you had been seriously ill but that Our Lord has been pleased to restore you to health. I felt it my duty to do myself the honor of writing to you to express the joy and consolation we have experienced in this, since you use your health in such a holy and useful manner, Monsieur, for the service of His Church.

This letter is to assure you that I wish with all my heart that I could give you the satisfaction you desire with regard to the second letter addressed to His Holiness, which you so kindly sent us. The Bishop of Pamiers and I reflected seriously on it once again before God and discussed it together, but we maintain the same opinion we expressed to you in a previous letter. I still have great respect, as I should, for the charitable, cordial, and paternal message in your letters, but we are convinced that the conciliatory spirit we had simply proposed to you would perhaps contribute more to the glory of God, the peace of the Church, and the reconciliation of mind and heart on both sides, while waiting for God to grant greater openness for the resolution of all these difficulties.

I entreat you, Monsieur, kindly to do me the favor of remembering my needs in your holy prayers and most Holy Sacrifices and to continue to honor me with your friendship. I am, in the love of Our Lord and of His holy Mother, Monsieur, my very dear Most Honored Father, your most humble and very obedient servant.

NICOLAS,
Bishop of Alet

1418. - TO NICOLAS BAGNI, NUNCIO IN FRANCE

Saint-Lazare, October 27, 1651

Excellency,

In accordance with Your Most Illustrious Lordship’s orders, I

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1Nicolas Pavillon, Bishop of Alet, and François-Étienne Caulet, Bishop of Pamiers, turned a deaf ear to Saint Vincent’s supplications with regard to the condemnation of Jansenism.


1Nicolò di Bagno.
have made inquiries about the qualifications of Father Michel du Saint-Esprit. I questioned three different monks of the same Order, one of whom is Father Léon, and they assured me that Father is very learned and virtuous, and most anxious to go to foreign lands to extend the empire of Jesus Christ. He is preparing to do so and even to bring some other Fathers with him to work toward his goal.

I was also told, Excellency, that the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide has given him faculties for this and twelve hundred francs for their maintenance. He left for Brittany just two days ago, fully determined, as soon as he returns here, to leave for Memphis, otherwise known as Grand Cairo.

This is what I learned about him yesterday, Excellency, going expressly for this purpose to the monastery of the Calced Carmelites. If Your Most Illustrious Lordship wants me to get further information, I shall gladly do so, Excellency. I have no greater consolation in this world than to obey and please Your Most Illustrious Lordship because of my very great respect for you. It will, however, be very difficult for me to find anyone outside his Order who knows him well enough to tell me anything more certain about him.

I most humbly entreat Your Most Illustrious Lordship to pardon me for not coming in person to give this report; I have a meeting this morning, which deprives me of this honor. It also deprives me of being entirely at your command to do whatever you wish, since God has given you sovereign power over me. I am, in His love, Excellency, Your Illustrious Lordship's most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Since writing this letter, Excellency, I have seen a man who knew this Father in Rome. He told me he is a good, wise monk, but a little ambitious and has even resorted to some cunning in the matter in question. In the beginning he requested only to be Vicar-General of the Bishop of Memphis; since then, however, in
order to act on his own authority, independently of the Bishop, he has asked for faculties for himself and three or four of his companions.

1419. - ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC TO SAINT VINCENT

March 2, November 2, 1651

Monsieur,

Abbé de Marmiesse, the representative of the clergy, wrote me that the unionist priests of my diocese were willing to do whatever the Archbishop of Bourges, the Bishops of Senlis, Lodève, and Périgueux, you, M. de la Marguerie, and the representatives of the clergy might order, and they want my consent for that, which I gladly give. This is an affair that involves all the Prelates, so I feel sure they will take care to maintain what is due to the episcopal character and dignity. I have no doubt that you and M. de la Marguerie will do likewise.

I am not sure if you recall that, when I wrote telling you that these men had met and formed a union, you sent me word that you were very worried about the possible consequences which you had apparently foreseen. That is why it is absolutely necessary to break up this association, which has very harmful consequences for all the Prelates. Any gestures of submission they might make without this would not mean a thing to me. We would be forever starting over, and if they did not do so, others would. This is the
duty of the representatives, to whom I am writing here. In the meantime I
shall remain, Monsieur. . . .

ALAIN,
Bishop of Cahors

1420. - TO THE QUEEN, ANNE OF AUSTRIA

November 3, 1651

Madame,

Monsieur de la Roche, son of Monsieur de la Roche, Counselor
in the Parlement of Bordeaux, is coming to pay his respects to Your
Majesty and to offer you his service. The first-mentioned is one of
the wisest and best priests I know and is among the most zealous
in the service of the King.

The division existing among the nuns of Longchamp\(^1\) has given
several persons the idea of requesting that Abbey of Your Majesty.
However, since it is not up to the King to bestow it because it is
elective, Your Majesty is most humbly entreated not to let herself
be taken by surprise. Both factions are asking for the Reform, but
it can be put in place there only by authority of the Pope, who must
be petitioned for this. It is to be hoped, Madame, that it may please
Your Majesty to have the Ambassador\(^2\) present this petition to him.
Madame de Brienne is supposed to ask her husband to discuss this
with Your Majesty.

Disorder has existed in this house for a long time, Madame, so
this is a blessing God is presenting to Your Majesty to contribute
to the restoration of peace and His service there, in line with the

\(^{1}\)Longchamp Abbey, a convent of Franciscan nuns, was situated on a plain of this name in
the Bois de Boulogne, near Paris.

\(^{2}\)Henri d'Estampes, Bailiff of Valençay.
resolution you have taken to support similar projects. I have no doubt, Madame, that His Divine Goodness will, in turn, bless your wise government more and more. This is my daily prayer to Him. I am, in His love, Madame, your most humble, obedient, and faithful servant and subject.

VINCENT DE PAUL,
i.s.C.M.

1421. - TO N.

November 4, 1651

And what are we doing if we are not doing God's Will?

1422. - ALLAIN DE SOLMINIHAC TO SAINT VINCENT

Mercuès, November 8, 1651

Monsieur,

I received your letter of October 8. We shall await the Queen's return, since you think it advisable, for the Sainte-Geneviève business. In the meantime, I am very much obliged to you and thank you for the care you have taken with M. de la Marguerie to put an end to the business with our unionists. I entreat you to give a favorable reception to my opinions and reasons which I indicated to you in a letter I had my Vicar-General write to my Officialis, with orders to show it to you and M. de la Marguerie.

3The Queen requested the reform of the monastery, and Rome appointed Saint Vincent to carry out the investigation. He describes further on (cf. no. 1564) the pitiful state into which that poor abbey had fallen.

Letter 1421. - Collet, op. cit., vol. II, p. 44.

Letter 1422. - Archives of the Diocese of Cahors, Alain de Solminihac collection, notebook, file 22, no. 31, copy made from the original.
In all sincerity, I must tell you that everyone who has seen the articles of the unionists was amazed at them and indignant that our Officialis would allow them to be discussed, since they were slanderous libel, and he knows better. Also, they dealt with my synodal statutes, which have nothing to do either with the Council or the Parliament. They have to go before the Pope, who has never been willing to listen to unionists, regardless of how strongly they insisted, but he has listened to us. The clergy has nothing to say about synodal statutes; only the cathedral Chapter is to give its opinion, which I am not obliged to follow. Moreover, I will never allow anyone to talk about this; the consequences would be too damaging. Our Officialis was very wrong in allowing it to be discussed. That is neither here nor there in the lawsuit. His behavior is very blameworthy. Personally, I think he meant well, but I am very familiar with his mentality and way of acting.

I have signed the request M. Treffort presented to me, in the format he wanted. The advice given you was very good. M. Treffort did not agree with our appointing M. Doronce, the representative of our Officialis, because of all the soldiers who are looting the whole countryside, but I have appointed an upright priest nearby whom he mentioned to me. I assure you that on this occasion, as in any circumstances in which I can be of service to you, I shall prove to you that I am, Monsieur. . . .

ALAIN,
Bishop of Cahors

1423. - LOUISE-MARIE, QUEEN OF POLAND,
TO SAINT VINCENT

Louise-Marie, by the grace of God Queen of Poland and of Sweden, etc., Grand-Duchess of Lithuania, Russia, Prussia, etc., born Princess of Mantua and Montferrat de Nivernois, etc.

Monsieur Vincent,

It was a joy for me to see the Missionaries you sent me, who delivered
your letter to me.\(^1\) I hope they will bear the fruits I have always expected of them. I am now sending them to the Bishop of Vilna\(^2\) to get his approval because they will be residing in his diocese, on one of my estates in Lithuania, where they will open their seminary. In time, I hope to be able to have priests from it for other places and for Warsaw itself and to do the things you foresee for me in your letter. They will send you a report of their journey and arrival here.

If God grants me the grace of not dying in childbirth, I shall write the letters you mentioned to have the Visitation nuns come this spring.

In the meantime, I recommend myself to your prayers and ask God to keep you in His holy care.

Written in Warsaw, November 13, 1651

LOUISE-MARIE,
Queen

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, in Paris

1424. - TO MATHURIN GENTIL, IN LE MANS

November 22, 1651

The compassion I feel for you in your hardships makes me ask Our Lord often to be your strength. The Le Mans house is greatly indebted to you for the trouble you take for it and the good example you give it. It is to be hoped that you will add to this the following: not to undertake any building project or major renovations without an express order from the General; for minor repairs the permission of the local Superior is required. This is in conformity with the Rules and customs of the Company.

\(^1\)Cf. no. 1401.

\(^2\)Jerzy Tyskiewicz, Archbishop of Vilnius.
Letter 1424 - Reg. 2. p. 315.
M. Lambert has clearly recognized this and, before he left for Poland, he expressed some regret for having told you at the time of his visitation that you could do and undo whatever you saw fit, without asking the Superior's advice. This is a big mistake; therefore, I am rescinding that permission, and I ask you to adhere strictly to the practice of the other houses, which is in conformity with the Rule and with what I have just said.

I am sure you will accept this advice since it comes from someone who loves you tenderly, and you will be even more glad to discontinue all spending because you have less money to pay your fees, and we have less to help you. You know we have advanced large sums on your house, paying about a thousand écus a year against it to Abbé Lucas¹ and others. For all that, you say you cannot meet other expenses. How is it, then, that you almost always have workmen who are moving, renovating, tearing things down, building up again, making general repairs, and carrying off a great deal of money for days of labor and supplies! You will tell me that the farms are on the verge of ruin and need repairs. This is only too true, Monsieur, but that is not where you have the work done; it is in the house, which does not need it. However, you must make up your mind to turn your attention to these small holdings and ask permission as soon as possible to sell some wood to cover the necessary expense.

May God grant us the grace to contribute to good order, to use well the modest means God gives us and, at the same time, to practice holy poverty!

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¹Martin Lucas, Provost of the collegiate church of Notre-Dame-de-Coëffort in Le Mans and a benefactor of the Missionaries in that town.
Most Honored Father,

I have found no document concerning the establishment. I do recall that one day your charity took the trouble to read us the petition you had presented to the Archbishop of Paris, followed by the reading of our Rule and, thinking that it should remain with us, I asked you for it. I believe the reason we never received it is that something else still had to be done to it.

My wretchedness and my awareness of the obstacles I place in the way of grace for this Company have often caused me to reflect that, in order for its establishment to be complete, it is to be hoped that another person might replace me. Serving as an example by her virtues and her exact observance of the Rules, she would help all the Daughters of Charity form good habits. I have thought several times that Providence was delaying the establishment in want of that.

The reasons causing me to wonder a number of times whether God willed the establishment or wanted to allow the work to continue, so long as it would not do away with itself by notable disorders, are: first, the premature deaths of so many good subjects, who could have been a great support to it. Another reason is that once the Sisters see themselves established they might elevate themselves too far above what they now are and become self-important in their duties. A third or fourth reason is the experience of already having three or four who left to get married and, consequently, had these ideas, which are bordering on impurity, when they were in the Company. That is an offense which would bring about the entire ruin of the Company, if it persisted in it, since it must be established with the aim of honoring Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, who are purity personified.
One final reason is the individual faults of our Sisters and their slow advancement in perfection, especially in mortification of the senses and passions.

What may allow us to think that God wills the establishment is the intrinsic goodness of the work, the blessings His Mercy has bestowed on it until now, the guidance of Divine Providence in forming every part of it, the freedom Superiors have to rid the Company of subjects who could destroy it and, similarly, the freedom each individual has to leave.

Another reason that might lead one to believe that God wills the establishment is that, since the principal of the temporal goods concerns another work, it is the principal might be sought after in the future, and sufficient reasons might be found to propose the general destruction of the Company. In this way the glory God wishes perhaps to draw from it would come to an end sooner than He had intended, if we had been faithful to Him.

The strongest motive to persuade people that the establishment is necessary is that, if it is not done by the founder God used to begin it, there is no reason to believe that his successors would ever dare to do so. 5

I beg God in His goodness to continue to enlighten and guide His work, to eliminate the obstacles to it, and to make known His Will concerning the thinking of the women who would like to be associated with it.

I have gone on too long—I most humbly ask your pardon for this.

Enclosed is our first set of Rules and, I think, the one which was presented to the Archbishop—or at least a similar one. To my great shame, I do not practice it. I am also ashamed to call myself, Most Honored Father, your most humble daughter and very obedient servant.

LOUISE DE MARILLAC

I think Brother Ducournau 6 should be able to find the copy and the
original of the petition that was presented, together with the Act of Establishment, which I believe we never had.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

1426. - TO PIERRE WATEBLE, SUPERIOR, IN SAINTES

November 26, 1651

I am deeply grieved by the disturbances that have arisen there, and I ask Our Lord to change the state of affairs for the better. In the meantime, we must honor His patience and make many acts of abandonment to His good pleasure and of acquiescence to the effects of His justice. I praise God for the interior peace you are maintaining in yourself and in your family. I am sure you earnestly ask this of Him for the entire region and the whole kingdom, as well as the grace for the poor people to make good use of the afflictions of the war.

I see that you are not sure of what you should do. You must remain steadfast, Monsieur. It would be a great wrong for you to leave and an irreparable scandal to the town and the Company. If you were to abandon the house, I do not think people would ever be willing to welcome us back. Fear not; calm will follow the storm,

shrewd, frank, and reliable in business affairs; Saint Vincent made him his secretary in 1645. By his devotion, tact, and love of work, this good Brother rendered inestimable services to the Saint and to the Congregation. By his preparation of materials and his personal notes, he probably contributed more than Abelly himself to the first biography of Saint Vincent. Brother Ducournau remained as secretary to the Superiors General René Alméras and Edme Jolly, and was archivist of Saint-Lazare. He died in Paris on January 3, 1677. His assistant in the secretariat, Brother Chollier, has written his life, which is found in Notices, vol. I, pp. 377ff.


1Saintes, at that time in the power of the party of the Fronde, was governed by Chambois. When the royal army, under the command of Henri de Lorraine, Comte d'Harcourt, was approaching, Chambois set fire to the faubourgs to facilitate defense of the place, sparing only the convents of the Benedictines and the Poor Claras, which served as shelters for the homeless inhabitants. There was a great deal of destitution in the town and the alerts were constant.
and perhaps soon. If you no longer have any income, you will not be neglected—you will not starve to death; we will assist you as much as possible. You still have some provisions and are drawing some of your income. We panic at first, but God does not always allow the evil that is feared to happen. Ever since war has broken out in Lorraine, Flanders, and along our borders, the religious houses have held their own. Not that they are not suffering, but they are surviving and are gaining a great deal of merit by their patience. Not one of you has yet had any reason to lose your composure.

I ask Our Lord to be your protector and consolation, to keep you united among yourselves, and to grant you the fidelity proper to the practice of virtue, especially of prayer, recollection, mortification, and conformity to the Will of God. Place all your trust in Him and keep up your courage. Our houses in Agen and La Rose are in the same difficulties as you, and so is the one in Cahors—or close to it.

1427. - TO JEAN-BAPTISTE GILLES,† SUPERIOR, IN CRÉCY

Paris, November 28, 1651

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Letter 1427. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original signed letter.

†Jean-Baptiste Gilles, from the Avranches diocese, had been headmaster and professor of philosophy at the Collège de Lisieux, situated on rue de Beauvais in Paris. He entered the Congregation of the Mission on November 28, 1642 and took his vows on October 11, 1645. After Gilles had served at the Cahors Seminary for some time, Saint Vincent entrusted to him the chair of Moral Theology at Saint-Lazare. When the Nuncio asked the Saint to propose a candidate for Coadjutor Bishop of Babylon, he thought of Jean-Baptiste Gilles. Gilles participated in the second General Assembly (1651) and took part in the debate on the vows, which he insisted on maintaining. His ardent opposition to the Jansenists was manifest mainly in his lectures and conferences to seminarians preparing for ordination. However, his insistence on attacking Jansenism ran the danger of producing the opposite effect. The Saint understood this and transferred him from Saint-Lazare in 1651. For a short time, Gilles was Superior of the
I praise God that you have arrived safely in Crécy. I ask Him to bless you abundantly and, through you, your little family and its works.

I shall have the pictures and books you want sent to you, but I feel it my duty to tell you, Monsieur, that we are living at a time when no unnecessary expenses should be incurred. Public misfortune surrounds us on every side. It is to be feared that it may reach us also, and even if it should not, we must be compassionate toward those who are enduring it. Perhaps, once you have laid in your provisions and taken stock of all domestic and related needs, you will be of the same mind about economizing the meager funds you have found.

As for the horse, for the reasons I gave you I will not send it back to you, but I will send you the price of one, with the help of God. I might add that, since your stay there is not definitely settled, it is unwise for people to see a horse at the house again because of the unpleasant consequences that might have—not for you but for those who will come after you, who might make ill use of it. You would hardly have thought of asking for one if your predecessor had done without one, as the others have always done. If you leave this good example, no doubt people will more willingly do without one in the future.

When you need one, you can get one locally, as has been the custom. There are enough around, and your journeys will not be so long and frequent that your mounts, poor as they are, will not do. You could even bargain with someone to supply you when you need one, or to take you and the other members of the family in a covered carriage, when you go to and return from a mission.

I am well aware that you can say to me, "Physician, heal

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Crécy house, where he died on August 22, 1652. He received a well-deserved place in Notices, vol. III, pp. 110-14. His will, drawn up on April 30, 1643, showed the high esteem in which he held Saint Vincent. (Cf. Arch. Nat. M 211, f° 1.)

2In no. 1482, Saint Vincent gives the circumstances under which Gilles was sent to Crécy.
yourself," because I used a horse in the past and now I use a carriage. This is true, to my great shame, but it is true also that necessity has obliged me to do so. However, if you advise me to act otherwise, Monsieur, I shall do so.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Gilles, Superior of the Priests of the Mission, in Crécy

1428. - TO SISTER JEANNE LEPEINTRE, SISTER SERVANT,
IN NANTES

November 29, 1651

I read your letter with the special consolation I usually have whenever I hear from you. It seems to me that your leadership improves every day and is producing additional results as well as we could wish. I ask Our Lord to be Himself His own thanks for this and for the calm you are enjoying after all the storms and troubles that have buffeted your little bark.

We must love Our Lord deeply and, along with that, keep ourselves in readiness to endure other upheavals and additional setbacks. Man's condition is never the same; he is humbled, then exalted; sometimes at peace, sometimes persecuted; enlightened today and plunged into darkness tomorrow. What is to be done? As I said, let us be prepared for whatever may happen. When we suffer, hope that God will deliver us; when He treats us gently, store up

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3 Cf. Lk 4:23. (NAB)

4 "First redaction: "I can reply." The words "it is true" are in the Saint's handwriting.

the gentleness and patience in order to make good use of the trials that will ensue.

In a word, Sister, we must give ourselves to God in all respects, and hope that His Will may be done. We must conform ourselves to it in both unpleasant and pleasant circumstances, which constantly succeed one another. This requires us to be ready for anything and completely detached from ourselves.

O my God, who but You alone will give these things to us? We humbly ask them of You through Your Son Jesus Christ. May God grant us the grace to be always faithful to His lights and to our little spiritual exercises!

I recommend myself humbly to your prayers.

1429. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

O Monsieur, what a consolation for me to think of you, so totally given to God and to your vocation, which is truly apostolic! So then, love this happy lot which has fallen to you and which should draw down on you an infinity of graces, provided you are truly faithful to using the initial ones. You will doubtless have much to combat, for the evil spirit and corrupt nature will join forces to oppose the good you want to do. They will make difficulties seem greater to you than they really are and, to sadden and discourage you, will do their utmost to convince you that grace will fail you in your need. They will incite certain men to contradict and persecute you, and perhaps these will be the very persons you consider your best friends and the ones who should support and console you.

If that happens, Monsieur, you must take heart and look upon it as a good sign, for by this means you will have a closer relationship with Our Lord who, overwhelmed with sorrows, saw Himself
forsaken, repudiated, and betrayed by His own men and, as it were, abandoned by His own Father. Oh! how happy are those who bear their cross lovingly in imitation of such a Master!

Remember, Monsieur, and firmly believe that, regardless of what may happen to you, you will never be tempted beyond your strength. God Himself will be your support and your courage, all the more completely since you will have no refuge or trust but in Him alone.

1430. - TO GILBERT CUSSOT, SUPERIOR, IN CAHORS

Paris, December 9, 1651

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have received two letters from you since I last wrote. You tell me that the Archdeacon\(^1\) is asking you for an annuity on the farm, which you say has been paid. If this is so, make it clear to him that you do not owe it. Get his friends to speak to him and, if necessary, the Bishop of Cahors.\(^2\) If, after all that, he sues you, defend yourself, but beforehand you must take the steps I have just mentioned.

Perhaps his late uncle\(^3\) did give you the student you mentioned to be educated and fed in your house, in accordance with the foundation. By accepting the gift of his farm,\(^4\) the Company assumed this obligation, but neither he nor you can oblige this

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\(^1\)Christophe Hébrard, Abbé de la Garde-Dieu.
\(^2\)Alain de Solminihac.
\(^3\)Claude-Antoine Hébrard de Saint-Sulpice, Grand Archdeacon of the Church in Cahors.
\(^4\)The farm in Cayran. Hébrard had willed it to the Priests of the Mission of the Cahors Seminary on February 1, 1649. (Cf. Arch. Nat., S 6703-04.)
young man to enter the priesthood. If he began to wear the cassock and to place himself under your guidance in that capacity, it does not follow that he must continue, since, being older now, he is better able to make up his own mind.

If, then, he is inclined to another state of life but still wants to continue his studies in town and take his meals at your house, you must allow this and leave him free. I think the Archdeacon wants it that way, and my opinion is that this is how you should act. However, be careful about taking other children into your house, if they have no intention of giving themselves to the Church and do not wear a cassock. As for that boy, however, you cannot put him out.

I asked you to find out what the Bishop thinks about your buying the house and adjacent garden so that, if he is in favor of this, you will be acting according to his wishes, even though you give in payment the land you have in town.

God be praised that you have been led to hope for five hundred livres for your domestic needs! Let us allow Him to act. His Providence will never fail us as long as we do not fail in His service.

I shall write to Agen to find out if they can give you Brother Dupuich and, if they can, I shall see that you have him.

I have no objection to sending a Brother to be on guard duty and to work on the fortifications, if it costs you too much to send a layman there, but he should be dressed in gray.

I am writing a note to Brother Dubourdieu, which I am sending to you to give to him or keep, as you see fit. I am sending the note

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3Cuisset was going by the text of the will. The Cayran farm had been willed to the Priests of the Mission on condition that they "feed and educate a student aspiring to Holy Orders and the priesthood, and also the person to be put in his place by the heirs of the testator, without, however, any obligation of the priest to clothe him."

4On January 20, 1652, Gilbert Cuisset bought from Raymonde Anjalbert a garden and stable adjacent to the seminary enclosure. Could this be the garden Saint Vincent mentions here?

5Antoine Dupuich, coadjutor Brother, born on May 26, 1620 in Arras, entered the Congregation of the Mission on November 7, 1642 and took his vows on November 21, 1646.

6Jean-Armand Dubourdieu, born in Garos (Pyrénées-Atlantiques), entered the Congregation of the Mission in La Rose on November 8, 1644 at eighteen years of age, and took his vows on
unsealed so you can read it, with a seal to close it.

I thank Our Lord for blessing your leadership and giving peace to the family. May His Divine Goodness continue to bestow on you and them the abundance of His grace.

I recommend myself to your prayers and I am, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

1431. - A BISHOP TO SAINT VINCENT

1651

The mission is one of the most important and most necessary benefits I know, for the greatest ignorance in the world exists among the poor people. If you could see the extent of it in my diocese, it would move you to compassion. I can say in all truth that most of the Catholics are so in name only and simply because their parents were—not because they know what it means to be Catholics. This creates a thousand difficulties for us, especially since we cannot put any order in the diocese without those who do not like this order saying that they are as satisfied to go to a sermon as to Mass.

December 13, 1647. In 1658, although he was only a coadjutor Brother, Saint Vincent chose him for the position of Consul in Algiers, but circumstances delayed his departure until 1661. He set sail with Brother Louis Sicquard, who had been given him as chancellor, and Philippe Le Vacher, who was going to settle the affairs of Brother Jean Barreau. The new Consul carried out his office with intelligent zeal. His correspondence testifies to his concern for the interests of religion and of France, and how touched he was by the sad plight of the slaves, whose well-being was the object of his constant care. He returned to France in 1673 and died at Saint-Lazare on April 15, 1677. Edme Jolly announced his death and eulogized him in a circular letter to all the houses of the Company. Brother Dubourdieu's biography was published in vol. IV of Notices, pp. 21-24.

1432. - TO A NUN

December 18, 1651

Reverend Mother,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am very embarrassed by the honor you have paid me of sharing the good thoughts God has given you for the welfare of the house in question. I am most unworthy of this because of my ignorance and sins. Nevertheless, since you ask me, I will tell you that it is indeed desirable that regularity be reestablished there, and I think God’s guidance of you until now and your present dispositions give us reason to believe that He is counting on you to make certain efforts to contribute whatever you can to this undertaking. If so, you have reason to hope that He will give you greater light and strength as the work progresses than you are experiencing in its beginning.

I ask this of Him with all my heart and I would welcome the opportunity to serve you. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Reverend Mother, your . . . .

1433. - TO BROTHER JEAN-PASCAL GORET,1 IN BAZOCHES2

December 19, 1651

I thank Our Lord that you have recovered your health and are using it in the service of God and the poor. I ask Him to give you a share in His humility and obedience. These are the virtues necessary to practice the others well and to go straight to God, to

Letter 1432. - Reg. 1, f° 38 v°, copy made from the rough draft.


1Jean-Pascal Goret, born in Angers in 1613, entered the Congregation of the Mission as a coadjutor Brother on November 21, 1641. Saint Vincent sent him to Picardy for the relief of the poor, as he had sent Brother Mathieu Régnard to Lorraine.

2In the district of Soissons (Aisne).
whom we often recommend the work He has given you to do.

You tell me that our good Daughters of Charity looked after you while you were sick. I am glad to hear it, and I am sure you are very grateful for this. However, dear Brother, it is to be hoped that this gratitude will not be expressed by visits or a great many words; it will suffice to see and speak to them only in passing, when necessity requires it. You know how we act with them here, so please do likewise.

1434. - TO MARGUERITE DÉNIAC, SUPERIOR OF THE DAUGHTERS OF NOTRE-DAME, IN RICHELIEU

December 20, 1651

I was very sorry to see in your letter how distressed you are because our priests can no longer serve your house. I was obliged to ask you to dispense them from doing so, and I entreat you again by this letter, with all possible respect and affection, to relieve our Congregation of an example that would be prejudicial to it both in its consequences and in its substance, since it is contrary to the resolution we took from the very beginning never to assume the direction of nuns. We foresaw that this would be a hindrance to our primary function, which is to give missions for the instruction of the poor country people who, for the most part, are ignorant of matters necessary for salvation. Their need in this respect is greater than that of nuns, who rarely lack priests and directors.

That is the only motive we have had because, of course, dear Mother, God knows how greatly we esteem your virtue and your holy Community, to the point that we would consider ourselves fortunate to serve you, if we were not engaged in other duties incompatible with that. You need a priest who does nothing else.

Letter 1434. - Reg. 2, p. 79.

1These nuns had come to Richelieu a few years before to teach little girls.
If our house were to give you one, it would be depriving the poor
country folk of the assistance he could render them.

If you ask me why, then, we began by providing you with one,
and why I permitted it, we did so because of the need you had of
one in your new foundation, and our intention was to withdraw him
as soon as possible. Besides, you are too faiнимinded to claim that,
because we have served you for several years, we are now obliged
to keep it up.

If you say that your financial difficulties do not allow you to
support a confessor, I reply that we also have our difficulties, which
certainly prevent us from continuing to provide one for you. That
would oblige us to find another worker to send on missions in his
place.

Perhaps you have heard that I myself serve as spiritual Father
to the Daughters of Sainte-Marie in Paris, and that by so doing I
am the first to act contrary to our resolution. My reply to that, dear
Mother, is that I had been in this duty for [two] years before God
was pleased to bring our Little Company into being, having been
given this responsibility by their holy founder. That is why it was
thought I should continue. Nevertheless, I have not failed to do my
utmost to be relieved of it, and I even stopped going there for almost
a whole year. In the end, however, I had to yield to a higher
authority, who ordered me to continue. Then, too, it is only as
Superior, which obliges me simply to go to each house about once
a month; the rest is taken care of by letter.

In any event, Reverend Mother, I can assure you that none of
the other houses renders any service to nuns. Not that we are not
being urged to do so and would be highly honored to oblige, but

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2The manuscript has ten years. The copyist undoubtedly misread it because Saint Vincent
was appointed Superior of the Visitation of Paris in 1622.
3Saint Francis de Sales had entrusted the direction to Saint Vincent the direction of Saint Jane Frances de
Chantal and the first convent of the Visitation nuns, which she had established in Paris.
4The "higher authority" was Jean-François de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris.
what can we do? Everyone must carry out his own duty and refrain from what is not proper to him. I entreat you once again to allow us to act in this way.

1435. - TO LAMBERT AUX COUTEAUX, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW

Paris, December 21, 1651

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

And may countless thanks be rendered to Divine Providence for having brought you so safely to Poland to a King and Queen who are so devout! May God be also blessed for the charitable welcome Their Majesties have given you, their zeal for the salvation of their subjects, the parish confided to M. Desdames, and all the help you are receiving from them for your foundation! I am unworthy of thanking them in any other way except by prayers to God. May He Himself be their thanks! You can imagine how fervently I offer them to God, and I shall have the Company offer many prayers and sacrifices for their preservation and prosperity, as you desire.

We have been greatly consoled by all the things you tell us. I was especially touched by the kind manner in which M. Fleury welcomed, instructed, and assisted you, and how M. Drogo also spared nothing in this. I am writing a note of thanks to the former and will do the same for the latter at another time. If I had occasion to do service to them, God knows how eager I would be to do so. You can give them every possible assurance of this, and be

Letter 1435. - This letter was published in 1875 by Études Religieuses (vol. VIII, p. 285). It was taken from the original, which was in Nancy.

1Jan Casimir and Louise-Marie de Gonzague. Louise-Marie had married Władysław IV in 1643. He died three years later; his brother and successor, Jan Casimir, married Louise-Marie in 1649.

2François de Fleury, chaplain to the Queen of Poland. He was considered to have Jansenist leanings.
assured yourself of our entreaties to Our Lord that He may grant you the fullness of His Spirit for the perfect accomplishment of His plan for you and for the Company.

I have nothing to say about what you have to do, except to tell you to have great confidence in the Divine Goodness and to take care of yourself for His service, since you are in the midst of a bountiful harvest in a place where the laborers are so few.

May God preserve and bless those you brought with you! May He multiply their number aplenty for the service of the ecclesiastical state and of the country people so that Jesus Christ may establish His reign in both! Once again, entrust yourself confidently to His guidance and prepare your own guidance for all sorts of events in order to make good use of any that will be unfavorable to you. I have no doubt that you will experience some; otherwise, I would wonder about the outcome of the work.

If God does not allow you to do either a little or a great deal for others, you will be doing enough by adoring His ways and remaining at peace. Our perfect happiness consists in doing His Will in the true wisdom of desiring nothing other than that. God often wants to build lasting benefits on the patience of those who undertake them; that is why He tries them in many ways.

You know all that, but here is something you do not know: thanks be to God, nothing new has happened here. Our families in Paris and elsewhere are about the same, as far as their health and duties are concerned. Only the Troyes house has had any sickness. Everyone there has been affected and almost all of them at the same time. M. Ozenne and one or two others still have quartan fever.

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3Charles Ozenne, born in Nibes (Somme) on April 15, 1613, was ordained a priest in 1637 and entered the Congregation of the Mission on June 10, 1638. After his Internal Seminary (novitiate), he was assigned to Troyes, where he took his vows on August 29, 1642 and became Superior in 1644. Saint Vincent recalled him in 1653 to direct the mission in Poland. “He is a zealous and detached man of God,” he said, “who has the grace of leadership and is capable of winning men exteriorly and interiorly.” Unfortunately, this excellent Missionary’s career was brief: he died in Warsaw on August 14, 1658. (Cf. Notices, vol. III, pp. 148-54.)
The house in Saintes has had its share of the common affliction of the town, caused by the civil war. God continues to bless the Genoa house, and our men in Rome are devoting themselves to the missions even more than in the past; this is a consolation to me.

Here, however, is some sad news—if it is true. They say that Limerick has been captured by the Parliamentarians and that the Bishop and about thirty priests have been taken. We have good reason to fear that Messieurs Brin and Barry are among them. We are awaiting more definite news but, whatever their situation, I recommend them to your prayers.

Our men in Barbary continue to do good work. M. Le Vacher the younger has arrived in Algiers. Brother Huguier, who is in Tunis, has been in chains for two or three weeks; it is costing almost four hundred écus to get him released. This came about because he was not careful enough with his papers. A slave took a patent from him, which serves as a passport for those who have been set free and are returning to their country. He thought he could use it for

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*The town of Limerick had surrendered to Oliver Cromwell’s troops on October 27, after a siege of five and a half months. Henry Ireton had Terence Albert O’Brien, Bishop of Emly, put to death. Along with him died a Franciscan named Wolf, Major-General Purcell; Barrow, a member of the Council; and Stritch, mayor of the city. Fathers Gérard Brin and Edmund Barry managed to escape in disguise. Edmund Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick, also escaped the soldiers and was able to get to Belgium.

Edmund Barry, born in the Cloyne diocese (Ireland) on June 24, 1613, was ordained a priest in Cahors in 1639 and admitted into the Congregation of the Mission on July 21, 1641. He took his vows at Saint-Lazare a few days before his departure for Ireland, returning to France in 1652, after Limerick had been captured by Cromwell’s army. He was placed in Richelieu (1652-53) and Montauban (1653-80). While in Montauban, he directed the seminary (1667-64, 1673-80). He died there in 1680.

*Philippe Le Vacher.

*Benjamin-Joseph Huguier, born in Sézanne (Marne) on March 10, 1613, was Attorney at the Châtelet of Paris before his admission into the Congregation of the Mission on September 15, 1647. He served in Tunis (1649-52), returning to France by way of Marseilles in May of 1652, took his vows that same year, and was ordained a priest in February 1655. After ordination, he became chaplain of the galleys in Toulon. However, he felt drawn to Barbary; on September 19, 1662 he was sent to Algiers with the title of Vicar Apostolic. While nursing the plague-stricken there, he contracted the illness and died of it himself in April 1663. (Cf. Mémoires de la Congrégation de la Mission, vol. II, pp. 221-30.) It is evident from many letters that Saint Vincent sent seminarians to various houses before ordination and usually referred to them as “Brother.”*
his own escape. For that reason, they humiliated him in this way.

We are just about finished with preparations for ordination, and the solemnity of Christmas is almost upon us. I ask Our Lord to grant you the grace of entering fully into the love and practice of the virtues resplendent in His holy birth and to be more than ever the life of your life and the unifying bond of your little family, whom I embrace tenderly.

Just one more remark: the poverty of the border areas still persists, and we have the same workers there. I forgot to tell M. Alméras to write to you; I will do so at the first opportunity. He is Superior of Saint-Charles Seminary, as we are now calling the petit Saint-Lazare. M. Gilles is in Crécy as Superior.

I ask Our Lord to act as Superior in you and through you, and to fill your hearts with faith, hope, and love.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL,
I.I.C.M.

I embrace you, Messieurs Desdames and Guillot, and Brother Casimir, prostrate in spirit at their feet and yours.

7In 1645 Saint Vincent established within the Saint-Lazare enclosure a seminary for youths completing their humanity studies, although not all the students necessarily aspired to Holy Orders. Before he died, Cardinal Richelieu had endowed twelve students; the others paid room and board.

8Nicolas Guillot, born in Auxerre (Yonne) on January 6, 1627, entered the Congregation of the Mission on June 12, 1648, took his vows on June 11, 1651, and was ordained a priest on December 24, 1651. While still a subdeacon, he was sent with the first group of Missionaries to Poland. There he dedicated himself to the works of his vocation, but after the death of Lambert aux Couteaux, he was overcome by discouragement and returned to France in May 1654. Saint Vincent gently reproved him for his fault, inspired him with regret, and persuaded him to go back in July. But this was not for long: the misfortunes of Poland, invaded by the Swedes, constrained four of the seven Missionaries, including Guillot, to leave the country in November 1655. The Saint assigned him as Superior of the Montmirail house, then in 1658 called him to Saint-Lazare to occupy the chair of Philosophy. Later, René Alméras named him Superior in Arniens (1662-67); he filled the same duty in La Mâle (1667-70).

9Stanisław Kazimierz Zelazewski, born in Warsaw, entered Saint-Lazare on October 19, 1647 at the age of eighteen and was sent to Poland as a seminarian with the first group of priests. He was ordained a priest some time between 1651 and 1655, but because of his instability he was
O Monsieur, how much I mind your absence! I feel as if I have lost my right arm.10 I beg you to offer me often to God and to His guidance, Monsieur, and to take care of your health.

1436. - TO ACHILLE LE VAZEUX, IN ROME

December 21, 1651

I thank God that you are looking out for everything. I had already heard from others about the proposed new Congregation called “Missionaries for the Indies,” under the tutelage of M. de Ventadour.2 We have nothing to say against the nature of the thing, always a trial to Superiors. After trying to retain him in the Company, which he wished to leave, Saint Vincent was finally obliged in 1655 to ask him to withdraw.

10 According to Collet (op. cit., vol. I, p. 509), Saint Vincent expressed himself in the same terms in another letter to Lambert aux Couteaux on January 2, 1652. Since no such letter is extant, it is possible that Collet gave the wrong date.


1 This letter is addressed to “Monsieur N., Assistant of the Rome house, in the absence of the Superior.” There are strong reasons for believing that this Assistant is Achille Le Vazeux. On the one hand, his recall from Rome coincides with the appointment of Thomas Berthet to that house as Procurator to the Holy See (cf. no. 1584); on the other hand, the character and ideas of the Assistant are remarkably like those of Le Vazeux. One of many illustrations of this: Saint Vincent wrote to Jean Dehorgny in regard to the latter’s Assistant (cf. no. 1477), “In his last letter he went so far as to try to persuade me that our vows are null and void and that it is a mortal sin to make and renew them.” The Journal des derniers jours de Saint Vincent says of Le Vazeux: “He still has a horrible aversion to vows, which he believes are the ruin of the Company” (cf. vol. XIII, no. 57).

Achille Le Vazeux, born in Bonneval (Eure-et-Loir) on June 22, 1620, entered the Congregation of the Mission on August 24, 1639, took his vows on June 7, 1643, and was ordained a priest on April 3, 1649. Shortly after ordination he was sent to Rome, where he remained until 1653. He was Superior of the Annecy Seminary (1653-58), then was recalled to Paris and sent to the Collège des Bons-Enfants. He left there a few days before the Saint’s death and returned to his family. To certain good qualities, Le Vazeux added such conspicuous failings that Saint Vincent regarded his withdrawal from the Congregation as a blessing from God. Hasty and obstinate in his decisions, he found it hard to take advice from Superiors and to submit his will to theirs. Saint Vincent had frequent occasion to reproach him, as will be seen later on.

2 Henri de Levis, duc de Ventadour, Peer of France, Prince de Maubuisson and Comte de la Voulté, had married Marie Lisse of Luxembourg in 1623. His wife bore him no children and soon preferred the cloister to married life. She entered the Avignon Carmel in 1629, took vows
which is good and praiseworthy. On the contrary, we should be very glad that there are men who give themselves to God to serve Him in this way.

As for the person himself, everyone knows he is of high rank. He was a Duke and has become a Canon of Notre-Dame de Paris; he is a very fine man. However, it is advisable to prevent them, if possible, from being called “Missionaries,” pointing out the inconveniences that arise when two or several different Companies have the same name. Please make it clear that this confusion of names is very prejudicial to us. We have had only too great experience of it.

Because M. Authier’s Company was called “of the Blessed Sacrament for Missions,” we were almost expelled from Annecy, especially since they are at the Collège des Savoyards in Avignon against the will of the people. The latter, thinking that we and they were one and the same Congregation, turned against us and, in the heat of things, tried to drive us out of their region. The Chambéry Senate has even refused absolutely to approve our foundation, so I think that, in the end, we will have to leave Savoy.\(^3\)

Let us go from this to another example. One day a priest went to the Lyons hospital and did not find it as well run as it should have been, according to his way of thinking. So, he wrote a letter

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\(^3\) What Saint Vincent feared never happened.
to the Cardinal of Lyons, exhorting him to put an end to the disorder in that house; otherwise, he would suffer from it some day, and to that end he was summoning him before the judgment seat of God. Since he signed the letter “Priest of the Mission,” this good Prelate took it that he was one of our men, although it was not so. He complained about this everywhere and attacked us for it. I went to see him and gave him clear proofs that this priest was not a member of our Company, but he was never willing to believe it. Ever since then, he has thought badly of us.

Here is a third example. Some time ago, the Bishop of Béziers asked us for a few priests to work in his diocese. A priest who had lived with us, whom we had sent away because he had a weakness for wine, learned of this. He went to see this Bishop, saying that I had sent him. The Bishop welcomed him and put him to work, but he recognized soon after that he was a drunkard and, from that time on, lost any esteem he had for the Missionaries.

You can judge from all that the painful consequences that may ensue from having similar names for two or several Companies. The Chancellor had clearly foreseen this, for, when the Bull for M. Authier’s establishment was presented to him for the King’s authorization, he flatly refused, without my saying a word or having anyone else mention it. He said that there was already a Congregation of Missionaries in France.

Since God has been pleased to bestow a certain blessing on ours, new Societies desiring to do what we do are happy to take our name as well. Thus, the faults of others will fall on us, and ours will be blamed on them. Also, it is no use to say that the Company will be called “Mission for the Indies” because ours is also for the Indies, as well as for elsewhere. Do not the Jesuits and other religious Communities send people there also? However, they are distin-

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4 Alphonse-Louis du Plessis de Richelieu, brother of the famous Minister of State, Armand du Plessis, Cardinal de Richelieu.
5 Clément de Besançon.
6 Pierre Séguier.
guished by their own name and not by “the Mission.”

So, as I told you, I knew that there was some activity here to get that work started, but I did not know that it would be pursued in Rome, even less that there was any hope of having it erected as a Congregation.

I have also learned that a certain abbé, who is such in name only, is its Director and is forming the men of that seminary in the parish in Gentilly,7 which he has taken for this purpose, and that M. de Ventadour will be the Prefect General of those missions and, as it were, the Patriarch of America. He will have full authority from the Pope, and no one will be permitted to go there for priestly functions without his permission. If this were the case, there would be great reason to fear that disorder might arise; there is already cause for division.

A large fleet is being fitted out here for that land. A Doctor of the Sorbonne is going there, taking a number of good priests with him, and he is determined not to be in any way dependent on anyone except the Holy See. This plan was conceived long ago and will be carried out sooner than the other one because the money and the ships are almost ready.

You might inform the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation8 about all that and tell him, as if it were coming from yourself, that, before he grants anything with regard to this so-called establishment, it is most advisable for him to write and tell the Nuncio9 here to make careful inquiries about the qualifications of this abbé, who is supposed to be in charge of that seminary.10

Show this letter to M. Dehorgny.

Addressed: Monsieur N., Assistant of the Rome house, in the absence of the Superior

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7A suburb of Paris. Adrien Le Febvre was Pastor there.
8Dionigi Massari.
9Nicolò di Bagno.
10The Duc de Ventadour offered to send a large number of colonists to America at the same
1437. - TO A MONK OF SAINTE-GENEVIÈVE

Saint-Lazare, December 21, 1651

Reverend Father,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have seen the decrees we have obtained against the monks of Saint-Victor, of which I am sending you an excerpt. You will see in the first one a clause which apparently does not further your plan. It states: "without prejudice to the Congregation of Saint-Victor with regard to the houses dependent upon it." I would like to think, nevertheless, that they may be useful to you and that we had other good documents to assist you. I am, in every way, for you and your holy Congregation, in the love of Our Lord, Reverend Father, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
I.s.C.M.
Most Honored Father,

I could not let this day go by without reminding your charity that it has been twenty-six years since Providence placed me in the state of corporeal widowhood and granted me the grace of desiring to be united to Him for time and for eternity. Please give me your blessing for this, and do me the charity of offering me anew to His Goodness. If I were not so unfaithful to my holy angel, he would have inspired you to do so this morning.

I am returning to you the letter from the chaplain in Nantes. I feel I am not mistaken in thinking that some people in that place have the idea that withdrawing our dear Sister Jeanne would be advantageous. Would you consider, Most Honored Father, sending her to Saint-Malo? Excuse my readiness to tell you my thoughts. I am sending you the letter from our dear Sister Jeanne and the one from Sister Henriette who, as you see, is quite willing to go to Hennebont.

I do not know if your charity has taken the trouble to read the letter from the Pastor of Nanteuil, which I am also enclosing. I think he is annoyed that Madame de Schomberg, the Maréchal’s wife, is listening to our Sisters who, I believe, are opposed to his putting a beggar as watchman at the Hôtel-Dieu. They fear that the disorders which have long existed there will continue. Enclosed is the letter the Sisters wrote to me about this. I shall send it to Madame de Schomberg, if your charity judges it appropriate.

Allow me, Most Honored Father, to ask you, for the love of God, if I may make my little review to you before Christmas—Friday, Saturday, or Sunday which is Christmas eve, at whatever time you like.

Letter 1438. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1December 21.

2The year is indicated on the back of the original and confirmed by the contents of the letter, particularly the reference to the death of Saint Louise’s husband, Antoine Le Gras, on December 21, 1625.

3M. des Jonchères, confessor and adviser of the Sisters in Nantes.

4Sister Jeanne Lopeintre.

5Sister Henriette Gessain. Saint Vincent had written to her in August 1651 about this change (cf. no. 1393).

6Anne de la Guiche, Duchesse de Schomberg, a Lady of Charity.
We have here Mademoiselle Guérin, your former neighbor at the Bons-Enfants. In the space of a month she lost—in the eyes of the world—two very virtuous and promising children. One was a professed monk at Sainte-Geneviève; the other was a Counselor in the Parlement. She would like very much to have the honor of seeing you. You know she is someone who will take only the time your charity can give her. I am, though unworthy, Most Honored Father, your most humble and very grateful daughter and servant.

L. DE M.

The young man who came from Nantes asked to be remembered to your charity.

I almost forgot to send you most humble greetings from Monsieur and Madame de Liancourt on their return from La Roche-Guyon.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

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7Wife of Gilles Guérin, Councillor of the King and Auditor of Accounts. She lived on rue Saint-Victor, very near the Collège des Bons-Enfants.

8Jeanne de Schomberg, daughter of Maréchal Henri de Schomberg and wife of Roger de Liancourt du Plessis, was a pious and talented woman. Still extant is a booklet of hers entitled: Règlement donné par une dame de haute qualité à Madame ***, edited by Abbé Jean-Jacques Boileau, Paris, 1698. (Madame *** was her granddaughter, the Princesse de Marsillac.) The château of Liancourt was famous for its beautiful gardens and fountains. It was truly a princely residence and well known to high society. The Duchesse de Liancourt used to call Saint Louise her dear friend and received her in her home a number of times. She helped Saint Louise considerably in her charitable works, encouraged the zeal of Adrien Bourdoise, and took under her patronage the Daughters of Providence. Both she and her husband were finally completely won over to Jansenism by Pascal, Arnauld, and Le Maistre de Sacy. The Duchess died in the château of Liancourt on June 14, 1674, at the age of seventy-four. Abbé Boileau included her biography in the introduction to the above-mentioned booklet. A sketch of her life is also found in the Jansenist work of Abbé Leclerc, Vies intéressantes et édifiantes des religieuses du Port-Royal et de plusieurs personnes qui leur étaient attachées, 1750-52, 4 vols., vol. I, pp. 411ff.
Prompted by the loving mystery we are about to celebrate, I am writing to wish you the blessings it brings to men of good will.

What I wrote you about repairs is not to forbid them altogether but to say that they must be necessary, and the Superior must consent to them; that is, the General, when they are major, and the local Superior, when they are simply minor and ordinary. Does that not seem reasonable to you? I did not include in the countermand in my last letter the project for the trees nor planting the garden because no major expenditure is involved there. So, you may continue but always with the consent of the Superior.

Please do not think that I am influenced by reports, especially in your regard. I am well enough acquainted with the depths of your soul and the uprightness of your intentions.

It is very difficult right now to find seven or eight thousand livres, which are being distributed monthly in Champagne and Picardy, and this is only a fourth of what used to be given last year.
1441. - A PRIEST OF THE MISSION TO SAINT VINCENT

[Saint-Quentin, 1652] 

The famine here is so bad that we see men eating dirt, chewing on grass, stripping the bark off the trees, and tearing up and swallowing the miserable rags that cover them. But what is horrifying—and what we would not dare to mention if we had not seen it—is that they are devouring their own arms and hands and are dying in this state of despair.

We have three thousand poor refugees and five hundred sick persons, not to mention the impoverished nobility and the bashful poor of the town, whose number increases daily.

1442. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION, IN MARSEILLES

The words that Reverend Father let slip give us reason to rejoice at not having been the occasion for his calumnies and to thank God for this. Happy will we be if He finds us worthy of suffering for justice' sake, and if He grants us the grace of loving humiliation and returning good for evil!

1443. - TO PROPAGANDA FIDE

[January 1652]

Most Eminent and Most Reverend Lords,

Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Priests of the Congre-

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Letter 1441. - Abelly, op. cit., bk. II, chap. XI, sect. II, p. 395. Abelly combined into one letter excerpts from three different letters; this is one of the excerpts.

1This fragment appeared in Relations, January 1652.


1Against the Congregation of the Mission.

2Cf. Mt 5:10. (NAB)

Letter 1443. - Archives of Propaganda Fide, II Africa, no. 248, f° 35 and 42, original; written in Italian.
gation of the Mission, the most humble petitioner, places before Your Eminences the fact that for several years the Consul of the town of Salé in the kingdom of Fez in Africa has urged him many times to send some priests of his Congregation to that town for the service of Christians, both freemen and slaves, who are there. Up to the present, he has been unable to satisfy the zeal and piety of this Consul. Now, in face of these same constant requests, the said petitioner represents to Your Eminences the desire and need of that Church so that, with the consent and under the authority of this Sacred Congregation, he may send some of his priests there and, as soon as possible, give information on the qualifications of the subjects, with the approval of the Nuncio of France. And he will consider all this as a special favor from Your Eminences.

Whom God, etc.

Addressed: The Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, for Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission

1Cf. vol. II, no. 827 and vol. III, no. 869.
2This petition was presented on January 5, 1652 and resulted in the following, written in Latin:

Decree of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, given at its meeting of January 15, 1652.

His Eminence, Cardinal Sabelle, submitted the petition in the name of Monsieur Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Missionaries in France, asking that, whereas the Consul of the town of Salé in the kingdom of Fez in Africa urgently asks the petitioner to send there priests of his Congregation for the mission, the Sacred Congregation might deign to grant him faculties for the said mission, with the usual and necessary privileges, conditions, and faculties. Their Eminences sanctioned the mission in the aforesaid town and directed that, for the priests to be chosen by the petitioner with the participation of the Apostolic Nuncio of France, the usual faculties must be sent, for which the Holy Office should be approached at the proper time and place. In the meantime, a letter must be written to the said Nuncio to send here the names and qualifications of the said priests, indicating also who among them will be Prefect, so that the necessary instructions in the matter can be sent to him for the direction and advancement of the said Mission.

Cardinal Pamphili
Dionigi Massari, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation
Madame,

M. de Guénegaud\footnote{Henri de Guénegaud du Plessis, Marquis de Plancy, Commander of Montbrison, Treasurer General (1639), Secretary of State (1643-69), Keeper of the Seals of the Orders of the King (1656). He died in Paris on March 16, 1676 at sixty-seven years of age.} did me the honor of telling me that at the time Your Majesty passed through Fontainebleau you did me the favor of inscribing on the register of officers of the house of the Duc d'Anjou,\footnote{Philippe de Bourbon, the future Duc d'Orléans, and only brother of Louis XIV was born at Saint-Germain-en-Laye in 1640. On April 16, 1661 he married Princess Henrietta of England; after her death in 1670 he married Charlotte-Elisabeth of Bavaria. He died in 1701. In the reign of Louis XIV he is referred to by the stylized title of Monsieur.} in the duty of ordinary gentleman-in-waiting, the person I had the boldness to recommend to you. However, since I learned of this only much later, I was unable any sooner to pay Your Majesty the highest homage of my gratitude. It is indeed so great, Madame, that I consider myself unworthy of thanking Your Majesty for such a favor. Therefore, I ask O[ur] L[ord] to be Himself your thanks and reward. I have not yet received the commission for it; I am taking the liberty of requesting it of M. Guénegaud. I hope that, if necessary, Your Majesty will consent to order him to send it to me.

We continue to pray and have prayers offered constantly to God for the King and Your Majesty, that He may be pleased to be your guidance and sanctification. I have the happiness to be, in His love, Madame, Your Majesty's most humble, most obedient, and most faithful servant and subject.

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

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

If I am deprived of your letters, I am not deprived of the consolation of knowing about the good services you are rendering to God, at times by the instruction of the clergy, at other times by missions, and always by the exercise of His love in all the ways His best servants are accustomed to honor Him. I thank Him infinitely for this and for the blessings He gives to your work. O Monsieur, how good God is to us, so long as we are faithful to Him!

How are you? Please send me a few words on the state of your health and—when you get the chance—let me know if I should continue to give your brother receipts on the house in town to collect the rent you have on it. I already gave him two or three, each for forty-three livres fifteen sous, the amount for each quarter. He says he needs the money, and I believe him because it is a bad time.

Once again, I ask Our Lord to be your all in all and that I may be, eternally in His love, as I am in this life, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
I.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Martin, Priest of the Mission, in Genoa
1446. - TO ÉTIENNE BLATIRON, SUPERIOR, IN GENOA

January 19, 1652

Your letters put me to shame, making me see that you are working continually while we are doing so little here. More than once a week I tell the Company what you are doing, to excite them to the conquest of souls and to take up the struggle against nature, in imitation of you.

I am greatly consoled that Messieurs Duport and Le Blanc already have tongues sharp enough to cut the children's bread, especially the former, who you say is ready to go and give missions. May God be blessed for that, and may He be pleased by His grace to animate them with the same zeal which animates their Superior!

The spirit prompting M. Valois with the desire to go to the aid of his country seems too strong for us to venture to resist him. If this impulse persists with the same intensity, let him go. Perhaps God will find his sacrifice so pleasing that He will draw glory from it and will work through him some extraordinary grace for such an afflicted kingdom. So many good Catholics there should not be left without assistance; the more they are persecuted, the stronger they hold fast to their faith. If M. Molony wants to go with him, we will assign him as his companion and will do all we can for the consolation and salvation of their homeland.

You say you are worried about the Corsica mission and do not know whom to send with M.... I think you will be making a good choice in M. Duport, a capable, zealous man of God, who preaches


1Have begun to learn the language.
2Patrick Valois (Patrick Walsh) (Valois was the usual French transliteration for Walsh). Born in Limerick (Ireland) in 1619, he entered the Congregation of the Mission on December 21, 1644, and was ordained a priest in 1646.
3There is no information regarding Walsh's desire to return to Ireland; he was still in Genoa in 1652.
4Thaddée Molony (Thady Molony) was born in Limerick in July 1623. He entered the Congregation of the Mission on September 4, 1643, was ordained a priest in Rome on March 6, 1650, and took his vows on November 14, 1655. He was in Le Mans in 1658-59.
well and very successfully. You can even put him in charge, if you see that M... will not object. Rest assured that he will make no faux pas because he has very good judgment, prudence, and discretion. With all that, he is very gentle and cordial. Think it over; if you need other workers, we shall send you some.

I pity that poor Brother who has left you, if he is planning to become a priest, because I have hardly ever seen any men succeed in the priesthood who previously had another vocation in which they did well. On the contrary, I have known holy men in the military, not to mention those in other professions, who were doing wonders there, but once they entered the priesthood, they did almost no good in it.

God grants grace for one state of life that He refuses in another. A Brother who would have the Spirit of God residing in his state would undoubtedly lose it if he left it. God is not fickle; He wills that each person should remain in the state in which He has placed him. Anyone who abandons it has no guarantees.

1447. - TO JEAN GICQUEL, SUPERIOR, IN LE MANS

January 21, 1652

The present miseries of this region, and those we have reason

5Cf. no. 1403.


1Jean Gicquel, born in Miniac (Ille-et-Vilaine) on December 24, 1617, was ordained a priest during Lent of 1642, entered the Congregation of the Mission on August 5, 1647, and took his vows on May 6, 1651. He was Superior of the Le Mans Seminary (1651-54), and of Saint-Lazare (1655-60) (cf. vol. V, nos. 1908, 1912; vol. VI, no. 2157), and was Director of the Company of the Daughters of Charity (1668-72). Gicquel wrote an interesting diary of Saint Vincent’s final days, which is preserved at the Motherhouse of the Congregation of the Mission.
to fear, lead us to consider vacating this house. Perhaps we shall send you either our seminarians or our students along with their teacher because wheat and meat cost much less in Le Mans than in Paris. Please let me know if you can feed them for forty or forty-five écus apiece. Talk it over with the Procurator of your house.

1448. - TO FATHER FRANÇOIS BOULART, AT SAINTE-GENEVIÈVE

Reverend Father,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I do not recall the name of the parish of the late M. Flamignon, a former monk of this house. It is a league away from Châteaudun; your Fathers there can tell you. I do not know whether he personally occupied any other benefice, except for a chapel called Sainte-Radegonde, which is in the parish where he was Pastor, and that he was at law against the Seigneur who is—I think—M. de Nouveau. One of your Fathers, who saw him during his illness at his request, could tell you what he said. If I knew anything else, I would gladly tell you. I am, Reverend Father, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Reverend Father Boulart, at Sainte-Geneviève

2Mazarin had returned to France at the head of an army and was nearing Paris. On learning this, the Parlement declared him guilty of high treason and promised one hundred fifty thousand livres from the sale of his personal property and library to whoever would deliver him up, dead or alive. On his part, Gaston, Duc d'Orléans, the brother of Louis XIII, recalled from the North all the troops faithful to him. All indications pointed to another civil war, worse than the preceding ones.

Letter 1448. - The original autograph letter was formerly in the Sainte-Geneviève Library (cf. Ms. 2555) before it became the property of the Marquis de l'Aigle, 12 rue d'Astorg, Paris. Its present location is unknown.

1A monk of the old Saint-Lazare. He was Pastor of Lannestay.

2This chapel, mentioned as early as 1529, was no longer in existence by 1730.
Most Reverend Father,

It will soon be six months since the Comte de Brienne sent me a letter from the King to have delivered to Your Reverence. I did not do so at the time because I was seriously ill, and I have not done so since then through the negligence of the person who looks after my papers. He did not mention this letter to me until two days ago. I most humbly ask pardon of Your Reverence for this delay.

The reason His Majesty wrote to you is that it was decided to do so at the Council for Ecclesiastical Affairs. At the time, a priory of your Order in the Lodève diocese became vacant, and one of your good monks named Father Frémont was considered for a

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Letter 1449. - Reg. 1, f° 35, copy made from the rough draft. This letter was published by Father Jean-Baptiste Rochais in the manuscript life of Charles Frémont (Prémon). The original was formerly in the archives of the Congregation of Sainte-Geneviève in a file entitled Lettres de prélates depuis l'an 1653 jusqu'en 1660. Added material in the footnotes has been taken from Mission et Charité, 19-20, nos. 67-69, pp. 89, 90.

1The Order of Grandmont, taking its name from the place north of Limoges where the main monastery was situated, was founded in the eleventh century by Saint Stephen of Muret. Because of its Rule, it has been classified among the Benedictine Orders, although there are in it aspects of both the Cistercian and Carthusian Rules.

2Henri-Auguste de Loménie, Secretary of State.

3Brother Bertrand Ducournau.

4During the whole time he was a member of the Council of Conscience, Saint Vincent fostered the reform of Grandmont, being careful, however, not to run counter to the Superior General of the Order. (Cf. Abbé Terre, “Saint Vincent de Paul et l'Ordre de Grandmont,” in Mission et Charité, no. 3 [July 1961], pp. 368-72.)

5Charles Frémont (Prémon), born in Tours in 1610, entered the Order of Grandmont at eighteen years of age. Shortly after ordination he was appointed Prior of Grandmont Abbey. Impelled by the idea of establishing the Reform, he requested and obtained permission to go to Paris as Prior of the Collège de Grandmont. It was at this time that he became a friend of Saint Vincent. After advanced studies in theology, he felt that the hour of Providence had come, and he informed his Superior General, Father Barny, of his plans, but the latter was not in favor of them. Thanks to Richelieu's intervention, however, Frémont was given complete liberty to establish the primitive Rule at Époisses, near Dijon, where he retired in 1642 with one of his confreres, Joseph Boboul. In 1650 the convent of Thierry was built, and it became the center of the Reform and the residence of Father Frémont. Progress was slow because of Father Barny's opposition. In 1668 a third monastery, Chavanon, in the Clermont diocese, accepted the Reform.
pension, on condition that he reestablish the primitive regularity there, as he has done in some of your other houses. This pension would pass from him to his successors in the observance of the above-mentioned Rule. When a reply was made to the Queen, Her Majesty expressed great joy and ordered me to see that it was carried out, which makes me guilty of not having done so until now.

There is reason to hope that the good God wishes to make use of you, Most Reverend Father, to restore such a holy Order as yours, which has been very distinguished in the Church and a blessing to the kingdom. Under your government it has begun to diffuse the same odor it diffused in its primitive way of life, which good people would like to see reestablished. The King wants to do his part in this, and it seems like this is God’s plan, since He has given you that good monk as a most suitable instrument to be used by Your Reverence. You will do so very effectively if you agree to make him your Vicar-General to govern the houses in Époisses, Thiers and Lodève, with authority to receive novices and professed monks in the above-mentioned primitive observance, all under your authority and holy guidance.

Then followed Saint-Michel in Lodève (1679); Louyes, in the Chartres diocese (1681), Vieux-Font, in the Sens diocese (1683), and Macherets, in the Troyes diocese (1687). The reformed monks spent more than eight hours daily praying the Divine Office and in mental prayer; they abstained all year long, fasted for almost eight months, lived in solitude, and rarely went out—never for the purpose of seeing their relatives. Father Frémont died in the odor of sanctity in Thiers in 1689.

6In the manuscript Histoire de la Réforme de Grandmont by Pierre Legeay (Bibl. nat., Manuscripts, Fonds Français, 19682), vol. I, bk. II, chap. 3, p. 155, we find: "On July 1 of this same year 1651, he [Father Frémont] received a letter from Vincent de Paul, Founder of the Congregation of Saint-Lazare, asking him to go immediately to Paris for an important matter, which concerned the glory of God, the general good of the Order of Grandmont, and the particular good of the Reform, without giving him any further details." (Cf. Mission et Charité, no. 67, p. 89.)

7In Legeay’s manuscript we read: "This same Prelate [François Bosquet, Bishop of Lodève (1605-76)] wrote to him [Father Frémont] from Moslim in Bourbonnais on December 24 of the same year 1651, informing him that he had written from Tours to Dom Georges Barny and to M. Vincent asking the latter to urge the General to send him the vicarial powers he had requested." (Cf. Mission et Charité, no. 69, p. 90.) These powers would give him authority over the monasteries won over to the Reform.

8The Legeay manuscript states: "As soon as Father Charles received these two novices, he
This, I believe, Reverend Father, is the subject about which the King is writing to you. I am sure Your Reverence will comply with his wishes in such a reasonable matter, which tends to the glory of God and the administration of a body of which you are the head. Furthermore, through you and your ministers, Our Lord will cause His religious spirit to permeate it and to reign in it for centuries to come. By this means also He will make you and your zeal worthy of commendation to posterity, in addition to the merit Your Reverence will have before God. I ask Him to preserve you and to grant me the grace of rendering you my obedience on some suitable occasion because you are a Prelate whom I esteem and respect highly. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Most Reverend Father, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
Unworthy Superior of the Congregation of the Mission

1450. - ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAAC TO SAINT VINCENT

Mercuès, January 24, 1652

Monsieur,

Since writing to you, I have reflected on the note you added to your letter, and I thought it advisable for you kindly to write me in detail about its contents by the next mail. You said that, after signing the propositions that were sent, you learned that a notation had been added to the article concerning the eight hundred livres ‘for which provision will be made at

wrote to Vincent and to the Bishop of Lodève that Providence had placed him in a position to be able to send some disciples, once he had the General’s consent.” With the arrival of these two novices, Father Frémont, in agreement with the Bishop, had envisaged establishing the Reform in Saint-Michel Priory in Lodève. Father Barny, however, turned a deaf ear to this, and so strongly opposed it that the union did not come about until 1679. (Cf. Mission et Charité, no. 68, p. 90.)

Letter 1450. - Archives of the Diocese of Cahors, Alain de Solminihac collection, notebook, file 22, no. 33, copy made from the original.
the next synod. " You felt obliged to point out to me that, in the contract by which you assumed the obligation of running the seminary, it is stated that, since I was expecting my clergy to contribute eight hundred livres annually for the support of six priestly seminarians, you committed yourself to maintain them for the above-mentioned sum and that it was decided nemine reluctante by a general vote of my synod that the eight hundred livres would be paid annually to the said seminary. The money would be taken from the contributions given for the auditing of the accounts. You said that this decision had been confirmed by letters patent from the King and has been put into effect since then, so you ask me not to allow anything to be changed and to reflect that, if this were to happen, nothing would be assured. You hoped for this from my integrity and my love for my seminary and clergy, who are the beneficiaries of this. If you think it fitting to write to me, do not be stopped by the words set down here. They are simply to let you know my sentiments, which I submit to yours. In the meantime I shall remain, Monsieur, your . . .

ALAIN,
Bishop of Cahors

1451. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

January 25, 1652

The daughter of Mademoiselle Gionges has no sign of a vocation for the Charity; how can you expect her to remain in it? She has not worn the habit since she has been there; and, what is worse,
is unwilling to do so. She gets up when she pleases and does almost nothing. Yet, she is maintained like the others. This is a relief for her parents but a burden to that Little Company, which is poor and cannot feed a girl who does not work and does not intend to stay, except perhaps only as long as the bad weather lasts. Now, as you know, it is not right for a girl like her to eat the bread of the other poor girls who are working for God and for the sick poor.

1452. - TO GUILLAUME DELVILLE, SUPERIOR, IN MONTMIRAIL

January 25, 1652

It is not at all proper for women to be in our houses in rural areas, any more than in the towns. There was an elderly woman at Orsigny, who was upright and very helpful, but because our Brothers were there, people found fault with this, and we sent her away immediately. I am not saying that you did anything wrong by of Gionges and of Fortel, and Anne de Launay. She entered the Daughters of Charity on October 7, 1651, although, as indicated here, Saint Vincent showed some reluctance about her admission. The reprimand given her by Saint Louise regarding her faults completely transformed her; after a difficult adaptation she was sent successively to Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet, Saint-Denis Hospital, and Arras. In 1667 Sister Gabrielle was named an Officer [Councillor] of the Company; she died at Saint-Germain-en-Laye on February 5, 1669.

Letter 1452. - Reg. 2, p. 130.

1Guillaume Delville, born in Tilloy-lez-Bapaume, today Ligny-Tilloy (Pas-de-Calais), entered the Congregation of the Mission as a priest on January 19, 1641, at thirty-three years of age. He was Superior in Crécy (1644) and Montmirail (1644-46, 1650-51). He then retired to Arras, where for several years he continued his missionary work with Saint Vincent's permission. He died in Arras in 1658.

2A hamlet near Saclay (Essonne), where Saint Vincent had accepted the gift of a farm from Jacques and Élisabeth Nosais (cf. contract signed on December 22, 1644, Arch. Nat., S 6587). The Orsigny farm provided the Congregation of the Mission with agricultural products and served as a place of rest and relaxation. As long as Jacques and Élisabeth Nosais were alive, the Community possessed it in all tranquility. After their death, however, some cousins claimed it in a successful lawsuit (1658). The farm was later bought by the Congregation of the Mission at a court-ordered auction in 1684.
getting one for La Chaussée, since there was a need and we had none of our men there, but to keep one at Fontaine- Essarts is out of the question. It is better to get rid of everything in the household, except for a plow which you can keep for the crops. So, sell your cows and everything else involved in the work, unless you can find some good boy to look after things.

1453. - TO BALTHAZAR GRANGIER DE LIVERDI,
BISHOP OF TREGUIER

January 28, 1652

I have nothing to say, Excellency, about your suggestion to me regarding confessions in the seminary chapel and the priests you are forming there. It is up to you to arrange matters as you please. As for our men, however, I beg you most humbly to allow me to represent to you that our Bull expressly forbids us to hear confessions of persons outside the Company in the places where we live, except for those who make retreats in our houses. None of our houses acts otherwise, except those that have parishes, as in Sedan and Richelieu; or pilgrims, as in Saint-Méen and La Rose. The reason for this is to avoid the attachments to which this practice would commit us, and to keep our priests always available to work for the salvation of country people.

Town dwellers do not, as a rule, lack spiritual assistance. Nev-

3Farmlands in the suburbs of Montmirail, which were donated by François Malier de Houssay, Bishop of Troyes, to the house of the Congregation of the Mission in Montmirail.
4Another farm of the Missionaries in Montmirail. It was willed to them by Louis Toutblanc, secretary of Pierre de Gondi, Duc de Retz.


1The Bull, Salvatoris Nostri, by which Pope Urban VIII erected the Congregation of the Mission, states the following: In cities and towns where there is an archbishopric, bishopric, parlement, or bailiwick, the clerics and priests of the said Congregation shall not perform any public function of their institute. (For the full text see vol. XIII, no. 81.)
Nevertheless, Excellency, I wanted to find out if our older men thought it appropriate to waive this Rule in consideration of you, but they all felt that inconveniences would arise from contravening our Bull and our custom in this matter. That is why, Excellency, we most humbly entreat you not to allow our Missionaries to give this bad example to their confreres. Since several of them are already inclined toward working in the towns and for the rich rather than the poor, it is to be feared that, once they became accustomed to that, they would no longer be willing to go to the rural areas in search of the lost sheep. In this way, they would make themselves useless to the Church of God and incapable of rendering obedience to the Bishops.

1453a. - TO JEAN-JACQUES OLIER

Saint-Lazare, Easter Sunday [Between 1643 and 1652]

Abbé Olier is most humbly requested by his servant Vincent to listen to the complaints against one of his parishioners, brought to him by M. Maheut, the bearer of this letter. The latter is the brother of a monk of this house who, because of that, is an old friend of mine. Please help him to be compensated for the wrong being done to him. The Abbé is aware of the obligation we have to be of service to the relatives of those of this house who adopted us as their own

\(^2\)Cf. Lk 15:3-7. (NAB)

Letter 1453a. - Cathedral Library, Vincennes, Indiana (USA), original autograph letter. This letter is numbered 1604 by Costie, but in vol. VIII, p. 628, he corrected the date from 1656 to 1652. For this reason, the editors have repositioned the letter.

\(^2\)Jean-Jacques Olier was Pastor of Saint-Sulpice from August 1642 to June 20, 1652.
children. He knows also that no one in the world is more his most humble servant than I.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.c.M.

Addressed: Abbé Olier

1454. • TO LAMBERT AUX COUTEAUX, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW

[Beginning of February 1652] ¹

I have just received your letter of January 1, and you can imagine how much it consoled me, seeing that you are still in good health. You mention, however, another letter written two weeks before that one, which I have not received. So, I do not know what you did in Vilna,² what kind of welcome the Bishop gave you there, whether he is well-disposed or ill-disposed toward the Company, whether it is likely that you will keep the parish, and whatever else you wrote me and do not mention in this last letter. Nevertheless, because of the distance and the danger that all the letters may not reach us, it is advisable to repeat briefly once or twice the contents of the preceding letter, when the matter is important. Please do this and send me a copy of the lost letter as soon as possible.

As for the rest, I thank God for all the graces He has bestowed on you, especially the willingness He gives you to follow His orders, your fine leadership within the Company and outside of it, and the satisfaction our dear confreres give you. I ask Our Lord to

¹Comparison of this letter with nos. 1457 and 1463 shows clearly that it is from 1652 and was written before February 16. Moreover, Saint Vincent had just received a letter dated January 1 from Lambert aux Couteaux, whose letters always took a month to arrive, and in his letter of February 16 the Saint states that he had written to him two weeks before. The conclusion is, therefore, that this postscript was written in early February.

²Today, Vilnius (Lithuania).
bless them more and more through you and through Himself and to animate your dear soul with the fullness of His Spirit so that it may be diffused according to His plan for you and them. We pray God also for the safe delivery and preservation of the Queen and will take care to continue to do so.

VINCENT DEPAUL,

i.s.M.C.

1455. - TO LOUIS THIBAULT, IN SAINT-MÉEN

February 6, 1652

In this letter Saint Vincent says that he was designated by Saint Francis de Sales himself as Superior of the First Monastery of the Visitation in Paris.

1456. - TO A PRIEST

I hope that, since the last letter you wrote, God has scattered those clouds that were troubling you. That is why I shall just say a few words in passing about this.

It seems you have begun to doubt whether you are among the predestined. My reply to this is that, although it is true that, without a special revelation from God, no one has infallible signs of his predestination, nevertheless, according to the testimony of Saint

Letter 1455. - Collection for the process of beatification; letter mentioned by Pierre Chollier, witness no. 102.

Pierre Chollier, born in Unenville (Troyes diocese) on March 3, 1646, entered the Congregation of the Mission in Paris on October 26, 1668, and took his vows in November 1670. He served as personal secretary to several Superiors General. He had a talent for writing, and we are indebted to him for the biographies of Brothers Alexandre Véronne and Bertrand Ducournau, and of Father Guillaume Cornaire. He died at Saint-Lazare on November 6, 1716.

Paul, there are some signs so definite for recognizing the true children of God that there is almost no room for doubt. And I see all those signs in you, Monsieur, by the grace of God. The very letter in which you tell me that you do not see them reveals some of them to me, and my long acquaintance with you reveals the others. Believe me, Monsieur, I know no other soul in this world who belongs more fully to God than you, nor any heart further removed from evil, nor any that aspires more to good.

"But," you will tell me, "it does not seem so to me." And I reply to you that God does not always allow His own to perceive the purity of their interior amidst the promptings of corrupt nature, in order that they might constantly humble themselves; and since by this means their treasure remains hidden, it may be in greater security. The holy Apostle had seen wonderful things in heaven but did not consider himself justified because of that, for he saw in himself too much darkness and too many struggles. Still, he had such great confidence in God that he believed nothing in the world could separate him from the charity of Jesus Christ.¹

This example should suffice for you, Monsieur, to remain at peace in your dark moments and to have perfect and total confidence in the infinite goodness of Our Lord. Wishing to complete the work of your sanctification, He invites you to abandon yourself into the arms of His Providence. So then, let yourself be led to His paternal love, for He does love you. Far from rejecting such a good man as you, He never even abandons a wicked man who hopes for His mercy.
February 13, 1652

Dear Sister,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Our dear Mothers who came from outside to discuss the affairs of your holy Order with our Mothers and those relieved of office of your monasteries in this city, in accord with the desires of your Annecy monastery, were unwilling to accept the reasons you gave me this past Monday for not coming. They want me to see you about this and are absolutely determined not to settle the matters that have been proposed to them, unless you are present. They are also determined not to go home before you come. They pleaded so strongly with me that I could not refuse them the order, which I am sending you in this letter, to return here with our dear Sister de Chandenier today, Sunday, in this coach which we are sending you.

Letter 1456a. - Visitation monastery of Boulogne-sur-Mer, original autograph letter. The text was first published in Annales C. M. (1929), pp. 724-25, and reprinted in Mission et Charité, 19-20, no. 70, pp. 91-92. This edition uses the letter text.

1The name of the addressee is missing from the original. From the text of the letter it is apparent that the addressee is a former Superior of the Second Monastery of the Visitation in Paris (faubourg Saint-Jacques). This can only be Sister Anne-Marguerite Guérin. She entered the Visitation Order at the First Monastery in Paris (rue Saint-Antoine) and was sent to the Second Monastery as Assistant to the Superior at the time of its foundation in 1626. She was Superior there from May 24, 1640 to May 21, 1643; in 1659 she became the first Superior of the Third Monastery in Paris (rue Montorgueil). At the time this letter was written, she was at the monastery in the faubourg Saint-Jacques. She died on January 24, 1669, at seventy-seven years of age.

2The last digit of the year is blurred on the original. Mention is made in the letter of "today, Sunday," but in 1652, February 13—clearly legible in the date—fell on a Tuesday. The editors think that the letter was actually written in 1650 but—with reservations—have followed the date assigned to it by Annales.

3Superiors in office and those who, legitimately replaced at the end of their mandate (Déposées), retained a certain influence in their monastery.

4First foundation of the Visitation by Saint Francis de Sales and Saint Jane Frances (1612). Although each monastery was autonomous, the Annecy Visitation maintained a moral preeminence within the entire Order.

5Marie-Louise de Rochechouart de Chandenier (1620-94), Visitation nun, sister of the two
So, dear Sister, come at the time I indicate to you, no matter what difficulty to the contrary is put before you. If, after you do what you have to do here, the Pastor of Saint-Nicolas\textsuperscript{6} feels you could render some services to our dear Sisters of the Conception, it will be up to him to order what he pleases.

As for me, dear [Sister], I entreat you to renew the offers of my most humble services to your dear Mother Superior\textsuperscript{7} and her dear community. We expect you today, then; please do not fail in this. I am, in the love of Our Lord, dear Sister, your most humble servant.

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

\textbf{1457. - TO LAMBERT AUX COUTEAUX, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW}

Paris, February 16, 1652

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Two weeks ago I wrote you our little news items; I received yours at the same time, which greatly consoled us but not entirely, since I did not read what has happened there since you arrived, and I did not receive the preceding letter in which you say you informed me of matters. I await a copy. I am also worried that, being able to write to us every week, as you have been doing, you did not do so. Since your last letters, some have arrived here from M. de Fleury and others, which have filled us with joy and gratitude for the

\textsuperscript{6}Hippolyte Péret, Pastor of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet and Vicar-General of Paris.

\textsuperscript{7}Mother Marie-Agnès Le Roy.

Letter 1457. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.
Queen’s safe delivery of a fine Prince. We have thanked God for an event greatly desired and equally desirable. We shall continue to pray often that the Majesty of God will preserve and bless that good Queen and this young Prince. We have also learned that you are living near the King’s palace and celebrate Mass daily in his chapel. For this we have likewise thanked God.

As soon as I heard all this good news, I exhorted the Company to thank God for it. Learning it from you would have been too great a consolation for us. May God grant that we may soon receive some of your own dear letters! Please send us as many as possible because some get lost and, of the many, one or the other will reach us.

We are in the midst of ordination. M. Watebled gives the morning conferences and M. Blampignon takes the ones in the afternoon. We have recalled the former from Saintes in order to empty the house; it was pillaged along with the town, which is in the power of the Prince. The town of Angers has declared itself for him, so we are in great danger of not getting back anything we have there.

The rest of our houses are going along as usual. Rome and Genoa are working at giving missions. The sick men at Saint-Méen are getting better. Brother Guy has paid the price for them all, since

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1 Born January 9 but died on February 20 of the same year.

2 Claude de Blampignon, born in Troyes in 1611. He was a Doctor of Theology, Abbot of Notre-Dame de l’Aumône, member of the Tuesday Conferences and of the Company of the Blessed Sacrament, Visitor General of the Carmelites, and Director of the nuns of Saint-Thomas. He introduced the Reform into several monasteries. Saint Vincent made use of his services in the missions at Saint-Germain (1641) and Metz (1658), and chose him several times to give the retreat to the ordinands at Saint-Lazare. Claude de Blampignon died in 1669.

3 A previous letter to Pierre Watebled, Superior in Saintes (cf. no. 1426), suggests another possible reason for Watebled’s recall, apart from the troubles of the Fronde.

4 This place in the original has been eaten away.

5 The Prince de Condé.

6 The Duc de Rohan, Governor of Anjou, had drawn the entire province over to the side of the Prince. Besieged by the Royal Army, Angers capitulated on February 28 and was obliged to pay 180,000 livres to the victor.

7 It is impossible to determine the identity of Brother Guy from the personnel lists of the Congregation of the Mission of this period, which give no coadjutor Brother by this name. A
our good God has called him to Himself. You knew him but we did not.

We are anxious to know what money we have received from the salt tax, to be used for the Richelieu house, whether for buildings, repairs, acquisitions, consignments, legal expenses, fabric, or other provisions. If you can recall, please tell us what you know or how we could find out. M. Le Gros has written to M. Maillard about it; I do not know what his answer will be. If you cannot give us this information, at least let us know the amount Saint-Lazare owes the Richelieu house. It is not quite clear on our books; perhaps you will remember.

We are still hoping to send some relief to M. Nacquart this spring. However, I have not yet decided who will go.

We have completely changed our recreations to conversations, and are trying to incite the Company to punctuality, recollection, silence, and the practice of solid virtue. Everyone seems to like it.

We have ten or twelve workers out on two missions, despite the ordination retreat, of which M. Demonchy is the principal director.

I tenderly embrace your dear family and, prostrate at their feet

Michel Guy entered the Congregation in 1649 as a priest; as such he would not normally be referred to by the appellation Brother, which Saint Vincent often used for seminarians. Moreover, Michel Guy was apparently still alive in September 1659.

Jean-Baptiste Le Gros, born in 1614 in the Coutances diocese, entered Saint-Lazare as a priest on June 24, 1644, and took his vows on June 29, 1646. He was Procurator of the Motherhouse (1648-51), then Superior of Saint-Charles Seminary (1651). He was still at Saint-Lazare in 1652-53, and was Superior in Richelieu (1653-55). Since he was in Richelieu on February 6, 1654, he probably arrived there at the end of the preceding year. Le Gros died in Montech, near Montauban (Tarn-et-Garonne) in 1655. (Cf. Lyons manuscript, f° 226-30.)

The variations encountered in the date of death given for Jean-Baptiste Le Gros reveal the difficulties caused by inaccurate record keeping and/or the work of copyists in past centuries. Coste lists the date of his death as November 5; Notices, vol. III, pp. 146-48, states that he died on December 31; while Catalogue du Personnel de la Congrégation de la Mission, vol. V (Supplement), gives January 7, all in 1655.

Antoine Maillard had succeeded Le Gros as Procurator of Saint-Lazare.

Nicolas Demonchy, born on March 21, 1626 in Bar (Seine-Maritime), entered the Congregation of the Mission on August 19, 1646, and took his vows on March 6, 1649. He was ordained a priest on March 4, 1651, and was Superior in Toul (1653-55, 1657-58, 1669-74), Metz (1661-69), Tréguier (1680-84), and La Roce (1689-92).
and yours, I ask Our Lord to unite you more and more in His amiable love and to grant all of you the grace of doing His most holy Will always and in all things. Please ask the same of Him for us and particularly for me. I am, in the love of 
Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Lambert, Superior of the Priests of the Mission now in Warsaw, Poland

1458. - TO ÉTIENNE BLATRON, SUPERIOR, IN GENOA

February 16, 1652

You are right in thinking that money given to the Congregation for Masses or for other purposes cannot be diverted in favor of our relatives. One day, one of my nephews came from one hundred fifty leagues away to see me. Since he was poor and had no money to return home, I consulted M. Duval¹ to find out if I could give him a little something out of our money. He told me that, in conscience, I could not do so without the Company’s consent. This obliged me to go and ask alms for him, and with the six écus that

¹André Duval, renowned Doctor of the Sorbonne, author of several learned works, friend and adviser of Saint Vincent, was born in Pontoise on January 15, 1564, and died in Paris on September 9, 1638. The Saint never made an important decision without having recourse to his wisdom. He asked his advice before accepting Saint-Lazare (cf. Abelz, op. cit., bk. I, chap. XXII, p. 97) and before establishing vows in the Congregation. One day, seeing his portrait in one of the rooms at Saint-Lazare, the humble Doctor became upset and insisted so much that Saint Vincent had to remove it. (Cf. Robert Duval, Vie d’André Duval, docteur de Sorbonne, manuscript copy [Robert Duval was the nephew of André Duval]; J. Calvet, “Un confesseur de Saint Vincent,” in Petites Annales de Saint Vincent, May 1903, p. 135.) Duval was also the uncle of two Priests of the Mission, Jean and Philippe Le Vacher.
were given me I sent him off. God knows how consoled I would be for you to assist your good sisters; however, since that cannot be done in the way you propose, I prefer to send them something from the first money we receive. Let me know by whom I can do this.

1459. - THE TOWN MAGISTRATES OF RETHEL TO SAINT VINCENT

Rethel, February 23, 1652

Monsieur,

As our misfortunes are increasing instead of diminishing, we feel strictly obliged to express to you our gratitude for the acts of charity you are doing to make them more tolerable for us. They have reached such a point that most of the poor are living only on a little oat bread, which those who are better off find rather difficult to give them in alms.

We have previously thanked you most humbly for the care you take to come to our aid. We now implore you once again to keep it up, assuring you that our wish for you is your continued well-being, since we are obliged to call ourselves, Monsieur, your most humble and grateful servants.

THE TOWN MAGISTRATES

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

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2This may refer to a nephew who came to Paris in 1630 to consult Saint Vincent about a promise of marriage (cf. vol. I, no. 54, n. 2).

Letter 1459. - Municipal Archives of Rethel, GG 80.
I have heard that M. Guesdon\textsuperscript{1} is dictating lessons to his seminarians. This is contrary to the custom of the Company and a somewhat ineffective way of teaching, since the students rely on their notes and do not exercise either their judgment or their memory. In this way, their minds remain empty while they pile up papers which they will perhaps never look at again.

In the past, one of our men in charge of a seminary\textsuperscript{2} wanted to dictate lessons, but we dissuaded him. I do not think this is ever done in Spain or Italy; as a result, the Spanish are very scholarly and delve more deeply into learning than people do elsewhere. Tell Monsieur Guesdon for me to please act likewise. It will not take him long to recognize the usefulness of this piece of advice.

You tell me that the rumor about the arrival of some regiments\textsuperscript{3} is forcing everyone around Le Mans to hide whatever they have in the town and that you, trusting in God, are moving nothing, or very little. I am glad, Monsieur, that you have such trust, but neither should one tempt God. We foresee that other soldiers will be passing through Le Mans; this leads us to think that it would be a good idea for you to put in a safe place the silver and the finest vestments in your Church, your dishes, your major furnishings, the linen and beds you can do without, as well as deeds and important papers, wheat, oats, etc. You could send all that to one of your friends in town.

\textsuperscript{1}François Guesdon, born in the Rouen diocese, entered the Congregation of the Mission on December 13, 1646, at twenty-five years of age. He was ordained a priest in March 1649 and took his vows in Saint-Méen on the following April 12. He was assigned to Le Mans until he was recalled in October 1653.

\textsuperscript{2}Bernard Codoing. (Cf. vol. II, nos. 562 and 575.)

\textsuperscript{3}Cf. no. 1457, n. 6.
As for yourselves, you must not leave the house but wait there for the protection of God, who will not allow any misfortune to befall you. I ask this of His Divine Goodness.

1461. - NICOLAS PAVILLON, BISHOP OF ALET, TO SAINT VINCENT

My very dear and most honored Father,

Since you procured for us the happiness of having the Abbés de Chandenier come into this diocese, I felt obliged to tell you, on their return to you, about the admirable edification they have given here and the remarkable progress they have made in piety. I entreated them, my very dear Father, to assure you of the fond remembrance I have and shall have all my life, please God, of my very great obligations toward you. I hope you will add to these that of constantly offering to God, especially at the holy altar, my very great needs and those of this poor diocese.

I am, with all possible respect and affection, in our dear Savior, my very dear and most honored Father, your most humble and obedient servant.

NICOLAS,
Bishop of Alet

Alet, February 28, 1652

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

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1462. - TO GUILLAUME DELVILLE,1 IN MONTMIRAIL

February 29, 1652

Despite the reasons you had for your haste in signing the farming leases, I persist in telling you that you should have informed me about this and waited for my reply. Even if the opportunity had been lost, I think that would have been for the better, especially since these are farmers who probably will not pay, as is common in that region. If you farmed that land yourself, you would have lost nothing. It would have been easy for you since you had the horses, implements, and all the things desirable to assure a good yield from the farms. Moreover, you are still obliged to maintain a plow in good condition and, consequently, to remain in almost the same difficulties; and all that for titled lands, which are not extensive enough to keep one plow occupied.

I am surprised that Brother François objects to taking care of the farmyard and the things connected with it, such as the cows and the dairy. If I am not mistaken, he used to do that here at this house. I am also surprised that he says he did not come to the Company for such things. He should remember that we enter it to do whatever obedience ordains and not to live in it according to our own will.

1463. - TO LAMBERT AUX COUTEAUX, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW

Paris, March 1, 1652

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Letter 1462. - Reg. 2, p. 130.
1Coste mistakenly wrote Jacques Delville but the letter is clearly meant for Guillaume Delville, who was in Montmirail at the time. Notices lists no Jacques Delville, C. M., during Saint Vincent's lifetime.

Letter 1463. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.
I finally received your letter of December 18, relating what took place during your sojourn in Lithuania. I had good reason to be anxious about its delay, since its reading brought me inexpressible consolation, seeing the consolations you received there from God, who blessed this visit, and from those whom you went to see, especially the Archbishop of Vilna, who welcomed you so cordially, edified you so greatly by his piety, and honored you with several fine gifts. I ask Our Lord to be his thanks for all that. I am sure you thanked him on behalf of the Queen or had her thank him herself, since it was out of consideration for her that he treated you in that way.

I received, at almost the same time, your letter of January 23 or 24. That was last Friday, after our packet was taken to Madame des Essarts. She had heard that there was a Franciscan named Father Berthod in town, who manages the affairs of Poland in the absence of the Resident, and that he was the one who received and sent dispatches, and the person I should contact for the speediest and safest delivery of ours. I was obliged to have someone go to see him and find out the day and the hour for picking up your letters each week and to send him ours on time. So, he fixed Thursday morning for me to send someone for your letters and Friday evening to bring him our replies. Following this arrangement I received your letter of January 30 yesterday.

Like you, I blushed with shame when I saw what was said to

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1Jerzy Tyskiewicz, Archbishop of Vilnius.
2Claude-Émilienne Moulin, wife of Charles-François Testart, Seigneur des Essarts, Councillor and former majordomo of the King, Master of the Robes for the Queen of Poland. Madame des Essarts took care of business for the Queen in Paris. The influence her husband wielded over the Queen finally roused the jealousy of the Polish lords, who saw to it that he was sent away. He was assigned various missions in France, Poland, and Italy. Madame des Essarts died in March 1667.
3François Berthod enjoyed the confidence of Cardinal Mazarin, who entrusted to him various missions in Paris, and especially in Bordeaux during the Fronde. He was Guardian of the Franciscan convent (Cordeliers) in Brioude. His Mémoires, published by Petitot (2nd series, vol. XLVIII) and by Michaud and Poujoulat (2nd series, vol. X), enlighten us on his political role.
4Minister residing at a foreign court, e.g., a Consul or an Ambassador.
you about the dirt and disorder in the churches in France and the acts of irreverence being committed in them. I am sure that, seeing just the opposite in the churches in Poland, this has affected you quite differently than when you were here. It is indeed a great evil to which people do not give sufficient attention because they have become inured to it. Your letter caused me to reflect on it and I have perceived, first of all, that the solution to it is painful but nonetheless necessary. I am determined to do something about it, beginning with ourselves here, and recommending it to all our houses. Then I shall continue with the ordinands, retreatants, and at our meetings with the diocesan clergy; in a word, in every way I can.

As for Notre-Dame, beyond the solution attempted to reform the priests who go there to celebrate Mass and whom we were instructing at the Bons-Enfants, I do not know what else can be done. This [instruction] has been discontinued because of the misfortunes of the times, which at present are greater than ever and seem to make this means impossible. And I see no other, unless some Communities in Paris, such as the Oratory, Christian Doctrine, and ourselves, are willing to join forces, and each send five or six persons to serve the Masses in the above-mentioned Church two days a week. In that way the acts of immodesty and lack of devotion there may be prevented. I shall seek advice on this; please ask God for light and grace as to how to go about it.

I have nothing special to say in reply to your three letters, nor any advice to give you on your present situation. I ask Our Lord, who knows what He has destined for you, to guide you toward this by the most suitable ways.

As for news, everything here is as usual. Our poverty is increasing with the public calamities. The disturbances causing them have deprived us all at once of an income of twenty-two or twenty-three thousand livres, for, in addition to the loss from the aides, the

5Taxes formerly levied in France on produce and merchandise passing through the gates of
coaches are no longer running. One of the things that might help provide us with bread next year is the Rougemont farm, which we are tilling ourselves, along with the one in Orsigny, if God protects them from damage and pillage, and the harvest lives up to its promise. God is always open-handed to those who call upon Him and generous to those who hope only in His bounty.

We have yet to see the slightest sign of reconciliation and amendment; attitudes and affairs are getting progressively worse. Still, our confidence is increasing that God will soon give us peace, according to the maxim that where human means fail, divine operation begins.

We have no guarantee that the ship will sail for Madagascar, unless this has been decided in the past three days. I am very much afraid that the year may go by without our going there.

We now have thirty-five priests here. You can imagine how hard it is for us to subsist with such a large community.

I am taking the honor of writing to the Queen and to M. Fleury. The letters are open; read them and deliver or hold them back as you see fit.

Humbly, and with heartfelt tenderness, I embrace you, M. Desdames, M. Guillot, and Brothers Zelazewski and Posny. Please pray for us and for me who am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Lambert, Superior of the Priests of the Mission, in Warsaw

Paris. Throughout French history, increases in these taxes almost always gave rise to unrest.

6The Rougemont farm, situated in the Bondy forest in the commune of Sevran (Seine-Saint-Denis), covered a vast expanse of woods and cultivated land. Adrien Le Bon donated it to Saint Vincent on February 11, 1645, "on account of the great friendship and affection" he bore the priests of Saint-Lazare. (Arch. Nat., S 6698, pieces 1 and 2.) Besides helping to provision Saint-Lazare, the farm served as a place of rest for confreres.

7Farm in Saclay.

Jacques Posny, born in Vendôme (Loir-et-Cher), entered the Congregation on May 16, 1649,
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I take the honor of renewing to you the offers of my obedience with all possible humility and affection, and of telling you that I had the consolation of seeing the Abbot of Cuissy here. He told me that you object to his living in Community with his monks and having over them and their temporal affairs a type of direction similar to that formerly exercised by the regular abbots of your holy Order. You also want him to live in a separate building and to have the use of his two-thirds of the revenue without the right to the other third, or the choir and cloister, which will remain under the direction of the Prior, as if the said Abbot were a Commendatory Abbot and did not belong to the Reform.

I see several reasons for or against this, Monsieur. Since I cannot put them in writing nor can the question be settled by letter, I feel that some Doctors and good Order priests should be consulted to examine everything and give their opinion on this dispute. However, since they cannot be brought to Verdun, where you are, the desirable thing would be for you to take the trouble of coming to

at twenty-seven years of age.

Letter 1464. - Reg. 1, f° 44, copy made from the signed and annotated rough draft.

1Order of Canons Regular, founded by Saint Norbert in 1120 at Prémontré, near Laon. Its abbeys followed the basic Rule of Saint Augustine. Aspects of the Cistercian regulations were added to this Rule, since it was intended by its Founder to blend the contemplative with the active religious life. Throughout its history the Order has experienced a number of reforms. Today's members are also known as Norbertines.

In this letter Saint Vincent appears to be writing in his capacity as a member of the Royal Council for Ecclesiastical Affairs (Council of Conscience).

2Hadrien Amour, Abbot of Cuissy (Alise) (1649-73).

3A person with the honorary title of abbot, having legal rights with regard to the revenues of the abbey but no religious jurisdiction over the monks.
Paris for this purpose. By so doing, in the uncertainty of such an important matter, you will be placing yourself in a position to know the Will of God. By the fairness of your line of action, everyone will see that you are seeking His glory. Furthermore, instead of being disedified at seeing a reformed Abbot sequestered from the other monks, in no position to observe his Rule and apparently leading a scandalous secular life, the public will praise your conduct, if you submit it to the advice of wise persons. Even the Queen, who made him an Abbot so that he might introduce and preserve the Reform in his abbey, will have good reason to continue with her plan of choosing abbots from your Reform.

Lastly, Monsieur, we hope to have the happiness of seeing you here as soon as possible to avoid a seeming division in your holy Reform. You know I have dedicated my humble services to it, and I will consider as a blessing the opportunities you give me to render them and to witness to you personally the esteem and respect God has given me for you. I am, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

1465. - TO NICOLAS BAGNI,¹ NUNCIO IN FRANCE

Saint-Lazare, March 7, 1652

Excellency,

The Consul of Salé,² a town in Africa in the kingdom of [Fez].³

¹Nicolò di Bagno.
²Henri Prat.
³This word is missing from the original.
has asked the Superior of the Marseilles house for a priest to act as his chaplain and to assist the poor slaves. I wrote to the Superior of the Mission in Rome, asking him to propose the matter to the Sacred Congregation, which he did.\textsuperscript{4} This led the same Sacred Congregation to request Your Most Illustrious Lordship to inquire into the qualifications of the person and the office. However, Excellency, I have since learned that Father Canto, a Recollect Father, or other members of the same Order who were formerly responsible for that mission, are petitioning Rome to be newly reestablished there. This removes from us any thought of sending men there. It also inspires us with the desire that our Excellencies of Propaganda Fide should know that, when other workers can be found, who are willing to go to the places to which we are being called, we will withdraw so as not to break the bonds of charity nor depart from the opinion we must hold that others will do better there than we.

With all that, Excellency, we most humbly thank the Sacred Congregation for its attention to our proposal, and Your Most Illustrious Lordship for the honor you have done me in letting me know about this matter.

Thank God, we—and myself in particular—are entirely submissive to the wishes of both you and them. I have the happiness of being unreservedly, in His Love, Excellency, your most humble and very obedient servant.

\textit{Vincent De Paul,  
i.s.C.M.}

\textsuperscript{4} Cf. no. 1443.
It is unwise to revoke your consent to exempt from tithes that arable land, enclosed and owned by a Huguenot townsman. Although this may be a surprise or, rather, an act of condescension toward the Abbot of Mouzon, the former Pastor,1 nevertheless, the revocation would be ill-received right now and might produce bad effects. The right to recovery will always remain if the matter demands it, so it is better to defer it.

In similar circumstances, you should listen to the proposal and make no decision on it but ask for some time to think it over, or to write to me about it, or to share it with your community. No one can object to this delay.

I think it is a good idea for you to go to the synod and to inform the Vicar-General of the opinions of M... and the sermon he gave on them. Then, entreat him to tell you how he would like you to act in future with regard to this priest and whether or not you should refuse to let him preach in your pulpit.

Monsieur,

Almost two weeks ago I received a very short letter from you,
which was both a great consolation and a source of admiration, seeing how well you are keeping in the midst of work as long and hard as yours. God must surely have a hand in it; otherwise, how would you dare to undertake, or be able, with so few workers, to sustain such a heavy mission as Villeneuve, after giving three or four others! I thank His Divine Goodness for all that, Monsieur, and for the graces He has granted these poor people through you, and I ask Him to draw His own glory from it.

Amidst all this joy, I still greatly fear that you are taking on too much and will ultimately break down. That is why I beg you with all my heart to take care of your health. M. Ducasse has written me two or three times from Mont-de-Marsan, where he now is, and in one of his letters he led me to hope that he would go to help you manage that big mission in Villeneuve. I do not know if he did so and whether you have brought it to a successful conclusion.

We shall try to pay the Pastor of Saint-Louis the three hundred fifty livres of your letter of exchange. This, however, will not be easy because the public disturbances have already deprived us of more than twenty thousand livres income. As a result, almost all we have left is what we get from Saint-Lazare and a few farms, which is not even one-sixth of what we need to live on.

You tell me you are also afraid of losing all. Blessed be God for everything! Still, I ask Him not to permit this, or to grant us the grace of acting in our needs as Our Lord acted in His, while He was on earth.

I have no other news to give you. We are well, thank God, and the Company is going along as usual here and elsewhere, except in Saintes and in your area because of the troops who are causing disorder wherever they go. I am sure you are earnestly asking God for unity and peace in the kingdom, the remedy for so many evils.

presence of Antoine Portail, and died on February 28, 1671. He was Superior in La Rose (1649-52), and Notre-Dame de Lorn (1652-54).

\(^{2}\) Villeneuve-sur-Lot (Lot-et-Garonne).

\(^{3}\) Pierre Ducasse, Canon Theologian of the Aire diocese, who considered entering the Congregation of the Mission and, as indicated here, worked with the Missionaries.
Mademoiselle Le Gras was at death's door but, by the grace of God, she has recovered. God continues to bless her Little Company as well as the leadership of M. du Chesné at the Bons-Enfants, which is full. Saint-Charles Seminary is also doing well under M. Alméras, who is still not feeling very well.

I often receive news of M. Lambert and his little band, who are in good health, at peace, and in hopes of working effectively in Poland.

Our men in Barbary are well. Those in Italy have given quite a few missions this year, and God has blessed them in an exceptional way. I ask Him to increase His blessings on you and your work. I am, in His love. . . .

1468. - TO A BISHOP

[1651 or 1652] ¹

I really am distressed, Excellency, that the misfortunes of the times are depriving you of the revenues of your abbey. I find it very hard to tell you what I think in the matter both because I am not in a position to be of service to you and because of the political disorder in the kingdom. Nevertheless, Excellency, it seems to me that the present state of affairs should induce you to put off the visit to the Court until things are a little clearer.

Several of our Bishops are in the same plight. The Bishop of . . .

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¹Pierre du Chesné entered the Congregation of the Mission as a priest in 1637. He became one of the best Missionaries of Saint Vincent, who entrusted him with the direction of the houses in Crécy (1644-44), the Bons-Enfants (1644), the Mission of Ireland and Scotland (1646-48), Marseilles (1653-54), and Agde (1654). He also summoned him to attend the two General Assemblies convoked at Saint-Lazare during his lifetime. Du Chesné died in Agde on November 3, 1654.


¹Internal evidence indicates that this letter was probably written a short time before March 23, 1652, the day Saint Vincent wrote to Nicolas Sevin, Bishop of Sarlat (cf. no. 1474).
has not only lost all his current income but also all the provisions he had been putting aside for the future. Although he is highly respected at the Court—and rightly so—when he made a journey here, thinking he would receive compensation, he got no satisfaction. The Bishop of [Sarlat] who remained in his diocese, brought his town back to obedience to the King, when, in the early disturbances, it had declared itself for the opposing party. For this he was greatly praised at the Court and opened the way for some expression of gratitude.

Although you do not have the opportunity of rendering similar service to His Majesty, still, your presence can help appreciably to keep order in the province, given the extent to which you are respected and esteemed. This is something which is most desirable now and which will also be very carefully noted.

I beg you most humbly to accept my simplicity and the offers of my obedience.

1469. - TO PROPAGANDA FIDE

[March 1652]

Most Eminent and Most Reverend Lords,

Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, humbly represents to Your Eminences that two ships are preparing to leave this Easter with some Frenchmen going to live in America, who are asking for two priests of his

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Letter 1469. - Archives of Propaganda Fide, II America, no. 250, p 43, original unsigned petition.

1The date, March 13, 1652, is written at the end of the résumé on the back of the petition. The year, written in another hand, is given also at the top on the front of the document.

2The expedition mentioned here is the one organized by Henri de Levix de Ventadour, Canon of Paris (cf. 1436, n. 10). In no. 1494 Saint Vincent states why the departure of his two Missionaries never took place.
Congregation. Since he has not had time to choose the persons to be sent and, therefore, is unable to submit their names to Your Eminences, he humbly requests that you be pleased to send the usual faculties, without mentioning any names, for these two priests, who will be designated by the writer and approved by the Nuncio of France. Please also grant authority to the writer, with the approval of the said Nuncio, to appoint one of them Prefect of that mission, and to give this Prefect the power to grant the same faculties to the other priests who will work with him for the salvation of souls. He will consider all this as a special favor from Your Eminences.

Whom God, etc.

Addressed: The Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, for Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission

1470. - TO PROPAGANDA FIDE

[Before March 31, 1652]

Most Eminent and Most Reverend Lords,

By a decree of July 9, 1648, the Sacred Congregation granted the faculties of Apostolic Missionaries on Saint-Laurent Island, commonly known as Madagascar, to Charles Nacquart, designated Prefect of the above-mentioned mission, and Nicolas Gondrée, his companion, both priests of the Congregation of the Mission, to work for the conversion of the unbelievers of that country. Six

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3Nicolò di Bagno.

Letter 1470. - Archives of Propaganda Fide, II Africa, no. 248, f° 102, original unsigned petition.

1Date of Easter Sunday in 1652.

2Year written at the top of the document in a different hand.
months after their arrival on that island, having made excellent progress in spreading the holy Faith, the companion of the said Prefect died. The latter now remains the only priest on that island and has written of the great need of evangelical workers. For this reason, Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the said Congregation of the Mission, has asked this Sacred Congregation permission at other times to send some of his priests there, and Your Eminences were pleased to grant them the usual faculties. However, since no ship has sailed for that island since that time, he has not been able to send them.

Now, since a French ship is preparing to set sail at Easter for that island,3 Vincent de Paul humbly places the above-mentioned need before Your Eminences. Since he has not been able to select the men so quickly and to give their names to the Sacred Congregation, he asks that it be pleased to have the usual faculties sent, without mentioning any names, for four priests of the said Congregation of the Mission. These will be designated by the writer and approved by the Nuncio of France, with the authority granted to the said Vincent de Paul, in agreement with the said Nuncio, to appoint one of these priests as Prefect of the said mission, in the event that the said Charles Nacquart, the designated Prefect, may have already passed, or may pass, to a better life. He will consider all this as a special favor from Your Eminences.

Whom God, etc.

Addressed: The Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide for Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission

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3The ship was unable to set sail.
1471. - TO LAMBERT AUX COUTEAUX, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW

March 15, 1652

It is true that France is sorely afflicted to such an extent that there are already other provinces almost as devastated as Champagne and Picardy. . . . The money distributed this month amounts to nine thousand livres, and at Easter we are sending three other priests to Champagne, in addition to those who have been there for so long.1

1472. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

O Monsieur, what a beautiful adornment for a Missionary is holy indifference, since it makes him so pleasing to God that God will always prefer him to all other workers in whom He does not see this disposition for indifference in carrying out His plans! If we divested ourselves, once and for all, of all self-will, we would then be in a position of being sure of doing the Will of God, in which the angels find all their delight and men all their happiness.

1473. - TO LAMBERT AUX COUTEAUX, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW

Paris, March 22 [1652] 1

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!


1In the part of the letter that is missing, Saint Vincent states that the Visitation nuns had been forbidden by the Archbishop to leave Paris under pain of excommunication. (Cf. Collet, ibid., vol. I, p. 310, note.)


Letter 1473. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.

1The secretary mistakenly wrote "1651." On March 22, 1651 Lambert aux Couteaux was still in France.
I received your letter of February 19. I was a little disappointed when I opened it and saw only half a page of writing. However, the little there was did not fail to give me great consolation, since it informed me that you and your little community continue to enjoy good health. On the other hand, I was sorry to hear of the illness of the Archbishop of Vilna and am planning to offer Holy Mass for him tomorrow, God willing, that His Divine Goodness may be pleased to preserve this holy Prelate for His Church. We are continuing our prayers for the King, the Queen, and the little Prince.

I have just left your nephew, who came here to see you. He stayed only two days because he wanted to go home on the coach that leaves today so that they would not worry about him if he were delayed longer. He is married now and God has given him children. He also has two horses and about twenty-four acres of land, part of which he has sown. This would be enough to live on if there were no soldiers in France. When any of them come to him, M. Jouailly willingly takes them in, with whatever they bring.

I have never seen anyone who represented better for me the goodness and simplicity of Our Lord than he does. I do not mean a foolish kind of simplicity because he does not lack intelligence. He embraced me more than six times, kissing my cheek with such cordiality that he seemed to me to be all heart. We spoke a great deal in the Picard dialect but with this difference: he did his best to speak good French and I to speak good Picard.

He told me you would really be dumbfounded when you heard that he had come here. He was a little disappointed at not seeing you but went off as cheerful and pleased as could be. His good humor has left me quite delighted because it is accompanied by

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2Jerzy Tyskiewicz, Archbishop of Vilnius.
3This name is in the Saint's own handwriting.
4This word is also in the Saint's own handwriting.
piety and the fear of God. He has a little sister, too, who is also a fine girl.

I add to this news what we have heard from our dear confreres in Ireland. We thought they had been among those whom the English had put to death at the fall of Limerick, but thanks be to God, He snatched them from their hands. We are sure about this for M. Barry, who has arrived in Nantes and whom we expect here. We also have good reason to hope for the same regarding M. Brin, although we have no guarantee.

They left Limerick together with one hundred or one hundred twenty priests and monks, all disguised and mixed in with the soldiers from the town, who left the day the enemy was supposed to enter it. Our men spent the night preparing for death because there was no mercy for the clergy, but God did not allow them to be recognized as such.

They separated with great sorrow on leaving, one in one direction, one in another; but they felt they had to do this so that, if one were to die, the other might at least be in a position to escape. M. Brin went off toward his native place with the Vicar-General of Cashel, a good friend of theirs, and M. Barry headed for some mountains he mentioned. There, he met a charitable lady who took him into her home and kept him there for two months. At the end of that time, a ship arrived, which, by chance, was going to France, and he boarded it without having heard anything about M. Brin from the time they had separated. However, he thinks it will not be easy for the latter to get back to France because the English hold the seas and because they are in his region; so, he needs prayers.

We have about seventy ordinands here in the house. Messieurs Grimal and Gallais give their conferences and M. Demonchy has their overall direction.

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*Guillaume Gallais, a very talented Missionary, was born in Plouguenast (Côtes-du-Nord), entered the Congregation of the Mission on April 7, 1639, at the age of twenty-four, was ordained a priest in 1641, and took his vows in 1645. He was Superior in Sedan (1643-44), Crécy (1644-45), and Le Mans (1645-47).*
We are fairly well, thank God. True, I have not been out for a week or ten days because of my little fever, but I think I am over it for now, so I hope to go to the meeting of the Ladies today.

The Collège des Bons-Enfants, S[aint]-Charles Seminary, and our other houses are going along as usual. I continue to offer you to God frequently and affectionately, and am, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

Poor Brother Lye, who was in his native place, fell into enemy hands. They crushed his skull and cut off his feet and hands in the presence of his mother.

Addressed: Monsieur Lambert, Superior of the Priests of the Mission, in Warsaw

1474. - TO NICOLAS SEVIN, BISHOP OF SARLAT

March 23, 1652

Excellency,

One of our priests in Cahors told me that you did me the honor of writing to me but, since I have not received the letter, I entreat you most humbly to let me know what orders you gave me in it so that I can try to carry them out. I shall do so always and in all things, unless I am unable. I venture to assure you of this, Excellency, and

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6Thaddée Lye (Thady Lee), born in Tuoghe (Ireland) in 1623, entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 21, 1643, and took his vows on October 7, 1645. While still a seminarian, he was sent to Ireland, probably in 1646. It is certain he was there in March 1651, where he died, as Saint Vincent describes, at the hands of Ireton's army.

Letter 1474. - Reg. 1, F 51, copy made from the unsigned rough draft.
to take this opportunity to tell you that I see no Prelate in the kingdom so generally esteemed as you are because of your wise manner of acting with regard to God, the State, and the people.

One of our Bishops did me the honor of writing to me recently about an abbey of his, ruined by the war in Saintonge. He was asking my advice as to whether he should go to the Court to seek compensation for his losses. I replied to him that the present state of affairs was too unfavorable for that, despite the fact that he is highly respected by the Queen and the King's Council. I added that his stay at the Court would not be greatly appreciated at this time, whereas his presence in his diocese might be very helpful in the service of the King and the province.

To encourage him to stay home, I gave him two examples: one, of a bishop who felt urged to come to the Estates but saw his town on the verge of declaring itself for the Prince; and the other, of you, Excellency, whom I named, saying that during the first disturbances, you saw your diocese about to do the same but you held fast and by your fine leadership maintained it in perfect obedience to the King. I also said that you were highly praised for this at the Court, and by this means you have opened the way for some expression of gratitude to you. The best advice I could give him was to do as you did in this time of crisis, when the good servants of God and of the King distinguish themselves from those who are not, and in this way will merit consideration later on.

Your brother did us the honor of coming to dinner here recently. As you can imagine, Excellency, we talked about you and all the good you are doing, which is already known throughout the kingdom. He was greatly consoled by this. As for me, I cannot tell you how much it consoled me nor how fervently I pray to God for your preservation and for the grace of being able to render you my modest services. I hope to receive this grace, along with your

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1This reply is probably no. 1468.
2The Prince de Condé.
blessing, if you are pleased to give it to me, as I beg you, prostrate in spirit at your feet. I am, in Our Lord.

1475. - TO MARC COGLÉE, SUPERIOR, IN SEDAN

March 23, 1652

If you have not yet given official notification to M... regarding the ban on preaching, do not do it; ask the Vicar-General to excuse you and to give it to some neighboring pastor to do. Tell him that this young man has influential relatives in Sedan, who would be offended if this prohibition came from you and would think that you had requested it; that, in addition, the Governor would be displeased if you did this without consulting him, since you usually share with him matters of any importance, and even more so if, after you discussed it with him, he were to tell you he did not want it done; that, in M...'s time, he was annoyed that he had issued an official notification, by order of the Vicar-General of the day, without asking his opinion; and that it is important for the glory of God that you stay on good terms with this fine gentleman.

Since writing the above, I have learned that you had the notification issued by a priest of the house. When you ask for advice on another occasion, it would be well to wait for the reply.

1476. - TO N.

March 23, 1652

Food was so scarce during the siege of Limerick, said the Saint, that “a horse’s head was selling for an écu.”

March 29, 1652

M. [Le Vazeux] has informed me that M. de Ventadour continues to pursue the project of the Mission to the Indies and has sent the Sacred Congregation several objections to the decree obtained by M. [Le Vazeux]. The result is that there is now some friction between that good gentleman and us, for which I am very sorry and had clearly foreseen from the very beginning. I even told M. [Le Vazeux] to entrust this affair to Providence and not to place any obstacle in its way, for fear of opposing the plans of God and of offending many good and important persons. However, he moved too quickly, and the deed was done.

I also wrote him to do nothing of any importance without your advice and mine. Now I see that he is in a great hurry to prevent this work and to find some means of maintaining our little Congregation, imagining that its preservation depends on the destruction of others—as if God Himself, who made us what we are, was not taking the trouble to preserve us.

So, he takes unnecessary precautions, and his natural hastiness makes him incapable of brooking any delays. He is carried away by first impressions and, in his last letter, he went so far as to try to persuade me that our vows are null and void and that it is a mortal sin to make and renew them. This gives you some idea of where his mind is leading him, and where it might go if we let it. One of these days I will send you an official document in which he himself will see how wrong he is. In the meantime, I am recommending to him once again to take no action in opposition to this new Mission, nor to do anything else of importance except in agreement with you, nor even without writing to me about it and having received my reply.


1Achille Le Vazeux, Assistant of the house in Rome.

2The petition censured here by Saint Vincent and the decree that resulted from it are given in the Appendix, nos. 3 and 4.
Every day you give me good reason to praise God for your attachment to the Company and your vigilance regarding its affairs, and I do so with all my heart. However, I must tell you also, as Our Lord told Martha, that you are a little too concerned about things and that only one thing is necessary, which is to give more to God and His guidance than you now do. Foresight is good when it is subject to the latter, but it becomes excessive when we are in a hurry to avoid something we fear. We rely more on our own efforts than on those of His Providence, and we think we are doing a great deal by anticipating His orders by our own disorder, which causes us to rely on human prudence rather than on His Word. Not a sparrow nor a single hair of our heads falls to the ground except by His orders, and you doubt that our little Congregation will be able to maintain itself unless we take such and such precautions or do this or that, and that, if we delay, others will be established on our ruins. "Look," you say, "a new type of Congregation is starting; it must be opposed. Here comes M. Authier to Rome with the intention of getting the best of us because we have no authority to give missions in the towns and, perhaps, because we take vows. We must forestall him; otherwise, all is lost."

That, more or less, is the gist of your letters. What is worse, your quick mind is impatient to do whatever you say and in its zeal thinks it has enough light to see everything without having recourse to the light of others.

You have placed obstacles in the way of M. de Ventadour's lawsuit, which should never have been done without consulting us.

1Cf. no. 1436, n. 1.
2March 29.
3Cf. Lk 10:41-42. (NAB)
4Cf. Mt 10:29-30. (NAB)
5Henri de Levis, Duc de Ventadour.
That is what I wrote to you at the time, foreseeing the conflict that resulted from it. If, since then, I have not expressed to you that I disapproved of the way you acted, it is because matters could no longer be remedied.

It would be better to have a hundred ventures under the name "Missions," even were they prejudicial to our Institute, than for us to have thwarted one good one, such as his, under pretext of maintaining ourselves. Besides the fact that this project for the Indies is apparently a work raised up by God, we would offend many important, virtuous persons and would thereby manifest more envy or ambition than genuine zeal. If we are truly zealous, we will be glad for everyone to prophesy, for God to send good workers and new Communities to His Church, and for their reputation to grow while ours diminishes.

In the name of God, Monsieur, let us have greater confidence in Him than we do; let us allow Him to steer our little bark; if it is useful and pleasing to Him, He will save it from shipwreck. Far from being submerged by the multitude and the size of other boats, it will sail along with greater assurance in the midst of all those fine ships, provided it keeps straight on its course and does not waste its time crossing over into their path.

Continue to write and tell me what is happening and also what you think of things, but do not attempt anything of importance without consulting M. Dehorgny and me.

1479. - TO LAMBERT AUX COUTEAUX, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW

Paris, Good Friday, 1652

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Letter 1479. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.

1March 29.
I received your two letters of February 26, and there were several things in them that consoled me. One item, however, grieved me deeply—the death of the little Prince, of whom God has willed to deprive this earth in order to have him reign in heaven. We have redoubled our prayers for the King and Queen on this occasion. I do not think I should write any sympathy letter because only God Himself can console people in such losses. Then, too, you tell me that Their Majesties have already conducted themselves in these tragic circumstances as souls perfectly submissive to the adorable judgments of God. I thank His Divine Goodness for this, Monsieur, as well as for the liking He has given the King for your establishment, so much so that he himself has deigned to think about means to make and to strengthen it. I hope God will bless his efforts, since they are directed toward His service.

It is true that I have suffered greatly since I no longer have you here, but I adore the hand of God who has taken you away, and I assent to using this mortification until He is pleased to bring you back. In the meantime, we shall ask Him for a person having the fine qualities you indicate, to go and further the glory of God in Poland.

I sent your letter to M. Gambart, with a note for the Daughters of Sainte-Marie, urging them to write to Poland by the next regular mail to console the Queen with the hope of seeing them there soon.

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2 He had died on February 20.

3 Adrien Gambart, born in Croye, in the Noyon diocese, on September 27, 1600, was ordained a priest in 1633. Soon after ordination he made a retreat at Saint-Lazare and took Saint Vincent as his guide. He became a member of the Tuesday Conferences and participated from time to time in the Saint's missionary activities. Aware that Gambart was a prudent man, he convinced him to accept the position of confessor for the Visitation nunns of the Second Monastery of Paris. He was also Director of the Daughters of Providence of Saint-Joseph and often taught catechism in the hospitals. *Le missionnaire paroissial*, published in 1668 and dedicated to Saint Vincent, is the best known of his writings. It was thought erroneously that Gambart was a member of the Congregation of the Mission. He died a holy death on December 18, 1668, after an illness of one week. His manuscripts and part of his library were willed to Saint-Lazare. His biography, *Abrégé de la vie d'Adrien Gambart, prêtre missionnaire*, was published in Paris in 1670.
I also notified Mademoiselle Le Gras of what concerns her. After these feast days, we shall work seriously on this plan.

Please tell Brother Casimir that, just as I was about to go to Tenebrae yesterday, I was informed of his return, and during the services I thought of it several times and thanked God for it. Today’s services prevent me from writing you a longer letter.

Our little news items are the same as I sent you. I wish you the blessings of the mystery of love which we are celebrating, and the same for your dear family, whom I embrace, along with your dear soul, at the foot of the Cross of Our Lord. I am, in Him, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
L.s.C.M.

I embrace in particular Brother Casimir, prostrate in spirit at his feet, with the inexpressible joy of knowing he is with you.

Addressed: Monsieur Lambert, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Poland, in Warsaw

1480 - TO BROTHER LÉONARD LAMIROIS, IN GENOA

Good Friday [Between 1646 and 1660]

I praise God for your health of body and mind. I am sure you are still ailing somewhat, but this is, as you say, in order to exercise

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*Probably Stanislaw Kasimierz Zelazewski.


Léonard Lamiros, coadjutor Brother, born in Paris on October 17, 1626, entered the Congregation of the Mission in 1644, and took his vows in October 1647.

This letter was probably written after 1652. In that year Lamiros was in Lagno (cf. no. 1577); we know from Saint Vincent’s letter to him on March 14, 1653 that he was definitely in Genoa at that time.
patience, without which we advance little in solid virtue. You practice it not only in that respect but in always doing the same duty, and one such as yours where the work is never finished and you have to deal with everyone. True, in this you honor Divine Providence, who provides for the needs of His creatures but, since Providence cannot please them all, neither can you do things so well that you do not have to put up with some slight opposition and feel an aversion toward certain persons.

Thank God, you rise above those feelings and show as much gentleness and affability as the hot climate and the heat of the fire allow. Keep this up, dear Brother. Blessed are those who suffer, and blessed will you be for consuming yourself for God, as Our Lord did on the Cross! I wish you an abundant share of the fruits of His precious death so that you may live eternally with Him. Take care to direct your intention to Him so that nothing may be lost in all the work you do, but your labor may be pure gold and your soul richly adorned for its Spouse.

1481. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION, IN TROYES

April 4, 1652

I was very glad to receive your letter. I am sure your father and mother would be greatly consoled to see the whole family gathered together; I, too, would share in their consolation at seeing you pass through here. However, I cannot suggest that you go because Our Lord has left us a counsel quite to the contrary, not wanting one of His disciples to go home to bury his dead father, nor for another to sell his possessions and give them to the poor; yet, those were very holy, urgent reasons.

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2 The kitchen and the storeroom.

1 Cf. Mt 8:21-22. (NAB)
2 Cf. Mk 10:21; Mt 19:21; Lk 18:22. (NAB)
He added His own example to this counsel. You know that He returned only once to His own region, and you know what happened to Him then: His own people wanted to throw him off the edge of a cliff. I think He permitted this in order to represent to us the spiritual dangers to which we expose ourselves by similar visits, which, in our experience, are greater and more common than I can tell you. At the very time I am writing to you, we are experiencing this with a member of the Company. That is why, Monsieur, you will be doing an action most pleasing to God if you mortify nature by refusing it this journey. What you say about your parents wanting to see you is true, but this desire is natural and not divine; and they will be edified when they learn that you are depriving yourself of this satisfaction for the love of God.

When you say that, despite all those reasons, your brothers and your uncle, who are monks, will not fail to be present at your sister’s profession, I believe it; but you should take into consideration that they are nearer to there than you are and do not have the opportunity you have to gather in the harvest—at all hours of the day you can procure the salvation of souls and win over many of them to Jesus Christ. Consider, Monsieur, whether this holy objective should not be given preference and whether, at the hour of death, you will not feel inexpressible consolation for having held fast to it, when flesh and blood tried to divert you from it. Besides, I have to tell you that the roads are very dangerous in these troubled and disorderly times, and, in all probability, they will be even worse in future.

I also assure you that I myself want to follow the advice I am giving you, as do most members of the Company, who greatly scruple about abandoning the works of God for their own temporal affairs, still more for a fleeting satisfaction such as being at home and visiting with relatives there. When parting time comes, there is nothing but sorrow and tears, and, what is worse, the servants of

\(^3\text{Cf. Lk 4:16-30. (NAB)}\)
God are often left with nothing but distractions. Their minds are full of images and sentiments very little in harmony with their state, and they sometimes lose the attachment they had for their spiritual exercises. Monsieur Alméras has not gone to see his father since he has been in the Company, except for one time when he was ill.

I ask you, Monsieur, to reflect on all this and to give yourself to God so as not to interrupt your work as long as He blesses it as He does. Remember that, besides the glory His Divine Majesty will receive from this oblation, you will be more pleasing in His sight, more fit to serve your neighbor, and an ever better example to the Company, which has good reason to thank Our Lord, as I do, for having given you to it and for all the good you do in it.

1481.

TO LAMBERT AUX COUTEAUX, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW

Paris, April 12, 1652

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Yesterday I received your letter of March II, which gave me great consolation, not only because it is one of your letters, which all have the same effect, but also because of your fine leadership—or rather God's leadership over you. He has caused you to find favor in the hearts of the King and the Queen and, what is more, disposed Their Majesties to make such a fine royal foundation. Although it is assured only during their lifetime, there is reason to hope that, with time, the State will consent to its being permanent. So, you must allow God to act just as you have done until now.

I thank His Divine Goodness for all these things and for the others you tell me, especially your reply to the Queen on the questions of the day, which is much to my liking and according to

Letter 1482. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.
the Spirit of God. Although we do not like these novelties, I have nevertheless exhorted the Company to speak neither for nor against them. Because M. Gilles had dwelt on these matters in a conference to the ordinands, I asked him insistently not to do so any more; but being unable to prevail on him in this matter, we sent him to Crécy to remove him from occasions of getting carried away, as he was doing at every opportunity. We also had to withdraw M. Damiens from this duty. He had started teaching theology to our students and had said something about those things in a few of his lectures. I have likewise chastened our students in this regard and will see to it that no one tries it again because what you say is true: it is a great evil for a Community to be divided in its opinions. You have been advised sufficiently about preventing your men from discussing these debates or speaking about them with persons outside the Company.

I have nothing but great praise for your discretion amidst the satisfactions of a fine beginning. You do not expose yourself to the eyes of the Court nor to the dangers of envy and the snares of the devil, unless necessity obliges. In this way, Our Lord, in whom alone we are secure, will be your protector. It is to Him, Monsieur, that you must turn to choose the place for your establishment—I mean to ask Him to inspire the King, the Queen, and the Archbishop of Vilna about it. Since he wants to have you in his town, he will not fail to consult Their Majesties to see if it is more expedient to have it there than elsewhere. So, just let them act.

Wherever it may be, if there are theology classes, I think it will be well to allow Brother Casimir to go to the lessons, provided he goes to your house for the Office every day. I was very pleased with the Queen's charity to his mother because now he will have no reason to worry about her needs.

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1 The Queen’s confessor was a well-known Jansenist, François de Fleury. She corresponded with the Jansenists in France, especially with Mère Angélique Arnauld.

2 Jerzy Tyskiewicz, Archbishop of Vilnius.
I did not tell you that last Friday, after sending my packet to Father Berthod, I received yours of March 4, and that very day M. Bouchet sent me the one you sent with him with the bracelets and rings in it, which I have given to Mademoiselle de Lamoignon. As for the elk's foot, he did not send it to me nor have I sent to him for it. I shall have someone pay him a visit one of these days, in gratitude for being such good company for you and for the other good services he rendered you. I hope, then, to receive that beautiful present, which I shall give to the Duchesse d'Aiguillon from you.

You told me that Brother Posny was sick. Mon Dieu! how is he now? I presume he is better, especially since you did not mention him in your last letter to me. I have recommended him to the prayers of the Company, along with the little family in general and all that concerns you.

Mademoiselle Le Gras will keep three of her Sisters ready to be sent with the ones from Sainte-Marie. I have talked to them about a confessor; they are having great difficulty finding someone suitable. I sent the Mother Superior's Brother Zelazewski's letter and an excerpt from yours regarding the Queen's concern for them.

The voyage to Madagascar has been delayed again. M. Berruyer came to see me just four or five days ago and told me that the ship they had bought was too old to go so far. In addition, because it was late in the season, they had no time to procure and equip a better one but will have one for September, God willing.

M. Portail is making the Visitation of the Bons-Enfants. M. Grimal is taking his place here, and M. Bayart is looking after the

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2The Franciscan, François Berthod, Chargé d'Affaires of Poland in Paris.
4According to a legend widely prevalent at the time, the Scandinavian elk, hunted especially in Poland and in the North, was very susceptible to epilepsy. It was said that it stopped the seizures immediately if it could put its left foot in its ear; hence the belief that elk's foot was a specific cure for this illness.
5Mère Marie-Agnès Le Roy, Superior of the Second Monastery of the Visitation in Paris. It was from this monastery that the nuns expected in Poland were to depart.
6A member of the Company of the Indies.
Daughters of Charity. M. Ennery, who teaches theology to our students, is also their director, and M. Watebled is the director of our Brothers. Both will give them conferences on Sundays and feast days.

The Company is going along well everywhere, and I am, more than ever, if this were possible, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Lambert

1483. - TO ACHILLE LE VAZEUX, ASSISTANT, IN ROME

April 12, 1652

I told you I had seen M. de Ventadour and promised him we would not thwart his plans in any way. I said that our sole concern was to avoid a similarity of names because of the inconveniences this confusion might cause. When I pointed out some that have already occurred, he admitted that we were right and told me he wants only whatever name the Pope will give them. His plan is to open seminaries where the clergy would be formed for the Mission for the Indies. However, they will not be able to go there unless he

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Jean Ennery [John McEnery], born in December 1616 at Castle Mak Ennery, today Castletown [Castletown McEnery, Co. Limerick, Ireland], entered the Congregation of the Mission on September 23, 1642 and took his vows on October 11, 1645. According to Saint Vincent, he was "a wise, pious, and exemplary man" (cf. Abelly, op. cit., bk. III, p. 48). He taught theology at Saint-Lazare (1652), aided the unfortunate people of Champagne impoverished by the war (1653), and assisted his countrymen who had fled to Troyes (1654). Lastly, he was sent to Genoa where he died of the plague in 1657.

Pierre Watebled.


1Cf. no. 1436, n. 1.
sends them, in accord with the will of our Excellencies of Propa-
ganda Fide, on whom they will depend. The same holds true for
the collège they⁴ have in Rome, which bears their name.

You wrote me that a priest who wanted to go to that country told
you that this could not be done, unless one was a member of M. de
Ventadour’s Congregation. With regard to that, let me tell you that
the obstacle he says he encountered may arise from another source;
namely, that the Duc d’Amville³ has been made Viceroy of the
Indies—I mean of those where France has commerce—and since
he did not have a passport issued by the latter, they may perhaps
have tried to prevent him from going.

1484. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION, IN SAINT-MÉEN

April 16, 1652

When I realized that you thought your troubles had lessened the
esteem I have always had for you, I immediately decided to assure
you that this is not the case. I know that these difficulties which
arise and these desires for a change are trials God gives even the
saints for their greater sanctification. He is accustomed to put our
love for Him to the test and to guide the souls He cherishes through
several difficulties in order to help them to merit the extraordinary
graces He intends to grant them.

So then, far from conceiving the slightest thought that might put
you in an unfavorable light, I consider you, on the contrary, more
faithful to God because you resist these temptations and do not
curtail any of your usual spiritual exercises. In addition, after
explaining your difficulties to us, you accepted the reply I gave

⁴The priests of Propaganda Fide.
³François-Christophe de Levis-Ventadour, brother of the Duc de Ventadour.

you. I thank Him for this, Monsieur, and ask Him that, in proportion to the crosses He allows you to encounter in your vocation, He will strengthen you with His grace. It is a good sign when He burdens us with them and we carry them well, but woe to the person who runs away from them, for he will find such heavy ones that they will overwhelm him.

Perhaps you still desire a change, although you have not written me about this again. That is why we have assigned you to Tréguier, where the Bishop is going to establish a seminary. You can contribute to the advancement of the glory of God there by serving the clergy and, in and through them, to serve all the souls in the diocese who will later be entrusted to their care and direction.

1485. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

April 16, 1652

The Bishop of Tréguier is determined to open his seminary as soon as possible, on his return to his diocese. I think you will be consoled and will thank God if He makes use of you to go and lay its foundations. I have already named you for that place, but in the meantime, Monsieur, please use the time to give yourself wholeheartedly to Our Lord, in the spirit and practices of a true Missionary, so that you will produce results worthy of your vocation.

Alas! Mon Dieu! for a vain satisfaction of coming and going, of making and receiving visits, must God be deprived of the glory you can render Him? For a body that you perhaps gratify only too much, must your beautiful soul stop contributing to the salvation of an infinity of others? If I had ever seen anyone benefit from clinging

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1Balthazar Grangier de Liverdi.


1The copyist of Register 2 wrote: “To a lax Missionary, endowed with fine talents for the functions of the Company.”
to his sensuality, I would say to you, “Do likewise; that’s all right!”

Far from it, however; this is the downfall of all who walk the broad way, which leads many to perdition.²

It is time, Monsieur, for you to follow Our Lord along the narrow path of a life in conformity with your vocation. For almost nine months now you seem to be a little lax, although you have several important obligations for striving for perfection: (1) God calls you to it; (2) He has given you a very good character; (3) He has predisposed you with many interior graces and exterior gifts; (4) He has granted you exceptional blessings in your previous duties. In a word, His goodness in your regard has been so great as to give you the strength to consecrate yourself in a special way to His service and to that of His Church. Please remember that you started off well and continued even better and that it would be a lack of fidelity to God to let nature get the upper hand again. It would also be an abuse of His grace; you would be exposing yourself to His indignation and would regret it your whole life and beyond.

I am sure, Monsieur, that you are very disturbed by what I am telling you, and that the devil will strive to discourage and upset you, if he can; but I also hope that you will take the resolution to correspond henceforth to God’s plans for you and put them into effect without delay, always and everywhere. If you do, Monsieur, rest assured that He will give you more than enough grace for that. I beg this of you by the love He bears you, by the rewards He promises you, by the graces He grants you, and by the good you will do for the clergy and the people. This has been put off too long: lost time can never be recovered, death is approaching, the harvest is great, the workers are few,³ and Our Lord is relying on you.

Remember also that this Divine Savior says that He sanctified Himself so that His own might also be sanctified. He teaches us by

²Cf. Mt 7:13. (NAB)
³Cf. Mt 9:37-38. (NAB)
these words that, to work effectively for the neighbor, we ourselves must strive for virtue. You are in a position to do so, free from all other cares. Take my word for it; begin with a good retreat and continue in earnest with the diligence proper to reawakening fervor and zeal in you. Then again, the time will also come when the Bishop of Tréguier will give you the opportunity to practice these virtues and to instill them into his clergy. The esteem and affection God has given me for you causes me to speak to you this way. Please accept it and pray for me that I myself may not fall behind in doing what I induce others to do. I assure you that I shall continue to offer you to God for the accomplishment of His holy Will in and through you.

1486. TO JEAN DEHORGNY, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

April 19, 1652

I wrote you that I thought M. [Le Vazeux] was moving a little too fast in your absence. This was particularly apparent to me in the matter of the decree for which he was petitioning the Sacred Congregation to oppose M. de Ventadour's plan, without waiting for our opinion, nor, I think, for yours. This offended many important persons who have been good to us, and I had to go to that good gentleman with our apologies and assure him that we would put nothing in the way of the seminaries he wants to establish. When I explained to him the inconveniences to be feared from a similarity of names, he on his part promised me they will take only the name the Pope gives them.

They are asking that those seminaries be connected with and dependent on the collège of Propaganda Fide of Rome. If this work is of God, we would be doing a great wrong in thwarting it; if it is

1Cf. nos. 1477 and 1483.
not, God will destroy it whenever He chooses. As for us, we should want everyone to prophesy and for evangelical workers to increase in number. I, personally, think that this is a good means to do so, and I hope wholeheartedly for its success. With all the people in the Church of God, we will never lack work, as long as we are faithful to Him.

M. [Le Vazeux] takes offense at everything. He has ideas that are too advanced and takes unnecessary precautions. We must have confidence in God, be faithful to our duties, and entrust the rest to Providence. That is what I have tried to make him understand. As for his persistence in seeking an extension of our Bull so we can work in towns and in infidel lands, I asked him to suspend these proposals and to await our decision.

1487. - TO PHILIPPE LE VACHER AND JEAN BARREAU

[1652] 1

I have heard about the close bond and the warm charity between you. I have blessed God several times for it and will bless Him for it as often as the thought comes to my mind. My soul is deeply moved with gratitude for such a great good, which gladdens the heart of God Himself, especially since by this union He will bring about an infinity of good results for the advancement of His glory and the salvation of a large number of souls. In the name of God, gentlemen, do everything you can on your part to make this union firmer and more cordial, even into eternity. Remember the maxim of the Romans which states that by union and counsel we can achieve anything. Yes, union between you will bring success to


1This letter seems to have been written at the beginning of Philippe Le Vacher’s sojourn in Algiers; it must be some months later than no. 1435, which has the certain date of December 21, 1651.
God's work, and only disunion can destroy it. This is the noblest, though the least sought after, work of charity on earth. *O Dieu!* gentlemen, would that we had a little more insight about the excellence of apostolic works so that we might infinitely esteem our good fortune and correspond to the duties of this state! It would take only ten or twelve Missionaries, enlightened in this way, to produce unbelievable results in the Church.

I have seen the assault of flesh and blood on you. That was inevitable; the devil took good care not to leave you without a struggle. Blessed be God that you have remained firm in bracing yourself against these attacks! Heaven and earth look with pleasure on the happy lot that has fallen to you of honoring by your duty that incomprehensible charity by which Our Lord came down upon earth to come to aid and assist us in our slavery. I think there is no angel or saint in heaven who does not envy you this good fortune, inasmuch as their glorious state allows. I must confess that, although I am the most abominable of all sinners, were it allowed me I would envy you myself.

Humble yourselves profoundly and be prepared to suffer from Turks, Jews, and false brothers. They can cause you trouble, but please do not be surprised at this, for they can do you no other harm than what Our Lord wills to be done to you. Whatever comes to you from Him will be only to allow you to merit some special favors with which He plans to honor you. You know that the grace of our Redemption must be attributed to the merits of His Passion and that the more God's affairs are thwarted, the better they will succeed, provided that our submissiveness and trust do not falter. Rarely is any good done without difficulty; the devil is too subtle and the world too corrupt not to attempt to nip such a good work in the bud.

Courage, gentlemen! It is God Himself who has established you in the place and duty where you are. If His glory is your goal, what can you fear or, rather, for what should you not hope?
April 24, 1652

I approve of the maxim that all licit and possible means should be used for the glory of God, as if God were not supposed to help us, provided we expect everything from His Divine Providence, as though we had no human means.

You asked me if a Capuchin should be allowed to continue to say Mass, hear confessions, and distribute Holy Communion to his women penitents in your church without permission. My reply is: (1) that we should always share the sentiments of the saints, who wanted everyone to be saints and to do the works they did. Would to God, says the greatest among them, that everyone were a prophet! ¹ And since Our Lord, the Saint of Saints, has exhorted us to ask God to send laborers into His harvest,² we should rejoice to see that those He has sent are working at cultivating souls, as this good Father is doing. (2) He thinks that the permission he asked you on one occasion to do that in your church gives him the right to continue. (3) This helps to relieve you and your family. With regard to this, let me tell you that several pastors in Paris are glad to have the monks come to help them out. True, this is only for special occasions. (4) If you forbid them to do so without discussing this with you, they will get an express permission from your Superiors in Reims, and in this way will be defying you in your own church. Lastly, if you let them see that this upsets you, they will take offense and talk about it, and people hearing it will accuse you of envy or avarice, for they will see no other reasons.

Consequently, Monsieur, the lesser evil will be to let this Father go ahead rather than demand of him the duty he owes to the Pastor or prevent him from fulfilling the devotional needs of a few individuals, provided, however, that you do not discover any other

¹Cf. Nm 11:29. (NAB)
²Cf. Mt 9:37-38. (NAB)
problems. Nevertheless, if he were to continue to distribute Communion to them at his Mass while High Mass is being said, and the rest of the people—or some of them—receive Communion or are supposed to receive Communion at the latter, that would give an appearance of schism, which must be avoided.

For this reason, it would be well to ask Father to celebrate Mass at another time. However, I think it would be better for you not to say anything to him about this, if he distributes Communion only to one or two important ladies, such as the Governor’s wife and someone else. If the number of his communicants were larger and if, after your request, he would not advance or delay his Mass, in that case you might speak very tactfully to each of his followers individually. Explain to them the harm that could come from separating themselves from the general Communion, and persuade them to give this good example to the parish and to receive Communion with the others from the hands of the celebrant [of the High Mass].

As for the parish provided for M..., we must adore the ways of God. Certain things He allows bear more fruit than we expect, and we must always submit to situations like that which are inevitable and have no remedy.

1489. - TO CLAUDE DUFOUR, IN SEDAN

April 24, 1652

The departure for Madagascar has been delayed again until the month of September. Since we have waited this long, we can easily wait another four or five months; a great good is worth being long desired. You, who have received from God a strong attraction for this mission, should keep yourself in the same disposition because that is a sign of a calling. Furthermore, the Company has designated

you for that place from the beginning and still intends that you go there, which is a second sign. And a third sign is that you have not only been named in Rome, as I wrote you previously, but have been sent the usual faculties granted to those going to work for the conversion of unbelievers, and we are holding them here for you.

After all that, Monsieur, there is no reason to doubt that God is relying on you for such a holy work. You will do well, then, to keep the resolution you made of not thinking about the Carthusians any longer, especially since you wrote me that, if it is God’s good pleasure to make you an artisan rather than for you to transfer to that holy Order, you would willingly do so because you have so much respect and love for the adorable Will of God. Offer yourself anew to Him, since you are a worker whom He is calling to the loftiest, most useful, and most sanctifying service on this earth, namely, that of drawing souls to the knowledge of Jesus Christ and of going to extend His empire in places where the demon has reigned for so long.

The Apostles and several great saints considered themselves most fortunate to spend themselves for that end. Even now we see many monks leaving their cloister and many priests leaving their country to go and preach the Gospel to unbelievers, and if there were none to be found, the Carthusians would have to leave their solitude to be sent there. Consequently, Monsieur, I ask you, in the name of Our Lord, to wait patiently until the time comes which He has marked out for your departure.

In the meantime, you are serving God very effectively where you are. If it does not seem so to you, all the better. I cannot help being deeply consoled by my knowledge of this, and the Company is greatly edified by it. Just keep on doing what you have done. If this way of life is less agreeable to you than that of withdrawal from the world, you should cherish it all the more because it is more pleasing to Our Lord, since there is more of His love in it than your own satisfaction.

The good will you have shown Our Lord and His glorious Mother will be judged by its effect if, instead of going to Notre-
Dame-de-Liesse, you present to them in Sedan the gratitude and prayers you offer faithfully for graces received and desired. What obliges me to dissuade you from that little pilgrimage are the dangers which are being encountered everywhere at present.

1490. - TO REVEREND MOTHER CATHERINE VIRONCEAU DE SAINT JOSEPH, SUPERIOR OF THE HOTEL-DIEU OF QUÉBEC

Paris, April 25, 1652

Reverend Mother,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

It is true that those who did me the honor of conveying to you my esteem for the missions of Canada were right in doing so. I do indeed consider this work one of the greatest to be done in the past fifteen hundred years. Those holy souls who have the happiness of laboring at it are truly apostolic souls, merit ing the approval and assistance of the whole Church, especially you and your Commu nity, who contribute to the spiritual and corporal assistance of the poor and the sick. This is the height of Christian charity, and I will consider it a special blessing to help you with it, if some day God is pleased to grant me the grace to do so.

For me to do that at present, dear Mother, is, however, absolutely impossible because of the misfortunes of this country, stemming from the past wars and present divisions of this kingdom, which are reducing the provinces to a state of complete desolation. A number of charitable persons in Paris are trying to remedy the

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1Village in Aisne, celebrated for its pilgrimages.

Letter 1490. - This original signed letter was formerly at the Hôtel-Dieu of Quebec (Canada). Its present location is unknown.

2Catherine Vironceau had arrived in Canada from France on July 8, 1640, made her profession as a Sister of Mercy on August 29, 1645, and died on August 29, 1687, at the age of seventy-eight.
situation, helping by their care and their alms to prevent people from dying of poverty. Since, however, these alms cannot suffice for that, it would be of little use to speak to them about the needs of Canada. I am sure, dear Mother, that the needs of your hospital are great, after the losses inflicted on you by the Iroquois there and the considerable reduction of your revenue from the coaches here. I can certainly verify the latter because several of our houses, which depend on them for their meager subsistence, are having a hard time getting half of what they got from them before.

I ask Our Lord, Reverend Mother, to raise up some good persons who will give you the means of continuing your service to His poor members. This is what I venture to hope from His paternal Providence, which is everywhere adorable.

I have special confidence in your prayers, although I am unworthy to have a share in them. Still, I ask you for them with all possible humility and with the desire that God may be pleased to grant me the grace of being of service to you. I am in His love, Reverend Mother, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Reverend Mother Catherine Vironceau, Superior of the Sisters of Mercy at the Hôtel-Dieu of Québec, in Québec
Slavery engenders so many evils that the end of some is the beginning of others. Among the slaves in this place, besides those in the prisons, I found forty of them enclosed in a stable so small and narrow that they could hardly move. The only air they received was through a vent, closed with an iron grate at the top of the arch. They are all chained together two by two and kept locked up all the time. Yet, they work at grinding wheat with a small, manually-operated mill, and the quota they have to grind each day is beyond their strength. Indeed, these poor people are truly fed with the bread of sorrow, and they can say that, with such excessive work, they eat it in the sweat of their body in this stifling place.

Shortly after I had gone in there to visit them, as I was embracing them in this pitiful state, I heard some muffled cries of women and children, mingled with moaning and weeping. When I looked up at the vent, I saw five poor young Christian female slaves. Three of them were each holding a baby, and they were all in dire need. Hearing the noise of our common greeting, they had run to the vent to see what was happening. When they realized that I was a priest, the deep sorrow wringing their hearts caused


1Jean Le Vacher, born in Écouen (Val-d'Oise) on March 15, 1619, entered the Congregation of the Mission with his brother Philippe on October 5, 1643. He took his vows in 1646 and was ordained a priest in 1647. Julien Guérin, a Missionary in Tunis, needed assistance, and Saint Vincent was sending him Jean Le Vacher. On August 23, 1647, as the Founder and his young disciple were leaving Saint-Lazare together, they met Nicolò di Bagno, the Nuncio. "Excellency," said the Saint, "you are just in time to give your blessing to this good priest, who is leaving for the Tunis mission." "What! this child!" exclaimed the astonished Nuncio. "Excellency," replied the Saint, "he has the vocation for that."

Jean Le Vacher arrived in Tunis on November 22, 1647. Guérin's death on May 13, 1648, followed two months later by that of the Consul, Martin de Lange, placed on Le Vacher the double burden of Consul and head of the Mission. In 1650 he added Vicar Apostolic to these titles. Since the Holy See would not allow priests to be in charge of the consulate, Saint Vincent sent a layman, Martin Huaonen, a parliamentary lawyer, who arrived in Tunis in 1653 and left in April 1657, expelled by the Bey. For two years Jean Le Vacher carried out the functions of Consul. He returned to France in 1666, and was sent to Algiers in 1668 as Vicar-General of Carthage and Vicar Apostolic of Algiers and Tunis. His life in Algiers was that of an apostle, and his death that of a martyr. On July 16, 1683, the town of Algiers was being bombarded by Duquesne. The Turks, having used every device to make Le Vacher apostatize, tied him to the mouth of a cannon, which shot his body into the sea. (Cf. Raymond Gleizes, Jean Le Vacher, vice-arche apostolique et consul de France à Tunis et à Alger (Paris: Gabalda, 1914).)

2The years Jean Le Vacher was in Tunis while the Saint was still alive.
them to cry out loud and burst into tears, seeking from me a share in the consolation I was trying to give the men I had come to visit in that prison. I must confess that I was almost overcome with grief at that moment, seeing on the one hand those poor slaves who could scarcely stay on their feet because of the weight of their chains, and hearing on the other the lamentations of those poor women and the cries of those little innocents. The youngest woman is uncommonly persecuted by her master, who is trying to make her deny her faith in Jesus Christ in order to marry him. Alas! just a fraction of so many millions spent by Christians on vain superfluities and pleasures could be put to better use here to relieve these poor souls in the midst of the bitterness suffocating them.

With the help of God's grace, I tried to assist the men and women as best I could. However, we are in a country where permission to do some good for these unfortunate must be bought with ready cash. To obtain the right to talk to them I had to give good money to their masters. I had to do the same to have the chains removed from the slaves on a few galleys ready to set sail and to have them brought to me in the prisons. I did not take all the chain gangs at once but rather one galley after another to hear their confessions, say Holy Mass for them, and give them Holy Communion. This was done with good results and blessings, by the mercy of God.

1492. - TO JEAN DEHORGNY, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

May 2, 1652

I told you I was concerned because I think M. [Le Vazeux] is moving too fast in seeking an extension for our Bull; then you wrote me that you were trying to get the petition presented to the Sacred Congregation. Let me tell you once again that the fundamental decision taken from the beginning, after much prayer and by common consent, was to devote ourselves only to the service of the poor people in rural areas. This, therefore, does not allow us the freedom to give missions in towns for fear lest we might in the end become so attached to them—because they are more attractive—
that we might grow to dislike others where nature finds no satisfaction. Since, I repeat, there is question of such an important matter, it deserves to be pondered in depth. Therefore, please proceed no further until I have seen the outline for your petition.

If we have to request this extension, it should be on condition that we will give missions in towns only when the bishops in whose dioceses we are established order us to do so. It must be made clear that, of ourselves, we should aim at giving missions only in the country, in line with the original plan.

1493. - TO CARDINAL ANTONIO BARBERINI, PREFECT OF PROPAGANDA FIDE

Most Eminent Prince,

I received the letter with which Your Eminence deigned to honor me, with a sentiment of profound respect and humility, but especially of gratitude. I understood from it not only how much you keep us in mind but also how you esteem and support the members of our Congregation who are serving on the island of Madagascar. Their work is certainly of little account but, by the goodness of God, they do it zealously and willingly.

Most Eminent Cardinal, for a long time I have been thinking of sending new workers to this island and already considered this as well as done. However, those on whom all the voyages depend, and who usually sail for the Indies, did not dare to entrust themselves to the sea in a ship badly deteriorated by long use, and especially during a season of the year unfavorable to sailing. They have therefore postponed the departure until the month of September. At that time, God willing, the four workers destined for this mission will set out, if the Sacred Congregation gives its approval.