ladies had done at Bicêtre. When she learned that they had decided to put the boys in one wing to free themselves of arranging the necessary separation, she told me that this was not the decision your charity had them make and that she saw clearly all the problems, for the boys as well as the nurses, in leaving the girls there.

Although we try to get good women as nurses, it still means that most of them are obliged to leave not so much because of the necessities of the times but because of bad conduct. Furthermore, these women of every sort, taken in from all quarters, use bad language and are very free.

That good lady, the daughter, told me you had to be firm in seeing that the proposal your charity so strongly supported is put into action. She also said you should ask to make a try of it for this Jubilee year and not put it off until some other time. I add that these delays give rise to discussion among certain persons, and she says that, if you fail this time, there will be no way of reopening the question. However, I also think, Most Honored Father, that you should hold your own about taking one or two of your houses at the most to save rent. Otherwise, if they make the choice I think they will, someone else will be given complete charge of them permanently, and, in that case, their plans will be clearly revealed.

The thought occurred to me that they may think we are incapable of abandoning the service of the children and may be committed to it because of the one thousand livres we have from public funds. You know how we

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their mother. "She always assisted at Divine Office. One day, when she fainted, it was discovered that she was wearing a hair shirt and a belt with iron spikes that caused great pain. The poor of her parish called her "Mother Provider." On her death they would not allow her body to be taken to the Franciscan Church of Saint-Denis, where her husband was buried, but wanted her to remain near them. (Cf. Bibl. Nat. ff. 32.785.)

Madeleine de Lamoignon, daughter of Madame de Lamoignon, was born in Paris on September 14, 1608. Her mother initiated her from childhood in the traditions of the Confraternity of Charity, and they were both very zealous in their dedication to the poor. They often went to visit them in their homes, dressed their wounds, cleaned their rooms, made their beds, and gave them clothing, linen, food, and money. Madeleine de Lamoignon supported and took an active part in all the works founded by Saint Vincent, who used to say that she forged ahead so fast with her charitable works that nobody could keep up with her. She died on April 14, 1687; her life has been written by Father d'Orléans (Vie de Mademoiselle de Lamoignon, Bibl. Nat., Ms. fr. 23895) and by Mademoiselle Louise Masson (Madeleine de Lamoignon [Lyons, 1846]). Abbé Ouy-Toussaint-Julien Carron gave her a place in Vies des dames françaises qui ont été les plus célèbres dans le XVIIe siècle par leur piété et leur dévouement pour les pauvres (2nd ed., Louvain: Varlinhout et Vandenzande, 1826).

The Château de Bicêtre was a huge building constructed by Louis XIII on the site of a former royal castle to offer an asylum to disabled officers and soldiers. After the monarch's death, the plan was abandoned and the building remained vacant.
have been wronged in that, since it was the intention of the donors that we should have half of it, purely and simply, for the support of the Company and not to bind us to the service of the little children, no more than we are bound to the service of other poor persons and the galley slaves. If they had any intention of contesting this with us, it would be better done now than at some other time.

Yesterday I had the opportunity of going to see the Procurator General, who did me the honor of receiving me most courteously. He asked me directly if I was there about some matter he was handling. I told him it was to refresh his memory about it. He asked me if we claimed to be regular or secular. I explained to him that we claim to be only the latter. He told me that this was unprecedented. I cited the case of Madame de Ville-neuve's 7 Sisters and gave evidence to him that they went everywhere.

He indicated to me that he did not disapprove of our plan and said many good things about the Company but that something of such importance merited a great deal of reflection. I expressed to him my joy that he felt the way he did. I asked that, if the Company was not deserving or should not be continued, he should do away with it entirely but, if it was a good thing, we were entreating him to establish it on a solid basis. I said that for at least twelve to fifteen years now this thought had caused us to make a try of it, and during that time, by the grace of God, no untoward events had occurred. "Let me think about it," he said. "I do not mean for a few months but for a few weeks."

He then took the trouble to escort us to our carriage because it was in his courtyard, and manifested great good will toward us. He asked us to greet you most humbly for him, telling us he would be a usurer if he accepted our most humble thanks for the honor he does to all our Sisters when they venture to approach him in their needs for the poor galley slaves or for the little children.

The Marquise de Maignelay 8 gave me only a verbal reply yesterday

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6 Blaise Mélia, Attorney General (1641-50).
7 Madame de Villeneuve, widow of Claude-Marcel Villeneuve, was the sister of Mother Marie Hélène-Angélique Huillier of the Visitation, and a friend of Mademoiselle Le Gros and Madame de Lamoignon. In 1641 she founded the Congregation of the Daughters of the Cross. She died January 13, 1650, at the age of fifty-three. (Cf. Father de Salinis, Madame de Villeneuve (Paris: Beauchesne, 1918) and Marzin, L. P. Marie L’Huillier de Villeneuve, fondatrice des Filles de la Croix (Paris: Lemoine Robert, 1955.)
8 Saint Vincent had known Claude-Marguerite de Gondi for a long time. She was the sister of Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi and widow of Florimond d’Habuis, Marquis de Maignelay, whom she married on January 7, 1588. Her husband was murdered three years after their
and sent our Sister to see the Pastor of Saint-Roch. He and the said Lady both assured her that there was no fault to be found in our Sisters who were sent away. It was simply a question of the fact that one of the girls who was serving there did not seem suited to remain in the Company so the Pastor sent the other one away to look after her. Now she is married and those who have replaced her continue to follow her example.

The above-mentioned Lady is asking for two Sisters for tomorrow. This poses two difficulties: first, we have to propose to you the ones we are to send and let you get to know them, and they have to make a retreat beforehand. The other difficulty is that that girl, who remained and is now married, is living in the house where our Sisters are supposed to stay, and such proximity is dangerous for us.

I most humbly entreat you to take the trouble to let me know what I should do in these circumstances so as not to displease the Marquise or do any wrong to ourselves.

Give me your holy blessing for all our needs and do me the honor of believing, Most Honored Father, that I am your most humble and very grateful daughter and servant.

L. de Marillac

Friday

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

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marriage; her son died in the prime of his manhood; her daughter's husband, the eldest son of the Duc d'Épernon, Comte de Candale, treated his wife brutally and pitilessly. The Marquise de Maignelay was prevented by her family and Pope Paul V from entering religious life so she remained in the world and dedicated her life to the service of the poor. King Henry IV used to call her "the wise marquise." Queen Marie de Médicis would sometimes entrust to her the distribution of her alms; every day a great number of beggars stationed themselves at the door of her house on rue Saint-Honoré. She faithfully visited hospitals, prisons, churches, and convents. In addition, she collaborated in the establishment of the Madeleine convent, undertook to maintain sixteen religious women, and left a legacy sufficient to continue this charitable work after her death. Capuchin nuns, Carmelites, Daughters of Providence, Oratorians, and her parish church were also the recipients of her generosity. She gave Saint Vincent her time, her activity, and her money, and assisted him in all his works, especially with the retreats for ordinands. The Marquise de Maignelay died on August 26, 1650 and was buried in the convent of the Capuchin nuns, clothed in their habit. (Cf. P. Marie de Bauduex, La Vie admirable de très Haute Dame Charlotte-Marguerite de Gondy, Marquise de Maignelay [Paris, Vie N. Buon, 1666].)

Jean Roux, born in Pithiviers, was Pastor of Saint-Roch parish from June 30, 1633 to October 13, 1659, the day of his death.
Please make your excuses to M. de Maisonneuve about the exchange he is requesting of the Tuet mill and farm for an income of similar value. That property will perhaps be worth double the value thirty years from now, whereas the income can never increase, and this same income can be lost, but not an estate.

I already wrote you that Saint-Cassien must be left as it is, and I did not think it necessary to add that, when the late Cardinal Richelieu established the foundation for your house, he counted

Letter 1289. - Reg. 2, p. 179.

1Bernard Codoing, who holds an important place among the early companions of Saint Vincent, was born in Agen on August 11, 1610, was ordained a priest in December 1635, and entered the Congregation of the Mission on February 10, 1636. He was the first Superior of the Annecy Seminary (1640-42) and then Superior of the house in Rome (1642-44). He was next put in charge of Saint-Charles Seminary (1645-46), situated on the grounds of Saint-Lazare. From there he went to Saint-Méen under particularly difficult circumstances (1646-48), La Rose (1649), Richelieu (1649), and Périgueux (1650), always as Superior. He was very successful in his missions in France and Italy, and his sermons were so appealing that at one point Saint Vincent considered publishing them but in 1651, shortly after coming to Périgueux, he left the Congregation of the Mission.

Codoing was Pastor of Saint-Hilaire in Agen on July 24, 1654; the last date with his signature on the baptismal register there is January 2, 1678. He also acted as Vicar-General of the Bishop of Gap (cf. Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission, vol. 114-15 [1949-50]). Codoing would have rendered greater service to the Saint had he been less attached to his own ideas and learned to control his tendency to hastiness. We might be tempted to say "Happy faults!" since they merited for us some of the most beautiful letters in Saint Vincent's correspondence.

2April 10.

3Among the donations the Duchesse d'Aiguillon made to the Congregation of the Mission by the contract of September 2, 1643 were enumerated "the estates, inheritances, and domains listed below, dependent on the barony, estates, and manor of Saint-Cassien, situated in the region of Loudunois, which the above-mentioned deceased Cardinal [Armand-Jean du Plessis, Cardinal de Richelieu, who died on December 4, 1642] had acquired from Jacques de Beauvat, chevalier, Seigneur du Rivau, by a contract dated March 17, 1642... They included the large and small farms of the aforementioned locality, surrounding areas and dependencies, plus the tithe of Ronove, Loudun, and Saint-Cassien, with the provostship and the baker's oven for the sustenance of the officers occupied with law affairs; half of the Monaceau mill, the Saint-Cassien mill, the woods, meadows, and vineyards. The above-mentioned Lady reserves for herself the revenues of all kinds, the right of fief ownership, with the tower and a small area of the courtyard as marked off and set aside, with a little garden and the place where law complaints are heard, together with the complex of offices." (Arch. Nat., MM.534.)
heavily on the seigniory. He sent a man to me expressly from Amiens, where he was staying, to tell me he wanted it kept in reserve because the more castles with fiefs and incomes that are dependent on a duchy, the more respectable it is. Madame has no intention of letting that one go, no matter what profit it might bring her, and even less of consenting to the amortization of the income your land brings her.

--- Marie de Vignerod de Pontcourslcy was born in 1604, in the Château de Glenay near Bresseure, of René de Vignerod and Françoise de Richelieu, eldest sister of the Cardinal. While still very young, she married, in the chamber of Anne of Austria, the nephew of the Duc de Lorraine, Antoine de Beauvoir de Grimoard du Roure, chevalier, Seigneur de Combalet, whom she had never seen and did not love. During the two years this union lasted, the couple lived together only six months. The Marquis de Combalet, kept from his home by the necessities of war, died in battle at the siege of Montpellier on September 3, 1622. A widow at the age of eighteen, the Marquise left the court and withdrew to the Carmelite convent in Paris. She was admitted to the novitiate and, after a year of enclosure, received the religious habit from the hands of Father de Bérulle and took her first vows.

Richelieu, who loved his niece dearly, did his utmost to bring her back to court. At his request, the Pope forbade her to enter the cloister, Marie de Médicis chose her as lady of the bedchamber on January 1, 1625, and the King elevated her estate of Aiguillon to a duchy-peerage on January 1, 1638.

The Cardinal gave her a small mansion on rue de Vaugirard, one of the dependencies of the Petit Luxembourg Palace where he lived. The Duchess made noble use of her immense wealth and great influence. She supported and protected men of letters and took charge of all works of charity. She established the Priests of the Mission at Notre-Dame de la Rose and in Marseilles, entrusting them in the last-named place with the direction of a hospital she had built for sick galley slaves. The Richelieu and Rome houses subsisted on her generosity. It was she who had the consuls of Algiers and Tunis given to the Congregation of the Mission. She contributed to the foundation of the General Hospital and of the Society of the Foreign Missions, took under her protection the Daughters of the Cross and the Daughters of Providence, and was a great benefactress of Carmel. She was President of the Confraternity of Charity established at Saint-Sulpice, and replaced Madame de Lamoignon as President of the Ladies of Charity of the Hôtel-Dieu. The Duchesse d'Aiguillon must be placed, along with Saint Louise de Marillac, Madame de Gondi, and Madame Gouassault, in the first rank of Saint Vincent's collaborators. No one perhaps contributed more to him; few were as attached to him. She watched over his health with maternal solicitude; the carriage and horses the Saint used in his old age came from her stables. Saint Vincent's death grieved her deeply; she had a silver-gilt reliquary made in the shape of a heart, surmounted by a flame, to enclose his heart. The Duchess died on April 17, 1675 at the age of seventy-one and was buried in the Carmelite habit. Bishops Bressac and Flechier preached her funeral oration. (Cf. Comte de Bomeau-Avenant, La duchesse d'Aiguillon [2nd ed., Paris: Didier, 1882].) Le Long mentions, in Bibliothèque historique de la France (Fontette ed., 5 vols., Paris: Héritissant, 1768-78), vol. III, no. 30.854, a manuscript collection of her letters, which has since been lost. Any further mention in the text of "the Duchess" refers to the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, unless a footnote indicates otherwise.
I ask you, Monsieur, not to give another thought to either. If you were its master, you would always have some lawsuits, and instead of thinking that you would avoid them, you would be entangled even more in them.

I also repeat to you my request to make very few changes, and what you do change, never to do without the advice and consent of the chief officers, M. du Rivau, M. de Grandpré, and the senechal. They have charge of all temporal matters. If you interfere in that, you are interfering with their duties and with the apple of their eyes.

So, since Madame has informed the first-named that she wants no changes made in the chaplaincy of Champigny, stay there and tell that good lord that you do not want to do anything about that nor about anything else, except what he thinks fit. Show him great deference and respect. Do the same for the others proportionally to their position because the authority of the master resides in them, or at least it sees only through their eyes and works only through their hands. Even kings do not want their edicts enforced until they have been verified by their sovereign courts, so as not to be taken unawares.

If you say that I approved your proposal and that Madame gave her consent to it, that is true, we did. However, both she and I presumed that you and the gentlemen there had agreed on the matter, but you are far from having done that. You can see that they are opposed to it. So Madame is right to withdraw her consent and you are wrong to hope she will agree later to the proposed change; she will never do so against M. du Rivau’s wishes. Even should she want to do so, we must not desire this so as not to run the risk of losing her benevolence. If, however, you can persuade those gentlemen that the nature of the foundation will not change, and

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Jacques de Beauvai, chevalier, Seigneur du Rivau, nephew of Cardinal Richelieu.
Antoine-François de Joyeuse, Comte de Grandpré.
Pierre de la Barre, Councillor of the King, senechal, and ordinary judge for civil and criminal affairs under Richelieu.
they in fact consent to it, in nomine Domini; Madame will be pleased and I shall bless God; otherwise, do not give it a thought.

Furthermore, Monsieur, it is advisable that the Company not become involved in any way in getting persons appointed to positions of authority nor in making recommendations for or against them, regardless of the apparent good you see in so doing. Inconveniences can arise from this because it excites jealousy and aversion in people's minds, and we would pass for persons of intrigue and self-interest. In the end, we would be a burden to those to whom we owe obedience and respect, like children with regard to their mothers and fathers. In the name of God, do not write any more about any kind of temporal matters, when they are none of your business; that is the concern of the officers and not ours.

It did you no good to ask for the vacant land for the building, since this has been refused. If you can easily steer clear of paying for the repairs the building needs, go ahead because this payment might be considerable, but if it cannot be done quietly and without any lawsuit, my opinion is that you should advance funds for this year only, even if this has to be repeated, should the occasion arise.

1210. - TO BENoit BÈCU,¹ IN RICHELIEU

April 10, 1650

I am glad you have been deputed to go to M. du Rivau, but I would have been more so had people not given cause for this deputation, as has happened, stirring up matters entrusted to his authority, without informing him. The rules of prudence and justice demand that we take the precaution of discussing matters of any

¹Benoit Bécu, born in Breches (Somme) on March 21, 1602, was ordained a priest in 1627 and entered the Congregation of the Mission on May 14, 1637. In 1639, he went to make the foundation of La Rose, returning a few months later to Richelieu, where he took his vows in 1646.
importance with those who have some opinion on them or who may oppose the good we are pursuing. In fact, we should desist when that is their wish; otherwise, we shall be thwarted and their indignation will fall upon us. All officials are jealous of their authority, and only with great difficulty do they recover from wounds in such a tender spot, once they think they have been attacked.

May Our Lord, who received on this day² in Jerusalem a sample of the honor due to His royalty, grant that we may be able to accord it in full to those who represent for us His dominion and justice, by always asking their advice and approval in temporal matters! Let us consider that we are not doing the Will of God if we do not submit our will to them in this respect. I hope your house will act this way from now on and will not pursue the proposed change in the chaplaincy of Champigny, if M. du Rivau and all the leading inhabitants are not in agreement. This is my request to you personally.

1211. - TO LOUIS THIBAULT,¹ SUPERIOR, IN SAINT-MÉEN

April 12, 1650

I have received two letters from your father, from which I learned two things: first, that God has taken your younger sister to

²Palm Sunday.


¹Louis Thibault, born in Ferrières-Gétines (Loire) on March 29, 1618, was received at Saint-Lazare on August 21, 1637, and was ordained a priest in April 1642. From his post as Superior of the Saintes house, he was recalled to Paris in 1646, where he took his vows and dedicated himself zealously and successfully to the missions. From 1648 to his death in February 1655, he was Superior of the Saint-Méen house. During his missions he would seek out pious persons wishing to detach themselves from the world and would assist them in the choice of a religious Community. The Company of the Daughters of Charity greatly benefited from his zeal. (Cf. Notices sur les prêtres, clercs et frères défunts de la Congrégation de la Mission, [1st series, 5 vol., Paris: Dumoulin, 1881-1911], vol. III, pp. 124-28.) When his sister died, his parents decided to dedicate themselves to God's service—the father with the Priests of the Mission; the mother with the Daughters of Charity. It is uncertain whether they actually did so.
Himself. This would be a source of sorrow to you if you had not learned to conform yourself to His good pleasure and felt assured of the eternal happiness of that dear innocent child. Second, I learned that your father and mother are still persevering in the desire they once had of withdrawing from the world to unite themselves more closely to their sovereign Creator.

They are asking my advice on this and also on the disposal of their property. As soon as the first letter was delivered to me, I wrote back that, given their age, and their goodness by the grace of God, and the fact that Madame Thibault is not well, they would do well to remain in their present state. I also asked them to dispense me from giving them any advice about their property.

The second letter I received indicates that they are not satisfied with this reply and want to know God’s Will more clearly on both points, so they are pressing me to give my opinion on the matter in greater detail. This has obliged me to reflect more deeply on it than I had previously done.

I am now prepared to tell them that perhaps God wishes to grant them the consolation they have so long desired, now that they have no earthly attachments, since all their children are in heaven except you, Monsieur, who are still on the way, working successfully to draw others there. These good people are so pleased with this that they say they can receive no greater consolation in this life.

I think I should add that perhaps Divine Providence wills that their joy may be full by bringing them close to you and your vocation (Who knows?) by calling your father to Saint-Lazare and your mother to Mademoiselle Le Gras’ house. There they will be free of the world and in a position to serve Our Lord in a special way, proportionate to their strength.

As for their possessions, if, as their lawyer advises, they plan to give a large part of them to the Church or to the Confraternity of Charity, either they are thinking that you are a religious and, as such, cannot inherit from them, or they fear putting temptation in your way by leaving you some property. This has happened with certain members of the Company: while they possessed nothing
they were good Missionaries, but, as soon as a few temporal possessions were given them, they abandoned God's work.

I think we should tell them, first of all, that there is no danger of that in your case, Monsieur, both because of the grace within them that draws down on you the spirit of strength and perseverance, and also because of the grace God has placed in you yourself and in your dear vocation, through which His Divine Goodness has been pleased to save a large number of souls.

Second, the vow of poverty we take is only a simple vow and does not prevent those who take it from inheriting from their parents. In fact, one of our Rules states that members of the Company who have a simple benefice or other possessions will leave the use of them to the Company, but can give the property to anyone they wish, by gift or by testament, to be used after their death. In the case of those who leave us, they can take it back for themselves.

Since, according to several decrees of the Parlement, they can give nothing to the body of which they are members, neither could you dispose of any part of your inheritance in favor of our Company, to the detriment of your nearest relatives. Assuming that you might have such an attachment to the Company, as I think you already have, it is advisable for your father to know this so that, in declaring you their heir, they may appoint the Company, or whatever Community they please, as the substituted heir after you. In this way your intention and theirs of using their possessions for works of piety will be carried out.

Well now, Monsieur, I am simply proposing all this to you because you might want to know what I think about the letter your father is writing to you, in which you will see his dispositions. I also want to ask you to let me know your views. If you disagree

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2 Parlement refers to the French judicial system. At the time of Saint Vincent, France had eight Parlements, each with its own legal jurisdiction, chief of which was the Parlement of Paris. They registered or gave sanctions to the King's edicts, ordinances, and declarations, and supervised their implementation.
with my opinions as I have expressed them to you, in the name of
God, Monsieur, disregard them and give your father whatever
advice you judge proper. Please write to him as soon as possible,
one way or the other, to console him.

1212. - TO GABRIEL DELESPINEY,¹ IN TOUL

Paris, the Eve of Easter, [1650]²

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

A few days ago I received your letter written from the place
where you were giving the mission. Like all the others, it consoled
me greatly, especially because of the good work to which you and
your men have been devoting yourselves for such a long time. O
Monsieur, what service you render to God when you assist poor
suffering people in this way, with such timely and salutary help!

It is a sign of God's goodness to them and of the predestination
of many that, at the height of their bodily miseries, He consoles
them with His Word and sustains them with His grace, like a
sanctifying bread that gives true life. It is the daily bread, the bread
of the elect, which we must often ask of Him and make every effort
to break and share with the children of the house, the poor, so that
they may make good use of their poverty and not lose the kingdom
that belongs to them.

Letter 1212. - The original signed letter is at the Bons-Secours Hospital in Metz.

¹Born in Grandchamp (Calvados), Gabriel Delepiney was received into the Congregation
of the Mission on August 5, 1645 and took his vows on January 25, 1656. He was Superior in
Toul (1648-52) and Marseille (1659-60).

²The presence of Guillaume Desdames in Toul limits our choice to the years 1649, 1650, and
1651. In 1649 the Saint was not in Paris on Holy Saturday. During Holy Week of 1651, Adrien
Le Bon, the former Prior of Saint-Lazare, was seriously ill; in all probability, the Saint would
have recommended him to M. Delepiney's prayers, had he written to him then. Therefore, this
letter can only have been written in 1650. In that year Holy Saturday fell on April 16.
M. Desdames has written to me twice in your absence. Like you, Monsieur, I think he is looking after things and is very careful to see that all goes along smoothly. If this is the case when you are not there, it is even more so when you are present because you talk things over and act in harmony, each doing his part to relieve the other, and all for the common good.

I beg Our Lord to give all of you the spirit of union and forbearance and to increase in you that of wisdom, especially concerning the difficult situation in which M. Plenevaux is going to place us. His period of truce is over and the time of combat has come. I think he will give us a hard time. Well, fine! We belong to God and His Providence, ready to comply with His orders as soon as they are made known. Would to Our Lord that they were already known!

The Archdeacon, M. Le Lièvre, has not yet arrived—at least I have not heard anything about him.

I am really surprised at the increase in the number of troops garrisoned in Toul and crushing that town. I can only sympathize with it in its suffering and ask God, as I do, to relieve His poor people and give us peace or the strength to bear the weight of His hand.

I embrace your little community most cordially and offer it often to Our Lord. I offer Him more often your own soul, which already belongs totally to Him. I am, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,

i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Delespiney, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Toul, in Toul

Guillaume Descamps, born in Rouen, entered the Congregation of the Mission on June 19, 1645, at twenty-three years of age, took his vows on March 10, 1648, and was ordained a priest on May 31, 1648. He was sent to Toul shortly afterward, then to Poland, where he arrived with Lambert aux Couteaux in November 1651. He worked there with praiseworthy dedication amidst...
1213. - TO GERARD BRIN, IN LIMERICK

April 1650

We were greatly edified by your letter, seeing in it two excellent effects of God’s grace. The first is that you have given yourself to God to stand firm in the country where you now are, in the midst of dangers, preferring to risk death rather than fail to assist your neighbor. The second is that you are devoting yourself to the care

numberless difficulties; first, as a simple confrère; then, after the death of Charles Ozanne (August 14, 1658), as Superior of the Mission. René Alméras recalled him to France in 1669, but he went back to Poland a few years later and assumed the direction of the house in Chelmno, returning to France for the General Assembly of 1683. He ended his days on June 1, 1692 in Krakow, as Superior of the foundation there. (Cf. Notices, vol. III, p. 166; and Mémoires de la Congrégation de la Mission [11 vols., Paris, 1863-99], vol. I, pp. 24-33.)


1Gerard Brin, born near Cashel (Ireland), entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 14, 1639, at the age of twenty-one. He took his vows on November 2, 1642 and was ordained a priest in 1644. Of all the Irishmen whom Saint Vincent received into his Congregation, Brin was perhaps the most accomplished. He was brought from Le Mans in 1646 and sent to Ireland where, with several other confrères and compatriots, he did boundless good. Driven back to France by persecution, Brin then went as a missionary to Saint Vincent’s native region. Some time later he was named Superior in La Rose (1652-54) and held the same position in Troyes (1657-58), Meaux (1658-60), and Toul (1660-62). He returned to Ireland in 1663 and resumed his apostolic work with a zeal that age had not slackened. Neither a month in prison, nor illness which brought him twice to death’s door, could stop this heroic Missionary.
of your confreres, sending them back to France to remove them from danger.\(^2\)

The spirit of martyrdom has prompted you to do the former, and prudence to do the latter. Both are drawn from the example of Our Lord, who, as He was about to go and suffer the torments of death for the salvation of mankind, wanted to protect His disciples from this and save them, saying: "Let these men go and do not touch them."\(^3\)

That is how you have acted, as a true child of that most adorable Father, whom I thank infinitely for having produced in you acts of sovereign charity, the summit of all the virtues. I ask Him to fill you with it so that, exercising it always and in everything, you may pour it into the hearts of those who lack it.

Since those other gentlemen with you are likewise prepared to remain, regardless of the dangers of war and contagion, we think they should be allowed to do so. How do we know what God wishes to do with them? He is certainly not giving them such a holy determination in vain. My God, how inscrutable are Your judgments! \(^4\) At the end of one of the most fruitful and perhaps most necessary missions we have ever seen,\(^5\) You seem to be stemming the tide of Your mercy on this penitent town to weigh Your hand more heavily upon it, adding to the misfortune of war the scourge

\(^2\)Four priests, two seminarians, and one or two coadjutor Brothers had left Ireland in 1646. A seminarian named Brother Lye (Thady Lee), and a fifth priest, whose name is not known, joined them there. It is unclear from Saint Vincent's letters exactly how many confreres went to Ireland. Of the original band only Edmund Barry and Gerard Erin were still there in 1650. (Cf. vol. III, no. 877, and Abelly, ibid., p. 149.)

\(^3\)Cf. In 18:8. (NAB) Throughout this edition, use is made of the New American Bible (NAB) translation. However, when necessary, the Douay-Rheims (D-R) translation of the Vulgate will be used, since the NAB omits some passages which the D-R contains. Saint Vincent uses scriptural references which are not always direct quotes.

\(^4\)Cf. Rom 11:33. (NAB)

\(^5\)The reference is to a mission in Limerick whose success was prodigious. During it, nearly twenty thousand persons made general confessions and received communion. Moved by the words of the preachers, the town magistrates took severe measures against blasphemers.
of sickness. It is, however, to harvest souls that are well prepared and to gather the good grain into Your eternal granaries. We adore Your ways, O Lord!

1214. - TO GABRIEL DELESPINEY, SUPERIOR, IN TOUL

April 30, 1650

In this wretched season we have to borrow money to feed ourselves and for the relief of the poor.

1215. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[End of April or May 1650] 1

Monsieur d’Annemont has written me the same thing; his letter is enclosed. 2 I am going to write him that I hope and pray to God the affair will turn out in favor of those good nuns, if it is for the good of the poor, and that we most willingly agree to having the Daughters of Charity dismissed.

6Almost eight thousand persons died of the plague in the city of Limerick alone, including Bishop Edmund Dwyer’s brother, who caught the disease while visiting the sick with the Missionaries. (Abelly, op. cit., bk. I, p. 153.)


Letter 1215. - Archives of the Mission, 95 rue de Sèvres, Paris, tracing of the original autograph letter. Saint Vincent wrote this after Saint Louise had shared with him the letter she had received from M. d’Annemont.

2M. d’Annemont’s letter to Saint Louise was dated April 27, 1650. D’Annemont was chaplain to Maréchal de la Meilleraye in Nantes. In May 1646, he had advised the Administrators of the Nantes hospital to ask for the Daughters of Charity for this establishment (cf. vol. II, no. 804).

3In this letter M. d’Annemont informed Saint Vincent that there was talk of replacing the Daughters of Charity at the Nantes hospital with some nuns, and he was offering his services to prevent it.
I also think, Mademoiselle, that it would be a good idea for you to write along these lines so as, in a sense, to honor and practice the counsel of Our Lord, which says that, if someone wants to deprive us of our robe, we should give our coat as well. I think God will be more honored by that than by the service your Daughters might be able to render to God in that hospital. In the name of God, Mademoiselle, let us be generous with Jesus Christ; He would assuredly act in that way.

1216. - TO A MONK

[Between 1643 and 1652]

I am sure Your Reverence would work wonders in the episcopacy, if you had been called to it by God. Since, however, He has made it clear by the good results He has given to your works and leadership that He wants you in your present duty, it is not likely that He wants to take you away from them.

If His Providence were calling you to the episcopacy, He would not turn to you to have you seek it out; rather, He would inspire those who have the authority to make appointments to ecclesiastical offices and dignities to choose you for that one, without your

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Cf. Mt 5:40. (NAB)


1This monk, who had earned a name for himself by his virtues and preaching, wished to become Coadjutor to the Archbishop of Reims. He had taken steps for this purpose and sought Saint Vincent's approval. He gave the impression that his only ambition in this was to devote himself for a longer time to the good of the Church, because, according to him, the fasting and other austerities of his Order were exhausting his strength. By exempting him from such penitential exercises, a bishopric would enable him to conserve his energies. Saint Vincent was too clear-sighted to be taken in by these pretenses.

2The period during which Saint Vincent was a member of the Council of Conscience (Royal Council for Ecclesiastical Affairs). He became a member in 1643, when it was created by the Queen Regent, and was dismissed by Cardinal Mazarin in 1652. This Council discussed and decided all questions dealing with religion in France, e.g., episcopal appointments.
taking any steps in that direction. Your calling would then be pure
and certain. It would seem, however, that there is something to be
said against putting yourself forward, and you would have no
reason to hope for God's blessings on such a change, which can be
neither desired nor sought by a truly humble soul like yours.

Furthermore, Reverend Father, what a wrong you would be
doing to your holy Order in depriving it of one of its main pillars,
who sustains it and gives it a good name by his teaching and
example! If you were to open this door, you would give cause to
others to leave by it after you, or at least to grow weary of
penitential practices. They would need no pretext to mitigate and
diminishing these to the detriment of the Rule, for nature grows weary
of austerity. If she is consulted she will say that it is too much and
that we should spare ourselves in order to live a long time and serve
God better. Our Lord says, however, that "the man who loves his
life will lose it, while the man who hates it will preserve it." 3

You know better than I all that can be said on that, and I would
not venture to write you my thoughts on it if you had not ordered
me to do so. But perhaps you are not attentive to the crown awaiting
you. O Dieu! how beautiful it will be! You have already done so
much, Reverend Father, in order to obtain it successfully, and
perhaps you have only just a little more to do. Perseverance is
needed on the narrow path on which we have entered, which leads
to life. You have already overcome the greatest difficulties, so you
must take courage and hope that God will grant you the grace of
overcoming the lesser ones.

If you take my advice, you will suspend the work of preaching
for a while in order to recover your health. You still have great
service to render to God and to your Order, which is one of the
holiest and most edifying in the Church of Jesus Christ.

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3Cf. Jn 12:25. (NAB)
Dear Sister,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Since there is still a lack of understanding with the former Community at the hospital, giving us good reason to fear that you will not find sufficient peace there, we think it advisable for you to leave and for us to withdraw you. Besides, we need you and your Sister here.

Therefore, I ask you to take leave of the Governor, his lieutenant, and the town leaders. Thank them for the honor they have done you, ask them to excuse you for not giving them all the satisfaction they expected, and say that you are sorry for being unable to continue to serve at the hospital because Providence has determined otherwise.

We are waiting for you, and I assure you that you will receive a very warm welcome at your house. As for me, it will console me
greatly to see you. I am, in the love of Our Lord, my good Sister, your very affectionate servant and brother.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

1218. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Monday evening [Between August 6, 1649 and August 25, 1650] ¹

Here I am, on the verge of leaving tomorrow, God willing, Mademoiselle. I hope your prayers will draw down Our Lord's assistance on me for my journey. M. Portail² will do whatever you tell him regarding the business of the house.

I am sending you the Marquise de Maignelay's letter. It will be a comfort to me if she sees good M. Dupont³ and if he brings her the letter himself.

I spoke to the Procurator General;⁴ he promised me full protec-

Letter 1218. - The original autograph letter is at the house of the Daughters of Charity in Narbonne.

¹This letter was written after the ordination of Louis Dupont (September 17, 1647), before the death of the Marquise de Maignelay (August 25, 1650), and while Antoine Portail was in Paris. It was written, consequently, after August 6, 1649.

²Antoine Portail, born in Beaucaire (Gard) on November 22, 1590, came to Paris to study at the Sorbonne. He made the acquaintance of Saint Vincent there around 1612 and became devoted to him. From the time of his ordination (1622) to that of his death (1660), he was the Saint's auxiliary. Vincent employed him first in the service of the galley slaves, received him as the first member of his new Congregation, initiated him into the ministry of the missions and the work of the ordinands, chose him as First Assistant in 1642, and entrusted to him the direction of the Daughters of Charity. Portail left Paris in 1646 to make visitations in the houses of the Congregation. He began in the West of France, then went south, crossed into Italy, and did not return to Saint-Lazare until September 1649. Except for a fairly long absence in 1655, he hardly ever left the Motherhouse again. He died on February 14, 1660, after an illness of nine days. (Cf. Notices, vol. I, pp. 1-94.)

³Louis Dupont was born in Nemours (Seine-et-Marne), entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 23, 1641 at twenty-two years of age, and took his vows in November 1644. He was Superior in Toul (1652-53), Tréguier (1654-61), Annecy (1662-63), and at Saint-Charles (1664-71).

⁴Blaise Méliand.
tion for the children in whatever M. Biète tells him, and will have those who have been weaned taken in at the asylum with two young women whom the Charity will maintain. M. Biète could see him for any business matters. He has reprimanded some commissioners, who were insisting on taking the abandoned babies from the wet nurses.

I was not able to speak with Marie-Denise; she has gone to Colombes.7

I shall try to have a word with the young one; please encourage her.

Enclosed is a letter from a lady from Sedan, who is in this city, and another which that good chaplain wrote her. I am on the point of my departure, eager to do God’s Will always and in all things, by His mercy, and to be, in His love, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

1219. - TO PROPAGANDA FIDE

[May 1650] 1

Most Eminent and Most Reverend Lords,

This Sacred Congregation has successively granted missionary

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5Perhaps Biet, a Canon of Notre-Dame, who was alive at that time.
6A Daughter of Charity.
7Today, principal town of a canton in Haute-de-Seine, located on the Seine near Paris.

Letter 1219. - Archives of Propaganda Fide, II Africa, no. 248, f° 155, original unsigned letter, written in Italian.

1The petition was presented on May 26, 1650. The decree of approval is dated May 31, and the faculties were dispatched by the Holy Office on June 30.
faculties to Boniface Nouelly, Jacques Lesage, and Jean Dieppe, priests of the Congregation of the Mission, sent to Algiers to assist poor Catholic slaves and to work for the spread of our holy faith in those parts. One after the other, they have died there, victims of the plague, while assisting the sick corporeally and spiritually.

Now, Very Reverend Father Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, whom the death of so many of his men in the short space of about two years has not discouraged, and who wishes to continue the charitable work which has been begun, once again proposes to the Sacred Congregation another of his priests of the same Congregation of the Mission, Philippe Le Vacher by name, who has already been a missionary in Ireland, along with some other confrères, and is presently serving in a seminary for the clergy in the city of Marseilles. He humbly entreats Your Eminences to be so kind as to grant him similar

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

3 Jacques Lesage, born around 1614 in Auffay (Seine-Maritime), entered the Congregation of the Mission as a priest on October 7, 1639, and took his vows on November 26, 1645. He embarked for Algiers in January or February 1648, and with no regard for hardships and dangers, gave himself entirely to ministering to the poor slaves. After a visit to the plague-stricken, he himself contracted this terrible disease and died on May 12, 1648.

4 Jean Dieppe, born in Cancale (Ille-et-Vilaine), entered the Congregation of the Mission on August 5, 1647, at thirty years of age, and died of the plague in Algiers on May 2, 1649. He had left Paris on December 22 of the previous year.

5 Philippe Le Vacher, born in Écouen (Val-d'Oise) on March 23, 1622, entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 5, 1643 and took his vows on August 5, 1646. He was part of the first group sent to Ireland in 1646. Recalled to France in 1649, he was sent to Marseilles, where he was ordained a priest on April 2, 1650 and sailed for Algiers as Vicar Apostolic and Vicar-General of Carthage. He returned to France in 1657 to collect alms for the slaves. His absence, which was supposed to last only a few months, was prolonged for two years. He set out again in September 1659, reached Barbary, and in 1661 accompanied Brother Jean-Armand Dubourdieu to Algiers, where the latter was destined to replace Brother Jean Barreau, French Consul in that city. Le Vacher paid Barreau's debts, settled a number of business matters, and finally left Barbary in 1662, accompanied by seventy slaves whom he had ransomed. He was sent to Fontainebleau, where he led a most exemplary life until the day of his death, August 5, 1679. (Cf. Notices, vol. III, pp. 595-606.)
faculties for the same place, Algiers, and to add certain new faculties by means of which he would have the authority to put an end to the dissensions and quarrels which often arise among slaves who are members of religious Orders. In that way the scandals that occur may be avoided. He will consider all this as a favor from Your Eminences.

Whom God, etc.

**Addressed:** The Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, for Philippe Le Vacher, Priest of the Congregation of the Mission

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**1220. - ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC I TO SAINT VINCENT**

Mercure, May 25, 1650

*Monsieur,*

*I received two of your letters, one dated the last of April and the other the fourteenth of this month. In them I remarked the continued concern you so kindly show in our Chancelade affair, for which I am much obliged*
and thank you wholeheartedly. In the future I shall be more discreet about writing to you so as not to give you the trouble of answering me.

Father Montal wrote me from Lyons that he was quite surprised that Father Vitet 1 was making an effort for our two titles and that he would write to Abbé Tinti 2 about it. Father Vitet also wrote to me, saying he no longer feels the same way about this, especially since it had nothing to do with our proceedings in Rome. Our lawyer had left Paris to return here before receiving the letter my Vicar-General was writing to him, etc.

The neighboring dioceses are depleting mine of priests, sending for them to give them benefices. A while ago, the Bishop of Sarlat 4 took the curate who was serving the church of our Saint-Barthélemy Seminary; he certainly did me no favor in this. Yesterday, he took another one, and the day before yesterday the Bishop of Périgueux 5 took another. If I had more than I needed, I would not mind, but I do not think that will ever be the case if this keeps up . . .

A short time ago the Bishop of Tulle 6 almost died of a cerebral hemorrhage. Given his age and condition, it is unlikely that he has long to live. Please try to persuade the Queen 7 to put a worthy Bishop in that diocese, when it becomes vacant, for it is in a very bad state. Kindly tell Her Majesty that I entreat this of her with all my heart so that in this way we can restore the devotion to the Virgin in Rocamadour, 8 the most celebrated in the kingdom.

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1Jean Vitet was a Reformed Augustinian of Chancelade. Subsequent to Solminiac’s reforms in 1623, various other monasteries were incorporated into this reform, and Chancelade became the center of the new Congregation.

2Agent of the King of France in Rome. By a decree of December 5, 1651, he was appointed “general agent and expeditor of his Majesty in the Court of Rome for the purpose of obtaining all Bulls and appointments from the Pope.”

3Nicolas Sevin.

4Philibert de Brandon, Seigneur du Laurent. He became a Counselor in the Parlement on February 18, 1622. On the advice of Father de Condren, he left this position after the death of his wife, Marie de Ligny, niece of Chancellor Séguier, to enter the priesthood. He was one of the founders of Saint-Sulpice Seminary. Brandon had offered his house in Saint-Maur-les-Posses to M. Otier and his first companions. It was there that this group of apostolic men spent part of the years 1640-41. After refusing the diocese of Babylon, he was proposed by Saint Vincent for Périgueux, of which he became Bishop in 1648, remaining there until his death on July 11, 1652. His relationship with Abbé de Saint-Cyran did not affect his orthodoxy.

5Jean-Richard de Genouillac de Vaillac. He was Bishop of Tulle from 1599 to 1652, the year of his death.

6Anne of Austria, wife of Louis XIII and Queen in France; at this time Regent for Louis XIV.

7Commune of the district of Gourdon (Lot).
When you see Abbé Olier, \(^9\) please ask him about the qualifications of the Dean of Carennac \(^10\) of my diocese and whether he judges him suited to be a bishop; I see no one in Guyenne better able than he to head that diocese. I mentioned him to you before; he is very pious and an example of virtue in my diocese. I tell you this so that, if the Queen were to ask you if you knew a suitable person, you might consider him. It is a small diocese worth only seven or eight thousand livres.

I must tell you that my heart bleeds with sorrow at the reproaches people are making me from one day to the next concerning the kind of life one of our young neighboring bishops \(^11\) is leading. He recently rented a house outside his capital for six hundred écus,\(^12\) to have a place to keep a pack of hounds and hunting dogs. In a word, he is completely taken up with hunting, in brevibus,\(^13\) with a rifle slung over his shoulder. You had very good reason to oppose his promotion; would to God your advice had been heeded!

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\(^{9}\) Jean-Jacques Olier, the celebrated founder of Saint-Sulpice Seminary, was one of the principal restorers of ecclesiastical discipline in the seventeenth century. Saint Vincent calls him "a man given over to the grace of God and completely apostolic." He was born in Paris on September 20, 1608. After a few hesitations, which Saint Vincent succeeded in dissipating, he decided to become a priest and was ordained on May 21, 1633. The first years of his priestly career were dedicated to the work of missions. He participated in the labors of the priests of Saint-Lazare, whom he edified by his zeal and humility. For reasons still unexplained, perhaps because of a divergence of views on the question of whether he should accept becoming a Bishop, Olier changed from the direction of Saint Vincent, who had been his confessor for three years (1632-35), to that of Father de Condren. This was not a desertion—far from it. In 1649 he wrote, "For extraordinary affairs, we do not fail to see Monsieur Vincent, and for ordinary matters, all our brothers assembled." He did not begin the Vaugirard Seminary or accept the pastorate of Saint-Sulpice until he had consulted the Saint. "M. Vincent is our father," he often used to say to his seminarians. Olier died on April 2, 1657, assisted by his holy friend. The latter consoled the priests of Saint-Sulpice in their sorrow, and we still have a fragment of the address to them on this occasion, which has been attributed to Saint Vincent (cf. vol. XIII, no. 51).

\(^{10}\) Commune of the same district.

\(^{11}\) Probably Jacques de Montrouge, appointed Bishop of Saint-Flour in 1647. He died in 1661.

\(^{12}\) Throughout this edition the various denominations of French money have been left in French since no adequate, unchanging value in American dollars can be assigned. One écu equals three livres. One thousand livres could support two priests and a Brother for one year on the missions. (Cf. vol. V, no. 1972.)

\(^{13}\) Probably in short hunting attire.
I pray that God will inspire the Queen to appoint to the dioceses persons worthy of such eminent responsibilities. In the meantime, do me the favor of believing that I am, etc.

ALAIN,
Bishop of Cahors

1221. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

Monsieur Hurtel slipped away from us Sunday evening to go to a blessed eternity, leaving us as grieved by his passing as we were consoled by his innocent life, which was of such a nature that I can tell you I never saw any fault in him. You can conclude from that the good he did and our gratitude to God for having given us this good servant as a confrere. Let us thank Him for the graces He granted him and let us pay our last respects to his soul. If it has no need of them, others will profit from them.

1222. - A PRIEST OF THE MISSION TO SAINT VINCENT

If it is right that the person who plants a tree should have the pleasure of seeing it bear fruit, it is likewise right that you should share in the blessings God has given so abundantly to our modest labors. I can assure

Letter 1221. - Lyons manuscript.
1Knowledge of the year of Hurtel's death (1650) allows this date to be assigned to the letter.
2François Hurtel, born in Nîmes (Somme), entered the Congregation of the Mission on November 26, 1640 at nineteen years of age, took his vows on December 1, 1642, and was ordained a priest in 1645; he died at Saint-Lazare in 1650.

3Nos. 1196 and 1222 are from the same priest of the Mission; Abelly states that the second was written about two months after the first.
you that, in the missions we have given since Joigny, I think no one has failed to make a general confession. It is wonderful to see how these people have been touched, even to the point that I decided to preach repentance to them only during the first few days, given the great sensitivity of their hearts, because I was afraid it might be harmful to their imaginations.

1223. - TO DENIS GAUTIER,¹ IN SAINTES

Paris, June 3, 1650

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Monsieur de Lavau, the bearer of this letter, passed through Saintes on his way to Paris, and he tells me that he left twenty-two écus in the care of M. Watebled.² I have just had two écus given to him, to be deducted, and promised him you would have the remainder of what he left returned to him. I ask you please to do so, once you have received this letter, and also to be as helpful to him as you can. I beg Our Lord to continue to do the same for you.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

At the bottom of the first page: Monsieur Gautier

¹Denis Gautier, born in Langres (Haute-Marne) in 1610, was already a priest when he entered the Congregation of the Mission on July 19, 1639, at the age of twenty-nine. He was Superior in Richelieu (1642-46, 1648-49).

²Pierre Watebled, born in Tully (Somme) in 1622, entered the Congregation of the Mission on January 19, 1641 at nineteen years of age, and took his vows on June 14, 1643. He was Superior of the Saintes Seminary (1650-51) and died a victim of his dedication in Villeneuve-Saint-Georges (Val-de-Marne) in October 1652.
I was glad to learn your reasons for going back to the old custom of reciting the prayer for the King only when Mass was over, instead of saying it before Communion, as was being done since the visitation. All things considered, I think this was advisable because by this means you put an end to the grumbling of the inhabitants. The latter is an unfortunate situation, more to be feared than the lack of uniformity in the customs of the diocese on this point, since it was a question of a prayer and not of a ceremony. Nevertheless, because this action concerns the King, you should have sought the advice of the Governor, so that he would not have had reason to take offense at this change.

This omission caused me to wonder if you knew of the request I formerly made to your predecessor not to make any innovations


1Marc Coglée (Cogley), born in Carrick-on-Suir, Lismore diocese (Ireland), on April 25, 1614, was ordained a priest on May 30, 1643 and entered the Congregation of the Mission on the following July 24. In a period of distress and discouragement, he had the good fortune to meet Gerard Brin, a fellow countryman, who induced him to remain in the Congregation. After having given him time to make up his mind definitely by spending some time in the novitiate, Saint Vincent sent him to Sedan (1646). Marc Coglée took his vows there on December 13, 1649, and the following year was named Pastor of the parish and Superior of the house. Replaced in 1654 by Jean Martin, he resumed these same functions in 1655 and kept them for another year. For a few months in 1659 he was Superior of the Annecy Seminary, and from there he returned to Saint-Lazare.

2Abraham de Fabert, one of the most renowned generals of the seventeenth century, was born in Metz in 1599. His civic virtues, military talents, and administrative qualities could never be adequately praised. He won all his commissions at the point of the sword. The famous retreat from Mainz and the siege of several fortified towns offered him the occasion of showing his bravery. He loved discipline and was the terror of looters. His fidelity to the King and his minister was rewarded with the highest dignities. He became Governor of Sedan in 1642, Lieutenant-General in 1651, and Maréchal of France in 1658. He died in Sedan on May 17, 1662. The part of his correspondence from 1634 to 1652 has been published. His life was written by Father Joseph Barre, Vie de M. le Marquis de Fabert, maréchal de France (2 vols., Paris: J. T. Hérisson, 1752), and Jules Boutelly, Le maréchal de Fabert (1599-1662) (2 vols., Paris: Didier, 1879-81).

3Charles Bayart, born in the diocese of Soissons, entered the Congregation of the Mission as a priest on February 9, 1644, at twenty-seven years of age, and took his vows on October 16, 1648. He was Superior in Sedan (1646-49), Périgueux (1650), and Montmirail (1651-52).
of importance in the external running of the parish until the Governor had been consulted. Now that you are aware of it, I hope you will be exact in following this order. Above all, Monsieur, it is customary for Superiors in the Company to put before the General any unusual problems that present themselves. In this way, by seeking his advice, they avoid many inconveniences and are sure of doing God’s Will, which I know you seek in all things and, consequently, will be glad to know this.

1225. - TO JEAN MIDOT,1 VICAR-GENERAL OF TOUL

June 8, 1650

Monsieur,

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

I received your letter with renewed recognition of the obligations we have toward you and with renewed hopes that God might be pleased to preserve you for many years for the good of His Church, in which I hear you have acquired a new dignity. I thank Providence which has bestowed it on you. Posts of responsibility are usually an honor to those who occupy them, but I venture to say that you bring honor to yours. So now, you are chief Dean, Grand Archdeacon and Vicar-General of a large diocese, notable for piety and for doing good; in a word, great in the sight of God and men. May God grant that your soul will continue to grow in His love!

Letter 1225. - Reg. 1, n° 40, copy made from the original, which was written by the secretary and signed by the Saint.

1Jean Midot, Doctor of Theology, Counselor in the Parlement of Metz, Grand Archdeacon, Canon, and Vicar-General of Toul. He was highly respected in the courts of Rome and Lorraine. After the death of Charles Christien de Gournay, Bishop of Toul, he governed the diocese as Vicar Capitular. According to Collet (op. cit., vol. I, p. 291, note), in the seventeenth century his family possessed several letters that Saint Vincent had written to him. Midot was the author of Mémoires sur les évêques de Toul, which has remained in manuscript form.
Thank you again, Monsieur, for the help you are giving us in Rome and for the letters promised by M. Platel from his relatives. Whenever you want to send them to us, we will forward them and hope for the results you mention. The Superior of our house in Rome wrote me that M. Jehot has reopened negotiations for the settlement, in accord with the order you gave him.

I shall render you most willingly, Monsieur—more willingly than I can express to you in writing—whatever service I can for the commission necessary for the registration of the acknowledgement in question. I do not recall whether or not it is a patent, or how that document is worded. I ask you to send it to me because the counter-seal has to be affixed to it, or to a verified copy, at least. It will have to be shown to M. de Brienne, and I will speak to him about it, God willing. True, he is at Court now, and I do not go there unless I am summoned, which happens rarely and perhaps will not

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2René Alméras, nephew of Madame Gousault (first President of the Ladies of Charity of the Hôtel-Dieu), was born in Paris on February 5, 1613. A Councillor in the Great Council at the age of twenty-four, he left everything—family, position and hopes—despite the opposition of his father (who was to follow him later) to enter the Congregation of the Mission, where he was received on December 24, 1637. He was ordained a priest at Easter in 1639.

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

3Henri-Auguste de Lomenie, Comte de Brienne et de Montbron, Seigneur de la Ville-aux-Clercs, and Secretary of State, died on November 5, 1666, at the age of seventy-one.
happen in the future because we are responsible for settling the affairs of the ecclesiastical congregation here.

So, if I cannot see M. de Brienne, I will write to the Countess so that she will talk to him about it. For whom would I use my influence, if not for someone who always acts so efficiently and charitably on our behalf? For this reason, in addition to those of your merit and my affection, do I not have a strict obligation to render you obedience?

With regard to M. du Saussay, I cannot conceive how there can be any misunderstanding between you and him. Some trouble-maker must be inciting that by talebearing. You are one of the most peaceful, sincere, and amiable men I know, and so is he. Still, on the one hand, I see that you have a certain amount of distrust toward him and, on the other hand, that he suspects you have done him a disservice.

Dare I ask you, Monsieur, to tell me your feelings on this; and would you be agreeable to my acting as an intermediary to restore you both to friendship? My knowledge of his gentleness and goodness leads me to hope he will not offer any resistance to that and, in addition to the consolation of your heart, which loves nothing so much as union, several other benefits will result from it.

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6 Royal Council for Ecclesiastical Affairs, also known as the Council of Conscience.

7 Louise de Béon, a Lady of Charity very devoted to Saint Vincent and his work, was the daughter of Louise de Luxembourg-Brienne and Bernard de Béon, Intendant of Saintonge, Angoulême, and the territory of Aunis. She was the wife of Henri-Auguste de Loménie, Comte de Brienne, Secretary of State. Louise de Béon died September 2, 1665.

8 André du Saussay, born in Paris around 1589, was a Doctor in both civil and canon laws, a talented controversialist, renowned orator, prolific writer, and the Pastor of Saint-Leu and Saint-Gilles (1624-56). He found favor with the King, who made him his counselor and preacher. He became Ecclesiastical Judge and Vicar-General of Paris (1643-55). Proposed by the Queen Regent for the office of Bishop of Toul in 1649, he was not approved by the Pope until 1656. He governed his diocese wisely and died on September 9, 1675, after meritng the praise engraved on his tomb: vir clero et populo amabilis [a man beloved by the clergy and the people]. (Cf. Eugène Martin, Histoire des diocèses de Toul, de Nancy et de Saint-Dié [3 vols., Nancy: A. Crépin-Leblond, 1900-03].)
While awaiting the honor of your orders, I am, in the love of O[ur] L[ord] ....

VINCENT DEPAUL,
I.s.C.M.

Since writing the above, I was at the Duchesse d'Aiguillon's house when the Ecclesiastical Judge arrived, and we spoke about you. I can assure you that he is most anxious to be on good terms with you. He even told me we will find him very open to that. Let me know, Monsieur, what you would like me to do.

1226. - TO THE SUPERIOR OF THE GENOA HOUSE

I am very glad that public penances are performed during missions. You will do well to see that they are put into practice as much as you can. The custom is useful as well as necessary but must be carried out wisely. I say “wisely” because discretion is required so as not to involve all sorts of persons in it, nor for all sorts of sins. So, do it, but only in accordance with the Council of Trent,¹ for public sins, and on the orders of the Bishops.²

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¹Session XXIV, chapter 8.
1227. - TO A BISHOP

[Between 1643 and 1652] ¹

It is true, Excellency, that I have wanted you to exercise moderation, but only so that your work may continue and your constant state of overwork may not deprive your diocese and the whole Church of the incomparable good you do for them. If this desire is not in conformity with the impulses with which your zeal inspires you, I am not surprised because my human sentiments distance me too much from that eminent state to which the love of God elevates you. I am still too attached to the senses, and you are above nature. I have as much reason to be astounded by my own faults as to thank God, as I am doing, for the holy dispositions He gives you.

I beg you most humbly, Excellency, to ask Him to give them to me—not the same ones, but just a small share of them or simply the crumbs which fall from your table.

1228. - TO GUILLAUME CORNAIRE,¹ IN LE MANS

June 15, 1650

The boredom you experience in your work may stem from several causes: (1) from nature itself, which grows weary of always seeing and doing the same things. God allows this to give rise to the practice of two beautiful virtues: perseverance, which leads us

¹Guillaume Cornaire, born June 4, 1614 in the Besançon diocese, was ordained a priest during Lent of 1639, entered the Congregation of the Mission on December 2, 1647, and took his vows in Le Mans on November 23, 1653, where he provided for the spiritual needs of the sick in the hospital. He died there, perhaps in 1660. Brother Chollier wrote his obituary, but it is no longer extant.
to attain the goal, and constancy, which helps us to overcome difficulties; (2) from the nature of the work, which is depressing and which, when done by a person who is also sad, engenders distaste, especially when God chooses to take away the interior consolation and cordial sweetness He allows those who serve the poor to experience from time to time; (3) from the devil, who, in order to turn you aside from the great good you are doing, suggests to you an aversion for it. Lastly, this boredom may come from God Himself because, in order to raise a soul to the highest perfection, He allows it to pass through dryness, brambles, and combats, causing it thereby to honor the times of weariness in the life of His Son, Our Lord, who suffered various kinds of anguish and abandonment.

Courage, Monsieur! Give yourself to God and declare to Him that you desire to serve Him in the way most pleasing to Him. It is a matter of triumphing over your enemies—the flesh, which is opposed to the spirit, and Satan, who envies your happiness. God’s Will is that you persevere in the work He has given you to do. Trust in His grace, which will never fail you in living out your vocation. Bear in mind that this is one of the holiest and most sanctifying works on earth. Perhaps as many people die in that hospital as in a large number of parishes. Since you help them to die well, you are also responsible for their souls being received into heaven. As for those who do not die, you dispose them to lead a good life; consequently, you do more good on your own than many pastors put together.

I beg Our Lord, Monsieur, to grant your heart the patience and joy He knows it needs and to make me worthy of sharing in the merit of your labors and prayers.
1229. - TO MARC COGlée, SUPERIOR, IN SEDAN

You will be saddened by the news I have to give you: it is the death of good M. Delattre, Superior of our house in Agen. He had just made a journey to Amiens and, on his return, was suddenly taken ill with an unremitting fever. The result was that, the day after his arrival in Bordeaux, God took him to Himself. This is a very great loss for the Company. He was a man with good judgment, and was experienced in leadership and business, since he had been the King's Procurator in Amiens. If ever I met anyone detached from relatives, the world, and his health and life as well, it was he. He performed great penances and was very regular. We will tell you more about him another time.

In the meantime, I ask the whole dear family of Sedan to pray for him, even though we have every reason to hope that his soul is in possession of the glory of the saints.

1230. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN RICHELIEU

June 22, 1650

I am glad you sent Brother Jamin to Saintes because that house really needs him. I am well aware that this inconveniences you, and

Letter 1229. - Lyons manuscript.
1Year of the death of Guillaume Delattre.
2Born in Amiens, Guillaume Delattre entered the Congregation of the Mission on August 10, 1642, at the age of thirty-two. He became Superior in Cahors (1644-46), La Rose (1646-48), and Agen (1648-50), and died in Bordeaux in 1650.
3Saint Vincent often refers to the local community of the confères as the family.

4Gary Jamin was a native of Baudien (Lorraine), in the Trèves (Trier) diocese. He entered the Congregation of the Mission as a coadjutor Brother on January 29, 1639, at twenty-two years of age.
I had foreseen the reasons you gave me for leaving this Brother with you, but there is an overall Providence which demands such changes. Those who are affected by them, but do not see the reasons for them, think they are being wronged, and they complain about them, but God knows they are made for the best.

So, we shall not send any Sisters for Champigny, since people everywhere are discontented with that project. In fact, I fear you have not left room for Providence but have attempted something God does not will. Mon Dieu, Monsieur, how good it is to wait for Providence on these occasions, without trying to anticipate its orders!

Whenever you have a proposal to make to the Bishop of Poitiers, please inform me about it beforehand. You have been in his diocese too short a time to have sufficient knowledge of persons and affairs, and I fear that certain inconveniences may arise if you act otherwise.

Speaking of that, I implore you once again, Monsieur, not to make any innovations or changes or do away with anything, either in temporal matters or in the customs of the house. If you think something should be done, take the trouble to write to me about it, and together we will decide the time and manner of doing it. I am not talking of ordinary things that come and go and are part and parcel of the Superior’s concern, but of those that are of greater importance, either because of their merit or their consequences.

You did not tell me what boarders you have, what fees you charge, whether you have any seminarians who pay nothing, who their teacher and director is, and similar things which merit dialogue. I have seen seminaries open and last but a very short time, for want of discussing matters.

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2Champigny-sur-Verdon (Indre-et-Loire), near Richelieu.
3Cf. letter of February 23, 1650 from Saint Vincent to Bernard Codoing (vol. III, no. 1193).
4Henri-Louis Chastaignier de la Rochepossy.
I would also like to see a little more communication and trust between you and M. Maillard, the procurator of your house. I assure you that you can act with him as with the wisest, most loyal, most understanding person I know among us, and that he has the interests of the Company very much at heart. Please have no doubt about this. If I were in your place I would take the advice I am giving you, not because I have had any information from him, since he has never written any to me, but because I know what sort of person he is.

1230a. - TO MONSIEUR HORCHOLLE, IN NEUFCHÂTEL

Paris, June 28, 1630

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am a little slow with my replies but not with my efforts to be of service to you regarding the parish about which you wrote me. I contacted a person who works closely with the Bishop of Saint-Malo. He mentioned it to the latter, but this good Bishop did not make any decision on it, and that friend of mine came to tell me he thinks it is promised to someone else. Nevertheless, he will see that the preference is given to you, if the benefice should become vacant. That was quite a few days ago, and since you have not

5Antoine Maillard, born in Venay (Mourthe), entered the Congregation of the Mission on May 21, 1644, at twenty-six years of age, took his vows in 1646, and renewed them on January 25, 1656. He was Procurator of Saint-Lazare for a long time, and Procurator General (1679-86).


3Ferdinand de Neufville de Villeroy had been Coadjutor to his uncle Achille de Harlay de Sancy since 1644. After the latter's death on November 20, 1646, Neufville succeeded him as Bishop of Saint-Malo until 1657, when he was named Bishop of Chartres.
notified me of the pastor’s death, I presume it has not occurred and we have to wait for another opportunity.

I will always welcome joyfully any opportunity that comes my way to be of service to you. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble and obedient servant, Monsieur, as well as that of your mother, whom I greet most humbly.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Horcholle, Pastor of Neufchâtel, in Neufchâtel

1231. - TO MARC COGÎÈE, SUPERIOR, IN SEDAN

July 9, 1650

Far from being a bad thing to seek advice, you must, on the contrary, do so when the matter is of any importance, or when we cannot come to a clear decision on our own. For temporal affairs, we consult a lawyer or some lay persons who are knowledgeable about them; for internal affairs, we discuss matters with the consultors and other members of the Company when we think it appropriate. I often consult even the Brothers and ask their advice on questions involving their duties. When this is done with the necessary prudence, the authority of God, which resides in the person of Superiors and those who represent them, is in no way disadvantaged. On the contrary, the good order which ensues makes it more worthy of love and respect. I ask you to act in this way and to recall that, when there is question of any change or of extraordinary matters, these are proposed to the General.
I agree with you about . . . . I do not think he will ever recover from his present state; on the contrary, I fear he will do considerable harm to that house. Not only do I fear it, but we already have experience of it, and I must admit that . . . and he and someone else as well have unsettled it a great deal. One is out, after we put up with him as much as we could, and it would be expedient for the others to be at a distance from him.

It would be doing justice to the Company to amputate its gangrenous members. This is true and prudence demands it. However, because we have to allow for the practice of all the virtues, we are now exercising patience, long-suffering, and charity itself, in the hope that they will mend their ways. We are applying remedies to the sore, using various plasters of gentleness, threats, prayers, and admonitions. Our sole hope in all this is that God Himself will be pleased to bring some good from it. Our Lord did not send Saint Peter away for having denied Him several times, nor even Judas, although he was to die in his sin. So I think His Divine Goodness sees fit that this same goodness be extended in the Company to our difficult members, bearing with them and sparing nothing to win them over to God. This does not mean that in the end we may not have to get rid of them; that is a necessity.
Monseigneur,

I received the letter with which Your Eminence deigned to honor me, with the respect I owe to one of the greatest and holiest Princes of the Church. It is my ardent desire that God may be pleased to make our Little Company, and me in particular, worthy of being of service to Your Eminence. His Divine Goodness knows, Monseigneur, that our joy would equal our happiness if we had the occasions to do so. I beg you most humbly to offer them to us and to accept the gratitude we owe to Your Eminence for having been such a support to us in your San Salvatore Abbey.¹

You have done so through your excessive kindness rather than for any reason for satisfaction our Little Company may have given you; consequently, we do not deserve the thanks Your Eminence has expressed. I venture, nevertheless, Monseigneur, to entreat Your Eminence most humbly to regard us as your lowly creatures, to honor us with your protection, and to allow the Company, and me in particular, Monseigneur, to be your most humble, obedient, and grateful servant.


¹Francesco Barberini, born in Florence in 1597, was created Cardinal shortly after his uncle became Pope (Urban VIII [1623-44]). He was legate a latere in France, and then, at the beginning of 1626, in Spain. When Pope Innocent X (1644-55) wanted him and his brother to render an account of the peculations of which they were guilty under Urban VIII, they took refuge in France, where they were received very cordially, although, while his uncle was alive, he had shown himself more favorable toward the interests of Spain than those of France.

²An abbey in the Sabine region, about thirty-six miles from Rome.
July 17, 1650

The Chief Justice\(^1\) told me the day before yesterday that the King is supposed to go to Richelieu, if he is not already there.\(^2\) This obliges me to tell you what I think you will have to do, in the event that this letter is delivered to you in time.

Please go with three or four of your priests to greet him at the château. He does not like long speeches, so do not make any. Tell him, however, that you have come to offer His Majesty the services of the Company and to assure him of its prayers that God may be pleased to bless him and his armies, to preserve him for many years to come, to grant him the grace of subjugating the rebels and of extending his empire to the ends of the earth; in a word, that God may reign over his States. Next, you will have to address the Queen Regent,\(^3\) saying something similar to her, then to Monsieur.\(^4\) On

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\(^1\)Mathieu Mole, born in Paris in 1584, became Procurator General in 1614 and Chief Justice of the Parlement of Paris in 1641. Appointed Keeper of the Seals on April 3, 1651, he lost the office ten days later because of political pressure resulting from the Fronde, but was reappointed on September 9. He held the position of Chief Justice until the Queen Regent, Anne of Austria, summoned him to the Royal Court outside Paris. He died January 3, 1656. (Cf. Amable-Guillaume-Prospère Brugières, Baron de Barante, Le Parlement et la Fronde. La vie de Mathieu Mole [Paris: Didier, 1859].)

\(^2\)Louis XIV was on his way to Bordeaux, where the Princess de Condé had incited the Parlement and the people against the court. He arrived in Richelieu on the evening of the eighteenth, before Bernard Codoing received this letter. Abbé L. A. Bossebeuf (Histoire de Richelieu et des environs [Tours: L. Péricat, 1890], p. 344) wrote, "The clergy of the locality did not wait for orders from the Superior of Saint-Lazare to present their homage to the King. The entire body of the town, wearing ceremonial dress, did the same. If there were any regrets about that beautiful ceremony, it was that Saint Vincent's advice, 'he does not like long speeches,' did not arrive in time."

\(^3\)The Queen, Anne of Austria (1601-66), was consort of Louis XIII of France and Regent (1643-61) for her son Louis XIV (1638-1715) during his minority.

\(^4\)Philippe d'Ovides, brother of Louis XIV, who was only ten years old at the time. In the period preceding the French Revolution, it was accepted court practice to use the title 'Monsieur, standing alone, to refer to the King's younger brother next in line for the throne.
the way out, try to see the Cardinal⁵ to pay your respects to him, pledging your obedience with your best wishes, etc., but do it very briefly.

Above all, Monsieur, be careful not to request anything or to voice any complaints. If you are asked whether you are satisfied with your parishioners, say yes, that they are good, God-fearing people because, in general, that can be said. Say that they are good servants of the King and have had a master and mistress who have given them this example, etc. It takes but a few words like that to move Their Majesties to grant them some favor, such as confirming their privileges.

Find out from one of the chaplains how you should receive the King at the Church: whether or not with the cross, whether you should give him the cross to kiss or not, whether you should offer him the holy water sprinkler. If he spends a Sunday in Richelieu, preach the sermon or homily yourself and plan the ceremonies of the Mass and Vespers ahead of time. Have the house cleaned and everything in order. Because it is customary to house the chaplains in the priests' residence and in the local communities in places where the Court stops, maybe you will get them all and perhaps also the Bishop of Rodez, the King’s tutor;⁶ Father Paulin, his
confessor; and several others. So get a large number of decent beds ready. The members of the Company can be put up all together in one room, leaving the bedrooms free.

Please make everyone feel welcome, offer them whatever you have or can do, and spare nothing to give each one the best reception possible. If you have time, you could send someone to Tours to buy whatever is needed. If a Sunday falls before the King's arrival, you would be wise to exhort the town to give him a proper welcome, to express their joy and affection with praise and acclamations to Their Majesties, and to do all this as courteously as possible. I ask Our Lord to inspire you with whatever else you should do in all that.

1235. - FATHER VITET TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

I would have had the honor of writing you more often than I have done, and given you an account of what had taken place with our affair, if we had been able to get our papers from Bishop Farnese, Secretary of the Congregation of Regulars. Out of resentment at the fact that we had Cardinal Palotta appointed, and thereby have prevented the former from becoming judge as he wished—but we could not allow this—he is holding on to the above-mentioned papers, taunting us with slowness and delays, in one way or another. It is almost unbelievable that a Prelate like him is acting this way for such base motives as his, which, as we have finally

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7Charles Paulin (Poulain), born in Orléans on June 3, 1593, was received into the Society of Jesus on September 30, 1610. He was Rector of the Collège de Blois, then Superior of the Paris house of professed members. He prepared the King for his First Communion and was his confessor. Paulin died on April 12, 1653.

Letter 1235. - Archives of the Diocese of Cahors, Alain de Solminihac collection, file 45, no. 34, original autograph letter.

1Girolamo Farnese, of the illustrious Farnese family of Parma, was born on September 30, 1599, was created Cardinal in 1658, and died December 18, 1668.

2Giovanni Battista Palotta was created Cardinal in 1629 and died on January 24, 1668, in his seventy-fourth year.
discovered, are simply vengeance and the desire for money. I am ashamed to write to the Bishop of Cahors about all these delays, but I must do so because it is my duty.

I am very pleased that the solution we have discovered here of requesting confirmation of the Reform rather than speaking of establishment seems good to you. I am still not quite sure what order we will follow for carrying out this plan, since we can do nothing about it without the documents Bishop Farnese is keeping from us. We are doing our utmost to get them; I expect we shall manage this with money, but not otherwise. I await instructions from the Bishop of Cahors about getting funds as soon as possible because we have already spent almost all I had been authorized to withdraw here.

In the second-to-last mail I received a packet from the Bishop of Cahors with the brief of appeal of the Abbot of Grosbois' decision. He sent it back to me here to be corrected, especially since the banker who had it drawn up had not followed the statement we had sent from Paris. I had it corrected and another legal copy made, but I cannot get it until next Saturday and will send it a week from today.

I engaged a lawyer for this legal copy so as to keep it confidential. Father Guérin had gotten wind of the first one and had it revoked. I fear this will cause confusion in the lawsuit that will be initiated in France. I have already written this to the Bishop of Cahors. People here cannot understand what reason can be obliging him to take legal action in the same affair both in France and in Rome. I think there are as many difficulties in not doing so as there are in doing so. Both depend on the will of the above-mentioned Prelate.

I thank you most humbly for the honor you were pleased to bestow on me by your letter of June 24 and the trouble you deigned to take of writing to ask Monsieur Almeras to assist us, which he has most willingly offered to do. We are very much obliged to you for this and will make use of his help when the occasion arises.

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3Alain de Solminihac.
4Jean de la Font.
5Jacques Guérin, Procurator General of the Canons Regular of Sainte-Geneviève in Rome since 1639. Having entered a house of the Canons of Sainte-Geneviève in 1613, at the age of fifteen, he had embraced the Reform and renewed his profession in 1637. His connections with the Jansenist, Gorin de Saint-Amour, having rendered him suspect, he had to leave Rome in 1655. He died at Toussaints Abbey in Angers on May 18, 1681.
Please continue your assistance to us and grant me the favor of believing that I am, Monsieur, your most humble, obedient, and grateful servant.

J. VITET,
Canon Regular

Rome, July 18, 1650

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

1236. - TO PHILIBERT DE BRANDON, BISHOP OF PÉRIGUEUX

July 20, 1650

Thank you most humbly, Excellency, for the opportunity you are giving us to render some small service to God. With all due respect, I beg you, however, to allow me to point out to you that two workers are not enough for an establishment corresponding to your wishes and our Institute. You have the seminary in mind and we, our obligation to give missions. Our principal aim is the instruction of the country people, and the service we render to the ecclesiastical state is merely accessory to that.

We know from experience that the fruits of the missions are very great because the needs of the poor people in rural areas are extreme. But, since they are usually rustic and uneducated, they easily forget what they have been taught and the good resolutions.


1Register 2 simply states that the letter is addressed to a bishop. All the details point to the Bishop of Périgueux: his proximity to Cahors, the steps taken by the Bishop in 1650 to obtain Priests of the Mission to head his seminary, the number of these priests, and, finally, the obligation in which the Saint found himself to recall them in April 1651. He claimed that this was because of his sins, but more probably it was because the Bishop would not accede to the request which the Saint makes here. (Cf. vol. III, no. 1133, and this volume, nos. 1272 and 1304.) The two priests assigned to the Périgueux Seminary took up their duties there in the month of December.
they have taken, if they do not have suitable pastors to maintain them in the good state in which they have been placed. That is why we try also to help form good priests through retreats for the ordinands and through seminaries—not to abandon the missions but to preserve the fruits produced by them.

Therefore, Excellency, since you wish to have Missionaries, it is to be hoped that you may have at least four of them for the two functions. If they had to omit the first, that of giving missions, which, as I said, is of very great value, even for the best educated parishes, they would be distressed. Furthermore, the missions will provide the opportunity for advanced seminarians to put into practice the instructions they will receive in the seminary, or to acquaint them better with pastoral and ecclesiastical functions by seeing them exercised by our men who evangelize the poor.

If you say, Excellency, that in Cahors we only run the seminary, I admit that, but it is also true that the Bishop of Cahors had reserved to the Canons Regular of Chancelade, whom he established in his town, the right to give missions. At that time, I did not reflect on the consequences of this nor how difficult it would be for our priests to be unable to attend to their principal work at times. Yet, this is so painful that they have no greater nor more habitual temptation. It is also the only one of our houses involved with the seminary alone; all the others, thank God, give missions as well.

The problem lies in the maintenance of these four workers. I know, Excellency, that your diocese has a limited income and is burdened with heavy expenses. I know also that you give a great deal in alms and that it is unreasonable for your relatives always to have to contribute to the expenses of your diocese. You already donate more than your share to it, giving beyond your means, as well as giving of yourself to the extent that you do.

I beg you, therefore, to consider my proposal only insofar as it is feasible. Here is one possibility: M... has a priory in your diocese, which he offered us previously for a foundation; perhaps he will still be willing to hand it over to you.
Excellency,

I would be distressed if M. Grimal, a priest of our Company, had gone to pay his respects to you and to offer you the humble services of the Company as well as his own, if I did not do the same by means of this letter, and if I personally did not renew the offer of my obedience, as I now do, with all possible humility and affection.

I entreat you, Excellency, to accept it, together with the liberty I take of telling you that M. Pasquier is pressuring us to carry out the terms of the foundation he has made. He is asking us to provide workers to live in his house, serve his chapel, and give missions. Since you, Excellency, are the one who urged him to choose us over others, and since we are neither able nor willing to proceed further than what will be pleasing to you . . . .

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Letter 1237. - Reg. 1, p. 33 ν.
1In 1650 François Grimal went to the Agen Seminary to replace Guillaume Delatte as Superior.
2François Grimal, born in Paris on March 6, 1605, began his Internal Seminary on June 6, 1640, and took his vows on October 9, 1646. He rendered outstanding service to his Congregation as Superior of the houses in Crécy (1645-46), Montmirail (1646-49, 1654-55), and Agen (1650-51); as Second Assistant to Saint Vincent (1652); and in more humble positions in Fontainebleau and elsewhere. The introduction of vows into the Company corresponded to his wishes, and he made every effort to have this measure accepted by those around him. Although he had taken his vows in 1646, he renewed them on October 3, 1665, in the presence of M. Portail.
3The proposed foundation never materialized.
Monsieur,

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

I cannot thank you as humbly as I would like nor as much as we are obliged to you. O[ur] L[ord] will make up for what I lack, if He so wills. I ask Him to preserve you for many years on earth for the good of His Church.

Besides thanking you in general, I want to express to you my personal gratitude for your kindness in consenting to find out from the Bishop his intention regarding your foundation. Thank you also for your willingness to discuss matters heart to heart with me. Rest assured, Monsieur, that you can count on my confidentiality and collaboration; to this end, I shall try to have my letters delivered to you in person.

If His Excellency and you think it well for us to reside in your house, we shall do so. I repeat, His Excellency, Monsieur; otherwise we would not even consider it, unless the Bishop and you were in agreement on the matter, and we confirmed it.

I am sending M. Grimal there, asking him to see you and to get your orders and the Bishop's instructions concerning this business. Once they have been sent to us, we shall try to give you some while awaiting the ones from there.

If it pleases God that things have changed, in nomine Domini, we shall still be eternally grateful, Monsieur, for the good will with which you have honored us, even though Providence may arrange the outcome differently.

Letter 1238. - Reg. 1, f° 33, copy taken from a draft written in part in the Saint's hand.
1This letter appears to have the same date as no. 1237.
2Barthélemy d'Elbène, Bishop of Agen (cf. no. 1237).
1239. - TO RENÉ ALMÉRAS, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

August 5, 1650

You have greatly edified me by telling me that you no longer eagerly seek nor even desire an opportunity to get us established in Rome. That is the disposition we must have and the proper way to act in all things. In so doing, we may judge rightly, if things succeed, that it is God who has done them. I do not know what means Providence will use to get us a house in that city, if we ever have one there, but I do know that, if we do not get one, it will not be your fault, as you think. No one else could advance matters there any further than you because the time for that is not yet ripe.

The men giving the mission in the Spoleto diocese would have done well to ask to be excused from the commission the Bishop gave them regarding the nuns. If he had then persisted, fine; we owe obedience to the bishops, even in matters that do not pertain to our functions, when they absolutely insist. However, we must also make them realize beforehand that our Rules forbid this. Please make this clear to all your workers so that they will avoid such service as far as possible.

1240. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1647 and 1651]

Something has come up preventing me from being able to attend
today’s meeting. In the name of God, Mademoiselle, let us postpone it until tomorrow. The topic you sent me seems very timely.

The thought occurred to me—this morning and yesterday, I think—that you should give a solid formation in mental prayer to the Sister in charge of the newcomers, so that she can form them well in this holy exercise.

We will not have a meeting at Madame de Lamoignon’s house tomorrow; it was held last Monday.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am your most humble servant.

V. D.

1241. - TO A BISHOP

I cannot tell you, Excellency, how sorry I am to hear that you are not well. God has given me to you, and if He so pleases He will

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2 The topic of the conference.

Julienne Loret, first Seminary Directress. She was born in Paris on October 7, 1622 and baptized the same day. Orphaned at an early age, she was taken in by the parents of Jacques de la Pouze who later became a Priest of the Mission. “She had a tiny body which enclosed a great soul,” it was said in a conference after her death. (Cf. Recueil des principes circulaires des supérieurs généraux de la Congrégation de la Mission, 3 vols., Paris: Georges Champrot, 1877-80), vol. II, p. 524.) She entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity on June 9, 1644 and made her vows on December 25, 1649. Her merit and virtue were so remarkable that, on October 30, 1647, scarcely three years after her admission to the Community, she was entrusted with the formation of the new Sisters. At the same time, Saint Louise took her as her Assistant. “It was she who directed the whole Community,” Sister Mathurine Guérin would later say, “because Mademoiselle was in no state to assist at any exercise.” (Cf. Recueil, vol. II, p. 530.) Julienne Loret also carried out the duties of secretary. In this capacity she was responsible for taking down Saint Vincent’s talks, to which she listened pen in hand. In 1651, she was sent to Chars, a village some sixty miles from Paris, to settle a particularly delicate situation: the new pastor subscribed to Jansenist ideas and was attempting to impose these practices upon the Sisters. Returning to Paris in 1653, after two years of difficult trials, she received her appointment as Superior in Fontenay-aux-Roses (Hauts-de-Seine), where she remained until 1655. Recalled to the Motherhouse, she was again named Assistant, remaining in office under Mother Marguerite Château after the death of the Foundress, and again under Mother Nicole Haran. She died in Fontainebleau on August 9, 1699. Her manuscript life, by Antoine Durand, C.M., is in the Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity.

make you aware of the deep feeling He has given me for whatever concerns you. What consoles me is the fact that your illness is not irremediable or incurable. I experienced something similar in the past, when one of my fingers went completely numb, but that went away after a while.

May it please God, Excellency, to preserve you for the good of your diocese which, I have heard, you were thinking of leaving! If I were worthy of being heard by telling you my thoughts on that, I would take the liberty, Excellency, of telling you that I think it would be well for you to leave matters as they are, for fear that God may not profit from your resignation. For where will you find a man to walk in your footsteps and to equal your leadership? If someone could be found, well and good, but I see no hope for that, given the times in which we are now living.

Furthermore, Excellency, you have no greater difficulties in your episcopacy than Saint Paul had in his. Yet, he bore the burden of it until death. In addition, not one of the Apostles divested himself of his apostolate or abandoned his work with its hardships, until going to receive his crown for this in heaven.

I would be rash, Excellency, to propose their example to you if God, who has raised you to their supreme dignity, was not Himself inviting you to follow them, and if the liberty I take did not proceed from the deep respect and incomparable affection Our Lord has given me for your sacred person.

1242. - TO MARC COGLÉE, SUPERIOR, IN SEDAN

August 13, 1650

When your consultors are not in agreement, it is up to you to settle the matter as it seems reasonable to you; or, if it requires writing to me about it, to wait until you have my reply.
As to what you say about honor not making you vain but that dishonor saddens you, I must tell you, Monsieur, that you know the anatomy of the human will better than I, for you are a learned man and I am a nitwit. According to Seneca, the will is inclined to covet what seems good to it and to reject what seems bad. Saint Thomas says that, as a matter of fact, spiritual men rise above covetousness and master it to the point of depriving themselves voluntarily of their own satisfactions, but only with difficulty do they succeed in truly loving the hurt that comes to them from others.

We are, indeed, more sensitive to pain than to pleasure, to the prick of a rose than to its fragrance. The way to balance out this disparity is to be as willing to embrace what mortifies nature as to deprive ourselves of what pleases it and to incline our hearts to suffering by considering the good it brings with it. We should also be ready to accept it so that, when it comes, we will not be surprised or saddened by it. Le Combat spirituel ¹ advises us to envisage upsetting situations that may arise, to struggle against them, and to train ourselves for combat until we feel we are in command of the situation—I mean determined to endure them willingly if, in fact, they arise. Still, we should not imagine extreme trials, such as certain torments of the martyrs, the mere thought of which strikes fear in us, but rather, things like contempt, calumny, an attack of fever, and similar things.

In two or three cases, the community should be told of the fault of an individual:

(1) When the fault is so deeply ingrained in the guilty party that a private admonition is judged ineffective. That is why Our Lord admonished Judas only in the presence of the other Apostles. Even then He did so in veiled terms, saying that one of those who puts his hand in the dish would betray Him.² On the other hand, He

¹The Spiritual Combat, a work of the Theatine Father, Lorenzo Scupoli, translated into French by Saintel in 1608.
reprimanded Saint Peter when he tried to dissuade Him from the Passion He had to suffer, and even let him know what a great fault that was, calling him Satan, well aware that he would profit from it.

(2) When these persons are weak and cannot bear a correction, even a gentle one, although they are really good people. Because they are good, a recommendation given in general is sufficient to correct them.

(3) When there is danger that others may slip into the same fault, if a reproof is not given.

Apart from these instances, I think the admonition should be given to the person in private.

As for faults committed against the Superior, the subject must be reproved but: (1) it should never be done on the spot; (2) it should be done gently and in a timely manner; (3) reasons should be given, pointing out in a cheerful, pleasant way the ill consequences of the person's fault, so that he will realize that the Superior is not admonishing him because he is in a bad mood or because he is taking the fault personally.

I have never made any distinction between those who have taken vows and those who have not; some should not be overburdened in order to spare others.

It is well for you to invite outside preachers to your church occasionally, provided they are good and do not undermine the teachings and good practices you have endeavored to inculcate into your people. The repugnance you feel for showiness in a parish should not prevent you from doing what good pastors do to keep everyone happy, as far as this can be done.

Those who direct the houses of the Company must not look upon anyone as their inferior but rather as their brother. Our Lord said to His disciples, "I no longer call you my servants, but I have called

\[^{3}\text{Cf. Mt 16: 21-23. (NAB)}\]
you my friends." 4 They should, therefore, be treated with humility, gentleness, forbearance, cordiality, and love. Not that I always do so, Monsieur, but I feel I have failed when I deviate from that way of acting.

It is not the spirit of the Mission to make courtesy calls on prominent persons in the places where we are established. In small towns like Sedan, they are almost all of the same social rank, so you would have to visit all of them and do nothing else but that. If you visit only some of them, the others will think you are slighting them. Therefore, it is better to refrain altogether than to find yourself in such unfortunate situations. I make an exception for the Governor, whom you should visit often and, in his absence, the King's Lieutenant. I also make an exception for those whom you are obliged to see for some special reason, and for distinguished lay persons who might come to see you; in that case, since you are obliged to return the visit, it will no longer be simply a courtesy call. May I add to this that our priests who come to Sedan and who leave there should always go to greet the Governor and to say good-bye to him.

God be praised, Monsieur, that people say the Company knows the things of God but knows men very little! Oh! how we should wish that this be true and that it maintain itself at a distance from the spirit of the world and what goes on there so as to converse only with heaven! Blessed are those who converse on this earth only to snatch souls from it so as to raise them up to God, in whom I am...

1243. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

I am writing to inquire about you and to give you news of us. How are you after such hard work? How many missions have you given? Do you find the people disposed to make good use of your

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4Cf. Jn 15: 15. (NAB)

exercises and to derive from them the desired results and profit? I would be consoled to hear the details of all this.

I have had good reports from the other houses of the Company. In all of them the men are working successfully and satisfactorily, thanks be to God. Even Monsieur... has been in the country for nine months, working almost constantly at the missions. It is wonderful to see the strength God gives him and the extraordinary good things he is doing, as I am hearing from everywhere. The Vicars-General have told me so, and others have said or written it, even some monks from the areas near the place where he is working.

This happy success is attributed to the care he takes to win over the poor people by gentleness and kindness. This has made me decide to recommend more than ever that the Company should devote itself more and more to the practice of these virtues.

If God gave His blessing to our first missions, it is because we acted kindly, humbly, and sincerely with all kinds of people. If God was pleased to make use of the most wretched of men for the conversion of some heretics, it was, as they themselves acknowledged, because of his patience and cordiality toward them.

Even convicts, with whom I have spent some time, are not won over in any other way. Whenever I happened to speak sharply to them, I spoiled everything; on the contrary, when I praised them for their resignation and sympathized with them in their sufferings; when I told them they were fortunate to have their purgatory in this world; when I kissed their chains, showed compassion for their distress, and expressed sorrow for their misfortune, it was then that they listened to me, gave glory to God, and opened themselves to salvation.

Please help me, Monsieur, to thank God for all that and to ask Him to inspire all Missionaries to accustom themselves to treat their neighbor gently, humbly, and charitably, in public and in private—even sinners and the hardhearted—never using abusive language, reproaches, or harsh words with anyone. I am sure, Monsieur, that you, for your part, are striving to avoid this improper
manner of serving souls, which embitters and estranges them instead of attracting them. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal sweetness of men and angels, and it is by this same virtue that we must likewise go to Him, leading others there as well.

1244. - TO MATHURIN GENTIL, IN LE MANS

Paris, August 16, 1650

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

It has been a long time since I wrote to you. If I had been able to do so, my heart would have reproached me, and rightly so, for it is certainly glad to communicate with yours, which it cherishes with ever-renewed affection; your letters also give me great consolation. So, Monsieur, tell me no more that you dare not write to me, and that there is no longer any *auditus* for you. That is your own word; I remember it well, but I do not know why you have felt that way. God knows, and so do you, Monsieur, that I esteem and love your soul as that of a good servant of God and one of the best priests in the Company. Anything that comes to me from you will be welcomed in that light and, consequently, with respect and joy. Let this be said once and for all.

Let us go on to your last letter, in which you spoke about the seminary. Thank you for the information you gave me. I find it hard to believe that the younger students do not disburse more than forty écus. To find out whether this is true, please see what the whole

Letter 1244. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.

1Mathurin Gentil, born in Brou (Eure-et-Loir) in May 1604, entered the Congregation of the Mission on November 11, 1639, and took his vows on October 7, 1642. He was Treasurer of Saint-Lazare in 1644, and in 1647 he assumed the same position in the Le Mans Seminary. He died in that town on April 13, 1673, mourned by everyone, especially his Superior General, Edme Jolly, who announced his death to the Company in a most laudatory letter.

2*Hearing*, i.e., you are no longer heeded.
house, boarders and externs, has spent for bread, for wine, for meat, for wood, and likewise for the other items. After that, count the number of persons who have lived on that amount, then see how much that comes to for each one. All that cannot be figured exactly, but you can get a close estimate. Because the younger students do not have as much at their meals as the others, note the difference and subtract a reasonable amount for what concerns them. After you put all that in writing, please send it to me so the boarding fees can be adjusted to the fairest rate, for it is not right for the house, in its present straitened circumstances, to contribute to the board of these young people.

It is better not to have a seminary at all, but it is also necessary to maintain this work if it can be done without expense to the Company, other than the effort and maintenance of the teachers. You can see that this calculation must be done soon so that, when the students are leaving for vacation, you can tell them what they will have to pay if they are coming back.

I ask Our Lord, Monsieur, to illuminate you with His light and to unite our hearts in His most holy love, by which I am, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,

i.e.C.M.

At the bottom of the first page: Monsieur Gentil
Since you have spoken about M. Authier to Cardinal d’Este and Bishop Massari, and called their attention to the inconveniences that would arise from a similarity between the name of his Company and ours, it will be all right for you to touch on that. This, however, is not my own opinion because I would like to leave the matter to Providence, but it is the opinion of a number of clear-sighted persons, who feel we should try to prevent this source of confusion and disorder.

This makes me fear that my hesitancy springs from an insensitve spirit, so much so that I doubt I will say anything about it to the Keeper of the Seals nor to anyone else, for I have not done so up until now, not even to the Chancellor, except for one day when I merely asked if he thought it might be disadvantageous to have two Congregations with the same name. He immediately answered yes, that it would be very disadvantageous and should not be allowed. He also said he would do his utmost to prevent it. I did
not even want to tell him certain things that could have borne out his opinion.

Furthermore, what are we to do? Almost all those here engaged in work similar to ours call themselves missionaries. They do so because God, who in His mercy has called us to this profession, has been pleased to confer a certain esteem on that name. Even M. Olier, who seemed to like the name, *Priests of the Community of Saint-Sulpice*, told me he wanted them to be called *of the Mission*, as is being done, since the two or three seminaries they opened up until that time were under this name.

If this is an evil, it seems a necessary one in our case, and one we cannot avoid because it would be futile to do so. It is better to leave it in God's hands and strive to distinguish ourselves from others only by great submission, deference, and the practice of the virtues which constitute a true missionary, so that what Our Lord said about the first being last and the last being first may not happen to us.

Continue, as I have already told you, Monsieur, to be vigilant there.

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**1246. - TO FRANÇOIS DE FLEURY***

August 19, 1650

Monsieur,

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

God alone can make you understand what joy the Company

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*Jean-Jacques Olier, the founder of Saint-Sulpice Seminary.

*The Saint was soon to change his mind.

*Cf. Mt 19:30. (NAB)*

Letter 1246. - Reg. 1, f° 2 v°, copy made from the original autograph letter.

*François de Fleury, chaplain to the Queen of Poland. Born in the Langres diocese, he secured for himself a canonry in the diocese of Verdun. He approved the book *De la fréquence*
experienced at the news of the Queen of Poland's safe delivery.² We hope and pray continually that God will bless and sanctify the King and Queen and give them children who may found a royal family, providing Poland with Kings as long as the world may last.

We purposely did not leave sooner, Monsieur, since we had no specific order from either the Queen or you. We shall do so at the first opportunity which presents itself, unless Her Majesty judges it advisable for us to wait until spring and leave with the Sisters of Sainte-Marie³ and the Daughters of Charity. We await your instructions in this matter and in whatever else it pleases you to do us the honor of commanding.

I say nothing to you about Monsieur de Groni. M. des Noyers, the Queen's secretary,⁴ may have told you about his behavior here, and that he left about two months ago after receiving a letter he showed us, with the confirmation sent him by the Queen of Sweden, conferring on him a diocese dependent on her States. We ask Our Lord to be his guide and to make me worthy of being, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,

i.s.C.M.

²Communication, and was presented by the Jansenists to Queen Louise-Marie de Gonzague, on her departure for Poland, to act as her chaplain. His relationship with Saint Vincent and the Missionaries sent to that country was always excellent, even cordial, as is evident from the letters of the Saint, who esteemed him highly. He died in France, early in November 1658. Part of his correspondence with Mother Marie-Angélique Arnauld is extant.

³Despite her attachment to the Jansenist party, Louise-Marie de Gonzague, a former Lady of Charity, wife of King Wladyslaw IV, then of his brother, Jan Casimir, held Saint Vincent in the highest esteem. She summoned to Poland the Priests of the Mission, the Daughters of Charity, and the Visitation nuns, gave them housing, and took care that nothing was wanting to them. She never failed to protect them. She gave birth to a princess on July 21, 1650.

⁴The Visitation nuns.

⁴Pierre des Noyers, who died in Danzig (now Gdansk) in 1693. His correspondence was
Excellency,

I join my humble request to the one the Pastor of Saint-Nicolas is sending to you to kindly allow the Abbés de Chandenier, published in Berlin in 1859. (Lettres de Pierre des Noyers, secrétaire de la reine de Pologne, pour servir à l'histoire de Pologne et de Suède de 1655 à 1659.)


1Nicolas Pavillon was born on November 17, 1597. As a very young priest he placed himself under the direction of Saint Vincent, who had him teach catechism, employed him in the work of the missions, and sent him to the Charities, where it was felt he could be useful. More than once he entrusted him with the conferences and retreats for priests. Appointed to the diocese of Alet in 1637, Pavillon accepted it only upon the Saint's urging. This new office did not deter him from his apostolic works. He gave a mission in Russel at Richelieu's invitation, then in Saint-Germain-en-Laye at the King's request. He was consecrated at Saint-Lazare on August 22, 1639, and went to his diocese accompanied by Étienne Bâtiron, a Priest of the Mission. A zealous, intelligent Bishop, dedicated to reform, he justified the expectation placed in him. His episcopate would have been more fruitful had he been more on his guard against Jansenistic ideas. Saint Vincent begged him in vain to sign the formulary against Jansenism. The Bishop of Alet died December 8, 1677. There are several biographies of him, notably that of M. Étienne Dejean, Un prélat indépendant au XVIIe siècle, Nicolas Pavillon, évêque d'Alet (1637-1677) [Paris: Flon-Nourrit, 1909].

2Hippolyte Féret, born in Pontoise (Val-d'Oise), was a Doctor of Theology and later became Vicer-General of Alet, then of Paris. At the time this letter was written, he was Pastor of Saint-Nicolas-de-Chardonnat and he himself wrote to the Bishop of Alet on the same day. His letter, preserved in the archives of Utrecht, has been published in part by Dejean, op. cit., p. 143, note.

3The brothers Claude-Charles de Rochechouart de Chandenier, later Abbé de Moutiers-Saint-Jean, and Louis de Rochechouart de Chandenier, Abbé de Tournus, were both close friends of Saint Vincent and priests remarkable for virtue, especially their humility, which led them to refuse the highest positions in the Church. After the death of their uncle, they went to live in the Saint-Sulpice Seminary, which they left in 1653 to go and stay at Saint-Lazare. They came from a family of ten children. We shall have occasion to speak about the eldest, François, Marquis de Chandenier (cf. no. 1541). Charles, the second eldest, took up a military career, and died in November 1653 from his wounds. Jean-Elise, a Knight of Malta, died of the plague on July 10, 1627. One of their sisters, Marie, lived as an unmarried woman in the world until her death in 1701, at the age of eighty-seven; another died as a child; Louise, Henriette, and Catharine entered the Second Monastery of the Visitiation. More specific details will be given later on the Abbots of Tournus and of Moutiers-Saint-Jean (cf. no. 1552).
nephews of Cardinal de La Rochefoucauld, to retire near you to
gather some of the crumbs of doctrine and piety which fall from
your table. They are, Excellency, two of the most virtuous clergymen we have in Paris today. They will get a house in your town and bring with them two very pious priests. If you grant them the consolation they desire, Excellency, you will help win them over more and more to God and to the service they will render to His Church. They are capable of doing much good in it some day and of attaining the highest posts. I hope, Excellency, that they will be as grateful for the favor you will do them as they will be prudent in making use of it without causing you inconvenience.

I am working to obtain authorization for the resignation of the pastor of a parish in your diocese, which you did me the honor of recommending to me. God knows how displeased I was with the lack of success of the preceding one, and what a joy it would be to me to make good use of my obedience in your regard. I renew the offer of it with all possible humility and affection.

Prostrate most humbly in spirit at your feet, I ask of you your holy blessing, and of God the grace of preserving you for many years to come and of making me worthy of the happiness I have of being, in His love, Excellency, your . . .
1248. - TO LOUIS THIBAULT, SUPERIOR, IN SAINT-MÉEN

August 20, 1650

Just when I was yearning for some letters from you, I received the one dated the fifth. I praise God for your return to a place of rest because this is a rest for me, too, which will last as long as you enjoy yours. May His Holy Name be forever blessed for the blessings He showered so profusely upon your last mission and its workers! O Dieu! Monsieur, what a great reward you will have in heaven, since so many souls have shared in the fruits of your labors!

We shall welcome M. Greneda warmly and respectfully when he honors us with his visit. In the meantime, we ask your good angel to come to our aid so that we can welcome this good gentleman with the courtesy with which you welcome the servants of God into your house. I shall give no thought in this situation to the service he can render us but to that which we owe to him. If I have occasion to be of service to him, I shall do so most lovingly; how could it be otherwise? I think that neither you nor M. Serre would forgive me.


1Louis Serre, born in Épinal (Vosges), was ordained a priest in September 1643. He entered the Congregation of the Mission on March 23, 1644 at the age of twenty-six, and took his vows in July 1646. His first assignment was Crécy, where he was Superior (1646-48). From there he was sent to Saint-Méen, where he spent nearly his whole missionary life. He was Superior of this house (1655-65, 1671-75, and 1676-81).

I am sure Brother Bernard has already explained to you, better than my letter could do, the way their business was handled and settled. As for the brief I was hoping to obtain for the Bishop of Cahors to block the indults, I have come up against three difficulties in getting it granted:

1. The Bishop or his Vicar-General might not want to sign the indult, with no legitimate reason for their refusal. If anything, this might proceed from some resentment or aversion the Bishop may have toward the beneficiary of the indult.

2. This would arouse the jealousy of the other bishops, who do not raise these difficulties. As a result, it could happen that some disorder might ensue. There would be no fear of this if the entire Assembly of the Clergy, or at least several prelates, made this request.

3. The granting of this brief would drive to despair those who obtain indults.

Although, after a fashion, these reasons cover the refusal, the main one, which people were unwilling to state, is, nevertheless, the interest of this court, which would lose certain clients by granting this brief. I informed the Bishop of Cahors of this situation a long time ago, and I hope to have his reply soon, since without it nothing further can be done in the matter.

For what concerns our affair, here is what we have done since I last wrote you. As soon as the Bishop of Cahors obtained the brief of appeal we had requested against the Abbot of Grosbois' decision, my reading of it confirmed my opinion of the banker who had represented us in that court. We set to work immediately not only to have it corrected, but also to obtain a new one with a more accurate presentation of the situation. It was, however, a little long. This lengthiness caused it to be rejected, so I was obliged to correct the way the preceding one was stated. Since the Procurator General of Sainte-Geneviève at this court had had our agents recalled, I sought counsel here on what I should do. Before I could act on the advice given me, I received the Bishop's reply.

To make a long story short, it was felt here that a suit should not be filed at this time for the revocation of the brief obtained by the Procurator General of Sainte-Geneviève, but we should simply have ours drawn up without a new date and change one of the first agents we had requested.

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1The Assembly of the Clergy was the periodic gathering of French bishops and holders of notable benefices. It had varied and extensive privileges in financial, judicial, and educational matters, and, in its internal discipline, it held a dominant position in the life of the nation. It formed the First Estate whenever the Estates-General convened.

2Jacques Guérin.
These agents were the Bishop of Chartres or his Officialis, the Dean of Notre-Dame de Paris, and the Officialis of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. I changed the last-named and asked for the General of the Congregation of Saint-Maur to replace him; I was refused. I was also refused the Bishop of Utica. As a last resort, I had the brief forwarded to the Dean of Paris, the Archdeacon of Chartres, and the Officialis of Sarlat.

I am not sure the Bishop of Cahors will be satisfied; I think so, since we have done all we could. I know that the Officialis of Sarlat has gone beyond three diets; consequently, he cannot remain a judge, unless he is in Paris, but he can delegate some duly authorized Paris priest to carry out the orders. That is the main reason which induced me to have him appointed agent. I know he will do only what the Bishop of Cahors expects of him. I entrust the entire matter to his guidance:

We are still waiting for our documents from Bishop Farnese. I pray that God will forgive him the great harm he is doing us.

I ask your pardon for the length of my letter. I beg you to continue your patronage for us and to approve the liberty I take of declaring myself, Monsieur, your most humble, obedient, and grateful servant.

VITET

I almost forgot to tell you that for a month now Father Guérin, Procurator of Sainte-Geneviève, has been checking very carefully in Rome to see if the Bishop of Cahors has someone there working against him. He is using M. Gueffier for this. The latter is making a very thorough investigation but, as yet, he has learned nothing and is spreading very bad

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3Pierre de Bertier, Doctor of the Sorbonne, former Canon and Archdeacon of Toulouse, Coadjutor of Bishop Anquet de Murviel and then his successor (1652); consecrated Bishop in partibus of Utica in 1636. De Bertier had to put up with a great deal of trouble from the elderly Bishop of Montauban, and several times was on the point of resigning. Some time before the Prelate's death, he wrote to Mazarin: "His health is so good and his humor so bad that I cannot hope for his succession nor even his favor. Therefore, my Lord, not only am I unemployed in my ministry and deprived of sufficient revenues for my position, I am, in addition, constantly persecuted and believed guilty without any reason." (Cf. Arch. Nat., KK 1217, p. 207.) The day after Saint Vincent died, de Bertier wrote: "God granted me so much love and respect for Monsieur Vincent that I truly believe that none of his sons felt his death more than I did."

4A diet is a formal assembly for discussing or acting upon public or state affairs.

5Giroldo Farnese, Secretary of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars.

6Etienne Gueffier, chargé d'affaires for the French government in Rome since 1632; he died there in June 1660, at ninety-four years of age.
rumors about the Bishop, particularly that he is always involved in lawsuits and is retaining a titular abbey along with a diocese. I have informed the Bishop of all this.

1250. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN RICHELIEU

August 24, 1650

You tell me that, since the Archdeacon was unable to visit part of the Archdeaconry, one of our priests, commissioned by the Bishop of Poitiers, visited it on his own. You would like to know my opinion on this, in the event that a similar case should arise for you in the future. All I can say on that is that we must obey the bishops but should not seek out such services.

As for M. Romillon, chaplain for the Champigny almshouses, since he is an upright man in whom nothing blameworthy has been found thus far, and who is not in disfavor there, it would be discourteous for you to assail him to the point of seeking either his removal from the almshouses or your own release from your duties there. That smacks of severity, and to put pressure in this way on Madame¹ to do one or the other would be dealing too harshly with her. It suffices that you proposed the first suggestion once or twice. She is well aware of the conduct of this man, who most likely is not what people have told you he is. Those who spoke to you about him in a negative way have perhaps no other basis than their own disagreements with his leadership or advice.

You must no longer insist that the poor be lodged outside the almshouses nor prevent their being obliged—most of them, at least—to stay there. There are three or four reasons for this:

(1) M. du Rivau² will not give in to you, and it would be temerity

¹The Duchesse d'Aiguillon, niece of Cardinal Richelieu.
²The Chevalier Jacques de Beauvat, nephew of Cardinal Richelieu.