Thank you for informing me about M.... I am quite upset about his behavior because it will have very bad effects. He acted as he did through zealous enthusiasm, thinking that it was a means of procuring some relief for the poor. I have written him my humble thoughts about it. It is true that M.... is basically very good at heart, even though exteriorly he may be too agitated and undisciplined. We have to bear with some of this and urge him to correct the rest by timely admonitions given gently and cordially in a spirit of charity.

We must pay no attention to the complaints people make of us when it is a question of some good custom in the Company, such as not going to eat in the homes of persons outside the Company. M. de Santeuil is not one to take offense at your not going to eat at his house, if you explain why: that our customs forbid it, on the one hand, and, on the other, the consequences of the contrary if we disregard this.

As for being more open with the leading citizens, I see no disadvantage in that for important parish business pertaining to its welfare and your pastoral duties, provided you do not pass from these external affairs to the internal affairs of the house or worldly news.

No, it would not be a good idea for you to ask the Governor’s advice on what to say in your homilies, whether or not they concern controversial points. I am surprised that you even had that thought.

You have proposed to yourself, when you are in that person’s house, to tell him privately about anything improper he may say. I think, Monsieur, that you should not do so because, using his good intentions as an excuse, he might take your admonition the wrong way. Also, he is undoubtedly wiser than we, such as we are.
You did the right thing in establishing good relations with the Jesuits in Charleville, but saying that you did so in order that they might support us when people speak ill of us to them is a very base motive and a far cry from the spirit of Jesus Christ, according to which we should consider God alone in our actions and make everything serve the love we owe Him. You, on the contrary, with your own reputation in view, want to use the charity that binds you to these Fathers to preserve that reputation. This is vanity, if it is not founded on virtue, and if it is established on such a basis, what have you to fear?

You wrote me something else which smacks no less of human respect, namely, that when you write and tell me something good about certain persons, I should see that their friends hear about it so they can tell them. Mon Dieu! Monsieur, of what are you thinking? Where is the simplicity of a Missionary, who should go straight to God? If you do not see any good in these persons, then say nothing, but if you do see some, speak about it to honor God in them because all good proceeds from Him.

Our Lord reproved a man who called Him good, because he did not do so with the right intention. With what greater reason would He reprove you, if you praise men out of flattery, in order to ingratiate yourself with them or for some other ignoble purpose; still more, if this purpose should have some other good motive, such as yours! I know you are not trying to gain the esteem and affection of anyone except to advance the glory of God and the welfare of the Company; remember, however, that duplicity is displeasing to God and that, to be truly simple, we must have only Him in view.

You also mention that one of these Jesuits preached in your church on the feast of its holy patron, and you want to know if, in similar circumstances, you should return the compliment, in the event that they desire this. No, Monsieur, please excuse yourself,

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\(^2\text{Cf. Lk 18:18-23. (NAB)}\)
saying that our way of preaching is geared to poor country people, and we have neither the grace nor the practice of preaching in towns.

1556. - LOUISE-MARIE DE GONZAGUE, QUEEN OF POLAND, TO SAINT VINCENT

September, 1652

Monsieur Vincent,

I am most grateful to you for all your marks of affection and joy regarding My Lord the King's health and my own; I thank you for this.

When good M. Lambert saw how the Polish people feared the plague, he wanted to go to Warsaw to organize better relief efforts for the poor than what already existed there. I gave orders for him to be housed in the château, in the King's own room. I have news of him every day, and I recommend to him daily not to expose himself to danger. He has whatever he needs to come back to me as soon as he has everything organized, and I told him to hurry in order to return to us as soon as possible. Without this disease, which has upset all our plans, we would have completed their establishment in Warsaw.

Your Daughters of Charity arrived two days ago, which pleased me immensely. They seem to be very fine Sisters.

1557. - TO PHILIPPE VAGEOT, SUPERIOR, IN SAINTES

Paris, October 2, 1652

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
I am very sorry to hear you are ill, but since this is the good

Letter 1557. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.
pleasure of God, we must submit to it and await from His Goodness the recovery of your previous state of health. You can imagine how heartily I ask this of Him, since, after the mercy of God, the salvation of many depends on it. The polluted air, your close contact with the sick, and your heavy labors have all contributed to overwhelm you. In the name of God, do whatever you can to get well again. I ask the same of God for M. Rivet, and make the same recommendation to him.

Yes, Monsieur, we shall send you the relief you request as soon as possible, with the help of God. This will not be easy because the misfortunes of the times are carrying off all our workers, keeping us very busy here, and because we have a large number of sick men. For the past two or three months we have had sixteen to twenty of them, and even more. As soon as some are on their feet, others fall ill, and these illnesses bring them to death's door. We shall, nevertheless, do our utmost to give you the means of continuing your missions and your seminary.

Just a short time ago, God also took from us good M. Gilles (O Monsieur, what a loss!) and also one of the most virtuous coadjutor Brothers in the Company, named Jean Geneset. I recommend their souls to your prayers.

We had seven or eight men in Étampes, assisting the poor inhabitants of the town and the surrounding area, and all of them have fallen ill because the air there is so bad.¹ I think they are now

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¹A twelve-page report published in October 1652 (État sommaire des misères de la campagne et besoins des pauvres aux environs de Paris, les 20, 22, 24 and 25 octobre 1652), gives us an accurate idea of the misery at the gates of the capital (p. 3): "Some hide in the dung heap by night like animals and come out by day to get warm in the sun, even though they are already full of worms and are dead before dying. Fifty of these persons were brought to the Hôtel-Dieu and were barely able to survive two or three days. They were so infected that the boatmen ferried them only because of the pressing entreaties of the priests of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet Seminary, who rendered them this charitable assistance. Others were seen climbing up the dung heaps like lizards; others so exhausted that they lay motionless on straw; still others in cesspools and stables like persons already condemned, and rendered so insensitive by languor and extreme suffering that they can barely listen when spoken to about God, more like dumb animals than reasonable creatures." "At Étiolles," states the same publication (p. 5), "the houses
in the château² of one of our good friends,³ who wanted to do this act of hospitality. We sent a priest⁴ and a seminarian⁵ there to take care of them, and four others to Étampes to replace them. We still have seven or eight men scattered around that diocese, seeking out and serving parishes abandoned by their pastors and priests, especially the sick poor who have no one to console them, administer the last sacraments, and bury them when they die. One of these men is M. Watebled,⁶ who is doing immense good near the army.

I must conclude after I tell you that M. du Chesne has left to make visitations. He is going to Brittany and will stop at your house on his way back, I hope. M. Cornuel⁷ has taken his place at the Bons-Enfants, and M. Alméras is now Seminary Director here.

Enclosed is my reply to M. Maurisse;⁸ I left it open so you could read it, but please seal it before you deliver it.

are like stables, the people in them sick, and the sick on the point of dying. The Missionaries bury people every day.”

Religious, September-October, tells of the death of a Daughter of Charity in Étampes: “No woman could be found to stay with one of the Sisters of Charity, who ended her days serving the poor of that area, after having assisted the poor for almost two years in Picardy and Champagne.” It was presumed that this was Sister Marie-Joseph, whose heroic death Saint Vincent describes in his conference to the Daughters of Charity of June 9, 1658 (cf. vol. X, no. 97). In actual fact, there is no proof that Sister Marie-Joseph died in 1652 or even in 1653.

²In Béville, a hamlet of the commune of Saint-Chéron, in the district of Rambouillet (Yvelines).
³Guillaume de Lamoignon.
⁴Thomas Goblet, born in Rohan (Morbihan), entered the Congregation of the Mission on August 18, 1648, at twenty-two years of age.
⁵Michel César, born in Vauvilles (Mayenne), entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 31, 1649, at twenty-four years of age, took his vows in November of 1651, and was ordained a priest in 1653. He was Superior in Toul (1659-60), then in Crécy (1662-70), after having spent some time in Fontainebleau. He later became a diocesan priest and died as Pastor of Croisy-sur-Oise (Seine-et-Marne).
⁶Pierre Watebled.
⁷Guillaume Cornuel, born in Bar-sur-Aube (Aube), entered the Congregation of the Mission on November 29, 1644, at twenty-three years of age, took his vows in 1646, was ordained a priest in December of that same year, and died in the Troyes diocese in 1666. He was twice Superior in Montmirail (1649-50, 1658-59), also at the Collège des Bons-Enfants (1652-54), and Troyes (1665-66). Pierre de Vienne, Seigneur de Tovilliers, his first cousin, mourned his death with several lyric poems in Latin, published in Troyes, to which Jacques de la Fosse, C.M., made a suitable reply by several odes. (Cf. Abbé Jean-Baptiste-Joseph Bouillot, Biographie ardennaise [2 vols., Paris: n. p., 1830], vol. I, p. 420; Bibl. Maz., Ms. 3912).
⁸M. Maurisse had offered two priories in Saintes to Saint Vincent (cf. no. 1507).
I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL, i.s.C.M.

At the bottom of the first page: Monsieur Vageot

1558. - ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

You can be sure that any suggestion coming from you is pleasing to me. I am grateful for the one you made about the Bishop of Sarlat,¹ and I thank you most humbly for it. I would gladly give my own blood to see it put into effect. I sent him the letters I wrote to the Queen, the Cardinal,² and Father Paulin.³ To this end, I ask your help in this affair—at least your good advice, if you can do nothing else right now.

I really think you are losing nothing personally in being freed of the burden you had,⁴ but this is a great loss for the Church, so it would be most desirable if you were still in that position.

I want to thank you also for informing me of what is going on. It is very important for me to know this in the times in which we are living, and I benefit from it personally. I would be glad if that good man who is bothering you knew that I have never been in better health than I am now nor had more strength and desire to do my duty, so that he might direct his ambitions elsewhere.

If we have peace, they will probably call for a meeting of the Estates.⁵

Letter 1558. - Archives of the Diocese of Cahors, Alain de Solminihac collection, notebook, file 22, no. 38, copy made from the original.

¹Nicolas Sevin.
²Jules Cardinal Mazarin.
³Charles Paulin, S.J., the King's confessor.
⁴Saint Vincent was no longer a member of the Council of Conscience.
⁵It appears from the context that Bishop Solminihac was referring to an Estates-General. This national assembly could be convoked only by the King, for the sole purpose of advising him.
If you hear about this, please let me know and whether you think I should go. Unless it is necessary for the service of God, His Church, and the King, I do not think I should leave my diocese. In the meantime, please believe that I am, Monsieur. . . .

ALAIN,  
Bishop of Cahors

1559. - TO LOUIS THIBAULT, SUPERIOR, IN SAINT-MÉEN

Paris, October 8, 1652

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am sending you a letter which your father wrote you. You will note that he has changed the foundation of three catechisms to three missions to be given by us every six years in each parish, and he has asked me to accept that. I have sent him word, however, that we cannot do so because we made the decision not to take on such foundations and because that would oblige us to maintain men expressly for that purpose. Lastly, we would have commitments in so many places that we could not give missions elsewhere nor be available for more urgent needs. That is why, as I said, we are determined not to take on such foundations. I am annoyed that you did not know this because you might not have advised your father to set up one. Nevertheless, I thank you for the benefit you wanted

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It was divided into three sections: First Estate: clergy; Second Estate: nobility; Third Estate: everyone else. Representatives from each Estate met and voted independently of the other Estates. The majority opinion of each became the vote of that group (each Estate had one vote). Since no Estates-General met between 1614 and 1789, Salminiac's speculation did not materialize. Local assemblies, modeled on the Estates-General, did meet during this period, but he was probably referring to the national assembly because of his anxiety about absence from his diocese, his reference to the King, and his request for information from Saint Vincent, who resided in Paris in whose environs an Estates-General would meet.

Letter 1559. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.
to procure for the Company in this, and I thank your father for his good will.

M. du Chesne is in Le Mans now and will soon be leaving there to go and see you. Please notify those men who want to enter the Company because I would be glad for him to see them, if they are in Saint-Méen or somewhere along his way. If not, they will have to go to Richelieu when he can be there, because we are going to open a second [internal] seminary there for candidates for the Company. Other postulants will meet him there at that time.

I wrote to the Bishop of Saint-Malo¹ at court, as you had wished. A few days after that, I had the honor of seeing him in Paris, but he did not want to talk business then. He told me he wanted to come to our house to discuss matters. However, the difficulty raised at the gates about allowing persons of his position to leave has prevented him from so doing up to the present.

We still have more than twenty sick and convalescent men here. These illnesses bring people to death’s door, and recovery is very slow and difficult. Besides that, almost all those who were working in Étampes fell sick there. We had to send three or four replacements for them and two men to have them taken to a nearby castle and look after them. In addition, we have six or seven other workers scattered here and there in that diocese, seeking out parishes without priests to prepare the sick poor in them for death or to live a good life.

Because of all this we are really short of workers right now. We must wait until God restores strength to those who are getting over their illnesses, or who are still sick. We are still being led to hope for peace, but it has not yet come.

So much for our little news. I am waiting to hear from you, having received no news since I sent you the report on Corsica.

¹Ferdinand de Neufville de Villeroy.
I send my warmest greetings to your community and am, more than I can say, in the love of O[ur] L[ord], Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.c.m.

At the bottom of the first page: Monsieur Thibault

1560. - TO PROPAGANDA FIDE

[Between May 1652 and May 1654] ¹

Most Eminent and Most Reverend Lords,

The urgent need of evangelical workers for the people of the Hebrides and the Scottish Highlands, as Your Eminences have learned from the short report of Dermot Duiguin, a priest of the Congregation of the Mission, who is working with your authorization at the conversion of these people, abandoned for so many years, has prompted Vincent Depaul, Superior General of the same Congregation, to propose that Your Eminences send there the additional assistance of three workers of his Congregation. These are: Gerard Brin, an Irishman; Thomas Lumsden, a Scottish theologian and a former lecturer in philosophy; and Jean Ennery, an Irishman, formerly a lecturer in theology. Their competence gives reason to hope that, with the help of God, an abundant harvest may be gathered, if Your Eminences deign to accede to and foster his decision by declaring the three above-mentioned men Apostolic

¹This petition could not have been addressed to Propaganda Fide before May 3, 1652 because at that time Saint Vincent did not yet know what had become of Gerard Brin, driven from Ireland by Cromwell’s persecution (cf. no. 1494). It could not have been written after May 29, 1654 because Thomas Lumsden was already in Scotland by then (cf. vol. V, no. 1746).
Missionaries for those regions. He will consider all this as a special favor from Your Eminences. Whom God, etc.

Written on the back: The Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide for Vincent Depaul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission

1561. - TO MARC COGLÉE, SUPERIOR, IN SEDAN

October 15, 1652

If I told you that all possible means except sin may be used to attain a good end, I should have added, "reasonable and suitable" means, in line with the rule: *Omnia mihi licent, sed non omnia expedient.* It is indeed permitted to use all licit means to do the good God asks of you, but it is not good to cultivate the friendship of persons or Communities in order to win them over to defend our reputation. That end is not directed to God and, consequently, is vain. If you say that a good reputation serves to benefit the neighbor more, I admit that. However, since it should be based on a good life, it is, therefore, preserved by the practice of virtue and not by human intrigue.

Let us do our duty well; let us go straight to God; let us work to become very humble, very patient, very mortified, and very charitable. That is the only way to be highly esteemed, but we lose that

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2The six Missionaries Saint Vincent had sent to Scotland and the Hebrides in 1646 had all returned to France, except perhaps Dermot O'Brien, who died in November 1649. Dermot Duguan [Duggan], who had left again in 1651 with François Le Blanc [Francis White], was requesting assistance. The Saint counted on sending him Gerard Brin, Jean Enéry [John Mc Enery], and Thomas Lumaden, but only the last-named was able to go.


1*Everything is lawful for me—but that does not mean everything is good for me. Cf. 1 Cor 6:12. (NAB)*
esteem when we seek it in some other way. Did Our Lord seek His own fame when He was living on earth? Did He not forbid people to speak of the miracles He was performing?\(^2\) Let us entrust our reputation to Him, Monsieur, to do with it as He sees fit. To Him alone glory is due; let us never do anything that does not give glory to Him and, to that end, let us trample underfoot human respect and self-interest.

1562. - **ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC TO SAINT VINCENT**

*Mercurès, October 17, 1652*

Monsieur,

In the letter M. Treffort is writing you, on my orders, you will learn of the state of the town of Cahors, which has the plague at its gates; it is also thought to be in one of the faubourgs. Please notify us by the next mail what you want to be done about the seminary and the service of Saint-Barthélemy parish,\(^1\) about which I have instructed M. Treffort to write to you. The slightest hint of a minor expense stops him short. There are four fine rooms in the house given by the late Archdeacon, about one league away from Cahors; some of the seminarians closest to ordination could be accommodated there.\(^3\) When I mentioned this to M. Treffort, he told me that furnishing it would be an expense.

In two or three days I will go to Cahors for a meeting with the pastors to learn their dispositions. I will also see the monks to find out whether they would be willing to endanger themselves, and what help I can expect from them. I have to tell you my dilemma because I want to ask your wise advice and assistance. I decided to take the risk and to give my life willingly for the service of my people, if God wills to punish them by this calamity, which is thought to be inevitable. You can see my difficulty in doing this before having resolved the problem of a Coadjutor. I do not think this is

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\(^2\)Cf. Mt 9:29-31; Mk 1:40-44; Mk 7:32-36; Lk 5:12-14. (NAB)

Letter 1562. - Archives of the Diocese of Cahors, Alain de Solminihac collection, notebook, file 22, no. 37, copy made from the original.

\(^1\)The parish to which the Cahors Seminary was attached.

\(^2\)The Cayran farm, near Cleurac, bequeathed to the Cahors Seminary by Claude-Antoine Hébrard of Saint-Sulpice.
God's Will; that is what obliges me to beg you to help me all you can to get this matter settled promptly.

To save time, it would be advisable for the brother of the Bishop of Sarlat to have M. Camus \(^3\) draw up the act whereby I shall give my consent to the King's appointment of the said Bishop \(^4\) as my Coadjutor and future successor, with the proviso that he act in my diocese only with my consent, and he should send this official record to me. Please inform him of this, without mentioning to him or to any other person what else is contained in the document.

As for Chancelade, for a long time now I have only been waiting to have the way cleared for the election of an abbot. However, since it is necessary for a person of rank to be present for this act in order for it to be done properly, I said to ask the Bishop of Sarlat to go, and I am sure he will do so.

My greatest concern is that I foresee quite plainly that this poor town will be deserted and that everyone, with very few exceptions, is preparing to leave, with the result that only those who do not have to seek refuge and food elsewhere will be left. That being the case, it is inevitable that the enemies of the State will take possession of it. In speaking of that, the first Consul told me: "I see clearly that I am going to die without serving the town and the people." I foresee the same thing for myself, if God does not give us peace soon, for even though there were question only of myself, I think that, if people knew I was in this town and that it was abandoned, they would come and capture me and seize my châteaux, which would be the ruination of peace.

I tell you all this in my spirit of simplicity, as if I were speaking to God Himself, who is giving me a very passionate desire to die in the service of my people. I am, however, asking your advice about the following: in the event that we do not have peace, and objections are raised about giving me the Bishop of Sarlat as Coadjutor, and they agree to naming him only if I resign, I would like to know if it is more important for me to resign or to remain in office. I have been thinking of asking you about this for a long time. It is true that, in this time of plague, I felt I should not do it without consulting the Pope because of its importance and because this is unusual for a Bishop who is in good health and not too old. Please advise me and tell me what [you] think is best for me to do and most pleasing to God, which is the only thing to which I aspire in this world.

\(^3\)Perhaps a lawyer in Paris whom Saint Vincent sometimes consulted.
\(^4\)Nicolas Sevin, Bishop of Sarlat.
I ask you also for the assistance of your prayers for me and our poor town, which is suffering so much.

You may have your secretary write your reply, asking him to keep it confidential.

After I had written and closed this letter, M. Bonichon arrived, bringing me a letter from my doctor, who informed me that the plague is now in one of the faubourgs of the town and that the seminarians should be sent away. We shall do so tomorrow morning; they would be leaving in any case. May God take pity on these poor people, who are terrified!

Please send me word of what you know about the peace. In the meantime, I shall remain, Monsieur. . . .

ALAIN,
Bishop of Cahors

1563. - TO THOMAS BERTHE, IN LAON

Paris, October 19, 1652

Monsieur,

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

I am still worried about the state of your health, while hoping that you have completely recovered, if this is the good pleasure of God. Nevertheless, I ask you not to be in too great a hurry to be doing something but, rather, take great care to get better.

I have not yet received your letter, which I should have had yesterday. They say that the regular mail has not arrived; I sent someone for it four times. When you feel strong enough to come here, you may do so. The assembly\(^1\) will continue to assist poor pastors and will give monthly the one hundred écus it has been giving up to now. Arrange for someone there—either M. de Sérau-court\(^2\) or some other charitable and disinterested person—to re-

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Letter 1563. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.

\(^1\)The assembly of the Ladies of Charity.

\(^2\)A governmental official in charge of criminal affairs in Reims.
ceive the money and to distribute it exactly.

Sedan will also be given the usual amount. Give instructions for M. Coglé to receive it, as always. I am not sure if it is one hundred francs a month; please let me know. All the barley could then be used for the sick poor.

I embrace you cordially and am, in the love of O[ur] L[ord],
Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
S.J.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Berthe, Priest of the Mission, at the home of Monsieur Marqueth, former Procurator of the King, in Laon

1564. - TO CARDINAL ANTONIO BARBERINI

FROM THE FRENCH TEXT

October 25, 1652

Monseigneur,

On September 27 I received, with all the respect and reverence I owe to Your Eminence and to the Most Eminent Cardinals of the Sacred Congregation of Regulars, the letter Your Eminence was pleased to do me the honor of writing to me pridie idus martii ¹ of

Letter 1564. - Archives of the Congregation of Regulars, Rome, Sezione monache, folio of December 6, 1652, original signed letter, written in Latin; copy in the Bibliothèque nationale, fr. 10.565, f° 480 and in the Archives of the Mission, Curia Generalisitia, Rome. Besides the Latin text, Coste published the French text of a handwritten rough draft, which he found in Reg. 1, f° 61; the Latin was probably translated from this (cf. n. 1).

¹March 14. These Latin words, which the Saint used without taking the trouble to find out to what day of the month they corresponded in French, prove clearly that he intended to translate this letter or have it translated into Latin.
In this same year. In this letter Your Eminence did me the honor of ordering me to enquire confidentially about the contents of the petition presented to Our Most Holy Father the Pope\(^2\) on behalf of the Franciscan Abbess\(^3\) of Longchamp Monastery in the Paris diocese. In it she represents to His Holiness that there have been major disorders in the monastery for several years now,\(^4\) causing public scandal, through the fault of its Superiors, Fathers of the French Province of the same Order of Saint Francis.

Instead of taking steps to remedy them, they have fostered them by their own conduct and bad example, living in such dissension themselves that up to now they have taken one another to court before most of the tribunals presided over by lay judges. The result is that, for a long time now, there has been no recognized Provincial to settle these disputes in that province. The last one was even removed about two years ago from the office of Provincial by apostolic authority.

Consequently, this monastery, a very old royal foundation with considerable revenue, is today burdened with several heavy debts. For this reason, the Abbess, who wants to remedy these disorders and public scandals, has had recourse to His Holiness. She most humbly entreats him to exempt the monastery and even all its nuns from the jurisdiction and authority of the said Friars Minor of Saint Francis and to place them in future under the Ordinary, as was formerly the case when this monastery was founded. This is the substance of the said petition sent to me by Your Eminence.

Now, Monseigneur, when I received this order with which Your Eminence has honored me, I went to see several very upright, pious persons who lead exemplary lives, including some Doctors of the Sorbonne and other priests, monks, and laymen. These persons are

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\(^2\)Innocent X (1644-55). These lines indicate clearly that the letter is addressed to the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation of Regulars.

\(^3\)Madeleine Plancain. Catherine de Bellière succeeded her in 1653.

\(^4\)The Saint had personally suggested to the Queen to have recourse to the Pope in order to introduce the reform there (cf. no. 1420).
acquainted with the monastery and what goes on there. I also saw some nuns belonging to the house, from whom I received in confidence information about the contents of the petition. All, without exception, told me that all the clauses of the petition were true, except perhaps the one stating that this monastery was formerly under the jurisdiction of the Ordinary, of which they were unaware. Two of them, however, think that this is probably true, using as their authority an author of their Order, whose words are as follows... by which we see that, since this monastery was founded by Blessed Marguerite, sister of Saint Louis, almost contemporary with the birth of the Order of Saint Francis, to whose Superiors apparently all the monasteries of nuns of the same Order were not as yet subject...5

The following details are what I have learned about this house, Monseigneur, in addition to what is contained in the above-mentioned petition:

It has been in a state of disorder for two hundred years and, by a decree issued in the year 1560 by the Parlement of Paris, which had been informed of the existing disorders, it was ordained, by request of the Attorney General of the Parlement, that the Bishop of Paris should strive to reform the said monastery.

The parlors of the monastery are always open to all kinds of persons, even many young men who are not relatives. Most of the nuns go there alone, without permission, often against the wishes of the Abbess. It has also been noted that in these parlors there are little windows entirely contrary to religious enclosure; this has very grave consequences.

The monks who govern this monastery, particularly the confessors, instead of taking measures to remedy the disorder, promote it by going to the parlors themselves to talk with the nuns, sometimes at night and at unsuitable times.

One night a monk of the Order was found in the nuns' enclosure,

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5This passage, from "except perhaps the one stating that . . . ," is not found in the Latin text.
where he had been let in by a young nun.

There have also been nuns who have brought young men into the same enclosure of the nuns at night.

Once, the Abbess forbade a nun to speak to or have any more contact with a young man from a prominent family, who used to come and visit her quite often, even though he was not a relative. This contact was dangerous and was causing great scandal. However, the Father Provincial allowed her to keep up the contact, as the nun declared in the presence of all the other nuns and the Provincial himself. Because of this, rumor had it that the young man had given him a large sum of money for this.

The confessors of this monastery, who are monks of the same Order, are too familiar and have particular attachments to some of the lay Sisters, making the latter proud and unbearable. These monks have fomented division in the abbey and, instead of remedying the disorders, have only helped to augment them by opening their confessionals several times to laymen to use for speaking secretly to certain nuns, against the will of the Abbess and in spite of her express prohibition.

When the nuns sometimes ask to go to confession to others, these confessors are unwilling to give them permission, and take offense at this.

The novices and young professed are very poorly formed, and before receiving the habit and making their profession, they are not examined at all, as the holy Council of Trent ordains.

Several are very immodest in the way they dress, wearing gloves to the parlor, combs with rosettes of ribbons, or scarlet streamers, and gold watches. When they are reproved for this by the Abbess, they say that the Father Provincial has given them permission.

It is also a fact that, since the Community of these nuns has at present taken refuge in this city of Paris, several of them are living very scandalous lives, spending the day enclosed in rooms alone with men in the homes of the citizens, where they go to visit. When the Abbess was warned of the scandalous conduct of these nuns by a very pious priest, she replied that there was nothing she could do,
and she asked him to speak to the nuns himself. He did so and told me that they answered him as licentiously as fallen women would have done, which greatly scandalized him.

Since this is the situation, as I believe it is, because of the uprightness, piety, and virtue of the persons who gave me information on the state of this monastery and who are very well acquainted with it, and because of my own knowledge about it, I think His Holiness would do a work worthy of his pastoral office, and so would you, Monseigneur, and our Most Eminent Fathers of the Sacred Congregation of Regulars, were you to inform him that he would be doing a work most agreeable to God, most efficacious for the correction of the disorders of the monastery and the introduction of good order there, if you were to remove the monastery from the jurisdiction of the monks of the Order of Saint Francis and place it and the nuns under that of the local Ordinary. This should be done on condition that he appoint, for three years only, with a possibility of renewal, a Visitor, regular or secular, but not a member of the said Order. He should be learned, upright, and pious, and have a very good reputation, with wide experience in the direction of nuns. He will give him authority to direct, visit, and discipline the monastery, and to appoint and dismiss confessors; in a word, to act in this situation as the Ordinary would do, were he present, except for recourse to the Ordinary in case of complaint.

At the end of three or six years, when order has been established in the house, the nuns will be permitted to elect every three years three persons having the above-mentioned qualifications and to present them to the Ordinary, who will choose one of them as Visitor of the monastery, conferring on him the same authority.

That, Monseigneur, is the opinion of a poor priest, most unworthy of such a commission. He most humbly entreats you, Monseigneur, prostrate in spirit at the feet of Your Eminence, to grant him your blessing, as to one who is, in the love of Our Lord....
FROM THE LATIN TEXT

Most Eminent Prince,

I received on September 29, with all respect for Your Eminence and for the Eminent Fathers and Lords of the Sacred Congregation for Regulars, the letter Your Eminence deigned to address to me on March 14, and by which Your Eminence ordered me to inquire secretly and prudently into the contents of the petition presented to His Holiness the Pope by the Abbess and the nuns of the Longchamp Monastery, of the Order of Saint Francis, in the Paris diocese. This petition indicated that regular discipline in that monastery had been lax for many years and a scandal to the public, through the fault of the Superiors of the monastery, Friars Minor of the Province of France of the same Order, who not only have neglected to apply remedies but, by their government and bad example, foster the disorders themselves. Furthermore, the Friars live in such dissension and disagreement that they file suits against one another with most of the lay judges, and there is no appointed Provincial to settle these differences. The last of these Provincials was deposed by apostolic authority about two years ago, and the ancient monastery, erected by . . . , sister of Saint Louis the King, and endowed with a large property and income, is today burdened with numerous heavy debts. Since the Abbess is seeking some remedy for the ruined discipline and property of the monastery, and for the public scandal, she has had recourse to the Supreme Pontiff, urging His Holiness to free this monastery and the nuns from all jurisdiction and authority of the Friars Minor of the Order of Saint Francis, and henceforth, as formerly when the foundation of the monastery was made, subject them once again to the Ordinary. This is the substance of the petition which Your Eminence deigned to send me.

6The name has been omitted.
Now, in order to obey the mandate of Your Eminence as best I can, I immediately contacted many men known for their uprightness, learning, and wisdom, some Doctors of the Sorbonne, and several others of both the secular and regular clergy, and [pious and experienced laymen, who are well acquainted with the discipline and property of the monastery] 7 of Longchamp, of the Order of Saint Francis, in the Paris diocese. I also consulted a nun of this monastery whom I know very well. They were almost unanimous in telling me that everything contained in the petition was true.

Nevertheless, in order that everything may be even clearer to Your Eminence, I will try to explain, briefly and specifically, the state of this house. It is certain that for two hundred years the good odor of Christ in this monastery has been turning into the offensive odor of the corruption of flagging discipline and morals. Therefore, upon the demand of good people and the urging of the Royal Attorney of the Parlement of Paris, an ordinance was passed in 1560 to the effect that the Bishop of Paris should proceed with the correction and restoration of discipline.

The parlors are not closed but open to anyone, even to young men who are not relatives. Several nuns go there as they please, alone, without witnesses, without telling the Abbess and even against her will. It has been observed that there are in the parlors lattices and little windows, contrary to the rules of religious cloister, which pose certain dangers for virgins. The Friars, rectors of the monastery, do nothing to remove the evil; on the contrary, they make it worse. The confessors especially slip in there at night, at inappropriate hours, and gossip with the nuns. One of these Friars, brought into the cloister at night by one of the younger nuns, was caught. There are other cases where the nuns have brought certain young men into the cloister at night.

Once, when the Abbess placed a prohibition on a young nun

7The words in brackets are taken from the copy in the Bibliothèque Nationale; a tear in the paper has made them illegible on the original.
who was too familiar and engaged frequently in dangerous and scandalous conversations with a young nobleman of corrupt morals, who was no relative of hers, the Father Provincial allowed such familiarity and conversations, as the nun herself declared in the presence of all the nuns and the Provincial. Rumor has it that the young man gave the Provincial a large sum of money to obtain such permission.

Often the confessors have opened to laymen the places destined for confessions, for secret conversations with the nuns, and locked them in, disregarding the will and prohibition of the Abbess.

It is also a fact that when, on account of wars raging around this city, the whole Community of nuns fled the monastery, a good number of them gave scandal by their dissolute life, remaining alone with a man, spending entire days in private homes and rooms under the pretext of visits. When one of the clergy, a very religious man, warned the Abbess about that, she answered that she could not suppress the evil and pleaded with him to speak to them himself. When he did so, he received a spiteful and abusive answer and was greatly scandalized. This I learned from the man himself.

Those Fathers who are appointed confessors are involved in particular friendships and familiarity with the nuns called lay sisters or servants. As a result, the latter have become so proud that they are bothersome and unbearable to the others.

If some disputes arise among the nuns, the Friars take no trouble to allay and settle them; on the contrary, they encourage and increase them.

If the nuns sometimes ask to confess their sins to other priests, these confessors do not give the permission and, in fact, become annoyed and refuse them.

The novices and newly professed are formed with almost no religious discipline, nor are they examined and approved before receiving the habit and being admitted to profession, according to the decrees of the Council of Trent.

Some nuns wear indecent and immodest clothing; in the parlors they wear flame-colored headbands and gold watches. They also
put on special gloves they call Spanish gloves.

[I can have no doubt, Most Eminent Cardinal,] about the facts, because of the exceptional uprightness, truthfulness, and sincerity of those who are well acquainted with the state of the monastery, from whom I received these testimonies, and because of my own knowledge. This being the case, let me say in all humility that it seems to me that Our Most Holy Father the Pope will make provision for this, in his paternal providence. Your Eminence and the Cardinals of the Sacred Congregation will do likewise, if you advise His Holiness that it will be most pleasing to Almighty God, and the most convenient and efficient means to remedy the corruption and vice and to restore discipline in the monastery of Longchamp, if he completely removes from it the Friars of the Order of Minors, exempts the nuns entirely from their government, authority, and jurisdiction, and places the monastery and the nuns under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Paris in both spiritual and temporal matters. Let His Holiness also give orders to the Archbishop to place over these nuns someone who is learned, pious, and experienced—secular or regular—provided he is not from the said Order of Minors. He shall appoint him Visitor for three years, to direct, visit, and correct the said nuns and the monastery, name confessors, and, in a word, do everything that the Archbishop himself would do, except for recourse to him in case of complaint. If he thinks it useful, after the expiration of the first three-year term, he may extend the term of the same Visitor for another three years. Once this term expires and regular discipline is restored, let him grant the Abbess and the nuns permission to elect every three years three priests—secular or regular—of upright life, knowledge, and experience, by ballot and by majority of votes, with the Visitor presiding and in the presence of the confessors whom they shall present to the Archbishop. The latter will appoint one of them as Visitor with the power and authority over the monastery and the nuns.

These are the answers I submit to Your Eminence in accord with the order you have deigned to give me. They are stated as briefly
as possible by an unworthy priest, incapable by far of fulfilling your mandate, and who, prostrate in spirit at the feet of Your Eminence, earnestly and humbly asks your blessing, since he is forever, Most Eminent Prince, the most humble and obedient servant of Your Eminence.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
I.S.C.M.

Paris, October 25, 1652

1565. - TO ÉTIENNE BLATIRON, SUPERIOR, IN GENOA

Paris, October 25, 1652

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Do not worry about sending either M. Martin or M. Morando to Rome. Your reasons for keeping them in Genoa are too important to consider taking them away. Provided you send the two others of whom you wrote to me, when they complete their studies, that will suffice.

As for Brother Sébastien, I highly approve of your assessment of his temptation\(^1\) and what you said to him about it. He will be making a big mistake if he does not believe you. If he persists in his resolution, we shall see what we have to do. I am also greatly consoled by the wise, gentle spirit with which you act in all things. I thank God for it and for the present state of your community and each member in particular, mentioned in your letter. I ask His Divine Goodness to continue to grant you the same spirit and

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\(^1\)Cf. no. 1537.
through you to pour it out on all those He has entrusted, and will entrust in future, to your guidance.

Despite my deep sorrow at the knowledge that the plague is ravaging Poland, I have been greatly consoled to hear that our men are devoting themselves willingly to the assistance of the plague-stricken. M. Desdames and Brother Zelazewski have been working with them for some time; now M. Guillot and Brother Posny are also involved, and they are even distributing the Queen’s alms to them. I thank God for having given the Company subjects who belong more to Him than to themselves, and who serve the neighbor at the risk of their lives! They are like unrefined gold, which becomes visible in fire and which would otherwise remain hidden under ordinary actions and sometimes under faults and failings.

I have never experienced this more clearly than I have recently, not only in those who have died in Barbary for the sake of charity, and in several others who have willingly exposed themselves to the same danger for the salvation of the slaves, but in almost everyone we have here. They have devoted themselves zealously to the relief of the people in their present affliction, despite the perils of war and disease into which they have fallen. I am not saying that they have all been mistreated by the soldiers, but they have all been sick and are having a hard time recovering, except for the last ones to leave—but they are sure to succumb like the others. The fact is that we are at the end of our tether. We have no one else to send to the country to assist the abandoned parishes. In the past two days, M. Desvignes, M. des Jardins, M. Waterbled, and Brother de Nelz have come back sick, along with a coadjutor Brother, a servant, and two Daughters of Charity.

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2This name does not appear in the personnel list of the Congregation of the Mission.
3Georges des Jardins, born in Alençon (Orne) on January 6, 1625, was ordained a priest in September 1649, entered the Congregation of the Mission on August 15, 1651, and took his vows on August 17, 1653. He was Superior in Toul (1655-57) and Narbonne (1659).
4Jean de Nelz, a seminarian, was born in Cherbourg (Manche), entered the Congregation of
M. Deschamps was at death's door in Étampes. When he was feeling a little better, he was taken to Bâville, where once again they gave him up for dead because of a kind of gangrene in his buttocks. They cut away the flesh, causing great suffering to his body. Nevertheless, he has improved a little but I do not know what the outcome will be. He is a gifted man, who has done wonders for the sick poor. M. Labbé is still with him. They are being cared for by M. Goblet and Brother Caset, who are having great difficulty nursing them but are also doing this charitable act in a worthy manner. I recommend all our sick to your prayers; we still have a large number, although most of them are getting better.

I urge you to thank God for having brought the King and Queen back to Paris. The joy of their return is so great everywhere that it is hard to imagine. There does not seem to be the slightest trace of the upset of the past. This gives us great reason to hope for a complete cessation of the internal troubles of the kingdom.6

I ask God to shower you with peace and blessings, and your family as well, to whom I send greetings. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Blatiron, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Genoa, in Genoa

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the Mission on October 8, 1646 and took his vows on October 18, 1650. Notices, vol. I, p. 471, and p. 452 of vol. V (Supplement), refer to him as Jean Neta. Vol. I states that he was born in 1626; the supplement indicates that he was ordained, but gives no year of ordination.

5François Labbé, born in the Le Mans diocese, was ordained a priest during Lent 1645, entered the Congregation of the Mission on March 25, 1647, at twenty-six years of age, and took his vows on June 11, 1650.

6The King entered Paris on October 21 and withdrew to the Louvre, which was easier to defend than the Palais-Royal. The Gazette de France (no. 135) wrote: "The King is in his Louvre, the soldier at the gate; the sound of drums and the flourish of trumpets, which in recent days were the sad warning to alert the citizen to defend his possessions or to save his person, now serve only to evoke the transports of his joy."
1566. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

[Shortly after October 25, 1652] ¹

This letter will doubtless distress you, but there is no remedy for that: God has called to Himself Monsieur Deschamps in Bâville, where he had been brought from Étampes. He has left behind the strong fragrance of his virtue because of the grace that accompanied him both inside and outside of the Company. It must be acknowledged that the Spirit of God was evident in his life and in his death. Our loss is greater than I can express to you—if it is possible that being deprived of those whom Our Lord takes to Himself is a loss.²

Yesterday God also took good Monsieur Watebled.³ He had fallen ill while assisting the villages in the neighborhood of four armies, which had been camped for a month before Villeneuve-Saint-Georges⁴ and the surrounding area. He worked very zealously and used to give the poor the food we sent him for himself. He has left behind the fragrance of his virtue because of the grace which accompanied him.

1567. - DERMOT DUIGUIN TO SAINT VINCENT

October 28, 1652

As soon as we arrived in Scotland, God granted us the grace of having a part in the conversion of Glengarry's father. He was an old man, ninety years of age, raised in heresy from his youth. We instructed him and

Letter 1566. - Lyons manuscript.
¹This letter followed no. 1565 by a few days.
²Guillaume de Lamoignon, Master of Requests, proprietor of the Château de Bâville, where Edme Deschamps died, was present at his funeral and had him buried in the family crypt. He himself composed the epitaph in verse which was engraved on the tombstone.
³Pierre Watebled.
⁴In Val-de-Marne.

reconciled him to the Church during a serious illness that soon took him to his grave. However, this was after he had received the sacraments, expressing genuine regret for having lived so long in error, and unutterable joy at dying a Catholic. I also reconciled several of his servants and some of his friends, although in secret.

Once this was done, I left my companion in that mountainous region of Scotland because there were great spiritual needs there and much good to be accomplished, and I went over to the Hebrides. There, God in His all-powerful mercy has performed miracles beyond all hope. He disposed hearts so well that Clanronald, laird of a large part of the island of Uist, was converted, along with his wife, the young laird his son, and their whole family. All their subjects and their families did the same.

I also worked with the people on this island and went on to the islands of Eigg and Canna, where God converted eight hundred to nine hundred persons, who had so little instruction in matters of our religion that not even fifteen of them knew the mysteries of the Christian faith. I hope the rest of them will soon give glory to God. I found thirty or forty persons of seventy, eighty, and one hundred years and over, who had not received holy Baptism. I instructed and baptized them, and they died shortly after. Doubtless, they are now praying to God for those who procured this great benefit for them. Many of the inhabitants were living in concubinage but, thanks be to God, we rectified that, marrying those who were willing, and separating those who were not.

We have taken nothing from these people for the services we rendered them, but I still have to pay two men. One man helps me row from one island to another and carries my vestments and belongings overland—sometimes we have to walk four or five leagues on bad roads before I say Mass. The other man helps me to teach the Pater, Ave, and Credo, and to say Mass. He is the only one capable of doing this, after I have first instructed him.

We usually eat only one meal a day. This consists in bread made from barley or oats, with some cheese or salted butter. Sometimes we go entire days without eating because we cannot find anything, especially when we have to cross deserted and uninhabited mountains. We hardly eat any meat, but there is some in places quite far from the sea, especially in the homes of the upper class. However, it is so bad and prepared in such a dirty manner that it gags us. They throw it on the ground on a little straw, which serves them as table and chair, tablecloth and napkin, serving dish and plate.

If we wanted to buy meat for ourselves to prepare it as we do in France, we could not find any sold by the piece because there are no butchers on
these islands, so we would have to buy a whole ox or an entire sheep. But we cannot do this because we have to travel constantly to go and baptize and administer the other sacraments. There are fish in the sea surrounding these islands, but the inhabitants are not anxious to catch them, being lazy and not very industrious by nature. It would unquestionably be a great service rendered to God to send to this country good evangelical workers, who knew how to speak the language well and, even more, to put up with hunger, thirst, and sleeping on the ground. They would also need an annual income; otherwise, there is no way to survive.

1568. - TO LOUIS DONI D'ATTICHY, BISHOP OF AUTUN

The last day of October, 1652

Excellency,

M. Ozenne, Superior of the house in Troyes, has told me several times of your kind remembrance of me, who am so unworthy of this honor. My unworthiness does not prevent me from having a lively gratitude for this, which leads me to take the liberty, Excellency, of thanking you. Please accept my gratitude, since I offer it with all possible respect and submission, and certainly with an ardent desire to render you my obedience, if God were pleased to give me opportunities to do so. I shall ask this grace of Him all my life, together with that of preserving you for the good of His Church and the sanctification of your own [diocese].

In the name of God, Excellency, please make use of the sovereign power He has given you over me. I am, in His love, Excellency, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL


1Louis-Doni d'Attiehy, son of Valence de Marillac and first cousin of Saint Louise, was born in 1593 at the château d'Attiehy. In 1614, he entered the Order of Minims (founded by Saint Francis of Paola), became Provincial of Burgundy and, later, Bishop of Riez in Provence (1628).
Monsieur,

I am sending you the letter I have written to Father Paulin, with its copy, as you wished, so you may read it. If you think I should write another one in different terms, just send me the format and I shall do so immediately. I think it will be a long time before they see a Bishop with my health and strength asking for a Coadjutor, and perhaps never one who is requesting someone who is neither a relative nor an ally nor on whom he has some claim. But this is my case because there is no family tie nor alliance between the Bishop of Sarlat and me, and all I have in view in this whole plan is the pure glory of God, His service, and His Church. So do not be afraid that this example will create a precedent.

Your letters will never be too long for me, and you will be doing me a favor by informing me of what is going on. It is important for me to know, and I always benefit from it.

What you wrote me concerning the doctrine of the day has filled me with joy, and I thank you most humbly for it. There has been only too much delay in doing what you wrote me. Its outcome cannot be bad.

The plague has not spread in Cahors, thank God. It has not yet reached the town and has been found in only two or three houses in one of the faubourgs. I was just in the town, and the consternation and affliction I encountered there are almost unbelievable. It is becoming a ghost town from one day to the next and, in the end, will be deserted, if the disease reaches it. I pray God that it will profit from this affliction and that He will bestow on you the fullness of grace and health I wish for you....

Alain,
Bishop] of Cahors

He was then transferred to Autun (1652), where he died of gallstones on June 30, 1664. Among his works are a history of the Order of Minims and a life of Cardinal de Bérulle.

Letter 1569. - Archives of the Diocese of Cahors, Alain de Solminihac collection, notebook, file 22, no. 33, copy made from the original.
1Charles Paulin, S.J., the King's confessor.
2Nicolas Sevin.
1570. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

Another one of our seminarians has just passed away: Brother Hervy, who was one of the best. He was already studying at the Bons-Enfants but came here to die. It will suffice for each of our priests to say one Mass for each of the deceased. This makes six or seven men that the Company has lost in a short space of time, and all of them were young, except Monsieur Gilles, who was middle-aged when he entered. Four or five of our servants have also died, and among others, one who died here yesterday, who was one of the best and most loyal to the house that we ever had. I recommend him to your prayers.

1571. - MADEMOISELLE POLLALION TO SAINT VINCENT

November 3, 1652

Monsieur,

For fear of thieves coming into our church at night because there are only glass panes in the windows and our enclosure is very low, we have
decided to have two of our good Sisters take turns at night guarding the Blessed Sacrament, our treasure, which must be done during the day as well. When two of the most devout have been chosen, they will keep vigil just once a week. In other words, that night they will get only five hours sleep.

Although I am not one of the good ones, I ask your permission, Monsieur, to take my turn keeping vigil. I assure you that this will do no harm, for to order others to do things which I do not do myself would give them cause to grow lax. Besides, Monsieur, you know that, even if I had a thousand lives, I should use them to make amends for all my Communions made so unworthily. I hope you will grant me this grace and that of remembering before God the needs of your daughters and my own needs because I am your most humble and obedient servant.

MARIE LUMAGUE

1572. - TO ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC, BISHOP OF CAHORS

[November 1652]

There is no way, Excellency, I could express to you my distress at the sickness threatening your town, nor how humbled I am at the trust with which you are pleased to honor me. I ask God with all
my heart to avert this scourge of nations from your diocese and to make me worthy of replying in His Spirit to your orders.²

My humble opinion is, then, Excellency, that a bishop finding himself in these circumstances should keep himself ready to provide for the spiritual and temporal needs of his entire diocese during this public calamity. He should not confine himself to one place nor busy himself with any work that might deprive him of the means of providing for others, especially since he is bishop not only of that place but also of his entire diocese. He must divide his care so well that he does not limit it to one particular section of it, unless he is unable to provide for the salvation of the souls in that part through the pastors or other priests. In that case, I think he is obliged to risk his life for their salvation and to entrust the care of the rest to God’s adorable Providence.

That, Excellency, is how Bishop ... , one of the greatest prelates in this kingdom, acts. He has prepared his pastors to risk their lives for the salvation of their parishioners. When the disease breaks out in a place, he goes there to see if the pastor has remained firm where he is, to encourage him in his decision and, in a word, to give him advice and suitable means of assisting his parishioners. He makes this visit without risking his health by going to see the sick, then goes back home, prepared to risk his life if others cannot provide for the needs of a parish. If Saint Charles Borromeo acted differently, it was probably because of some special inspiration from God or because the plague was confined to the city of Milan.

But since it is difficult in a large diocese to do what is easily done in a small one, it would seem good, Excellency, for you to visit the plague-stricken sections to encourage your pastors. If some difficulty or the danger of being taken prisoner during this time of war were to prevent you, you could send into those areas some archdeacons or, if there are none, some other priests for the same purpose. As soon as you hear that the disease has broken out

²Father Chastenet praises in his work (cf. op. cit., pp. 472ff) the admirable leadership of Alain de Solminihac for the duration of the plague.
in a certain place, send some priest to support the pastor and to give some corporal assistance to the plague-stricken.

When the Queen of Poland\(^3\) heard that the plague had broken out in Krakow and that the houses of those who were stricken were closed up as soon as anyone contracted the disease, causing both the healthy and the sick to suffer hunger and cold, she resolved to send a large sum of money there with two Missionaries, who had instructions to provide food for the houses of the plague-stricken, without, however, putting themselves in danger. Some monks risked their lives to administer the sacraments. By this means, that good Queen has, if not stopped, at least greatly reduced the ravages caused by this disease, and infinitely consoled that city, which is also the capital of the kingdom.

And because the city of Warsaw, where the Kings now reside, was stricken by the same disease, one of our priests sent me word that she gave the same orders and assistance to that city through a priest and Brother of the Mission.

The poor country people stricken with the plague are usually left abandoned and very short of food. It will be an action worthy of your piety, Excellency, to make provision for this by sending alms to all those places. See that they are put into the hands of good pastors, who will have bread, wine, and a little meat brought in for these poor people to pick up in the places and the times indicated for them. If there is some question about the honesty of the pastor, these instructions will have to be given to some other neighboring pastor or curate, or to some good layperson of the parish, who could do this. There is usually someone in each area capable of doing this act of charity, especially if they do not have to come into direct contact with the plague-stricken.

I hope, Excellency, that if God is pleased to bless this good work, Our Lord will be greatly glorified by it, you will be consoled both in life and in death, and the people of your diocese will be greatly

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\(^3\)Louise-Marie de Gonzague.
edified. But, in order to do this, it is absolutely essential that you do not close yourself in.

Your Missionaries, Excellency, have sent me word that Our Lord has granted them the grace of being willing to risk their lives, one after the other, with the plague-stricken, either in their own neighborhood or in other parts of the town, as obedience and necessity demand. Now, I am writing to tell them, Excellency, to take orders from you, and I most humbly entreat you to use us in whatever way your incomparable goodness sees fit.

There are usually many monks who volunteer to assist the plague-stricken; I am sure there are some in your town, Excellency, and perhaps you will find enough of them for this good work both in the town and also to send some to the rural areas, instead of using the archdeacons and priests I mentioned above. You will see in this publication⁴ I am sending you how the Archbishop of Paris has organized this diocese to remedy the unspeakable misery existing in it. That can give you some idea of how to help the poor people of your own diocese.

1573. - ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC TO SAINT VINCENT

[November 1652] ¹

Monsieur,

Since, as you know, the Rector of Caussade ² is spreading slanderous libel against me and having it published, do not be surprised if he is writing lies to you, as I saw in your letter and in the one from Monsieur de la

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¹Estat sommaire (October 20-25, 1652).
²This letter was written between nos. 1569 and 1576.
³Principal town of a canton in the district of Montauban (Tarn-et-Garonne).
⁴Letter 1573. - Archives of the Diocese of Cahors, Alain de Solminihac collection, file 19, no. 13, copy. The name of the recipient can be deduced from the contents of the letter.
Marguerie.3 The following is the absolute truth, which alone I love, while I detest lies.

As soon as he returned from Paris, after the decree was issued, I made it public and informed the leading citizens that I was ready to give everyone absolution ad cautelam 4 in my chapel in Mercues, until the decree was enforced in the synod. We waited for them to accept the offer; however, no one came forward, nor has anyone since then. There was just one of his friends who spoke in his favor to the Prior of the Carthusians, asking that I treat him gently. I told him I would not say an angry word to him and, if he wished, I would say nothing to him and would simply give him absolution. The Prior was very pleased and satisfied with that. However, I have not laid eyes on him.

No good or honorable man can honestly say that I have ever said a single word that might indicate resentment, either before or since you took charge of this affair. I am amazed that he is so bold as to say that I am unwilling to uphold what you have decided, since I have done nothing that gives evidence of this. He gives two examples: first, the printing of orders made public several years ago in the synod—but he is forgetting that they asked for this—and I was careful not to fail in it, nor will he find that you ordered anything to the contrary.

As for the seminary, your men will certify in writing that clerics from my diocese are obliged to remain there one year only, as the statutes themselves state. But here is where this man is prevaricating: that after the year and before subdiaconate, I give them to understand that, if they expect me to dispense them from the interstices,5 they must remain in the seminary, for I do not dispense any of those who leave. I think that four months in that seminary are worth as much as one year outside of it. Furthermore, all that is left up to each individual. And since he is trying to make an obligation of something that is a free choice and common knowledge, consider whether people should put any faith in what he says.

As for the boarding fees, this year food costs four times what it does in ordinary years because of famine in the region and the soldiers, who are destroying everything. See how irrational this man is. He should have

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3Elie Lezine de la Marguerie, State Counsellor.
4Conditionally.
5Intervals to be observed between reception of the various Orders leading to priesthood. During these intervals those promoted to Orders are to exercise themselves in their order according to the regulations of the bishop (Canon 978, §1, 1917 codification of Canon Law). The 1983 revision does not use this term specifically but the concept remains.
waited until food prices returned to normal and then, if I did not adjust the fees, he could lodge his complaint. Would to God that we may not be obliged to increase them! I really fear this will happen.

With regard to my Officialis, I shall tell you quite simply that one time, when I was very sick, he came here to see me. After he arrived and I had greeted him, I said to him: “Father Garat ⁶ will speak to you. ” It was about the account of his expenditures. This was the period when many people were ill in Cahors, and he fell sick. I sent someone at once to visit him and offered to do whatever I could for him—not that I did not have good reason to complain about him, particularly because of an important affair he had ruined for me, for which I had to send someone to Paris and obtain two decrees from the Great Council.

As for that man named Pontie, whom he says he kept in his own home for some time, I do not know why he blames me for that because I never directed him there nor had anyone do so. On the contrary, I disapproved of his giving him hospitality, and even more that he made a public issue of it. Furthermore, there is much fault to be found in this person. In any case, should he not have waited until the synod was held? All matters must be implemented there; what is stated in the decree must begin to be done. I have not yet received nor seen the decree because Monsieur de Marmiesse ⁷ has it but has not dared to send it to me, so he tells me, because the mails are risky.

He is also well aware that I am still unable to hold my synod because of the soldiers making raids right up to the gates of Cahors. A short time ago, they even took prisoner a Councillor of the Cour des Aides ⁸ of Cahors.

Do me the favor of sharing this letter with Monsieur de la Marguerie. I ask both of you to disregard whatever that Rector writes to you and to trust that I shall not fail to carry out all that you have decided.

I think I told you previously my reasons for not going into our seminary, although I really wanted to do so. However, those difficulties no longer exist, so I intend to go there often. I already reserved a room for the reason I wrote to you before. Then the town heard about it—how, I do not know—and decided, so I am told, not to allow it. The first Consul told me recently, swearing before God, that he would close the gate on me if I presented myself there. He said that I would serve them better and more effectively

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⁶Jean Garat, a monk of Chancelade Abbey and Vicar-General of Bishop Solminihac.
⁷Abbé Bernard Coignet de Marmiesse.
⁸Courts established throughout France for the administration of the aides (excise taxes on certain goods) and jurisdiction over cases concerning them and other taxes.
than if I enclosed myself with them. Nevertheless, they will not be the judges of that, for we will do what we know is most pleasing to God. The plague has not yet entered the town but it is at the gate, and we dread the return of the full moon.

In the meantime, I am, Monsieur, your most humble and affectionate servant.

ALAIN,
Bishop of Cahors

I forgot to tell you that the Rector of Caussade has formally contravened the decree by the intervention he made in a case I had against my Chapter in Le Vigan, where he acted as representative of the unionized priests and seminarians.

1574. - TO THE DUCHESSE D'AIGUILLON

November 20, 1652

Madame,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The needs of our Consuls in Barbary, especially in Tunis, have obliged me, Madame, to put pressure on M. Blavet for money. The Tunis Consul used five hundred écus of ransom money for a slave, who was found dead, to free Brother Huguier from the chain gang, where he had been sent by the Dey; this cost eleven hundred livres. In addition, the Marseilles merchant who sent M. Le Vacher the five hundred écus wants the money right away, according to what M. Chrétien tells me. I asked M. Pepin to act as intermediary to

Letter 1574. - Reg. 1, f° 3 v°, copy made from the original autograph letter.

1The Duchesse d'Aiguillon was a prime contributor to the needs of the Barbary missions.

2Jean Le Vacher.

3Jean Chrétien, born on August 6, 1606 in Oncourt (Vosges), was ordained a priest on April 5, 1631, and entered the Congregation of the Mission on November 26, 1640. He was Superior in Marseilles (1645-53), sub-Assistant at the Motherhouse (1654), and Superior in La Rose.
get the money, which he did, and he has arranged with M. Blavet that, of the five quarters' rent he will owe at the end of the year, we will settle with him for two, which he will pay immediately. We are doing this because he does not enjoy the use of his goods and has lost a large number of horses.

I entreat you most humbly, Madame, to let me know if this arrangement is agreeable to you. M. Pepin who, like us, is concerned in this, has examined everything, found the above to be reasonable, and agrees to that price. If Madame du Vigean* and M. de Serceletes do not accept this, our settlement will not oblige them to release M. Blavet from the debt. I most humbly entreat you, Madame, to let me know if you accept our concluding this business today, and to send me a reply to the letter I took the honor of writing to you the day before yesterday about a small parish that is vacant near Crécy.

In the meantime, I am, in the love of Our Lord, Madame, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

1575. - TO THE DUCHESE D'AIGUILLON

November 21, 1652

Madame,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
One of the finest men in the world whom I know is M. de

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(1655-62). On November 26, 1667 he was a member of the house in Troyes.

*Aime de Neubourg, wife of Francois Poussart de Fors, first Baron and then Marquis du Vigean. She worked very closely with the Duchesse d'Aiguillon.

Letter 1575. - Reg. 1, f° 67 v°, copy made from the original.
Saveuses, Counselor of the Grand’Chambre. His sister has written him that Gisors Priory, which depends on Marmoutiers, is about to become vacant. I offered to write to you about it, which I now do, Madame, with all possible affection, assuring you, Madame, that you could not make it over to anyone more deserving than he, nor to one from whom you ought to expect more gratitude. For these reasons, Madame, I most humbly entreat you once again to keep him in mind on this occasion. O mon Dieu, Madame, what a joy to consider the true servants of God in matters which concern the service of His Divine Majesty!

I am, in His love, Madame, your.

1576. - ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC TO SAINT VINCENT

Mercuès, November 21, 1652

Monsieur,

After thanking you for so kindly offering your men to risk their lives, if need be, for the service of the plague-stricken of our town of Cahors, I want to tell you that, since they are working so effectively for my entire diocese, I would not want to put them in any danger, unless it were absolutely necessary. I do not think this can happen in the present state of the town because, as soon as I heard that the plague had been discovered in the faubourg, I went there and summoned the pastors of the town to a meeting at the episcopal palace. I tried to impress on them the obligation they had to risk their lives for the service of their parishioners, and I found all of them ready to do so.

I also called a meeting of the Superiors of religious houses to see what

1Charles de Saveuses, a diocesan priest who was an adviser in the Parlement.
2Main courtroom of the Parlement of Paris.
3Principal town of a canton in Les Andelys (Eure).
4Marmoutiers Abbey (Indre-et-Loire).

Letter 1576. - Archives of the Diocese of Cahors, Alain de Solminihac collection, notebook, file 22, no. 34, copy made from the original.
help I could expect from them, in case of need. It was truly something
worthy of admiration and gave me great consolation, for they offered me
themselves and all their monks, and so willingly that I do not think the likes
of it can be seen in any diocese in France. Several good priests also
volunteered, and we have sent two Capuchins to that faubourg where the
plague has broken out. It is only in a very small area where just fifteen
people in all have died. There may be seven or eight sick persons who have
been taken to some cabins in the fields, so we are hoping that the disease
will not be widespread and that God will preserve the town, which is
separated from this faubourg by the Lot River and has no contact with it.

I shall follow your advice in everything. I had made up my mind not to
risk my life unless I knew that this was the Will of God. I found out that
everyone, without exception, was against it. Although I had kept this
decision secret, mentioning it only to one or two of my staff and enjoining
them to say nothing about it to anyone, nevertheless, it was immediately
public knowledge. I met with such universal extreme opposition that the
town had determined to close its gates on me. I held everything in abeyance
until I saw in your letter that you were of the same opinion. So, I will put
all thought of it out of my head and, with great pleasure, will do what you
have written me.

One of the Capuchins who are at risk is responsible for administering
the sacraments to the plague-stricken in the countryside around that area.
Recently, I sent one of the priests on my staff there to visit him for me and
to bring them some alms, since obviously I could not go myself without the
danger of being taken prisoner by the troops of the Prince. They are
making raids everywhere, pillaging and taking prisoners without any
resistance. I would be very glad to go myself to visit and console these
poor people, but I do not feel in conscience that I can risk being captured
by those raiders. So, during this time of danger, I will use the means you
indicate to me in the letter.

As soon as I receive the official record of the act of consent I am
supposed to give, I shall sign it and send it on to you.

I am, Monsieur . . .

ALAIN,
Bishop of Cahors
My very dear Brother,

I cannot thank God enough for His guidance of you, and I beg Him to continue. We are sending you a hundred francs, which the Ladies want you to use to assist those twenty-two villages as soon and as best you can. Strike a bargain for this purpose with the surgeon you mentioned to me, so that every two days he will visit and take care of the sick who need him. We give M. Gaucher fifteen sous a day; if he is not satisfied with that, give him more.

We hear that you have spared nothing to save the lives of all the sick poor in those places. If some localities have no parish priests, you could ask Monsieur Hennin, who is being recalled, to take care of the spiritual needs while you continue with the temporal ones. If you need powder for purging, ask Monsieur Portail and, through him, Brother Alexandre. If you have to bargain to get provisions everywhere, do so, and three and all to cover needs on
time everywhere. Write to Madame de Herse, asking for a little money to help these poor people harvest their grapes. I had not yet received your letter on the day of the meeting; tell her that is why I have asked you to write her about it.

The doctor has sent me to Orsigny for a little fresh air because of a slight fever I get at night.

I embrace Brother Lamirois and ask God to preserve you both. Please send a weekly report to the Vicar-General and me, and spare nothing to save the life of the souls and bodies of those poor people. Some persons of rank will soon be coming frequently to see how you are doing, and they expect the poor to be assisted in the way I indicated to you. I am, in the love of Our Lord, my very dear Brother, your brother and servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Brother Sené, seminarian of the Mission, in Lagny

Hippolyte Féret, Pastor of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet and Vicar-General of the Archdiocese of Paris. As soon as the troops had evacuated the areas around Paris, the Archbishop ordered an investigation into the needs of his diocese. Féret collected the data into two reports: *Estat sommaire*, (cf. no. 1557, n. 1), and *Mémoire des besoins de la campagne des environs de Paris*, le 20 novembre 1652. Armed with this information, the Archbishop summoned the religious Orders, gave them his instructions and faculties, and sent them to various parts of the diocese, requesting them to send him detailed reports from time to time. Two general warehouses were established in Paris and individual warehouses in the parishes; the charity of the people kept them stocked with food, linen, tools, and even pickaxes and hoes for gravedigging. Soup kitchens were organized, hospitals and orphanages were opened, doctors and surgeons were sent everywhere, and aristocratic ladies joined forces with the Daughters of Charity. These ladies understood, wrote Faillet (op. cit., p. 449), that “possession of a manor imposes more duties than it grants rights.” The publication, *Le Magasin charitable*, of January 1653, gives an excellent description of the dereliction and the corresponding charitable effort.
1578. - TO THE MARQUIS DE CHATEAUNEUF

December 2, 1652

My Lord,

I was ill when you left Paris and did not hear of your departure until about two weeks later. Only Our Lord can make you understand how this distressed me. The doctor had advised me to go and take the country air for a week or so, and it was only on my return that I learned that you, My Lord, were not in Bourges, as I had been told, but in Leuville. 1 I intended to go there to tell you how sorry I was that you were not in Paris and to renew to you the offers of my perpetual obedience. However, because of a situation that has arisen, about which the bearer of this letter will have the honor to tell you, I felt that you, My Lord, would accept my depriving myself of this consolation and honor, reserving the honor of seeing you in a few days. This, My Lord, is what I now do, perfectly confident that you will find this for the best.

I am, in the meantime, in the love of Our Lord, your . . .

1578a. - TO CHARLES BAYART, IN MONTMIRAIL

[December 7, 1652]

I approve your having the garden enclosed with walls and including in it the small plot of land belonging to the Hôtel-Dieu, and that in exchange you buy a plot the same size near that Hôtel-Dieu to serve as a garden for the Sisters. 1 However, you may

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Letter 1578. - Reg. 1, f° 64, copy made from the original autograph letter.
1Leuville-sur-Orge, in the district of Corbeil (Essonne).

Letter 1578a. - Departmental Archives of the Marne, Châlons, Coutumier de Montmirail. Since the original has disappeared, the Coutumier text was published in Annales C. M. (1960), p. 314, and reprinted in Mission et Charité, 19-20, no. 73, pp. 94-95. This edition uses the latter text.
1The Daughters of Charity, who began serving at the Montmirail hospital in 1650.
do so on condition that the leading citizens of the town agree to it, for that is a public hospital and we are only its administrators and may not dispose of its property.

The Montmirail foundation obliges us to maintain the hospital, to take in travelers—even the sick—and, lastly, to do whatever good we can on the founders' estates by visiting the sick, instructing and consoling those we meet who are in need of this, and by other good works which priests can and should do. You did well to take the three wounded soldiers into the hospital. A refusal would have scandalized the people and angered M. de Leuze. It is better to go beyond the limits of charity than to fail in it. These occasions do not arise very often, and there is no consequence to be feared.

1579. - TO MARC COGLÉE, SUPERIOR, IN SEDAN

December 10, 1652

The Missionaries in Poland are being greatly blessed in their work; I do not have time now to explain it in detail so I shall just tell you that the plague has been raging in Warsaw, the city where the King usually resides. All the inhabitants who could do so have left the city. There, as in other places afflicted with this disease, almost no order exists but, on the contrary, mass confusion. No one buries the dead; they are left in the streets where they are devoured by the dogs. As soon as someone in a house is stricken with the disease, the others put him out in the street, where he must die, for

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2This establishment of the Missionaries was begun in 1644.
3The de Gondi family.
4Bailiff of Montmirail.

nobody brings him anything to eat. Poor artisans, poor servants, poor widows and orphans are totally abandoned; they cannot find work nor anyone of whom to ask bread because the rich have all left town.

It was into this desolation in that great city that M. Lambert was sent to find some solution to all these miseries. In point of fact, he did so, by the grace of God. He had the dead buried, and the sick who had been abandoned taken to places where they could be assisted and cared for both in body and soul. He did the same for other poor persons who were suffering from illnesses that were not contagious. Lastly, he had three or four houses, separated from one another, set up as hospices or hospitals, and had all the other poor who were not sick brought there to be housed, putting the men on one side and the women and children on the other. They are being aided there by the alms and assistance from the Queen.

1580. - TO FRANÇOIS HALLIER, IN ROME

December 20, 1652

Monsieur,

I thank God for the fine progress He is giving to your dealings there;¹ my most humble thanks to you for your kindness in consoling me by it. I assure you, Monsieur, that my greatest joy is the one your letters bring me, and there is nothing in the world for which I pray more fervently to God than for you and your business.

Moreover, His Divine Goodness gives me great hope that He will soon restore peace to His Church and that, thanks to your

¹François Hallier, Doctor of the Sorbonne, was in Rome pursuing proceedings for the condemnation of Jansenism.
efforts, truth will be acknowledged and your zeal exalted before God and men. We shall continue to ask Him for this. Please send us your precious news.

1581. - TO N.

December 26, 1652

Vincent de Paul gives news of the Missionaries in Ireland, who had written him on October 28. He received the letter in December, a few days before leaving for Villepreux, where he was going in order to console Father de Gondi for the disgrace of Cardinal de Retz, his son, recently imprisoned at Vincennes.

1582. - TO THE MARQUIS DE POYANNE

Paris, New Year's Day, 1653

My Lord,

I have heard how you protected a relative of mine by extricating him from his oppression. I thank you for this with all possible respect and affection, with as much gratitude as if this favor had


Letter 1582. - Archives of the Château de Saint-Aignan (Loir-et-Chart), original signed letter; facsimile in the Archives of the Mission, Paris.

1Jean-Henri-Gabriel de Baylens, Marquis de Poyanne, Commander of the King's Orders, Governor of Dax, Saint-Sever, and Navarrenx; Lieutenant-General of the King in Béarn and Navarre. He died in Saint-Sever on February 3, 1667, leaving behind him the reputation of a brave leader.

2Saint Vincent's relatives had suffered a great deal from the thieving soldiery who, enrolled either in the ranks of the Fronde or of the King, imposed an intolerable yoke of pillage on the unfortunate people living near Dax and Tautas. Many were killed or stripped of their possessions and reduced to begging. Moved with compassion, the Saint sent his friend, the Canon de Saint-Martin, the one thousand livres Charles du Fresne had given him for them, asking that he use the money in the best way possible. (Cf. Abelly, op. cit., bk. III, chap. XIX, p. 292.) This letter informs us that the Marquis de Poyanne himself also came to the aid of one of these poor people.
been done for me. I most humbly entreat you, My Lord, to grant me the favor of giving me your orders whenever opportunities may arise to be of service to you.

If I ever have this happiness, I shall consider it a blessing from God. With this desire, I venture now to renew to you the offers of my perpetual obedience, on the occasion of this New Year and to assure you, as I do now, of my prayers that God may be pleased to bless you, your army, and your illustrious family more and more.

I no longer recommend this poor young man to you, for the kindness you have already shown him leads me to hope that its powerful and charitable effects will continue in his favor. For myself, I ask you, My Lord, for the honor of allowing me to be your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
1.s.C.M.

At the bottom of the page: The Marquis de Poyanne

1583.- TO SAINT LOUISE

January 1653

Mademoiselle,

It seems you are right in doubting that the Lady who is pressuring you to give her our Sister from Suzy\(^1\) is planning to do what you told me, and that it is advisable for you to insist on one thing: either that they promise you that the Sisters will keep their Rule about confession,\(^2\) for if we say that there should be no fixed time

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\(^1\)Julienne Loret, who had been Sister Servant in Chars for over two years, was born in Suzy (Aisne). Saint Louise recalled her to Paris on January 4. (Cf. Spiritual Writings, L. 358, p. 409.)

\(^2\)The Pastor of Chars did not encourage frequent confession. Had the Sisters listened to him, they would have remained months without the Sacrament of Penance. In a letter written to
for confession, then the Church was wrong in ordering the faithful to confess once a year; or you must remain firm in not giving her that good Sister, whom it is well to assign elsewhere and offer them another one; or that Ménard be returned to you, if you give her this one.

It will be a good idea for you to ask her to come and see you and for you to explain to her that you have commitments elsewhere. When all is said and done, if they are unwilling, see if you are strong enough to break with them, rather than risk spreading the spirit of the times in the Little Company through those three. I am afraid that this savors of Port-Royal.

1584. - TO LAMBERT AUX COUTEAUX, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW

Paris, January 3, 1653

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I renew to you the assurances of esteem and special affection God has given me for you, not only for this new year but even beyond centuries. I pray that, after granting you an entire one to serve Him in this world, the Divine Goodness will then give you a blessed eternity with Him.

I received your two letters of November 28 and December 5. Since you told me you had the report on Madagascar read at table, I am sending you one on the Hebrides. It is not quite so detailed

Madame de Herse in 1657 (cf. ibid., L. 527b, p. 560), Saint Louise informed the foundress of the Char Charity that the Pastor still maintained these ideas.

Sister Marguerite Ménard, who had entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity at the end of 1650.

Letter 1584. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.

Saint Vincent is referring to a letter he had received from Charles Nacqart, dated February 5, 1650. (Cf. vol. III, no. 1179.)

Perhaps the letter from Dermot Duiguin, written October 28, 1652 (cf. no. 1567).
but is full of matter for consolation. We are not preparing to send anyone to the first-named island, which deeply distresses us because of what good M. Nacquart must be suffering, if by chance he is still alive. 3

Your letters have consoled me greatly, but this consolation has been followed by sorrow, since you tell me that perhaps the Queen’s illness will delay Their Majesties’ journey to Lithuania. The Queen’s good health is precious both to her States and to the poor members of Jesus Christ. My distress is increased by the fact that it is being said here that the general of the Cossacks has committed some act of disloyalty. We continue to pray to God for the King, the Queen, and their armies.

I thank God that M. Guillot is still caring for the poor in Warsaw and that he is a good priest. I ask Our Lord to lead him more and more to perfection and to make his stay and work in Poland . . . pleasant. 4

You have good reason to admire God’s guidance of you and your little community, especially for His taking you out of the house where you were living, in which seven or eight persons have died since you left. 5 That was surely the hand of Providence; but, Monsieur, over whom will God watch if not over His servants? And since He is so very good to you and has given the Queen an inclination for your establishment, it is to be hoped that, despite the

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3He had died on May 29, 1650.

4The word agréables (pleasant) is barely legible under the crossing out that hides it; what goes before it is indecipherable. Nicolas Guillot was not happy in Poland; it could be the Saint had written moins désagrables (less unpleasant).

5The plague had ravaged Warsaw, and the Priests of the Mission had distinguished themselves there by their dedication. In the Gazete de France of November 16, 1652, was included the following excerpt sent from Warsaw the preceding October 18: “Their Polish Majesties are still in Skieniegis, the fastest refuge from the malignant fevers raging throughout the country, especially in this city, where the sickness is so formidable that not only does it kill a great number of persons, but they die within twenty-four hours. The population is so terrified that they refuse to lend a hand to bury the dead, and leave them lying about the streets. To perform this final service, the Queen had to send for Father Lambert of the Mission and his confreres, whom she had brought from France the preceding year.”
delays up until now, it will be made in His own time. Then again, this same Providence will not leave you without persons to do His work.

I praise God that the Daughters of Charity are in Warsaw and have work to do. May God bless and preserve them! 6

I was on my way to Mademoiselle Le Gras' house to give a little conference to her Daughters, when the Duchesse d'Aiguillon and Madame de Herse, the President's wife, sent for me to go to the home of one of them, where I now am, to discuss means of assisting poor Champagne, where the armies are at present and are reducing it to a pitiful state. 7 I greatly fear that we will not be able to do much because assistance for this diocese is already a great expense; six or seven thousand livres a week are needed for it.

All of Paris contributes to this, supplying all sorts of things people need by way of food and clothing, for illnesses, and for work. There are several warehouses in the city, where people bring whatever they want to donate. The general warehouse has a salt barrel, which is never empty, even though some is taken from it every day to be sent to the country, as is done with everything else. 8

If I were at Saint-Lazare, I would send you the organizational plan for this holy distribution, which has been printed. 9

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6Sisters Marguerite Moreau, Madeleine Drougeon, and Françoise Douelle had arrived in Poland on September 7, 1652 and had just reached Warsaw.

7After the submission of Paris, the Prince de Condé had led his army into Champagne and there, reinforced by Spanish troops, subdued Rethel, Sainte-Menouehould, and other fortified sites. Turenne pursued him. The campaign lasted for three years, to the great detriment of the people who, continuously pillaged, were living in the most terrible conditions.

8The initial idea for the general warehouses is attributed to Christophe du Plessis, Baron of Montbard and a Councillor of the King. There were two of these warehouses in Paris: one in Madame Bretonvilliers' house at the tip of Île Saint-Louis, from which help went to places in and around Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, Lagny, etc.; the other at the Hôtel de Mandoose, near the Hôtel de Bourgogne, for Gonesse and the surrounding areas. All manner of merchandises, such as food, clothing, medicines, linen, furniture, utensils, tools, Church vestments, and even sacred vessels, could be found here, brought by charitable persons or on the carts sent for a house-to-house collection. (Cf. Abelly, op. cit., bk. I, chp. XLII, p. 194; also, Mémoire des besoins de la campagne aux environs de Paris; and Le Magasin charitable.)

9Le Magasin charitable.
The members of the Company of the Blessed Sacrament are doing wonders in this city, and the monks do likewise in the rural areas for the distributions and the assistance of the poor. We have only three men there, in addition to the ones we still have in Étampes, because the deaths among our priests have prevented us from giving more. For that reason they have had to turn to the religious Orders.

I am well, thank God, as is the whole Company here. We are sending M. Berthe to Rome. M. du Chesne is going to the Richelieu house as Superior and, at the same time, to open an Internal Seminary. We have sent our best seminarians there to teach the others the customs and to be an example to them. M. Cuisson is returning to Cahors and is supposed to go to Montauban to discuss with the Bishop the plan for his seminary. We are recalling M. Le

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10 The secret Company of the Blessed Sacrament did a great deal for the relief of the destitute. The importance of this Society was brought to light for the first time by Father Charles Clair in Études religieuses for November-December 1888 and January-February 1889. Its work has been the object of fine research, notably that done by Dom Beauchet-Filleau, Raoul Allier, and Alfred Rebello. Saint Vincent was associated with it at the time of its foundation. Lambert aux Couteaux had contact with it when he was Assistant in Paris and had even appeared at one of its sessions. (Cf. Annales de la Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement, p. 109.) Some see apparent contradictions between these Annales and Abel’s life of Saint Vincent, but the activity of the Company in the domain of charity in no way detracted from the work of Saint Vincent, as his first biographer informs us. See also: Pierre Coste, “Saint Vincent de Paul et la Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement” in Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique (December 1907), pp. 353ff.

11 The Archbishop of Paris sent the Jesuits to the region of Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, and their activities extended as far as Corbeil. The Priests of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet went to Limay, Brevens, Villers-Cotterets, and Charolles; the Capuchins served in Corbeil and the surrounding areas; the Jacobins (Dominicans) looked after the region of Gonesse, Sevran, and Le Bourget; the Priests of the Mission divided up into several groups to assist Étampes, Palaiseau, Lagny, and other places. These heroic groups of charity workers were also joined by the Discalced Carmelites, the Recollects (Franciscans), the clergy of M. Charpentier’s seminary, and the Pieuse Fathers. “The leadership of M. Vincent’s Missionaries, with their vast experience, served as a model for almost all the stations,” states the author of Le Magasin charitable (p. 13). (Cf. Estas sonmaire for October 20, 22, 24, and 25, 1652 for a description of the miseries of the countryside and the needs of the poor in the environs of Paris.)

12 Thomas Berthe was appointed Superior of the house in Rome and Procurator to the Holy See for the Congregation.

13 Forced to leave Montauban and go to Monistrol because of the plague, the Cathedral Chapter had taken with it some seminarians whom the Bishop of the diocese, Pierre de Bertier, had formerly lodged in his episcopal palace. The Bishop bought a house near the church, and it was there that the Priests of the Mission gave them their first lessons.
Vazeux from Rome; perhaps we shall send him either to Agen or to Montauban. 14

Enclosed is a letter from Barbary.

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 of Poland, who is now in Warsaw

1585. - TO MARC COGLOE, SUPERIOR, IN SEDAN

Paris, January 11, 1653

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

In this new year, I renew to you the gift of my heart, and I am enclosing the two Briefs you requested.

I am very distressed at the miseries of your border areas and of the large number of poor people overwhelming you. All I can do is pray to God for their relief, as I now do, because you must not expect anything in addition to the hundred livres we are giving you for them each month. Sedan is the only place on the border to which Paris in its charity is still sending alms. It has been forced to stop sending them elsewhere, so as to meet the urgent needs of this diocese, where the armies have been encamped for so long.

You will do well if, without sending the woman to Paris, you can discreetly separate those two persons who are living as man

14 He went to Annecy to take charge of the seminary.

Letter 1585. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.
and wife, but who are not. Quietly advise the woman to go somewhere else or tell the man to leave her. Paris is like a point of arrival for everyone; there are so many of these poor common-law wives here that we do not know where to put them. They remain exposed to the dangers of sin and poverty, which they thought they were going to avoid! You have an example of this in that good convert you and M. Dufour recommended to us some time back, for it has been very difficult to keep her here.

The Abbé has gone to Saint-Méen. He mentioned your confraternity to me but in such a way that he seems to have changed his original intention. He has the miseries of his own region at heart. I do not know if his money will stay there. He did not tell me clearly what he will do with it; perhaps also he has not made a final decision.

If I said nothing to you about M. R.,¹ it is because you spoke to me only vaguely about him. Tell me his faults—his wishes, I might add—and whether or not he had stated on his return that he wanted to have them no longer. Please tell M. Dufour that a ship is available for Madagascar and that it would be well for him to be ready to go in March, the month the ship is leaving.² In the meantime, let me know if any way or passage can be found to get him to Paris safely.

A third thing I ask you to tell me is whether five priests will be enough for you during this wretched time.

We have nothing new to tell. Everyone is fairly well here, thank God. I frequently present you to Him for this same end and so that

¹Probably Nicolas Regnault, born in Vigne-aux-Bois (Ardennes) in 1626, entered the Congregation of the Mission on April 21, 1647, and took his vows on April 22, 1649. He was placed in Sedan before 1654 and left the Congregation in 1655 or shortly after.
²The words, "the month the ship is leaving," are in the Saint's handwriting.
He may be pleased to sanctify more and more you and your community, whom I greet. I am, in O[ur] L[ord], Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
I.S.C.M.

At the bottom of the first page: Monsieur Coglée

1586. - TO JEAN LE VACHER, IN TUNIS

January 1653

I thank Our Lord that, through your efforts, several Frenchmen, captured at sea and taken to Tunis, have not been made slaves and that others who were, have been set free. You are rendering a great service to God in these persons. May His Goodness be pleased to give you the grace to act forcefully and effectively with those who have power and authority in such matters!

1587. - TO FATHER JEAN GARAT, IN CAHORS

Paris, February 1, 1653

Reverend Father,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter with the respect I owe to a very good servant of God who has an aversion for high positions. I am greatly


Letter 1587. - Archives of the Chapter of Cahors, Massabie estate, f° 47, original signed letter.

1Jean Garat, a monk of Chancelade Abbey, was Vicar-General to Alain Solminihac, Bishop of Cahors. When he was appointed Abbot of Chancelade, Garat wanted to decline the proposed honor, and wrote to Saint Vincent about it. Solminihac had to threaten him with excommuni-
consoled by the opportunity this affords me to renew to you the offers of my most humble services; I thank you for all the favors you have done for us and for the patronage with which you honor us there. I ask Our Lord to be your reward for all this.

Perhaps you are now aware, Reverend Father, that I am no longer involved in ecclesiastical affairs;² consequently, I am no longer in a position to take action on the matter in question. Even if I were, I would certainly not want to place any obstacle in the way of the workings of the Holy Spirit in the widespread request being made for you. It seems to me, Reverend Father, that after giving what you owe to the humble sentiments of your heart, you would do well to submit to the holy inspiration of those who have nominated you. Furthermore, positions of authority should be given to those who try to avoid them. Would to God there were many such monks in the Church!

I ask the Divine Goodness, Reverend Father, to conclude the matter in the way most expedient for Him, to preserve you for His glory, and to make me worthy of the happiness I have of being, in His love, Reverend Father, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.a.C.M.

Addressed: Reverend Father Garat, Vicar-General of the Bishop of Cahors, in Cahors

²Saint Vincent is referring to his dismissal from the Council of Conscience, the Royal Council for Ecclesiastical Affairs.
Most Eminent and Most Reverend Lords,

Vincent Depaul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, humbly informs Your Eminences that, hopefully, a ship will set sail this spring for the island of Madagascar. He plans to send there, if it pleases the Sacred Congregation, Claude Dufour and François Mousnier, priests of his Congregation, already approved previously by Your Eminences for the mission on that island, but who have been unable to leave because no ship could embark at that time. He humbly asks that you grant them the usual faculties.

And because two other priests, approved for that mission by the Sacred Congregation, have died, and because the petitioner, Vincent Depaul, has not yet decided whom he can present to Your Eminences in their place, he most humbly requests of you at the same time, that, if the departure of the ship becomes imminent, he be allowed to choose those whom he can substitute for the men who have died, have them examined by the Nuncio of France, and send their names as soon as possible to Your Eminences so that the usual faculties may be sent, as above. He will consider all this as a special favor from Your Eminences.

Whom God, etc.


1The contents of this letter dictate the date.

2Jean-François Mousnier, born in Saintes (Charente-Maritime), entered the Congregation of the Mission on December 19, 1643, at eighteen years of age, took his vows on January 1, 1646, and was ordained a priest in 1649. After distributing alms in Picardy, he was then sent to Madagascar where he died in May 1655. His biography was published in vol. III of Notices, pp. 129-46.

3The departure was delayed for another year.

4Faculties were granted on February 20, 1653. The only difference was the suppression of article 26 of the faculties previously granted to Nicolas Duport (cf. vol. XIII, no. 101).
1589. - TO ÉTIENNE BLATIRON, SUPERIOR, IN GENOA

February 14, 1653

As for M... , I share your distress at his mental weakness, but it does not surprise me because his behavior in the past has always given me reason to fear some instability in him. You know, Monsieur, that we must be submissive to God in these circumstances, determined to want nothing but His Will, even though others may shrink from it.

You did what a wise Superior should do to preserve order in the house. If this good priest should become so angry that he leaves the state to which God has called him, and in which He has bestowed on him many graces for himself and others, the signs of a true vocation, he shows clearly that he himself is confused. May the Divine Goodness be pleased to allow him not to deviate from His adorable guidance! I am not writing to him, since a sick mind cannot be cured by the sheer force of persuasion.

1590. - TO ÉTIENNE BLATIRON, SUPERIOR, IN GENOA

February 21, 1653

You did the right thing, Monsieur, in letting M... 's little fit of bad humor run its course, without saying anything to him about the
failings into which he let himself fall. During these mental aberrations, forbearance and patience are better remedies than correction, and there is reason to hope he will recover from them. Perhaps he excused himself from preaching to those girls because some men have a strong aversion to any kind of communication with that sex.

I am only sorry that the whole burden falls on you, but why not entrust some of the responsibility to others? You should give all your men practice in preaching and have them work outside the house; otherwise, they will never become good workers. I am well aware that they will not be as successful as you might be, but they will have as much success as God chooses.

With regard to that, I will tell you what I heard M. Lambert say, which I shall long remember. He said that if God has not given us excellent subjects to succeed in our works, He highly approves of our making use of those we have, weak though they be. I am always fearful that you may be taking too much on yourself, and that your heavy labors will overwhelm you. Not that—apart from this fear—I am not greatly consoled by this; often I even console the Company with it. Just two days ago I was telling the men about the frequent large missions you give and the special graces with which God is blessing them.

1591. - TO LAMBERT AUX COUTEAUX, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW

Paris, February 21, 1653

Monsieur,

The grace of O[ur] L[ord] be with you forever!
While waiting for your letters, of which I have been deprived

Letter 1591. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.

*The Saint was still unaware that Lambert aux Couteaux had died on January 31.
for the last fifteen to twenty days, I shall continue to send you mine
to wish you a continuation of the Spirit of God and His workings
in your leadership and actions, and an increase of His grace for the
King, the Queen, and their intentions.

We have no news other than what I have sent you. Still, I think
I forgot to tell you that nine or ten of our students are studying
theology under M. Cruoly, who is also their spiritual director.
Some of the other students, who are more numerous and have
finished their theology courses, are preparing for Holy Orders;
others are to be sent to other houses, while awaiting the time of
their ordination. These latter are spending their recreation with the
older men, and I am nearly always present. It is a great consolation
for me to see that we are over the faults of our former recreations
and to spend these two hours daily in holy conversations, where
each man speaks in turn seriously and usefully, yet gaily.

In addition, Monsieur, for some time now, we have been training
the Company in matters of controversy. There are three or four
persons in the city who have the grace of God to win over the
members of the so-called Reformed religion \(^2\) and are leading
a large number of them back to the Church. Every Monday they
come to us here in this house to demonstrate their method. Two of
our men practice with it each time by debating in their presence,
one taking the part of the Catholic, the other acting as the Huguenot.
One of those gentlemen is M. Girodon, a Doctor of Theology\(^3\) and
a disciple of the late Father Véron.\(^4\) One of the others is M. Beau-
mais, a haberdasher.\(^5\)

\(^2\) Calvinism, practiced in France by the Huguenots.
\(^3\) Antoine Girodon, author of *La discipline des églises préfendues réformées* de France
(Paris: L. Vendersme, 1663).
\(^4\) François Véron, renowned controversialist, born in Paris around 1575, member of the
Society of Jesus from 1595 to 1620, and a great adversary of the Protestants and Jansenists. He
died in Charenton, where he was Pastor, on December 6, 1649. (Cf. Pierre Fère, *Un curé de
Charenton au XVII* siècle [Paris: J. Gervais, 1881].)
\(^5\) Like the cutler, Jean Clémont, Beaumais had such a remarkable natural talent for debate that
the Queen used to send him to refute the sermons of the ministers in towns where the Reformation
had the greatest number of adherents. He converted between four and five thousand heretics and
I add to this that all of us are in good health, thank God, except Perrin, who is still sick. May God be pleased to keep you well!

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

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

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

1592. - TO ÉTIENNE BLATIRON, SUPERIOR, IN GENOA

February 28, 1653

I praise God that your family is faithful to keeping our Rules, with the exception of the two men you mention. I highly approve your indulgence for a time in their regard. Some grow lax at certain times and not at others, even behaving badly in one place and doing very well in another. We must hope for similar improvement in the case of these two men by being patient with them rather than by pressuring them.

With regard to communications, it would be well for you to recommend to the community, in their presence, to be exact in

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was particularly zealous in Paris. The Pastor of Saint-Sulpice parish posted the following notice in 1673, 1675, 1676, and 1677: "Every Sunday after Vespers M. de Crouz, Doctor in Theology and curate of the above-mentioned parish, will continue his debates, and M. Beaumais, the haberdasher, will uphold him in the usual manner." (Cf. Bibl. Nat., Lk 7 6743.) In recognition of his services, the clergy granted him an annual pension of four hundred livres. (Cf. Faillon, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 368-71, 400-02.)

Nicolas Perrin, born in Châtenois (Vosges). A widower, he entered the Congregation of the Mission as a coadjutor Brother on January 23, 1641, at forty years of age. Perrin took his vows on November 20, 1643 and died at Saint-Lazare on April 4, 1653.


Members of the Congregation of the Mission were urged to make, with all sincerity and devotion, and according to the formulary used in the Congregation, a manifestation of conscience to the Superior or to the person appointed by him for this purpose.
making them, and if they fail to do so, speak to them about it in a
cordial, pleasant way, inviting them by this gentle appeal to this
useful and necessary practice.

1593. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[March 1653] ¹

The little family did not fail to assemble, except for one on each side,
who had not yet arrived.² However, I think it is necessary, Monsieur, for
your charity to take the trouble to establish them there tomorrow morning
and have some devotions for them, such as adoration of the Holy Cross
and an exhortation on the Passion. It is very bold of me to suggest that.

Will your charity also kindly give instructions, this evening or early
tomorrow morning, about distributing the clothing prepared for them?
Your blessing, please, for the entire Company.

Letter 1593. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, copy.

¹Date added on the back by Brother Ducournau. Spiritual Writings, L. 76b, p. 414, assigns
it March 1, 1653, but gives no reason for this.

²The matter at hand is the opening of the Nom-de-Jésus [Name of Jesus] hospice. The
foundation was made by an anonymous rich merchant of Paris, who one day brought 100,000
livres to Saint Vincent for a good work, leaving the choice of work to him. After discussing his
plan with the benefactor, the Saint decided to spend 11,000 livres for the purchase of the house
called Nom-de-Jésus, which belonged to Saint-Lazare, and 20,000 livres for enlarging the living
space, should it become too small. He also constituted an income of 60,000 livres, to which
20,000 were added from Saint-Lazare, which later retrieved them; he allocated 5400 livres for
chapel furnishings, and 3600 livres for room and board for forty poor persons for a year. All
this was on condition that the Superior General of the Priests of the Mission, together with the
laymen from Paris whom he would employ, would have the spiritual and temporal direction of
the hospital, and in this position would have the authority to receive and dismiss the poor. The
contract was accepted on October 29, 1653, approved by the Vicars-General on March 15, 1654
(the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal de Retz, was in exile in Rome), and ratified by the Parlement
by Letters Patent in November. (Cf. Arch. Nat., M 53.) The work was already in operation in
March 1653. Saint Vincent chose forty poor artisans, twenty of each sex, who, because of old
age or infirmity could no longer earn their living. Men and women were housed in separate
buildings; although they came together in the same chapel for Mass, they were not permitted to
see or speak to one another. To occupy their time they were provided with looms and tools. The
Daughters of Charity served them and a Priest of the Mission, in conformity with the terms of
the contract, acted as chaplain. Saint Vincent often used to come to visit and instruct them. (Cf.
Abelly, op. cit., bk. I, chap. XLV, pp. 211-13.) The Nom-de-Jésus later became the municipal
health center (1802-16); its buildings were on the site now occupied by the offices of the Gare
de l'Est.
You have written me two letters, and I have not answered you. This has not been for want of affection but because of the pressure of business preventing me from doing all I would like. Do not refrain from writing to me whenever necessary. I hope it will not take me so long in future to reply to you.

I praise God for the satisfaction you are giving both within the house and outside. Continue to be very faithful to God in the practice of humility, obedience, and the Rules. That is the means of drawing upon yourself abundant graces from heaven and of preserving yourself in your vocation and, through it, in the Will of God, which should be our only aspiration in this world and in the next.

Concerning your doubt as to whether you should compensate the apprentice master, whom you left before the proper time, let me say, dear Brother, that, because he has had a summons issued since then to your good mother for that, it is probable that she has paid him, if the law so ordered. Even if she did not, you are not obliged to do so, since you are no longer in that state. God requires only that you do what you can, and a confessor never obliges his penitent to pay what he owes, unless he is able to do so. Now, you have nothing at your disposal with which to compensate this master; consequently, you are released from this before God and men.

Furthermore, it is questionable whether you owe him anything if, because of his bad treatment of you, he forced you to leave, as he did. Personally, I strongly doubt that you do. I ask you to remain at peace about it and to be more and more closely united with Our Lord by detachment from the things of this world.


1The number "19" written above the "14" on the register indicates uncertainty in the reading of the date.

2Brother Lamirois was cook for the house.
Monsieur,

Your blessing!

A week ago I sent you news of the death of M. Guérin, our very dear and most worthy Superior, who lived only four or five weeks longer than M. Gurlet and was not long in following him. Apparently, M. Gurlet, during his illness, gave him to understand this because he asked M. Guérin if he was ready to leave and go with him. He often kept after him on this point, as if he did not want to leave without taking him with him; he used to say that he would come and get him.

Once, he got out of bed, going in his nightshirt to warm himself by the fire. He asked someone to go get his papers and bring them to him because he wanted to throw them in the fire to be burned. (These were signs that he was near death.) When M. Guérin tried to stop him and to pick up his papers, M. Gurlet got up and rammed him with his head, leaving him with a bruise over his eye. This stayed with him and was visible during his own illness, and even more so after his death. He took it to the grave with M. Gurlet, beside whom he was buried in the church of Notre-Dame in Annecy.

I felt it my duty to inform you of this for the second time so that, if the
first letters happened by chance to get lost on the way, this one would take their place and would get the news to you.

I also thought it fitting to add here something about the virtues we noted in him, according to the custom and practice of the Company in such instances. Last evening M. Huilmille⁴ and I, together with Brother François, shared, by way of a conference, those things about him that were most noteworthy and edifying. I think, however, that we do not see his virtues and perfections as clearly and with the same sentiments as persons outside the Company, who were further removed from him than we, who were constantly associated with him and saw him regularly for such a long time. Being so close to him prevented us from discovering and admiring him. Unfortunately—strange to say—our close contacts and, consequently, our knowledge of one another, were very prejudicial to the proper esteem we desired in doing good. Wherever it is found, a tiny straw of the least failing and imperfection that may be noticed often takes away part of the enjoyment and greatly diminishes the splendor of the virtues shining in others. This makes me realize that I am incapable of recognizing the virtues of our virtuous deceased Superior and to have them esteemed as they deserve.

Humility and simplicity, inseparable companions, the foundation and faithful guardians of the other virtues, were especially apparent in him—not only in the eyes of those in the house but also of persons outside, who were deeply edified by them. I noticed this simplicity in everything, even in the slightest things. To thread rosaries, he would allow us to use only a bit of string instead of the thin ribbon ordinarily used for that purpose... He bought a large number of small medals to apply indulgences to them. I was surprised when I saw them, but did not express this to him because they were probably not worth a quarter of a voile apiece, the smallest possible coin. Instead of using some poor, ordinary laces for a pair of new shoes, he wanted us to use the cheapest, simplest leather thongs made of the same material as the shoes. It was the same way with clothing.

But this simplicity stood out most clearly in his conversations, words, and the way he replied to all kinds of people of rank and high position, expressing his thoughts and feelings plainly and simply, as he felt them in his heart. This was apparent, with no duplicity, dissimulation, or affectation; and his words were straightforward. This made a deep impression

⁴Philippe Huilmille [Vuilmille], born in Arras, entered the Congregation of the Mission as a priest on October 25, 1645, at the age of twenty-nine, and was admitted to vows on February 9, 1664 in the presence of M. Guillot. Notices, vol. I, and vol. V (Supplement), list him as Vuilmille.
on people, and those who knew him admired and esteemed him greatly. Even the Bishop of Geneva, who was speaking to me recently about him after he died, was really impressed by this spirit of simplicity, which he had noticed during the visitations in his diocese, when our priest had the honor of serving and accompanying him. He did so with the simplicity of the dove and, at the same time, with the prudence of the serpent. This led him to speak appropriately about everything, keeping in view the consequences which he well knew might ensue.

This virtue caused him to perceive God clear-sightedly and to perform all his actions with great purity of intention, without human respect, even for the good example he could have given people by doing good before them. Speaking of this, I remember making my interior communication to him and telling him that it might have been good to do certain things for the edification of the people. He immediately replied that we should have no thought of that but perform our actions solely for God, meaning that we should go directly to God without dwelling on any other intentions, which may be truly good but less excellent and more dangerous.

As a consequence of his humility, he also made himself all to all; thus, everyone found him admirable and amiable. If he happened to be in a garden and came across some people he knew, who were pruning their vines, he willingly set to work at this and shared with the others whatever he knew about it. As a matter of fact, he had a broad knowledge of things and was ready for anything.

On this solid foundation of humility and simplicity, he had built the other Christian virtues and all those best suited to the spirit of his vocation, especially charity and zeal for the salvation of souls. The latter was prodigious and most admirable, for, outside of the time of rest marked out in our Rules, he could not bear to see people fail to work continually in the missions. Even three or four days before his death he told me, while we were rather busy listening to and serving the ordinands, that we should steal a few hours to go to the place . . . , as if he had wanted to send us two poor priests out on mission after dinner on the very day of the ordination or the next day, while he was sick, to do what we could in one of the huge parishes in the diocese.

To illustrate more clearly how, during his life, his mind was occupied with thoughts of the mission and the salvation of souls, in the final days of

\(^5\)Charles-Auguste de Sales.
\(^6\)Cf. Mt 10:16. (NAB)
his illness, when he had a raging fever, his delirium was always about the missions . . . , that we had to go and give missions in the city of Geneva, that letters had been sent for this purpose, and the heretics were waiting for us there. About six years ago during a mission in our mountains in the dead of winter, I saw something similar happen to him when he was very sick. I remember that he was dreaming that Geneva had been converted and the local bishop had made his entry into the city. This stemmed from the great desire he had, when he was well, for the conversion of that poor town, and he himself was hoping to go there soon to celebrate Holy Mass.

Whenever he could get hold of any reports of the great successes God was giving to works in foreign countries, he would read them, his heart deeply moved; tears would stream from his eyes, showing clearly the joy and satisfaction of his soul. If obedience had so indicated, he was ready to go to Barbary, despite his advanced age and numerous ailments. I heard him say that, when he was a student with the Jesuits he would have volunteered for China, Japan, or Canada, if they had been willing to take other persons with them.

His zeal was as disinterested as it was ardent. In truth, he loved only the glory of God, never seeking himself nor worrying about who had procured it. Even when one of the priests working with us on the missions had been very successful in something, he rejoiced more than if it had been himself or another member of the Company.

This truly genuine zeal was accompanied by all the other virtues, without which it either cannot exist or can be, at the very least, useless for the glory of God. He was very patient in putting up with the difficulties and labors which must be endured to win souls, and I know that when he was on mission he continued to catechize, preach, and hear confessions, despite a painful ailment which greatly inconvenienced him. Nor did it prevent him from taking always the worst of everything for himself, as if he were in good health.

His zeal was just as evident in his role as Superior. He had an ardent desire for the welfare and perfection of his subjects and strove to make the spirit of the Company and its principal virtues—above all, perfect obedience to the Rules—flourish among them.

All these virtues, as I said at the beginning of the letter, had won him the esteem and affection of everyone. This was quite evident in the regrets and sorrow expressed by all sorts of persons at his death—diocesan priests, members of religious Orders, and the good Sisters of the Visitation—who prayed fervently for him during his illness and assisted him in several ways. The laity as well expressed similar regret. Recently a poor peasant came in the name of a leading family of the region to get news of
him and to bring him some food. As soon as he learned of his death, he burst out crying with as much sorrow as if it had been his own father.

It would take too long to go into greater detail on the other virtues of our dear departed and to recount the other difficulties, stresses, and labors he endured for the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

I will close by telling you that his funeral was extraordinary because of the presence of the Comte de Sales, Bishop of Geneva; a large number of the Canons of the cathedral; and the ordinands, who were meeting at that time. When members of the diocesan clergy heard of his death, many of them hastened to celebrate Holy Mass for the repose of his soul.

In the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, I have the honor to be, Monsieur, your unworthy son.

F. CHARLES,
1.s.C.M.

1596. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

March 20 [1653] ¹

Most Honored Father,

It is quite obvious that Our Lord is the sole general proprietor of the Congregation of the Mission, disposing in this way of the good subjects He places in it. He certainly has entrusted an excellent mission to the one He has taken from us. What can we say? Nothing, except that I think that this new arrival in heaven will draw down upon the rest of the Company great graces from God and that this universal sorrow will produce holy results in many souls.

Am I not truly bold, Most Honored Father, to dare to mingle my tears

¹The words added on the back of the original letter by Brother Ducournau lead the reader to believe that the letter dated from 1657. But in letters he wrote around March 20, 1657, Saint Vincent does not mention the death of any Missionary, and since, on March 20, 1653, he had just been informed of the death in Poland of Lambert aux Couteaux (January 31, 1653), the latter date seems preferable. Moreover, this decision can be substantiated from other letters of Saint Vincent (e.g., no. 1597), as well as one written by Saint Louise (cf. Spiritual Writings, L. 516, p. 415, in which she informs Sister Jeanne Lepeintre of Lambert aux Couteaux's death).
with your usual submission to the ways of Divine Providence, and my weakness with the strength God has given you to bear the generous portion of Our Lord's suffering, which He gives you so often? For love of Him, give nature what it needs for its relief and what you need in order to keep well.

I could not conceal from you, Most Honored Father, the extent of my sorrow, but your charity has taught me to love the Will of God, who is so just and merciful and whose goodness has made me, Most Honored Father, your most humble and very grateful daughter and servant.

L. de Marillac

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

1597. - TO EDMÉ MENESTRIER,1 IN AGEN

Paris, March 23, 1653

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever, and may His holy consolation be in all of us so as to bear lovingly the incomparable losses the Company has just suffered of two of its best members. One is M. Guérin, Superior of the Annecy house. The Bishop of Geneva has spoken to me very highly of him—with tears in his eyes and inexpressible sorrow in his heart, to use his own words. God had indeed always blessed the leadership and works of this servant of His to the satisfaction of those within the family and

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Letter 1597. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter. This letter, up to the part beginning "I am sending you a power of attorney for M. Pignay . . . ," was sent to all the houses of the Congregation of the Mission. Collet (op. cit., vol. I, p. 312) mentions three copies dated March 21, 22, and 26.

1Edmé Menestrier, born on June 16, 1618 in Rugney (Vosges), entered the Congregation of the Mission on September 10, 1640, took his vows in October 1646, and was ordained a priest in 1648. He spent the rest of his community life at the Agen Seminary, where he was Superior (1651-65, 1672-85), and procurator (1665-72).
outside of it. He died on the sixth of this month, after an illness of nine days.

I think I have already told you of the death of the late M. Gurlet, who died like a good Missionary. This happened a few days before, in the same house.

The other one about whom I have to tell you is good M. Lambert, who went to God at the end of January. He was sick for just three days, but the illness was so painful that he himself said he could not bear it long without dying, and that is what happened, after he had received all the sacraments from M. Desdames.

The confessor of the Queen of Poland has written me that he is mourned by everyone and that, according to human thinking, it is difficult to find a more perfect priest or one better suited for the work of God. He added that he could be described as *dilectus Deo et hominibus, cujus memoria in benedictione est.* He sought God alone, and never, in such a short time, had anyone won the esteem and good graces of the King and Queen more than he, nor had anyone been more universally esteemed, for wherever he went he spread the fragrance of his virtues. This is the opinion of that good doctor.

The Queen wrote me a long letter in her own hand about him. After expressing her satisfaction with his leadership and her regret that he was no longer with her, she concluded in the following words: "In short," she said, "unless you send me another M. Lambert, I do not know what I shall do." This shows what perfect confidence she had in him. He also persuaded her to donate about one hundred thousand livres more in alms than what she would have given, since the time he had the honor of approaching her, as our men have informed me. They have distributed a good part of

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2The body of Lambert aux Couteaux was interred before the main altar in the church in Sokolka but was exhumed in 1686 and transferred to the Holy Cross Church in Warsaw.

3Francois de Fleury.

4*Dear to God and men, whose memory is held in benediction.* Cf. Sir 45:1. (NAB)
them to the poor plague victims in Krakow and Warsaw, as well as to other sick persons and poor abandoned people.

I am sure, Monsieur, that the loss of this holy man, which grieves the entire Company, and even more the loss of all three together, affects you deeply. Mais quoi! the ways of God are adorable, and we must love their effects. This is what we are striving to do in our crushing grief in these events, confident that our dear deceased will be more effective in heaven than they might have been on earth. We are working on filling their places, particularly that of M. Lambert, because of the urgent needs of that kingdom, where people are very well disposed, and where the remaining workers are not strong enough. Please pray and have prayers offered for the living and the dead.

I am sending you a power of attorney for M. Pignay so he can get what is due him from the revenue on his priories, of which he is making a gift to you, up to the time when you took possession of them. There are also two letters to the same end.

I approve of your accepting the foundation of that good girl who died and made you responsible for her younger brother until he reaches the age of twenty-five. I also approve the celebration of two Masses a week in perpetuity and agree that the forty écus income she has given can meet these expenses. I wrote you the same thing a week ago.

I cordially embrace M. Fournier and am waiting for a letter for

5Nicolas Pignay, priest of the Rosigno diocese and Doctor of the Sorbonne. In his will, dated August 10, 1671 (Arch. Nat., M 213, no. 8), he is mentioned as "headmaster of the Collège de Justice" and "living at the Bons-Enfants."

6The document authorizing the union of the Priory of Saint-Pierre de Montmagnier, in the Cahors diocese, with the Agen Seminary, after the resignation of Nicolas Pignay, is in the Arch. Nat., S 6700.

7François Fournier, born in Laval (Mayenne) on February 2, 1625, entered the Congregation of the Mission on August 12, 1644, took his vows on September 24, 1646, and was ordained a priest on September 25, 1650. He was professor of theology at the Agen Seminary (1649-58) and in Cahors (1658-63), Secretary General of the Congregation (1663-77), and Assistant General from 1667 to April 4, 1677, the day he died. The life of Saint Vincent, commonly and correctly attributed to Abelly, was erroneously thought to have been written by Fournier. It is quite possible and even probable that, as Secretary General, he helped prepare the material, but
his father, in place of the one I lost. Please have the enclosed delivered to La Rose.8

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

VINCENT DEPAUL, i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Edme,9 Priest of the Mission, in Agen

1598. - ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC TO SAINT VINCENT

Mardi, March 26, 1653

Monsieur,

My most humble thanks for the advice you gave me on the Chancelade business and your offers to M. Sevin.1 He had informed the Bishop of Sarlat about it, from whom I learned of it. You saw in my last letter that going to Paris is out of the question. Oh, no! it must not even be considered. I dare to say also that, if I could do so (which I cannot), it should not be done because my presence would delay the business of my diocese more than it would advance it, and would, perhaps, ruin it.

I was very glad to hear of the success of the affair against the doctrine of the times.2 May God be forever blessed for it!

The Rector of Caussade and another unionist had me served a notice in which they say they had gone to Cahors, assuming that I had summoned

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that is the extent of his role. Brother Ducournau may well have contributed much more than he.

8House where Gerard Brin was Superior.

9Saint Vincent always called Menestrier “Monsieur Edme,” although he was not the only Edme in the company. He was, however, the only Menestrier!

Letter 1598. - Archives of the Diocese of Cahors, Alain de Solminihac collection, notebook, file 22, no. 36, copy made from the original.

1Brother of Nicolas Sevin, Bishop of Sarlat. Bishop Solminihac had designated the latter as his successor.

2Jansenism.
my clergy—which is false—to execute the decree of expediency and articles passed later, and they have registered a protest against me. I had them served another notice, wherein I order them to appear at my next synod for the execution of the said decree and articles. I wanted to inform you about this so that, if they write to you, you will know what it is all about. I am sending these acts to the agents.

Do me the kindness of praying to God for me and to believe that I am, Monsieur. . .

ALAIN,
Bishop of Cahors

1599. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

April 3, 1653

Most Honored Father,

I forgot to tell you that, two days before he became ill, the late M. Lambert did me the honor of informing me that our Sister Françoise,\(^1\) who is in Poland, was acting as the bond between the other two, who were not getting along well.

I also want to remind your charity to keep the Pastor of Saint-Laurent\(^2\) in mind when you get permission to have Holy Mass celebrated in the home for poor workers,\(^3\) so he will have no reason to complain.

I took the liberty yesterday of telling M. Le Gros\(^4\) that I thought it was too soon to have an outside door into the chapel. Do me the honor of informing me when you would like to speak to persons outside about the

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\(^1\)Françoise Douelle, who had arrived in Poland on September 7, 1652.

\(^2\)Guillaume de Lastoq was Pastor of Saint-Laurent Parish from 1628 to May 9, 1661, the day of his death. He was instrumental in the union of the Congregation of the Mission and the Priory of Saint-Lazare. He wrote a detailed account of this union, which Abelly incorporated into his work (op. cit., bk. I, chap. XXII, pp. 95ff.).

\(^3\)The Nom-de-Jésus hospice.

\(^4\)Jean-Baptiste Le Gros, Superior of the Petit Saint-Lazare, Saint-Charles Seminary, since 1652. He often helped with the spiritual care of the elderly of the Nom-de-Jésus.
house, and whether more women than men should be admitted so as to increase the number.

I beg God to do His holy Will in this and am, Most Honored Father, your poor daughter and most humble servant.

L. de M.

1600. - TO ANTONIO DRAGO, IN GENOA

My very dear Monsieur,

It was a very great joy for me to receive your letter, in which you tell me that you have finished your time in the seminary and wish to make vows in the Congregation. I certainly hope you will find in them a remedy against weakness and human inconstancy and will unite yourself more closely and perfectly to God.

You also disclose to me your intention of placing a restriction on your vows, in the sense that you may be free to dispose of your patrimony to your blood brothers or to other persons. In this regard, let me tell you frankly, Monsieur, that the mind of the Congregation is that those members who have benefices or patrimony should leave the administration and income of these goods to the Congregation during their lifetime, but on condition that they may dispose of them by will and testament to their relatives or to anyone else. If, however, you wish to do this right now and dispose of your property immediately as an alms to your relatives who, I suppose, are poor, I give my consent most willingly, provided you do so as soon as possible, lest these goods become a source of temptation later on.

Letter 1600. - The original signed letter was made available to Coste by Father Giovanni Tonello, C.M.; its present location is unknown.

1 Born in Aurigo, Albenga diocese (Italy), Antonio Drago was ordained a priest in 1645. He entered the Congregation of the Mission in Rome on March 30, 1651 and took his vows in Genoa in April 1653. He was Superior of the Genoa house (1666-70, 1677-80).
I thank God, who has given you such love for your vocation, and I hope it will increase daily for His glory and the salvation of souls.

Please keep me in your prayers, and I shall remember you daily in the most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

I am, my very dear Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

Paris, April 4, 1653

I am sending you the vow formula you requested, although Monsieur Étienne Blatiron has one in the house.

Addressed: Signor Antonio Drago, Priest of the Congregation of the Mission, in Genoa

1601. - TO GERARD BRIN, SUPERIOR, IN LA ROSE

Paris, April 6, 1653

Monsieur,

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

Yesterday we buried one of our good coadjutor Brothers, who had been sick for seven or eight months in one way or another. It pleased God to try him in various ways for the sanctification of his soul. This was obvious to us in the good use he made of his illness and his gentle, constant submission to the wisdom of God in this long, painful trial. His name was Brother Nicolas Perrin. He had served God in the Company for twelve or thirteen years and has

Letter 1601. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original signed letter.
left us many good examples of the practice of the virtues which
make a good Missionary. I recommend his soul and mine to your
prayers.

I say no more to you about our dear departed, Messieurs
Lambert, Guérin, and Gurlet, who died recently, because I have
written you in detail about them. I shall simply add that the more
time goes on, the more we find to say about them—at least the first
two, especially the incomparable M. Lambert.

I am waiting for news from you about the present condition of
M. Bimenet's mother, and whether you have given her the small
sum of money I asked you to send her.

You know well enough what the mind of Our Lord is. Therefore,
if you guide your family according to this spirit, you will guide it
by the Rules of the Mission, for we do not have any that are not in
keeping with that same spirit, with which I ask God to animate you.
If you were to consider only your own spirit in your present office,
you would have reason to fear. Since, however, it is Our Lord
Himself who guides Companies and will govern yours through
you, if you are truly submissive to Him and place all your trust in
His grace, you should also be at peace and consider that He will be
glorified by the care you take.

I do not know what to tell you about the difficulty in getting
your wheat from Clézac, except that I hope you will manage, using
the ways you indicated to me, or others with which God will inspire
you, especially if M. Bajoue, who got you into this situation, gets
involved.

If M. Ducasse expresses a desire to return to La Rose, it will be
well for you to take him back, but do not go after him so long as
he does not answer the request I made him to declare whether or
not he is one of us. On the one hand, he has pretended to be a

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1Étienne Bimenet, born in Moissac (Tarn-et-Garonne), entered the Congregation of the
Mission on October 6, 1645, at twenty-one years of age, took his vows on October 7, 1647, and
was ordained a priest during Lent of 1651.

2Commune in the canton of Jonzac (Charente-Maritime).
Missionary but, on the other, people have informed me of the contrary. ³

The large number of men God has chosen to take from us this year prevents us from sending you any relief for the present. That is why I ask you to do the best you can with the few workers you have. I hope God will give them double strength and you a double spirit to do His work without additional men.

Enclosed are several letters I am sending you, along with a renewed gift of my heart. I am, in the love of O[ur] L[ord], Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
I.s.C.M.

If you want to write to M. Ducasse to encourage him to help you, do so as coming from you, without letting on that I am aware of this.

At the bottom of the first page: Monsieur Brin

1602. - TO FRANÇOIS FOURNIER, IN AGEN

April 6, 1653

It is true that neither the late M. Gilles nor any other Missionary took part in the philosophical or theological debates that are held in the city, but it is not so easy to avoid them in small towns like Agen. I do not think you would be acting contrary to the spirit of the Company to go to them sometimes, when your Superiors think it appropriate. Nevertheless, they should not force you to do so but,

³There is no available documentation indicating that M. Ducasse entered the Congregation of the Mission.

Letter 1602. - Reg. 2, p. 82.
rather, leave you full liberty to go or not, as I do for my part. Even though I know how learned you are, you still might lack the necessary expertise in such circumstances.

1603. - TO NICOLAS TALEC, IN TRÉGUIER

April 9, 1653

I have received two letters from you. They give me reason to praise God, as I do, for your simplicity and candor in writing to me to express so sincerely what you have experienced interiorly. This has greatly consoled me. May God be pleased to allow you to progress more and more in these virtues!

I am not at all surprised that you have been tempted by the benefice. The devil had taken care not to lose this opportunity without making some effort to keep you there, foreseeing his loss in the action you have performed and the glory Our Lord will receive from it. Such a generous act of virtue, performed for love of this same Savior, and leaving you victorious, can only be followed by other victories, which will undoubtedly draw down special blessings on you and your works.

I tell you once again, Monsieur, that far from allowing the attack you have undergone to lessen my esteem and affection for you, I consider you now, on the contrary, one of our best Missionaries, who has been sorely tried; consequently, my heart cherishes you tenderly. Please have no doubt about this.

As for the pension, let me tell you, Monsieur, that Missionaries,
who must always tend to their perfection, must always also have no other possession than God. However, since it is proper to arrange with the Bishop of Tréguier, as to how to rid yourself of it, I think you should wait a little longer, especially since we will soon relieve you, with the help of God, of the main source of your temptation. This will give you the means of serving God with greater liberty and peace of mind, even though we must never expect not to be tempted, no matter what our state in life. It is certain that the servants of God will be tempted; He permits this to try them. Should it happen that you had no temptation, you would be a source of temptation to yourself. Therefore, we must expect it and, asking God for the grace never to give in to it, make up our minds to be firm in resisting. I expect this from the goodness of your soul, and I ask it of Our Lord for you, begging you to ask the same of Him for me and for the whole Company. I am, in His love, Monsieur, your . . .

Since writing this letter, I thought that the best way of getting rid of the pension, and the most effective way of having God alone as your portion, is to transfer it to the seminary, with the use of it during your lifetime. You can declare by the same act that this was your intention when you reserved to yourself the right to the benefice, in order to contribute by this means to the spiritual advancement of the diocesan clergy. I am writing to the Bishop of Tréguier about it. He will tell you in greater detail what has to be done in this matter. I think it is a good idea to keep it confidential.

1604. - TO JEAN-JACQUES OLIER

(Now 1453a.)

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2Balthazar Grangier de Liverdi.

Letter 1604. - This letter was numbered 1604 by Coste, but in vol. VIII, p. 628, he corrected its date from 1656 to 1632. For this reason, the editors have repositioned the letter.
April 13, 1653

We have recourse to the Duchess in all our needs. I most humbly entreat her to give us her good advice in the present situation.

Enclosed is a note the Attorney General has just written me about the matter of the butchers not selling meat. It is likely that the city will buy the cattle and sheep the merchants have taken to Poissy, which the butchers have been unwilling to buy because of the new tax on livestock, and they want to use our enclosure for feeding these cattle and sheep. This, Madame, would be very damaging to us. The whole enclosure is sown with wheat, oats, and grass for forage. All the walls are planted with espaliers—bons-chrétiens winter pears for the most part—and peaches. These trees are five years old and are laden with blossoms. We are counting on a fine crop this year.

So you see, Madame, what a loss this will be for us. In addition to the damages we will sustain from the loss of about a hundred acres of wheat and oats, the cattle will graze on the plants, chew them up and ruin them. The result will be that only the stumps will be left and will not grow for another three or four years. As for the peach trees, they will be a total loss.

I most humbly entreat you to give us your advice on this and to forgive me for interrupting your devotions on this holy day. But after all, this is an act of charity you are doing for your servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Letter 1605. - Reg. 1, p. 67 v, copy made from the original autograph letter.

1Easter Sunday.
Monsieur,

In celebrating Holy Mass, I offered your anxieties, groans, and tears to Our Lord. After the Consecration, I cast myself at His feet, asking Him to enlighten me. Having done this, I carefully considered what, at the hour of my death, I would have wanted to advise you to do. It seemed to me that, if I had to die at that very instant, I would have been consoled to have advised you to go to Tunis because of the good you can do there. On the contrary, I would have bitterly regretted having dissuaded you from that. This, in all sincerity, is my thought. However, you can go or not go.


1Martin Husson, born in 1623, was a lawyer in the Parlement of Paris and had been intendant in the De Gondi household since 1650. Saint Vincent had great respect for him, as is evident from the Saint's letters, especially nos. 1614 and 1638. Husson accepted the offer the Saint made him of the position of French Consul in Tunis and took up residence there in July 1653. While in Tunis he was an invaluable help and a faithful friend to Jean Le Vacher. Ignominiously expelled by the Bey in April 1657, he returned to France and became intendant for the Duchesse d'Aiguillon. At his death in December 1695, he left a reputation as a learned, pious, virtuous man and a celebrated author.

2If the date is accurate, it would seem that this text is, in fact, a letter. In writing to the Duchesse d'Aiguillon on the same date (no. 1605), Saint Vincent makes no mention of Husson. In his letter to her on May 14 (no. 1614), he introduces Husson to the Duchess, the benefactress of the Tunis mission. It seems likely to us that the Saint wrote to Husson on April 13, received his reply, and then introduced him to the Duchess.
My Lord,

Today I had the honor of going to see Madame Desd., as you requested. Immediately, she graciously offered to see the person on whom the Poissy affair depends. When she hears of the vacancy, she will make the request for the saintly soul in question, citing the testimony of Monsieur Vincent on the merit of the person. O My Lord, how fervently we are praying for the Sister working to reform that monastery; we pray also for conformity to the Will of God for the brother of that good soul who is sick!  

Letter 1606. - Reg. 1, f° 64 v°, copy made from the handwritten rough draft.


2This letter was written a few days after Easter Sunday 1653.

3Louise de Gondi, sister of Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi and Prioress of the Royal Abbey of Saint-Louis in Poissy (Yvelines). She had succeeded her aunt, Jeanne de Gondi, as Prioress. This election was contested for a long time, although its validity had been recognized by the King, by Father Sicenus, Master General of the Dominicans, and by the Pope himself. In 1625, Father Sicenus drew up new statutes which he had approved by the Holy See. Article 5 stated "that Mother Louise de Gondy, the present Prioress, is to remain in office, according to the apostolic concession granted her; but should she resign or die, a new Prioress is to be elected by the Sisters with active voice, according to the statutes and rules of the Council of Trent, and of our Constitutions and General Chapters. This Prioress, thus elected and confirmed by the Provincial, is to have a three-year term. This should be henceforth and perpetually observed with regard to the election and term of office of the Prioress."

Now that Louise de Gondi was seriously ill, steps were being taken to dispose matters in such a way that, after her, this office could pass to her sister, Marie de Dampierre. Father Marinis, Master General of the Dominicans, ended by giving his consent. On May 12, 1653 he issued the dispensation which Marie de Dampierre needed in order to be eligible. Contrary to all expectations, Louise de Gondi regained her health. She resigned her position in 1660 and died on August 29, 1661. (Cf. Edmond Borée, Histoire de la ville de Poissy [Paris: H. Champion, 1901]; cf. also, Bibl. Nat., Joly de Fleury collection, 1475.)
The recluse$^4$ is suffering from a toothache, but there is nothing to fear, thank God. M. Salmon$^5$ is in town; people say he was brought here for the express purpose of keeping M. de Buzay$^6$ company, who celebrated Holy Mass very devoutly on Easter. There are conflicting rumors about his release. Our Lord will do what is best for His glory and for the deliverance of the person in question.$^7$ I intend to have the honor of going to see you very soon, God willing. I cannot tell you, My Lord, how much I am looking forward to that blessed moment.$^8$

1607. - TO ÉTIENNE BLATIRON, SUPERIOR, IN GENOA

April 18, 1653

The order I sent to all our houses in the past—forbidding not taking in anyone who claims to be a member of the Company, unless he has a letter or a written obedience from the house he has left—can serve you as a guide in the case of those who admit they have left us, such as the man about whom you wrote to me. These persons are even less to be received than others. I do not mean that if they are in need we should not help them out in passing and do what we can for them, as you have done with that man; I strongly approve of that.

When someone leaves the Company of his own volition, we are not obliged to give him anything. But, if it is the Company that

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$^4$Cardinal de Ratz, imprisoned in the château of Vincennes by order of Mazarin in December 1652.
$^5$The copyist perhaps misread this; the original probably read “Lemoine” (cf. n. 7).
$^6$Cardinal de Ratz, Abbé de Buzay.
$^7$Cardinal de Ratz, Two articles by Régis de Chantelauze (cf. vol. VI of Oeuvres du Cardinal de Ratz [Paris: Hachette, 1857], pp. 478-79) shed some light on this letter. De Ratz had obtained permission not only to say Mass, but to go to confession to Lemoine, Doctor of the Sorbonne. During the celebration of his Mass, he was assisted by the Canon of the château, whose turn it was to celebrate Mass before him.
$^8$Father de Gondi had been exiled to his estate in Villepreux (Yvelines).

Letter 1607. - Reg. 2, p. 204.
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dismisses him, it is right to give him something, depending on how far he is from his native place.

1608. - JEAN LE VACHER TO SAINT VINCENT

[Tunis, between 1648 and 1660] ¹

Recently a very beautiful Valentinian young woman, twenty-five years of age, was brought to this town of Tunis. Turkish corsairs had kidnapped her near her town. She was sold in the public square. To buy her back, I had someone go as high as three hundred thirty écus, lent to me by merchants, but a despicable Moor, who kept bidding higher, got her because I did not have enough money. He already had two wives, and she made the third one. The poor creature cried for three days without stopping, and she could not be made to renounce her faith until she was robbed of her honor. These corsairs even captured some nuns in their convent near the sea, and they ran the same risk. Alas! if a few charitable persons would give something for similar occasions, they would certainly be well rewarded for it.

1609. - TO A CARTHUSIAN

Reverend Father,

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

I read your letter with respect and even with embarrassment because you are consulting the most human and least spiritual of men, whom everyone recognizes as such. Nevertheless, I shall not refrain from telling you my humble thoughts on what you propose to me—not by way of advice but out of the simple condescension

¹The length of Jean Le Vacher's stay in Tunis during Saint Vincent's lifetime.

Letter 1609. - Reg. 1, f° 21, copy made from the handwritten rough draft.
Our Lord wants us to practice toward our neighbor, or, better still, out of pure obedience.

I shall begin then by telling you, Reverend Father, that I was consoled to see your attraction toward perfect union with Our Lord, your fidelity in corresponding to that, the acts of endearment with which His Divine Goodness has often favored you, the great difficulties and trials you have encountered in the various states through which you have passed, and, lastly, the philtres of love you have for that great teacher of the spiritual life, Saint Teresa.

Now, even though that may be the case, Reverend Father, I think there is greater security in the common life of your holy Order and in your total submission to the direction of your Superior:

(1) because it is a maxim that a monk must aspire to be animated with the spirit of his Order; otherwise, he would be a monk in habit only and not in spirit. Also, since your holy Order is recognized as the most perfect one in the Church, and that, consequently, all the others can transfer to the Carthusians, you thus have a greater obligation to work at the acquisition of that spirit. And since the spirit of your holy Order consists in silence, solitude, and vocal prayer, animated by mental prayer, I think, Reverend Father, that it will be well for you to give yourself to Our Lord to enter into this spirit.

(2) It is a maxim that the Spirit of Our Lord acts gently and sweetly, and that of nature and the evil spirit acts, on the contrary, harshly and bitterly. Now, from all you tell me, it would seem that your ways are harsh and bitter and cause you to hold tenaciously to your own opinions in opposition to those of your Superiors. Furthermore, you are inclined to be that way by temperament.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I thank God for your safe arrival in Rome, and I ask Him to keep you well there, as He did on the way. I ask Him also to bless what you are doing there, one of the most important works that can be done for the Company, since it is a question of its consolidation. You will do well to start by making the seven churches to ask God for the success of this affair. Next, you should consult someone with broad experience, capable of seeing that it turns out well.

I also think it will be a good idea for you to discuss it with Bishop Massari, who honors us with his benevolence, so that, through his influence, you will be placed under the protection of the Sacred Congregation. In this way, you will be able to make them understand how varied, difficult, and extensive our works are. As a result, they may scare away, discourage, and expose to many risks those who devote themselves to them. Consequently, it is not easy for them to persevere, unless there is some bond to retain them in the Company.

What has happened to a few other Congregations, where the members had no obligation to obey, and left whenever they pleased, might also happen to us. If the Superior thought of preparing some of his men to be sent near or far for the glory of God, he had no control over things, because he did not have the right to make himself obeyed. So, if the Missionaries were free to do or not to do the good proposed to them, to go or stay wherever they were

Letter 1610. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.
1By the approval of the vows.
3Propaganda Fide, of which Dionigi Massari was Secretary.
most inclined, and to drop everything at their first whim, it would be almost impossible to function and to continue the good works that were begun, let alone to undertake any others, because many persons are so flighty that what they love today, tires them tomorrow.

Perhaps, when the Sacred Congregation is well informed of the need for our vows because of the inconvenience that might arise from not making them, it will do us the favor of using its influence with our Holy Father to obtain what we are requesting, since we are devoted in a special way to his service.

In the reports and the petition you present, be careful, however, not to call into doubt the permission we have to make the said vows, taking for granted our customary way of making them. Represent what was done in the past by certain other priests in Rome who were erected as a Congregation and used to make a vow of stability. They said that, after spending some time in the Congregation, many grow weary, are persuaded by relatives to leave or, under some other pretext, get themselves dispensed from their vows by the Ordinary. In this way, they may easily abandon their commitment, which is very prejudicial to the Congregation and its works. That is why the Congregation most humbly entreated our Holy Father to declare that no one but His Holiness and the Superior General of the Company may dispense a man from the said vows, to forbid the Bishops to dispense anyone from them in future, and to forbid those who have already made them—or will make them later on—to go to them [the Bishops] for that purpose, or to anyone else who has the authority to give a dispensation from vows. This was granted to the above-mentioned priests; I will look for the Bull and send it to you.

I hope also that, with the grace of God, your case will have a similar outcome. I know that Rome has a certain aversion for the religious state, and if they think we want to pass to that state, it will

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4 These words from "or to anyone else" are written in the Saint's hand.
be an obstacle to our plan. However, you can assure them of the contrary because our vows are simple and non-religious, and it is expressly stated in the Rule we have made on this point, and which the Archbishop has confirmed by the faculty the Holy See has granted him to approve our Rules, that we have no intention of separating ourselves from the ranks of the clergy nor to enter the religious state. Say that this year we have lost six or seven men from the Company because of the advice that some troublemaker gave them, stating that our vows are invalid, but while they thought they were valid, they persevered. How true it is that, by nature, we are very unstable when we have no bond to retain us.

As for me, by the grace of Our Lord, nothing will prevent me from being totally, as I now am, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
I.S.C.M. 7

Addressed: Monsieur Berthe, Priest of the Mission, in Rome

1611. - TO A SUPERIOR

Continue, Monsieur, to be very docile to the guidance of God and to conform your own way of acting to that of Our Lord. He was always humble, gentle, attentive, and most accommodating to the moods and weaknesses of others, having in view the glory of

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On October 19, 1641 Jean-François de Gondi approved the vows to be taken in the Congregation of the Mission. (Cf. vol. XIII, no. 87.)

The preceding lines from "and it is expressly stated in the Rule" are in the Saint's handwriting.

Brother Ducournau, who wrote this letter, as Saint Vincent's secretary, added the following postscript after the signature: "Forgive a Gascon for stealing this little space to offer you his obedience and to recommend himself to your prayers. Ducournau."

His Father and the welfare of souls in general and in particular.

Endure patiently with Him work, opposition, poverty, and all the upsets of mind and body in yourself and in others. By these means, O Dieu! Monsieur, you will draw down riches on your soul and blessings on your work, and I venture to say you will draw persons to God!

1612. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION, IN GENOA

May 2, 1653

We must always observe the maxim practiced in our Congregation of not hearing in our houses the confessions of persons outside the Company who do not reside there. If such a need exists, as you tell me is the case with regard to French persons in Genoa, you can go to the parish church to hear them or to some other one, with the permission of the Pastor or Superior. But you are not allowed to hear the confessions of people living in the town or the region, either in your own chapel or elsewhere, except during retreats and missions, because there is no lack of other confessors who can hear them, as there is for the French who do not speak Italian.

1613. - TO EMERAND BAJOUE, IN LORM

Paris, May 3, 1653

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
Recently I wrote you by way of Cahors because I could not

1This priest was acting as Superior during M. Blatiron's absence.

remember your address in Montauban. If M. Cuissot received my packet and delivered my letter to you, you learned two things from it, one of which is the inestimable loss the Company has suffered in the deaths of M. Lambert, M. Gurlet, and M. Guérin, not to mention Brother Nicolas Perrin, who has since died. I recommend all these good souls to your prayers.

The second thing is that I have the same sentiments of esteem and affection for you as I had in the past. Since you have given me reason to feel this way, you likewise give me reason to keep and increase these sentiments. I have no difficulty in doing so because I am naturally inclined to this, knowing your goodness, the graces God has given you, and your attachment to the Company, and to me in particular.

I think I expressed this to you in my last letter, and I assure you of it in this one, especially since, in your letter of April 12, as in the previous ones, you do not seem to be convinced of this truth, although I am not aware of having deliberately done, said, or thought anything to the contrary. Please let me know, Monsieur, what has given rise to your distress, for, if I am at fault, it was not intentional.

In my opinion, however, here is what it is: persons who love very much, easily take offense at trifles. No doubt your excessive affection for me makes you a little diffident about mine. But there is no harm done; I hope you will soon be over this slight jealousy and be convinced that nothing can change the genuine affection Our Lord has given me for you.

Please suspend the resignation you wish to make of Notre-Dame-de-Lorm and the parish in Saint-Aignan,¹ and let me know why you are pressuring me about this, so I can inform the person we will appoint for you. M. Admirault is not at all suitable because his health is very poor, so we cannot give him anything to do except

¹ Commune in the district of Casselsamins (Tarn-et-Garonne).
to assist the procurator of the Collège des Bons-Enfants. The least exertion causes him to spit up blood, and we could not send him there except at great risk to his life. We do not think he will last long, even resting as he is now doing.

Please let me know also what you would like M. Barry to do there, for he is not suitable for everything. He is also ailing with a condition he has had for three or four years. True, he could be given certain work that he might do very well; that is why I am asking you how you want to use him.

We have already assigned M. Lièbe to teach in the Montech Seminary, and this is the second time he has left Richelieu to go there. The first time, he returned from Poitiers because he learned there that the roads had been closed by soldiers. After that, he went directly to Saintes and wrote me from there that he was waiting for an opportunity to leave for Bordeaux and then for Montauban. I hope, then, that you will soon be seeing him, unless he has come up against some major obstacles.

I praise God for the steps being taken to get that seminary started and for the favor He has allowed you to find with M. d'Agan, who is so zealous about this good work and has such good will toward the Company. I take the liberty of thanking him in the letter I am sending with this one.

M. Cuisssot will be sure to give you a copy of the act of establishment for Cahors, if you ask him. If not, I shall send you one from here. However, I think it is safer to follow the one for

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2François-Ignace Lièbe, born in Arras on April 26, 1623, entered the Congregation of the Mission on May 12, 1641, took his vows in Richelieu on April 7, 1644, and was ordained a priest in June 1647. He was Superior at the Collège des Bons-Enfants (1650-51) and Notre-Dame-de-Lorn (1654-56). He was then placed in Richelieu; from there he left the Company in 1657.

3Principal canton town of Tarn-et-Garonne. (Cf. no. 1584, n. 13.)

4Jean d'Agan, Vicar-General, Canon of the collegiate church of Saint-Étienne de Tescou, and Pastor of Montech. He became second Archdeacon of the Montauban cathedral and Dean of the collegiate church.
Saintes because all the formalities have been observed for the union of the rectorship.

The rest of your letter requires no other reply except gratitude to God for your fine leadership. I ask Him to be Himself His thanks for this and to continue to bless you and, through you, your family and the people.

Ten or twelve of us are going to open four or five missions at the same time, on the occasion of the Jubilee in this diocese. Notice that I include myself in the number; should I not be doing something?

Everything here is going fairly well, thank God. I hope to write you more often after this Jubilee. Do the same, and believe that I am, in the love of O[ur] L[ord], Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

I embrace M. Bajoue with all the esteem and affection due to a true servant of Our Lord, and I send him greetings, prostrate at his feet and those of the family.⁵

Addressed: Monsieur Bajoue, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Notre-Dame-de-Lorm, in Lorm

1614. - TO THE DUCHESSE D'AIGUILLON

Paris, May 14, 1653

The bearer of this letter is Monsieur Husson, that fine lawyer from Montmirail, whom I had the honor to recommend to you for

⁵The postscript was in Saint Vincent's own handwriting.

Letter 1614. - Collection for the process of beatification.
the consulate of Tunis. I was already aware that he was one of the most virtuous men of his time, but I did not know he was such an intelligent, skillful negotiator in important affairs. He has just worked wonders in Montmirail in connection with a garrison stationed in that town, where the inhabitants held it down, and six cavalrymen were killed in the surrounding area. The magistrates left town, and only Monsieur Husson upheld the inhabitants, making all the arrangements with the colonel and with the commissioner sent there on behalf of the King. In a word, Madame, I venture to say to you that he is a man whom Our Lord has given to you and to the poor slaves and will serve well those poor afflicted persons, your dear children.

I wonder if a commission from the King will be needed for that, or will it suffice to get a power of attorney from Monsieur Le Gros, a priest of our Company? The contract for the office of Consul was drawn up in his name. I most humbly entreat you to do, as soon as possible, whatever will have to be done in this matter.

I am going to continue the mission of Sevran, four leagues from here, as I have announced. I doubt if I can leave it on Friday to go to the meeting. Please make my excuses to the assembly, Madame. I think I would offend God if I did not do all in my power for the poor country people on the occasion of this Jubilee.¹

There is a certain disadvantage in leaving Monsieur Husson here very long because of his good mother and father, who will do their utmost to prevent him from carrying out this generous plan. I am

¹The Duchesse d'Alguillon was anxious about the Saint's health. On May 20 she wrote to Antoine Portal: “I cannot get over the fact that Monsieur Portal and the other gentlemen of Saint-Lazare would let Monsieur Vincent, at his age, go to work in the country in this very hot weather, and for such a long time in the sun and open air. I think his life is too precious and too useful for the Church and his Company to allow him to give so unapairgly of himself. Permit me to implore them to prevent him from doing so. I ask that they forgive me for telling them that they are obliged in conscience to go and bring him back and that there are many complaints against them for taking so little care of him. People say they do not realize what a treasure God has entrusted to them and what a great loss they would suffer. I am too much their servant and the servant of the Company to fail to give them this advice.” (Deposition of Brother Pierre Chollier at the process of beatification.)
going to buy twelve aunes\(^2\) of scarlet cloth as presents for the Dey and for the Pasha of Tunis.

We went to a meeting about the Indies today. Things seem to be progressing little by little. Your charity was highly commended at it.

Good evening, Madame. I ask Our Lord to preserve you and to sanctify your soul more and more. I am, in His love, Madame, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
is.C.M.

Addressed: The Duchesse d’Aiguillon

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1615. - ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC TO SAINT VINCENT

Merci, May 17, 1653

Monsieur,

Your constant goodness to me, manifested in all circumstances, obliges me to inform you of the important things going on in my diocese. I wrote you two years ago about the disturbances caused by the clergy during my synod. In the copy of the letter I am writing to our Prelates in Paris, you will see the ones caused by the hidden unionists at the synod I just held. I say “hidden” because they did not come forth at the proceedings, although they were united with the others and acted together with them. I was fairly well aware of this, but my great desire to preserve union and peace between my cathedral chapter and me made me close my eyes to it, hoping thereby to win these people over by kindness.

However, all that was to no avail, even though I treated them as they might have desired, and more so. Everyone has criticized me for this, since they do not acknowledge one another anymore. Because of the way I acted toward them, they became even more obdurate, insulting me publicly and

\(^2\)An aune equals one ell or forty-five inches.

Letter 1615. - Archives of the Diocese of Cahors, Alain de Solminihac collection, notebook, file 22, no. 40, copy made from the original.
offending me in whatever way they could. The decree of the council was
implemented in an edifying manner in our synod; everything else was as
disorderly and scandalous as could be.

I am sending you the reply I gave when the article concerning the eight
hundred livres was read, after having your letter read on this subject.

When you see M. de la Marguerie, please show him the copy for the
Prelates and assure him of my services. I am so busy that I cannot write
to him. I sent the representatives of the clergy the statement I drew up
concerning the implementation of the said decree and articles upon which
you and he agreed. With his consent I have made the exchange of the
chapel of ease of Borërè in perpetuity for a small parish, and gave him,
for the latter, one of the most capable, virtuous priests in my diocese.

Father Paulin's death will delay the two matters he had been handling.
The Bishop of Sarlat promised me he would write about them to the person
replacing him, at least for the Chancelade business. I told him to write
about the other one also. He is being urged to write to the Cardinal about
it, so he tells me, but I would not dare advise him to do so, without your
advice. Please give it to us on the above-mentioned matter and, if you are
on familiar terms with the King's confessor, recommend these two affairs
to him. Believe that I am, Monsieur . . .

ALAIN,
Bishop of Cahors

1616. - TO MATHURIN GENTIL, IN LE MANS

Paris, May 24, 1653

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

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1Elie Laisme de la Marguerie.
2Commune in the district of Sarlat (Dordogne).
3Charles Paulin, S.J., the King's confessor, who had died on April 12.
4Jules Cardinal Mazarin.
5Jacques Dinet, S.J., replaced Charles Paulin.

Letter 1616. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.
I am glad that the absence of M. Lucas gives me the opportunity to embrace you in spirit and to recommend myself to your prayers, as I now do, with all possible affection.

Please give me some news of your health and the state of the family, whom I greet warmly. As far as I know, we are well here and everywhere else, thank God, and, by His mercy, everything is going fairly well in all our houses. All are being blessed in their work. For some time now, we have been giving four or five missions at the same time; I myself have given one together with two or three of our priests. I returned from it yesterday and shall perhaps go back for another one.

Please pray for the success of these missions, and send the enclosed letters to M. Lucas and M. Gicquel as soon as possible.

I am, in O[ur] L[ord], Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

At the bottom of the first page: Monsieur Gentil

1617. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Tuesday evening [After July 1639] ¹

If you can come to the parlor tomorrow after dinner and are ready for confession, I shall try to be there, although I am supposed to be purged tomorrow;² otherwise, it will be Thursday morning.

You have good reason to honor the various times of sadness and

¹Before July 1639 the words "Saint-Lazare, Tuesday evening" would have been placed at the end of the letter and not at the beginning.

²The original text had read: "although I must take tomorrow to be purged."
distress of Our Lord in His solitude and the horrible temptations
He had to endure. This should be a consolation to you.

I recommend myself to your prayers and am y[our]... .

V. D.

1618. - ÉTIENNE BLATIRON TO SAINT VINCENT

[Between 1645 and 1657] ¹

The pastors left last Friday, full of fervor and very edified. They say that
God has granted them wonderful graces, and the graces are, in fact, great.
I can say that I have never seen such dispositions nor so many tears shed.
I cannot even think about this without amazement and admiration. They
were so moved that they were making public confessions. When one of
them saw how freely and generously each opened his heart, he said: “We
are here in the valley of Jehoshaphat.” They did so, as I said, with an
abundance of tears in public and in private. These are the effects of an
all-powerful grace.

But it is no wonder that God has been so generous to persons who were
very faithful to the little regulation and especially to silence! I saw thirty
of them together in a room, waiting for me, and no one ventured to utter
a single word to another.

Right now we still have four retreatants, including a Jewish man who
wants to become a Christian and who has come from Pisa specifically for
this purpose. His Eminence sent him to us.

There is a senator who wanted to make a good general confession but
could not leave public affairs to make the retreat. He has chosen these
three holidays for it and comes twice a day to the house to talk with me
about making his general confession. He has begun it very fervently, with
deep sentiments of contrition. I hope he will finish it in the same way.

This evening we are expecting six or seven priests, who are supposed
to be coming to begin retreat. They are planning to start a mission in town,
as we do in the country. I ask your charity to recommend the matter to
God.

³Saint Louise was probably making her retreat.


¹The period during which Étienne Blatiron was in Genoa.
May 29, 1653

On the one hand, your letter consoled me greatly, when I saw how candidly you explained what is going on within you. On the other hand, it caused me the same distress Saint Bernard once felt when one of his monks, under pretext of greater regularity, wanted to leave his vocation to transfer to another Order. That Father told him that this was a temptation and that the evil spirit would like nothing better than this change. The devil was well aware that, if he could lure him away from the first state, it would be easy for him to make him leave the second, and then to plunge him into a disorderly life, which is exactly what happened. What I can tell you, dear Brother, is that, if you do not practice continence in the Mission, you will not do so anywhere in the world; of that I can assure you.

So, be careful that there is no fickleness in your desire for a change. If this is the case, the remedy, after prayer, which is necessary in all our needs, would be to consider that no state on earth does not experience times of repugnance and sometimes of desires to transfer to another. After reflecting on this, consider that, since God has called you to your present state, the grace of your salvation is attached to it, which He might deny you in another place where He does not want you to be.

The second remedy against temptations of the flesh is to avoid contacting and seeing the persons who arouse them, and, as soon as they occur, to reveal them to your director, who will give you other remedies. The one I advise for you again is to place your trust firmly in Our Lord and the assistance of the Immaculate Virgin, His mother. I recommend you to them with all my heart.


"The letter is addressed to "a coadjutor Brother of the Company, who wanted to become a Carthusian, thinking he would be safe there from temptations of the flesh."
1620. - TO A VICAR-GENERAL OF CHARTRES

May 29, 1653

Monsieur,

I have replied to the Queen that it was true that . . . had signed the books by Jansenius and De la Fréquente Communion,1 but he did so without reading them because he did not have the time, and he did so in good faith. Her Majesty's reply to that was to ask if one could sign books without reading them. I said that . . . the late Bishop of . . . had assured me he had signed the book, De la Fréquente Communion without reading it.

1621. - TO SISTER CÉCILE ANGIBOUST,1 IN ANGERS

Paris, May 30, 1653

My good Sister,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am writing to recommend myself to your prayers and to those of our Sisters, and to tell you how consoled I am by the good things I hear about you and your leadership. I think God is greatly glorified by it and everyone is satisfied. I ask Our Lord to continue to bless and strengthen you in your heavy labors. You should contribute to this by taking good care of your health, which I ask you to do. In the meantime, I thank Him for all the graces He is granting you.

Another reason for which I am writing to you is to ask you to

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1Work of Antoine Arnauld.


1Cf. no. 1405, n. 3.
send me some information about a certain M. Maillard, chaplain in your hospital—whether he is a good priest, whether he is truly zealous with regard to the poor and the salvation of the neighbor, the status of his father, whether they have a good reputation, and their usual state of health. If you are not well enough acquainted with them to know these things, you could find out unobtrusively, without letting on or telling anyone whomsoever that I wrote to you about this.

Mademoiselle Le Gras is well, and God continues to bless your Little Company.

I am, in the love of Our Lord, my good Sister, your affectionate servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL, i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Sister Cécile, Daughter of Charity and Servant of the Sick Poor of the Angers Hospital, in Angers

1622. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

June 4, 1653

In reply to what you inform me, let me say first of all that you should not be surprised if you sometimes feel impatient hearing confessions, and vain in your sermons and in your studies. You are a man and, consequently, a sinner. However, you are exaggerating these things a little, for there is a difference between the act, the

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2 In a letter to Abbé de Vaux the following November 12, Saint Louise also had questions about the chaplain in Angers: "I beg you most humbly to be kind enough to inquire about Monsieur Maillard. I am afraid that he is a little too hasty in determining the need for Sisters to leave the Company for their salvation." *Spiritual Writings*, L. 382, p. 434.

consent, and the temptation, and you are mistaking one for the other. If you are tempted to pride in your sermons, you do not, however, preach for this reason. When you are inclined to impatience in the confessional, even if, by chance, you consent to it in some way, it does not follow that you act on it. As for eating, have no scruple about the desires this stimulates in you, nor think you are going to excess in that regard; I have been informed of the contrary. Speaking of that, I ask you to eat better than you have been doing.

In the second place, it does not seem to me that your thought of becoming a Capuchin comes from God: (1) because you are in another state, where His Providence has placed you; (2) because your work in the Company is being blessed; (3) because the Capuchin Order requires great submission of judgment and will and greater flexibility with regard to the opinions of others than perhaps you and I possess; (4) you have no obligation to transfer to this religious Order: what you said to Saint Francis is not a vow but an expression of the impulse you felt to give yourself to him. Even if you had promised him to become one of his friars, that would not be a vow because vows are made to God and not to the saints. Besides, Monsieur, you know that vows are made only after long, mature deliberation and not on a sudden impulse like the one you had.

I see another sign causing me to think that God is not calling you to the Capuchins; namely, that the impulses which come to you disturb and upset you because of their violence, which is usually the case with those the evil spirit suggests. The inspirations of God, on the contrary, are gentle and peaceful, inclining us lovingly toward the good He desires of us.

For all these reasons, Monsieur, you would do well to give yourself to God to persevere in the vocation in which you are now, especially since you can practice the same virtues in it as with the Capuchins, and at least as much mortification of body and mind. If they take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, you can do the same in the Company; if they preach and hear confessions, as
they are beginning to do in several places, is not that what you are doing, thank God? So, I see nothing they do which you cannot do with us, except for the rough habit and bare feet. I say all this without making any comparison between this insignificant Company and that great, holy Order.

If you say that by serving your neighbor you are not working out your salvation, you must not believe that but be convinced of the contrary, since it is the best means we have to attain our end, which is God, and to draw others to Him, following the same ways Our Lord and the Apostles observed.

1623. - TO A SEMINARY DIRECTOR

I praise God for the number of priests the Bishop of... is sending you. You will have plenty of them if you take the trouble to form them in the true spirit of their state, which consists especially in the interior life and the practice of prayer and the virtues. It is not enough to teach them chant, ceremonies, and a little moral theology; what is important is to form them to solid piety and devotion. To do that, Monsieur, we must be the first to be filled with the above, for it would be almost useless to instruct them on these things without giving the example. We must be full reservoirs in order to let our water spill out without becoming empty, and we must possess the spirit with which we want them to be animated, for no one can give what he does not have.

So, let us ask this earnestly of Our Lord and give ourselves to Him to study how to conform our leadership and actions to His. Then your seminary will diffuse sweetness within the diocese and outside of it, causing it to increase in number and blessings. On the contrary, trying to act as masters with those under our care, or to neglect or disedify them, would be a great hindrance to that good.
This would happen if we were too anxious to be sophisticated, well-treated, esteemed, and honored, to amuse and spare ourselves and have too much contact with people outside.

We must be firm but not rough in our guidance and avoid an insipid kind of meekness, which is ineffective. We will learn from Our Lord how our meekness should always be accompanied by humility and grace so as to attract hearts to Him and not cause anyone to turn away from Him.

1624. - TO NICOLAS GUILLOT, IN WARSAW

Paris, June 6, 1653

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

A week ago I received three of your letters, dated April 14 and 22, and May 4. Only God knows the joy they gave me on reading such good things, especially how well you and our Brother are keeping, living together in the house where the Company is to be established, the growth in this foundation through the latest gift from the Queen of a house and garden, her continued benevolence, and the consequences of her royal charity for all of us and for the Daughters of Charity. I rejoice also at Their Majesties’ good health, as well as for God’s blessings on their armies, their forthcoming return to Warsaw, the disappearance of the plague in that town, and your holy work there. In a word, I rejoice in the good you are doing there and all that you tell me good Brother Posny and our Sisters are doing.

These are many important reasons for thanking God, as I do, with all possible gratitude. I have also received rather good news

Letter 1624. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, seventeenth or eighteenth century copy.
from our men in Sokółka, with whom you say you would like to be reunited; I certainly have no doubt about that. It is consoling and sometimes beneficial to be with those whom we love, but since you love the Will of God above all else, you will acquiesce willingly in this separation, since it is for His glory, and you have the means of promoting it in different places at the same time. If you were together, you would have to go your separate ways for such a good purpose, which must be our common ambition. Now that you are, in fact, separated, you are still united by special affection and are present in spirit by the grace of vocation. This binds all of us to God and causes us to pursue only what is most pleasing in His eyes and most in conformity with the progress of each individual.

The Daughters of Charity do not have any special directory. You can familiarize yourself well with their Rules and practices in order to be able to guide them as best you can in their observance of them, especially to love one another, to live in peace, and to have a deep, tender love for God and an ardent desire to serve and console the poor.

It could be that our establishment will be a long, drawn out affair, but this will allow it to become more deeply rooted in the esteem and affection of everyone. That is why we must accept this delay and even be prepared for a refusal, knowing that God in His goodness will permit this only for a greater good.

God be praised, Monsieur, for the distaste He gives you for the world! Doubtless, He wants to draw you closer to Him and to possess you completely so that you may be a worthy instrument in His hand to carry out His plans. He seems to have great ones for the exaltation of our holy religion in that kingdom where you now are and, consequently, for you, that you may contribute to the

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1 A small village in the Palatinate of Grodno [before the eighteenth century partitions of Poland], where Guillaume Deeamste and Stanisław Kazimierz Zelazewski had taken up residence. Today it is a city in eastern Poland. The Priests of the Mission had a benefice there given by the King.
sanctification of the clergy and the people, since He has inclined the King and Queen to contribute to this, as they do in so many ways.

The Daughters of Sainte-Marie\(^2\) will soon be leaving and will do great good, with the help of God. M. Ozenne will leave with them, if he does not go ahead of them. He is a zealous, detached man of God, with a talent for leadership and for winning hearts within the Company and outside of it. If, after these beautiful signs of hope, you were thinking of coming back here, how could you honestly say that you abhor the world and are well aware of its vanities and miseries? Please, Monsieur, allow yourself to be moved with compassion for Poland, where ignorance, sin, and so many heresies have established their thrones. You have been assigned there to try to destroy them. Oh! what a grace, Monsieur, to have been chosen by God for such a holy undertaking! How do we know what God intends to do? The fact remains that it is no small thing for you to offer yourself to Him for that purpose, and in patience to allow God's Providence to bring you back here or to call you elsewhere, without trying to run ahead of Him. The blessing He has given to your work in Warsaw should encourage you to go on. I ask Him to give you an ever greater participation in His Spirit and total abandonment to His guidance.

Our little news is that we have no news. Everything is going along as usual here. Saint-Charles Seminary has reopened, for the troubles had forced us to close. The Bons-Enfants Seminary is full. Monsieur Cornuel is Superior there, and Monsieur Goblet is Superior of the former. M. Alméras is director of the seminary in this house and has charge of the ordination exercises now in progress here. Most of our houses are working very effectively, even the ones in Italy.

Enclosed is a letter someone is writing you from Auxerre, along

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\(^2\)The Visitation Nuns.
with the renewed gift of my heart to yours, which I cherish tenderly. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
I.s.C.M.

1625. - ÉTIENNE BLATIRON TO SAINT VINCENT

[Between 1645 and 1657] ¹

Our ordination retreat was only average in number but abounding in blessings, since God bestowed the fullness of His grace upon it. The regulations were observed exactly—profound silence at all the exercises, and with such moderation, especially during meals, that it seemed as if the ordinands had spent their whole lives in our house. But the grace of God was even more evident in prayer and in the conferences which followed.

I do not think anyone could perform this holy exercise more fervently than they did. Some of them were seen to dissolve into tears at the time of prayer and even during the conference on prayer. Others thanked God aloud both for granting them the grace of making the retreat and for the enlightenment they received there to understand better the state they were embracing, and what they had to do to correspond to God’s plan by living as true priests.

As one, among others, was saying good-bye to me at the end of the retreat, he said to me in a voice broken by sobs—which did not prevent him from expressing himself well—that he was asking God to send him a thousand deaths rather than ever allow him to offend Him. Yesterday, when I reported that to the Archbishop, Cardinal Durazzo, he began to weep with joy and satisfaction; his heart could not contain his feelings for the blessings God had poured down upon this ordination retreat.

¹The period during which Étienne Blatiron was in Genoa.

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Our very dear Most Honored Father, you would be only too right to accuse us of negligence in writing to you. We most humbly ask your pardon for this and also for our boldness in writing to you about our present state.

There are seventeen people with us, two of whom are mother and daughter. The Queen forbids them to go out unless one of us is with them. We would not dare to tell you the humiliations we have suffered from this. We do not know what kind of a life they have led.

We also have two boys around five years of age. We have raised all sorts of objections to this, saying that our Rules forbid us to have boys and girls together. We have also had a certain warning from God about one of the two boys and a little girl, and about the bad habits existing in this country.

Some of the people with us have ringworm; we do not dare mention the disease the others have. We are not permitted to care for such persons in France, but here we very easily take them into our house. Since our return to Warsaw, the only sick poor person we found is a woman, whom we hospitalized and who died. When one of the Queen’s first ladies-in-waiting saw how little we had to do and the small number of poor, she told us that if this bothered us the Queen in her goodness and charity would send us back, without saying that it bothered us. We must not be annoyed nor upset, since we have come through obedience.

We beg you, prostrate at your feet, to do us the charity of informing us what we should do, if matters reach this point.

A week ago, a person with whom we had come from France returned from the Court. He told us that someone, who claimed to be a good friend of ours and who knew that we had come together, told him that we could leave together as well, knowing that the person was going back to France.

Our greatest trial is having no work to do. This certainly gives us reason
to humble ourselves and to reflect often on the good advice you gave us when we were leaving you, particularly regarding humility, charity, and union, especially among the three of us. We hope God will grant us the grace to observe it until death. We can truthfully say that we are so closely united that the three of us are as one.

We recommend ourselves to your Holy Sacrifices and prayers, as well as to those of Monsieur Portail and the whole Community. We ask God to keep us always in His holy love. We realize that it is good to be close to the source.

In closing, we greet you at the feet of Our Lord Jesus Christ crucified, and remain forever, Monsieur, your most humble and affectionate daughters and servants.

THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY
unworthy Servants of the Poor

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

1627. - TO MARC COGÔEE, IN SEDAN

Paris, June 11, 1653

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Besides the usual pressure of business here, which leaves me no time to write to you often, I have made several journeys to the rural areas to announce three or four missions there, to continue one of them, and to visit others. This is what has prevented me from replying sooner to your letters.

Since you are pressed for money and we have none, we shall try to find six hundred livres. Get them from some merchant and draw

Letter 1627. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.
a letter of exchange on us, payable at the latest date you can get; we will pay it exactly when it falls due.

I praise God for the satisfaction M. Jeandé\(^1\) is giving you. If you cannot manage without the preacher you are requesting, we shall make an effort to let you have one.

It is a great pity that Sedan has no hospital and is unwilling to designate a house to shelter the sick poor who are lying in the street. As for me, Monsieur, I see no remedy for that, and Mademoiselle Le Gras has no Sisters to send to Charleville. Furthermore, I do not think they are asking for them any longer.

I sent your letter to the Abbot\(^2\) at Saint-Méen and am awaiting the reply. I would be delighted to see you and embrace you, if your absence from Sedan would not cause several problems, as it would. Please be patient until God gives you an opportunity to leave your post conveniently.

As for eating at the Governor's residence, please abide by what I told you about that.

I forgot to speak at our meeting\(^3\) about that good girl who wants to convert, provided a position can be found for her in Paris. I shall propose this at the first opportunity, with the help of God, because I personally know of nowhere to place her.

If the private correspondence between M. Regnault and Sirven\(^4\) is a fact and you are sure about it, it would be a good idea for you to ask that Brother gently why he has not shown you the letters. However, if this is only a suspicion, you would do well not to mention it to him.

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\(^1\) Claude Jeandé, born in Blénod-lès-Toul (Meurthe-et-Moselle), was ordained a priest on March 27, 1632, entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 3, 1647, at thirty-eight years of age, and took his vows in Sedan on September 9, 1654, in the presence of M. Portail.

\(^2\) René-Louis de Fiquelmont, Abbot of Mouzon.

\(^3\) The meeting of the Ladies of Charity.

\(^4\) Pierre Sirven, coadjutor Brother, born in Verdun-sur-Garonne (Tarn-et-Garonne), entered the Congregation of the Mission on March 12, 1640, took his vows on January 1, 1643, and died in Sedan on July 12, 1660. His outstanding qualities had earned the confidence of the Bishop of Montauban. He was also highly esteemed by Saint Vincent, who considered him "the living Rule of the Company; a wise, intelligent man, benevolent toward everyone."
As for the young man from Chémery, about whom you wrote to me regarding his acceptance into the Company, since it is the father presenting the son, there is reason to think he is doing so only to unburden his family of him. Nevertheless, if you think he may be called by God, and he is healthy and determined to work at anything, send him to me.

Please continue to hold the obedience on the three usual days, even though you may have nothing to recommend. Too much time would elapse from one Saturday to the next.

Since M. Regnault has a sister who is a nun in Charleville, I think it is only to her or for her that he is writing there.

I do not know of any Canon willing to exchange his canonry, nor of any other good priest who would not raise some objection to leaving Paris, to go and work in the vicinity of Sedan. Therefore, Monsieur, I feel absolutely helpless to be of service to the Dean in the way you and he would wish.

I send cordial greetings to your dear family. We are fairly well here, and everything is as usual. I think the same is true for the other houses. May God be pleased to continue to bless you!

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

VINCENT DEPAUL,

I was given the report I am sending you, but I do not know what to do for the poor children mentioned in it. If you can do anything for them, fine; I shall be very pleased. It will be a consolation for me to receive letters from you every month.

Addressed: Monsieur Coglée, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Sedan, in Sedan

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5Commune in the district of Sedan (Ardennes).
6A meeting of the members of the Community on a specified day to receive, if need be, the recommendations of the Superior.
7This last sentence is in the Saint's handwriting.
1628. - TO JACQUES LE SOUDIER, SUPERIOR, IN CRÉCY

June 14, 1653

I think I forgot to tell you before you left that it is one of the maxims of the Company not to associate with nuns by hearing their confessions, preaching, or directing them in any way, and we should even visit them as little as possible. Since, Monsieur, there are nuns in Crécy who might want you or some other member of the family to render these kinds of services, I ask you to refuse absolutely and have no scruple about it, especially since our work is with the poor people of rural areas, and those nuns have other good priests to assist them.

You might say to me that I do the opposite of what I am advising you. God knows that I have done my utmost to be freed of the Visitation nuns; I have never been able to obtain this from my Prelate, although I have done everything possible. Rest assured that I will withdraw from this as soon as I can. In the meantime, please take the advice I am giving you and observe it exactly.¹

I hope you will make good use of what you are suffering because of the Pastor. Let me say in this regard that I would not try to justify him to those who are criticizing him, so as not to give them any cause to think we are condoning his faults, nor would I try to get him to visit you or to go often to your house. However, if he does arrive, I would not refuse to welcome him with the same cordiality as in the past.

¹The first fragment ends here.
Monsieur,

In my last letter I did not have time to write you at length about how the affair against the Jansenists ended because the Bull was not posted until the evening the mail left.\(^1\) I can give you no better account of it than by saying with Saint Paul, Regi saeculorum, immortali, invisibili, soli Deo, honor et gloria! \(^2\) because God alone has so obviously been at work in this affair that it must be attributed entirely to Him. The Pope himself\(^3\) clearly recognized this and said several times that he never felt such great satisfaction as he did during the sessions, where he sometimes stayed up to five hours without tiring. He would have remained there eight or nine hours, except that he had compassion on the theologians, who could not stand on their feet any longer. Furthermore, he understood everything so clearly that the very same evening he would discuss with Cardinal Chigi, the Secretary of State,\(^4\) all that had been said.

The hand of God was also quite evident in this, since there were major obstacles to overcome, and the Pope had been urged by all sorts of persons to leave the matter undecided. Several of them were very prominent, and they tried to deter him with the excuse that his health was being jeopardized. I do not know whether there was any powerful maneuvering from your area. Time will tell.

Nevertheless, he has remained so steadfast in his decision that, from the time he made up his mind, he has not vacillated a single moment but has always asserted that, since this business was for the good of the Church, he wanted to conclude it. He had it so much at heart that, when

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1. The Bull, Cum Occasione, was dated May 31, 1653 but was not made public until June 9. It condemned the Five Propositions of the Jansenists, which some bishops of France had submitted to the Holy See in 1651 for evaluation and proscription. (Cf. Appendix I for the petition and the Five Propositions.)

2. To the King of the ages, the immortal, the invisible, the only God, be honor and glory! Cf. 1 Tm 1:17. (NAB)

3. Innocent X (1644-55).

4. Fabio Chigi, appointed Secretary of State in December 1651, was created a Cardinal on February 19, 1652, and later became Pope with the name of Alexander VII (1655-67).
his relatives went to see him to get his mind off things a little, he talked about it constantly to them.

He omitted nothing necessary to remove any pretext for complaint. After more than twenty-five sessions conducted by the Cardinals, he held ten of his own for more than four whole hours. Afterwards, he consented to hear the Jansenists, since they so desired, although he was in no way obliged to do so, especially since they had refused to be heard before the Cardinals. But they got off to such a bad start with him that he did not grant them a second meeting, which they were requesting only in order to stall matters, and they wanted to have as many as twenty-five audiences, so they said. They never said a word about the matter in question but spent the time hurling invectives at the Jesuits, trying to prove they were the authors of more than fifty heresies.

When the Pope saw their scheme, he finally decided to move on. However, they have no reason to complain of him because we had only one audience with him and they have had more than eight or nine since they have been in Rome. Since the decision, they have had another one more than an hour long, at which they declared they would obey. Frankly, however, I doubt they will do so. They are returning to France immediately, despite the terrible heat. There is strong reason to fear that this is to prevent the Bull from being put into effect.

In the meantime, we are spending the summer here, by order of the Cardinals, who have told us that it is advisable for us to remain until there is news from France of how the Bull has been received, so as to supply anything that might be missing in it. I do not think, however, that people can find any fault with it. M. Hallier told me he was sending you a copy of the Bull, which is why I am not sending you one. I wanted to spell out these things in detail so that you might take the trouble to enlighten many persons who will probably be prejudiced by much false information.

I almost forgot to tell you that people here have already tried to take advantage of the fact that, two and a half hours after the Bull had been posted, it was taken down by order of the Pope himself. Understand, Monsieur, that this was done deliberately. The Pope had the manuscript posted and would not allow any copies of it to be distributed because he

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3The delegates the Jansenists had sent to Rome to prevent the condemnation were Louis Gorin de Saint-Amour; Jacques Brousse, Pastor of Saint-Honoré; Noël de la Lane, Abbé de Valcroissant; Louis Angran; Toussaint-Guy-Joseph Desmares, an Oratorian; and Nicolas Manessier.

4The orthodox party was represented in Rome by Jérôme Lagault, François Hallier, and François Joyeul, Doctors of the Sorbonne.
wanted to send the heads of state and the Nuncios copies before private parties sent any. So, he had guards posted to prevent people from copying it. When night fell, he had it taken down, as is customary, to go to testify and give proof that it had been posted.

That very day, it was sent to France with a special Brief to the King and another to the Bishops. The Pope sent an express messenger to Poland to get it there more promptly, since that country is farther away. I hope to be able to send at a later date a more specific report of what happened.

I implore you, Monsieur, to continue to thank God for having saved the Church of France from falling into Calvinism once again, and also not to forget in your Holy Sacrifices the person who is, with all his heart, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

Lagault

Since writing this letter, we went today, June 16, to thank His Holiness. He gave us an audience of over two and a half hours and told us that we must have known everything he had done before reaching that decision, how he had prayers offered to God publicly and in private, and all the sessions he had held to discuss the affair. Furthermore, he confirmed what I had already written you in this letter about the great pleasure he took in this discussion, and the special, tangible assistance he had received from the Holy Spirit on this occasion. He also said that no point of theology had been put forward which he did not easily understand and retain. Moreover, he gave us, point by point, all the reasons for his Bull. He went on to say that, after asking God's help one morning, he had sent for one of his secretaries and dictated it to him in a single morning.

He told us that our gentlemen, whom I no longer dare to call Jansenists—for I would like to believe that there will be no more of them—had come to thank him for his declaration and had promised him total submission to it, even to the point of shedding tears. Would to God that they keep their good resolutions! He added that their harangue at their public audience was just one terrible diatribe against the Jesuits—those are his own words—and that nothing they said was relevant.
Last Monday I had time only to write you a note, explaining how the constitution issued against Jansenius was most favorable to the defense of the Catholic religion and the condemnation of error. The Jansenists are leaving the city today, traveling by way of Loreno; their attendants have been ready for the past two weeks. They have promised the Pope that they will obey him exactly. I have reasons to doubt this, since they told all their followers that they had not been condemned, and that their thinking, which is the same as that of Jansenius, remained the same.

I know they will make themselves a laughing stock by saying that, because Jansenius has been condemned, as have the propositions taken from Jansenius. Even the interpretation given the fifth proposition by the Jansenists was expressly and specifically condemned. Likewise, all their interpretations were rejected as irrelevant and received an absolute condemnation. Nevertheless, this is an indication of obduracy in error, which can find adherents as easily there as in this country. That is why we must work to enlighten the ignorant and pursue aggressively the publication of the Bull and its verification in the Parlements, dioceses, and universities, as well as by the King, the Chancellor, the Keeper of the Seals, the Bishops, and the Doctors.

I am afraid M. de Saint-Amour may return to his post and report matters in an entirely different light from the way they actually happened, claiming that they did not get a sufficient hearing. This has been refuted several times, indicating that: (1) it was entirely up to them, since, for an entire year, they had the liberty to inform the Cardinals of the Congregation and the consultors, verbally and in writing; (2) they had access to our documents, as they themselves admitted in their harangue before the Pope;
(3) it was useless to listen to them and to us, too, since it was a question only of a doctrine taken from Jansenius' book, which the Pope had had carefully examined, and it was even more useless to listen to them because the only other means they used to defend themselves were those written in Jansenius; (4) when a book is being condemned, it is not customary to receive any other clarification than what comes from the book itself and from persons knowledgeable about the matter treated in the book; (5) the Jansenist Doctors were offered two, three, four, five audiences with the Cardinals—as many as would be needed—which they refused; (6) every time they presented a document, they always went off the subject, seeking only to slow things down and thereby to prevent the Pope from making a pronouncement against their heresies so they could disseminate them at leisure.

As for the means by which they are trying to evade the Bull, you have only to read them to condemn them. They came for the express purpose of defending the propositions presented to the Pope by the Bishops and to prevent them from being condemned; they tried to prevent the censure of the university, although it was milder; they wrote three Apologies for Jansenius; they interpreted the propositions the way the said author wanted, and the propositions can have no other meaning than that of Jansenius, unless they falsify the sense of the words in which they are stated. The Pope condemns them all as heresy and cannot tolerate any interpretation. Therefore, they are condemned in the sense they were trying to give them and had presented to the Pope: Ubi lex non distinguit, nec nos distinguere debemus.6

You know that the Nuncio7 has a Brief for Her Majesty, whom the Pope begs to enforce his Bull, and you see the importance of this. There is also a Brief for the Bishops. We have been asked to remain here until news has been received about how people react on reception of this Bull, since the intention here is to condemn the Apologies for Jansenius;8 the book, De

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6Where the law makes no distinction, neither must we make any distinction.
7Niccolò di Bagno.
8Apologie de M. Jansénii, évêque d'Iprie, et de la doctrine de S. Augustin expliquée dans son livre intitulé Augustinus, contre trois sermons de M. Habert, théologe de Paris, prononcé dans Notre Dame le premier et le dernier dimanche de l'Advent 1642 et le dimanche de la septuagesime 1643 (n. p., 1644). Seconde Apologie pour Monseur Jansénii, évêque d'Iprie, et pour la doctrine de S. Augustin, expliquée dans son livre intitulé Augustinus, contre la réponse que M. Habert, théologe de Paris, a faite à la première Apologie et qu'il a intitulée La défense de la foi de l'Eglise (n. p., 1645). These two works are by Antoine Arnauld.
la Grâce Victoriosa; 9 the Théologie familière; 10 and others, as soon as we see how the Bull is received.

When you read it, you will see that all the usual stylistic clauses have been taken out so as not to be prejudicial to our claims. This benevolent procedure obliges us to correspond by respectful obedience, and we must do our utmost in this. Since the Jansenists will do all in their power to prevent it, we must take care to work so as to render their efforts useless.

Someone will have to inform the Queen of the care, diligence, work, and goodness exhibited by His Holiness in this cause, and represent to her the duty of her conscience, her honor, and the security of the State for her son, the King; all these things are to be met with in these circumstances. We hesitated writing to her because the Ambassador 11 told us he was not going to write anything, relying on what we were writing about it. We had also thought of writing to His Eminence,12 but in the end we decided to do nothing, for fear lest people think that our whole plan was in our own interest, which is very far from our minds. We think it will be better for others to inform them about it, however, as you judge appropriate.

Your most humble and obedient servant.

HALLIER

Rome, June 16, 1653

9De la grâce victorieuse de Jésus-Christ, ou Molina et ses disciples convaincus de l'erreur des Pélagiens et Semi-Pélagiens (Paris, 1651).
10Théologie familière ou Instruction de ce que le chrétien doit croire et faire en cette vie pour estre sauvé [by Saint-Cyran] (Paris, 1639). This book and those mentioned in notes 8 and 9 were condemned by Rome on April 23, 1654.
11Henri d'Estampes, Bailiff of Valencey and French Ambassador in Rome.
12Jules Cardinal Mazarin.
1630a. - TO THE ABBESS OF ÉTIVAL

June 16, 1653

He [Saint Vincent] wrote to the Abbess of Étival to urge her to take in one of her former nuns, who was claiming that she had left her priory only because of the miseries of the times, and who was at a greater risk in the world than in her cloister, no matter how exposed to danger it might be.

1631. - TO NICOLAS DE BUZENVAL, 1 BISHOP OF BEAUVAIS

June 18, 1653

Vincent de Paul entreats the Bishop to consent to receive paternally into his diocese a poor hermit, who wishes to end his days in recollection and penance.

1632. - TO JEAN DEHORGNY, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

June 20, 1653

It may be that certain persons do not appreciate the accounts we

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Letter 1630a. - Collet, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 157-58; the original is now lost. Collet mentions this letter and quotes a short excerpt from it. This edition uses the text printed in Mission et Charité, 19-20, no. 75, p. 96.

Étival Abbey (Étival-en-Charnie, Le Mans diocese) was a monastery of Benedictine nuns. The letter was probably addressed to Claire Nau, Abbess (1627-60). Saint Vincent had worked to bring the Reform into this monastery, so he knew the Abbess.

1Date given by Collet.
2Probably the troubles of the Fronde.


1Nicolas Choart, Seigneur de Buzenval, born on July 25, 1611. He was named Counselor in the Parlement of Brittany on October 19, 1630, Councilor in the Great Council in September 1631, and Master of Requests on August 11, 1639. He was also appointed Ambassador to Switzerland, but never arrived there. In 1643 he tendered his resignation as Master of Requests, became a priest, and in 1650 was named Bishop of Beauvais. He was especially known for his attachment to Jansenist doctrine.

sometimes give of what is being done for the glory of God in the other houses. These are ill-disposed persons who usually oppose good and, since they do little good themselves, think it is an exaggeration to say that others do a great deal. Not only do they think it but they complain about it because of the shame it causes them.

Because of the weakness of these gummy-eyed persons, who cannot look at the light, are we to stop enlightening others by the examples of those who are more fervent and to deprive the Company of the consolation of knowing what is being accomplished elsewhere by the grace of God? To Him alone is due the glory, and this practice of speaking among ourselves of His mercies is most pleasing to Him. It is consistent with the custom of the Church, which desires that the good works and glorious actions of the martyrs, confessors, and other saints be recounted publicly for the edification of the faithful. This was done even in the time of the first Christians, although most likely no one dared to contradict these accounts while the majority of people were praising God for them and encouraging one another to imitate the virtues of those being mentioned.

Please, then, do not be the one to put a stop to this worthwhile custom, but inform us of all the good results God will be pleased to give to the work of your family, taking care to put forward only what is useful and true, as I shall try to do in my reports here.

1633. - TO EMERAND BAJOUE, SUPERIOR, IN NOTRE-DAME-DE-LORM
Paris, June 21, 1653

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Letter 1633. - The original signed letter was formerly the property of the Montauban Hospital;
I received your letter with renewed sentiments of joy and affection because it is your letter, but with regret at the dissatisfaction given you by those persons whom you mentioned without giving any names. I know, however, that this has not happened through any lack of esteem and affection for you but in the way the blessed Bishop of Geneva told me one day that porters bump into one another. This occurs accidentally in passing but the collision does not stop them; they disregard it as if nothing happened.

Please let me know, Monsieur, the causes of complaint they have given you so that I may try to help them recognize their faults and avoid similar ones in future. I assure you that this will be done in such a way that no one will know where I got my information.

Regarding M. Brin, he will not ask you again for the two hundred livres you brought from La Rose. About a month ago I told him not to think about doing so because that money has been used for the Company. I will tell him that again.

You ask me if you can resign Notre-Dame-de-Lorm to M. Fournier. I ask you not to do so but rather to leave to us the choice of the person and the times for making this resignation because not everyone is suitable nor in condition for that. M. Fournier is a good Missionary, but he is not strong enough to be Pastor nor old enough to head a Community family.1 Since you are on the scene and, thank God, have these qualities and many others, please be patient, especially since you are neither too old nor too infirm to fear dying soon.

I am not surprised that you have been summoned about the Brial2 benefice, but what does surprise me is that you say it could not be conferred on a man who was absent, even though the Bishop knows him; this is done every day. No one goes to Rome, and yet parishes are given to priests who are far from there. Even as I dictate

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1He was only twenty-eight years old.
2A former commune, today part of Bressols, a district of Castelsarrasin (Tarn-et-Garonne).
this, I have with me the nomination for a parish to be delivered to
the appointee, who is 150 leagues away from here.

What is even more surprising to me is that M. Portail's absence
is being used as a pretext to change everything. If there had been
any danger, it might have been avoided by handing in to the Bishop,
purely and simply, his resignation from the same benefice to have
it united to the seminary. At least he was sensible enough to inform
us of this change before making it.

True, this good Bishop could act that way since he is the master,
but what really astounds me, Monsieur, is that you, M. Bajoue,
accepted the title to this parish when you already had another! Moreover, you did so not only without discussing it with me but
knowing it was against our intention. Up to that time there was
nothing to be criticized in your leadership, by the grace of God. I
would like to believe that you thought you were doing a good thing
and that, from now on, with the help of God, you will pay closer
attention to our obligation of doing everything after consultation
and nothing on our own. There is a blessing to be had in adopting
this practice, and you can rest assured that affairs of any importance
will always succeed better when they have our approval than if you
were to act otherwise. And why? Because it is a question of order,
and order is in God.

You were quite right to refuse the Glatens\textsuperscript{5} parish—whatever its
merits—because it would have been a terrible scandal for you to
have charge of two or three parishes at the same time, and also
because parishes are not our business. We have very few of them,
as you know, and the ones we have were given us against our
wishes, either by our founders or by the bishops. We could not
refuse them without breaking with them, and perhaps Brial is the
last one we will ever accept because the further we advance, the
more involved we get in such matters.

\textsuperscript{3}This union came about sixteen years later.
\textsuperscript{4}Bajoue was the incumbent of Saint-Aignan parish.
\textsuperscript{5}Commune in the district of Castelaarrasin (Tarn-et-Garonne).
I thank God, Monsieur, for all the graces He grants you, especially for the dispositions He gives you regarding your vocation. I never thought you had any others, and would prefer to believe that of anyone else but you. I am, with the affection which only God knows, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble and affectionate servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL, i.s.C.M.

If my reply does not correspond with the sense of your letter and what you intended, please let me know; perhaps I have not understood clearly what you told me. If you are satisfied with it, Monsieur, in the name of God, please realize that I am speaking to you in the language of the heart, which cherishes you more than itself. 6

1634. - JEAN LE VACHER TO SAINT VINCENT

[Tunis, between 1648 and 1660] 1

A French ship ran aground off the coast of Tunis. Six men, saved from the shipwreck, fell into the hands of the Moors, who took them to Tunis and sold them as slaves. Some time after, the Dey tried to make Turks 2 of them and, by flogging them, forced two of them to renounce their faith in Jesus Christ. Two others died steadfast under torture rather than consent to such infidelity. Since he wanted to do the same to the two who were left, charity obliged us to save them from this peril. We settled on six hundred piastres for their ransom, and I was accountable for two hundred. Those men are now free.

For my part, I prefer to suffer in this world rather than see my Divine

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6The postscript is in the Saint's handwriting.

1The period during which Jean Le Vacher lived in Tunis while Saint Vincent was still alive.
2Muslims.
Master denied. I would willingly give up my own blood and my life—even a thousand lives if I had them—rather than allow any Christians to lose what Our Lord has purchased for them by His death.

1635. - TO PHILIPPE VAGEOT, SUPERIOR, IN SAINTEs

July 2, 1653

God knows, Monsieur, what a comfort it would be for me to give you the consolation you request regarding the journey to your native place, if I saw that it was the Will of God. But the great distance,¹ the roads, the dangers in the countryside, and the futility of this journey lead me to think it would be better for you to postpone it and, perhaps, even to forget about it. In addition, if we consider the maxim of Our Lord, who did not want His disciples to return home, although they had a good reason for doing so, such as going to bury a dead father,² and selling what they had in order to give to the poor,³ I must ask you, as I now do, to make to God the sacrifice of this desire.

When you say that you do not know your father's present condition, it does not necessarily follow that this obliges you to abandon a family which God has entrusted to you and the opportunities you have to render Him good services through it and through yourself. You are well aware that your father does not need you to survive. Even if he should be in need, there are ways to assist him without exposing yourself to the danger of such a visit. If you allow me, I will take care of that. I shall write to the Intendant of Burgundy,⁴ who is a friend of ours, or will have his father, M. de

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¹M. Vageot came from Bellegarde (Ain), a journey of about two weeks at the time.
²Cf. Mt 8:21-22. (NAB)
³Cf. Mt 19:21. (NAB)
⁴Louis Laisné.
la Marguerie,⁴ write to him, asking him to take the trouble to inquire about your father's present circumstances and condition so that, if he needs anything, he can provide him with it.

It seems to me that you can be at peace with that, especially since you would have reason to fear the judgment of God if you left His work for a slight satisfaction. As to your saying that I should not consider this a temptation, all I can reply is that it certainly has the signs of one because it upsets you too much, and you say that you could not bear a refusal. We [know],⁵ on the contrary, that inspirations which come from God are gentle and peaceful and must be proposed with indifference.

Please ask God, Monsieur, for the grace to do nothing which may displease Him in these circumstances. In the meantime, I am your...

1636. - TO ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC, BISHOP OF CAHORS

Paris, July 5, 1653

Excellency,

I am sending you some news which will please you greatly: it is the condemnation of the Jansenists. As of June 9, their five propositions have been declared heretical. The Bull was posted in Rome the same day and reached this city on the feast of Saint Peter.¹ The Nuncio² presented it to the King and Queen, and Their Majesties gave it a very good reception. The Cardinal³ has promised to see that it is enforced.

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⁴Elie Laiame, Seigneur de la Marguerie.
⁵A word omitted in Reg. 2.

Letter 1636. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.
¹June 29.
²Nicolo di Bagno.
³Jules Cardinal Mazarin.
All of Paris leapt with joy about it, at least those belonging to the good party, and the others have indicated their willingness to submit to it. M. Singlin, who, along with M. Arnauld, is one of the patriarchs of the latter group, has said that the Holy See must be obeyed. M. du Hamel, Pastor of Saint-Merry, one of the flying buttresses of this new doctrine, is of the same disposition and has volunteered to publicize the Bull himself in his church. Several of the most prominent persons among them, such as Monsieur and Madame Liancourt, say they are no longer what they used to be. In a word, we are hoping that all will acquiesce. Not that certain people have not found this a hard pill to swallow, and they even say that, although the opinions of Jansenius have been condemned, theirs have not—but I have only heard one person say this.

Nevertheless, the fact remains, Excellency, that this decision is such a great grace of God that everyone is rejoicing over it here, and those who know what harm those disturbances have done in the past cannot be grateful enough for such a boon. I hope, Excel-

4Nicolas Singlin, born in Paris in 1607, was an apprentice to a cloth merchant when, at twenty-two years of age, he decided to give himself to God. Saint Vincent encouraged him to learn Latin and prepare for the priesthood. As a subdeacon, he was entrusted by the Saint with teaching catechism to the children at the Pitié, a Paris hospital near the Jardin des Plantes. One day, narrates Marguerite Perrier, a niece of Pascal whose story seems suspect, Singlin, who venerated Saint Vincent at the time, met a pious woman in the hospital courtyard. She foretold "a horrible persecution;" pointing to the Saint, she added: "he will be one of the persecutors." Shortly afterwards, on March 26, 1633, Nicolas Singlin was ordained a priest. Already won over to Saint-Cyr’s ideas, he was chosen by the latter to hear the confessions of the nuns of Port-Royal. He fled in 1661 to avoid a lettre de cachet [arrest warrant under the King’s private seal] and took refuge on one of the estates of the Duchesse de Longueville. He returned to Paris in secret and died there on April 17, 1664. (Cf. “Mémoire de Mademoiselle Marguerite Perrier, nièce de Pascal” in Recueil de plusieurs pièces pour servir à l’histoire du Port-Royal [Utrecht, 1740], pp. 167-72.)

5Henri du Hamel, born in the Sens diocese, was ordained a priest at the end of Lent 1641 but did not say his first Mass until All Saints Day. He was Pastor of Saint-Maurice (Yonne) (1642-44), where he established public penance, then Pastor of Saint-Merry in Paris (1644-66), Canon of Notre-Dame (1666-71), and once again Pastor of Saint-Maurice (1671-82), where he died on November 13, 1682. Banished from Saint-Merry in 1654 because of Jansenism, he did not have permission to return to his parish until 1664, three years after he had signed the formulary.
lency, that, since you have helped to obtain it by signing the letter written to His Holiness, you will also be one of the most fervent in thanking God for it and in asking Him to complete the work of restoring unity. The Bishop of Sarlat\(^6\) will do likewise if you will please send him a copy of the enclosed Bull, which has not yet been printed. We are awaiting the Archbishop of Paris,\(^7\) who is away, to have it translated into French and posted.

It is a counter-decree of the Holy See which, after full argument on both sides, has taken every possible precaution to remove from our parties all pretext for complaint. It gave them several hearings both privately and publicly, not only the first Doctors\(^8\) sent to keep His Holiness from making a pronouncement, but the second group,\(^9\) who had gone to back them up. They spoke for three or four hours at a time in his presence, reading from a large notebook which they had brought fully prepared from Paris. Blessed be God that all their efforts were in vain and that souls are now enjoying peace from knowing the truth that those people were trying to obscure!

May it please His Divine Goodness, Excellency, to preserve you for His glory! This is one of my fondest wishes. I am, in His love, Excellency, your most humble and very obedient servant.

**VINCENT DEPAUL.**

\(i.s.C.M.\)

*At the bottom of the first page: the Bishop of Cahors*

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\(^6\)Nicolas Sevin.

\(^7\)Jean-François de Gondi.

\(^8\)Louis Gérin de Saint-Amour, Noël de la Lane, Louis Angrand, and Jacques Brouse.

\(^9\)The Oratorian, Father Desmares, and Nicolas Manessier; they had been in Rome since April 19.
July 1653

Most Holy Father,

We, the undersigned, have been informed of the admirable spread of the Christian faith in the kingdoms of Tonkin and Cochin-China, where more than 200,000 Christians are deprived of shepherds and compelled to live and die without the assistance of religion; consequently, they are exposed to eternal damnation. We know that the reason for this sad situation is the impossibility of sending evangelical workers in numbers large enough to gather in such an abundant harvest.

In order to prevent this disaster, indigenous priests must be formed; accordingly, bishops must be appointed. Now, the dissensions among Christian monarchs do not permit the nomination of bishops in these places, with the powers and title of Ordinaries. Therefore, we humbly venture to entreat Your Holiness to create bishops in partibus and to send them as delegates to these regions.

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1 By Father Alexandre Rhodes, S.J., who had returned to Europe to raise money and find auxiliaries for the Tonkin and Cochin-China missions (see n. 2), which he had successfully evangelized, and to persuade Rome to send Apostolic Vicars there.

2 Today, Tonkin and Cochin-China would include Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos.

3 It was said that Father Rhodes personally had baptized 100,000 people in Tonkin (approximately, North Vietnam). (Cf. *Annales de la Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement*, p. 139.)

4 As early as 1633, Propaganda Fide had conceived the idea of organizing the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Japan, China, Tonkin, and Siam [present day Thailand]. This would have been accomplished except for objections raised by the King of Portugal, who at that time enjoyed prerogatives of which he was jealous. He had the right to submit the names of persons for dioceses and benefices in all the countries conquered or to be conquered from the pagans. Moreover, all missionaries going to Southeast Asia had to leave from a Portuguese port. Instead of seeking to spread Catholics for its own sake, the Portuguese government saw in this a means of stabilizing and extending its own conquests. This accounted for its constant opposition, until the French Revolution, to the creation of dioceses entrusted to missionaries of other nationalities.

5 In *infidel* lands. A diocese no longer in existence was given to a bishop by way of title.
in the name of the Apostolic See. We have several secular priests in Paris capable of carrying out these functions. They are to be commended for their purity of morals, zeal, prudence, and learning. Moreover, they are prepared to be examined by whomever Your Holiness might care to designate for this.

Prostrate at the feet of Your Holiness, as before the Supreme Shepherd, we implore this grace with all our desire.

Henri, Archbishop-elect of Reims; Vincent Depaul; Du Plessis; Colombet, Pastor of Saint-Germain, etc.

1638. - To Jean Le Vacher, in Tunis

July 15, 1653

Here at last is M. Husson, the young lawyer we promised you for the work of the consulate. Please receive him graciously, since he is one of the most accomplished men I know in his social class. You will soon recognize his moral strength—I do not mean the extent of it, since it surpasses whatever one might think, but

only because it had to be abandoned and the territory was then "in infidel lands." These sees were usually in Mohammedan lands, not, as in the present context, in Southeast Asia. In 1882 the Holy See changed the name given to these sees to "titular sees" because the designation in partibus infidelium had become offensive to the governments of some of these territories.

6François Pallu, Canon of Tours; Pique, Doctor of the Sorbonne; and François de Laval-Montigny, Grand-Archdeacon of Évreux. Weary of the slowness of the Roman Curia, Pique accepted Saint-Joseph parish in Paris, and François de Laval became the guest of M. de Bernières at the hermitage in Caen.

7Henri de Savoie, Duc de Nemours.

8Christophe du Plessis, Baron de Montbard, lawyer in the Parlement, a very active member of the Company of the Blessed Sacrament and one of the most charitable men of his time. He founded Le Magasin charitable, gave generously to the Montauban hospital and the Hospice for Incurables in Paris, and was director of the General Hospital. He died at the Missions-Étrangères Seminary on May 7, 1672.

9Pierre Colombet, chaplain and Councillor of the King, Pastor of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois (1633-57).

sufficiently to oblige you to esteem it highly. He is not only wise, accommodating, vigilant, and pious, but he is an astute businessman and is always ready to interest himself on behalf of others.

He is going off to Barbary to serve God and the poor, despite the distance and the dangers of the place and of the sea. He is leaving Paris, where he is a lawyer in the Parlement. He also leaves his parents, who love him dearly and have tried to stop him by many tears, remonstrances, and stratagems. His detachment is indeed admirable for someone his age, as is the purity of intention he brings to this journey. Not only will he live the common life with you but will not settle any questions without your consent. Furthermore he is so gentle with everyone, so gracious with his friends, and so obedient to his director that when you see how docile he is with you, you will feel obliged to act the same way with him.¹

That is why, Monsieur, I do not have to recommend that you be the first to show him honor, confidence, and kindness, or to defer to him as much as possible, especially in the affairs of the consulate because, with the help of God, the two of you will have but one heart and one soul.²

1639. - TO JEAN BARREAU, CONSUL, IN ALGIERS

July 18, 1653

This letter contains, among other things, the announcement of the condemnation of Jansenism by Pope Innocent X.

¹Saint Vincent gave Martin Husson a rule of life for Jean Le Vacher and himself (cf. vol. XIII, no. 109, pp. 363-65). Except for a few minor additions, it is almost identical to the advice given to Boniface Nouelly and Jean Barreau in 1646 (cf. vol. XIII, no. 93, pp. 306-07).
²Cf. Acts 4:32. (NAB)

Letter 1639. - Collet, op. cit., vol. I, p. 561. In a letter of July 12, which has been lost, Saint Vincent was supposed to have given the same news to another Priest of the Mission.
1640. - TO THOMAS BERTHE, IN ROME

July 18, 1653

You have seen us wearing surplices when hearing confessions here, which we also do during missions in the country and at home. Now, I have learned that our family in Rome does not observe this custom, although the bishops have ordered it. Tell the men for me, then, that I ask them to do so, and tell those in charge of the house and missions to see to this.

1641. - ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC TO SAINT VINCENT

Mercurès, July 18, 1653

Monsieur,

On the tenth of this month, I received with great joy the Bull 1 of condemnation of the Five Propositions contained in Jansenius; I said a Te Deum of thanksgiving at the same time. Since then, M. Cuissot has delivered to me the one you so kindly sent. Thank you for it and for the news of the good results it has already produced in Paris; this has given me a new cause for joy, for which I thank God with all my heart.

I have read and reread the exact wording used by our Holy Father concerning these propositions, particularly for the first and the fifth ones, and I never weary of reading them because it gives me such pleasure. They cause me to see what a notable grace God has given to His Church, and especially to this kingdom, in protecting the latter from such serious, pernicious errors in which it ran the great risk of seeing itself involved with the passage of time, since so many persons in the capital had been tainted by them. Doubtless, this venom would have spread to other towns.


Letter 1641. - Archives of the Diocese of Cahors, Alain de Solminihac collection, notebook, file 22, no. 39, copy made from the original.

1Cum Occasione, dated May 31, 1653 and published on June 9.
if God had not made provision for this as He has done. May He be forever blessed for it!

My apprehension led me to groan about it many times, particularly when I saw that several prelates were upholding those propositions. People have written from Rome that the representatives of Jansenism had indicated there that they assented to the Bull, going so far as to declare their acquiescence loud and clear to His Holiness. Deo autem gratias qui semper triumphat nos in Christo Jesu. 

Please do me the favor of sending me the printed copy of the French translation of the Bull, and believe that I am, Monsieur.

ALAIN,
Bishop of Cahors

1642. - TO A SUPERIOR

July 19, 1653

Please tell me what you think I should do about one of our houses, where they are upset because the Superior is not very regular. He rarely attends Community exercises, especially prayer, and shows little concern about assisting, either by word or example, the souls entrusted to him, in the love of regularity and their perfection. He is always off in the country, keeps a horse in the stable for this purpose, and does not want to be bothered about anything else.

Please give me your advice on this matter, Monsieur. He is an accomplished man in everything else.

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2Thanks be to God who always makes us triumph in Christ Jesus! Cf. 2 Cor 2:14. (D-RB)

Letter 1642. - Reg. 2, p. 175. The copy has as a heading: “Note at the end of a letter in the Saint’s handwriting, in which he mentions the faults of a Superior by speaking to him as if he were speaking about someone else.”
Indeed, it was soon recognized, both in Paris and in Rome, that the Jansenist protestations were not at all sincere. The notorious three-column declaration these gentlemen\(^2\) disseminated throughout the kingdom caused people to believe that, under cover of the condemnation of a purely Calvinistic meaning—which is not the point at issue—they were continuing to uphold the entire error of the meaning of Jansenius—which was the only point at issue and the only one the Pope wanted to condemn.

This is what Doctor Hallier explained at great length in a letter he wrote to Saint Vincent. This letter, dated July 21, states in substance that the Jansenists had neither rhyme nor reason for trying to "hide behind such ridiculous evasions. They give the propositions\(^3\) meanings very different from what the words state. Although the propositions are clear, [they try] to make them ambiguous and cryptic by explanations far removed from the true meaning of the words and from the meaning of Jansenius."

Innocent X "condemned them according to what Jansenius meant, which is their true sense according to the meaning of the words. After listening to the representatives of the party, he did not find them acceptable in their imagined sense. He condemned the propositions outright because they could not be given any Catholic explanation. He said he condemned them in so far as they contain the opinions of Jansenius, which are the same as those of the Jansenists, as is apparent in their Apologies for Jansenius and the rest of their books." The Pope in his Bull gave "a meaning to the fifth proposition because it was not contained in the words but only in Jansenius, and he condemned it in that sense," which is the meaning given in the book and by its defenders. "He did not give any explanation of the other propositions because he felt they were clear enough," and he saw that they had no "need of any clarification."

After proving that, following the method of these new Doctors, there is no proposition, however wrong, that can escape censure, Hallier uses a large number of facts to demonstrate that there is no mistaking the
Sovereign Pontiff's intention. If it is true, he says, that the meaning of Jansenius is obscure, why then has the Pope refused Bulls to a man whose only crime was signing the Augustinus of that Bishop? Why was the General of an Order, who favored the Jansenists, removed from office? Why, for the same reason, did he relegate to Malta another monk, and give a severe reprimand to the General of the N...? Why did he give a diocese in the kingdom of Naples to an Augustinian named Celestin Brun, who had defended Catholic truth in the congregations, against both the Jansenists and his own Superior?

The fact remains, continues Hallier, that Innocent X "indicated that he wanted to reward all those who spoke against the" Innovators "and to show his displeasure toward all those who were on their side." This, he adds, is why he "offered me the diocese of Toul and, with no thought of mine, gave me a priory in Brittany, which several important persons had requested of him. He also gave orders to his Datary to give the first ones that became vacant to Messieurs Joysel and Lagault." This Doctor goes on to say that the Jansenists realize better than anyone else that they are the targets of disapproval. That is the only reason why "they fled Rome in a shameful manner, without taking leave of any of the Cardinals of the Congregation."

1643. - TO MARC COGLÉE, SUPERIOR, IN SEDAN

Paris, July 26, 1653

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am very distressed about your illness and have recommended you to God and to the prayers of our Company. May His Divine Goodness be pleased to restore you to health and grant you the grace of making good use of whatever states in which you will be. Please, Monsieur, do all you can for your part to get well, and spare nothing to this end.

Letter 1643. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.
Your proposal to me about making Sedan a diocese is a question that none of us should even consider because of the almost insurmountable difficulties involved, particularly on the part of the Archbishop. He will never willingly consent to have such an important town cut off from his diocese. With regard to the matter itself, if a diocese were established, revenue would be needed. Where would they get it? True, the King could assign to it the revenue from some abbey, but he will not do so, at least not for the present.

Draw on us—or have drawn—a letter of exchange for four hundred livres, which we received from the Abbot for the erection of your Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. We will pay it, with the help of God, just when needed. I did not know that our procurator had received this money, nor did he know for what it was intended.

Our Ladies know that Sedan is a place of refuge for poor country people driven from their homes by the soldiers and that you are overburdened with needy sick persons. They have allocated to you one hundred livres a month to assist them. This is in addition to the similar amount you usually receive. So, M. de Séraucourt has instructions to send you two hundred livres a month.

Thank you for the other information you gave me in your letters.

We shall try to let you have a preacher, even though this will be difficult for us. Good M. Dufour has been running our seminary since M. Alméras left for the visitation of our houses in Poitou and Brittany.

The sister of the late M. David, a priest of our Company, died recently. Her confessor, M. Gérard, chaplain at Saint-Pierre de Mézières, told me that she left to our house in Sedan an annuity she had there, with a capital worth perhaps two thousand livres. It is an

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1René-Louis de Fiquelmont, Abbot of Mouzon.
2A governmental official in charge of criminal affairs in Reims.
obligation for us, and for your family in particular, to pray to God for her soul, as she desired and as I ask you to do, after recommending it to our Community. I thought this bequest he mentioned was a piece of property and part of a farm they had near Sedan, but apparently he means that it is a monetary legacy set up as an annuity.

When you have no further need of Brother Sirven's remedies, will you please send him for additional information to M. Gérard, the executor of the will of the deceased woman, and discuss with him what we have to do. In the meantime, I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,  
i.s.C.M.

1644. - TO PHILIPPE VAGEOT, SUPERIOR, IN SAINTES

July 27, 1653

Monsieur,

I certainly was greatly consoled by your letter, and even more so by the mortification you are practicing by depriving yourself, for the love of God, of the journey you were planning to make. I am sure your father would be quite pleased with your visit, and rightly so. However, the glory you give Our Lord, by remaining where He has placed you, deserves to be preferred, not only because He advises us to give up our relatives, but also because by this act of virtue you draw down His protection on your family and greater grace on yourself.

I did not have the slightest thought contrary to the attachment you have for your vocation. Besides, you are only too well aware...
of the good you can do in it to abandon it, and I know you are far too good and too grateful for God's benefits for me to think you capable of such fickleness.

1644a. - FRANÇOIS HALLIER AND JÉROME LAGAULT
TO SAINT VINCENT

[Rome, end of July 1653] ¹

Hallier and Lagault, retained in Rome by the Pope, who was showering them with kindness, praise the charity of Saint Vincent in his efforts to bring the Jansenists back to submission and obedience. They express their pleasure at learning that a number of them had returned and accepted the truth. They approve wholeheartedly the respectful, gentle reception to be given to the Jansenists, with no sign of insult, cautioning at the same time that they should not be allowed to preach in places where they might spread their errors, unless they show true repentance for the past. Hallier concludes:

I beg you, Monsieur, to do your utmost to see that no Jansenist teaches, preaches, or instructs others, verbally or in writing, unless his own conversion is sure and his honesty recognized. This is the opinion of all upright men in this country, based on all the Church Canons and the Rules of the Holy Fathers. If we act otherwise, either the error will continue or smolder under the ashes for a while, only to burst into flames with greater heat at a later time. Please ponder this truth, Monsieur, and believe that I am your. . . .

Letter 1644a. - The originals have been lost. Collet (op. cit., vol. I, pp. 560-61) gives excerpts from each letter without identifying the author of any particular citation except the last passage, which he says was written by Hallier. Mission et Charité, 19-20, nos. 77-78, pp. 98-99, reprinted Collet. This edition summarizes the excerpts and quotes the passage from Hallier mentioned above.

¹Probable date; the content of these two letters indicates that they follow closely the letter of July 21, 1653 (cf. no. 1642a). Lagault died in October 1653, shortly after his return from Rome.
I think, Madame, that, if there is any difficulty furnishing this sum of money and establishing this fund in Rome, we should wait for the second letter. In the meantime, tell the Nuncio the objection being raised here, so that M. Massari, Secretary of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, who wrote one of the letters—which, like the other, I have been unable to read—may investigate in the said Congregation whether there is not some other way to settle this affair. Our Lord is always present in replies that are made in accordance with things as they are, and blesses them.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

Letter 1645. - Reg. 1, p. 24 v. The copyist took his text from the original, which was in Saint Vincent's handwriting. The name of the addressee is not given but it is reasonable to think it was the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, because of her generosity toward the foreign missions.

1It was between these two dates that Dionigi Massari was Secretary of Propaganda Fide. For a reason unknown to us, the first editor of the letters of Saint Vincent believed that this one was from January 1659.

2Perhaps the question here concerns funds reserved for stipends for the bishops who were to go to evangelize Indochina (today, the area included in North Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos).
APPENDIX

1. - LETTER OF THE BISHOPS OF FRANCE
TO POPE INNOCENT XI

[1651]

Most Holy Father,

The faith of Peter, which never grows weak, most rightly demands that a well-established custom in the Church, namely, that questions of greater importance be referred to the Apostolic See, should be preserved forever. In obedience to this very just law we have considered it necessary to write to Your Holiness regarding a most serious religious matter.

It has now been ten years since France, to our great regret, has been disturbed by most violent disputes arising from the posthumous book and doctrine of Cornelius Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres. These disturbances should have been appeased both by the authority of the Council of Trent and by the Bull of Urban VIII, of happy memory, in which he pronounced against the dogmas of Jansenius and confirmed the decrees of Pius V and Gregory XIII against Baius. By a new decree, Your Holiness has established the truth and binding force of this Bull, but as each particular proposition has had no special note of censure attached, some have thought that there was still room for their quibbling and caviling. We hope that all these ways of evasion will be entirely eliminated if, as we ask, Your Holiness defines clearly and distinctly what is to be believed in this matter. Therefore, we beg Your Holiness to examine and

Appendix 1. The original is in Latin.

1Isaac Habert, Bishop of Valence (1645-68), drafted this supplication, which eighty-five bishops signed. (Cf. no. 1320.)
decide conclusively and unequivocally the following propositions in particular, about which dispute is most dangerous and discussion most inflamed:

(1) Some of God's commandments are impossible for the just who wish and endeavor to obey them, considering the forces they possess; the grace that would make their fulfillment possible is also lacking.

(2) In the state of fallen nature, no one ever resists interior grace.

(3) To merit or demerit in the state of fallen nature, it is not necessary for a person to have freedom from necessity but only freedom from constraint.

(4) The Semi-Pelagians admitted the necessity of an interior prevenient grace for every action, even for the beginning of faith; but they were heretical in that they held that this grace was such that the human will could not resist it.

(5) To hold that Christ died or shed His blood for all persons, without exception, is Semi-Pelagian.

Your Holiness has quite recently had the experience of how powerful is the authority of the Apostolic See in crushing error, in the matter of the Two Heads of the Church. The tempest was immediately calmed, and the winds and the sea obeyed the voice and command of Jesus Christ.

When Jansenius was about to die, he submitted his work to you. This has led us to beseech you, Most Holy Father, to pronounce a sure and certain judgment on the meaning of these propositions. By this means you will dissipate every kind of obscurity, reassure wavering minds, put an end to divisions, and restore tranquillity and splendor to the Church.

While our minds are enlightened by this hope, we offer to God our wishes and desires that the immortal King of the Ages may grant you many happy years in this life and a most happy eternity in the next.
To the Queen, Anne of Austria

[July 2, 1651] ¹

Madame,

Some time ago I asked Monsieur Vincent to represent to Your Majesty, as I did in the past, how important it is to the service of God and His Church for someone to succeed me in my diocese after my death. When he did so, Your Majesty was so kind in my regard as to tell him that I might choose the man I considered best suited, and you would have him approved by the King. This compelled me to have prayers offered throughout my diocese and elsewhere, that God might be pleased to make known to me the person who would be most pleasing to Him for this office.

After having considered those who came to mind, studied their qualifications, and sought the advice of persons of outstanding piety, I have decided on the Bishop of Sarlat,² for the reasons Monsieur Vincent will explain to Your Majesty, Madame, if you will allow him, as I most humbly entreat you to do, and to grant me this favor. In this you will render a great and notable service to God and to His Church, and will oblige me to continue to offer you my prayers and good wishes for your prosperity. I shall do so, with great affection, for the rest of my life. I am, in virtue of all sorts of duties, Madame. . . .

¹In no. 1376, written on July 2, 1651, Bishop Solminiac refers to a letter he had just written to the Queen, Anne of Austria, about a successor for his diocese.
²Nicolas Sevin.
Most Eminent and Most Reverend Lord,

It has been learned that some priests from France are seeking to obtain, through the intermediary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, permission to form a new Order of Missionaries in that kingdom. There is some doubt whether this might not be prejudicial to the Institute of the Congregation of secular Priests of the Mission, already established, *apostolica auctoritate*, in the same kingdom, under the government of Vincent de Paul, its Superior General. This Congregation has been extended and employed for many years not only in France and other provinces of Christendom for the benefit of the people and the service of the clergy, under the authority of the Most Illustrious Ordinaries, but also *in partibus infidelium*, under obedience to the said Sacred Congregation. The said Vincent, Superior General, the most humble petitioner of Your Eminence, fears with good reason that, if the above-mentioned permission be granted, the multiplicity of Congregations of secular priests having the same name and the same employments might not cause great confusion. Therefore, he most humbly entreats Your Eminence to be pleased to consider us kindly and to see that nothing be innovated in this domain without some understanding with the Superior of the Mission of Rome. And he will consider all this as a special favor from Your Eminence.

Whom God, etc.

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Appendix 3. - Archives of Propaganda Fide, III Gallia, no. 200, p. 267, original in Italian. This petition, addressed in the name of Saint Vincent, was disclaimed by him in nos. 1477-78.

1The decree prompted by this petition was dated December 17, 1651 (cf. Appendix 4).

2Led by Henri de Levis de Ventadour, Canon of Paris.

3By apostolic authority.

4In infidel lands.
Addressed: The Most Eminent and Most Reverend Cardinal Barberini for Vincent Depaul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission

4. DECREE OF PROPAGANDA FIDE

Decree of the Sacred General Congregation of Propaganda Fide, December 17, 1651

His Eminence, Cardinal Barberini, submitted the petition of Reverend Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission in France, asking the Sacred Congregation for a declaration to the effect that nothing should be changed in view of a request to establish a new similar Congregation or college in the said kingdom. Their Eminences have responded that it should absolutely not be permitted that similar Congregations be multiplied in the same kingdom, lest rivalry among them cause harm to religion. Therefore, a favorable response has been given to the petition: nothing is to be changed. Moreover, if any seminaries or colleges are founded in France, they are to be committed to the direction and government of the priests of the said Congregation; otherwise, the Sacred Congregation will give no consent or approval to such foundations.

C. CARDINAL PAMPHILI

Dionigi MASSARI, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation

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On the back of the original were added the words: “Entrusted to the Ambassador of France.”

Appendix 4. - Archives of Propaganda Fide, III Gallia, no. 200, p. 287, original in Latin.
I have heard, Mademoiselle, that M. Vincent received a letter from the Queen of Poland in which, he says, she expresses her intention that the twelve thousand livres she sent be distributed by the Ladies of his Company. I did not want to delay any longer telling you that I will follow this new order of the Queen as wholeheartedly as the one she had previously given to Madame des Essarts. She has since confirmed this by the letter of June 9, in reply to the one I wrote to Her Majesty with my thoughts regarding the distribution of these alms. In her letter, she does me the honor of telling me to do with them whatever I consider most fitting for the good of the poor.

It is true, my very dear sister, that this change has surprised me somewhat, mainly because I know that the Queen’s intention is not that her alms be made so public and cause such a big stir. I think I know her well enough not to be mistaken in my conviction that she would have been just as satisfied to have these alms used to provide for needs that are all the more dire and deserving of pity—because fewer people are aware of them—than to have them used to meet public needs. Although very great, the latter are known to everyone and can more easily find support in the charity of good people. I think that, by parting with some of their luxuries and superfluities, as they are obliged to do, in line with all the laws of the Church, these persons will easily remedy that.

It seems to me that, if Her Majesty intended that these alms be used only in the kinds of works of which the Ladies have charge, and not in others where I know a need exists, she would not have expressed the desire for me to participate in the distribution of this

Appendix 5. - *Lettres de la Rédigente Mère Marie-Angélique Arnauld*, vol. II, p. 165. This letter refers to the difficulty mentioned in no. 1533.
charity. Nevertheless, since I am told that this new order comes from Poland and is more in conformity with the Queen's intentions than the first, I am taking good care not to oppose it. I shall be very pleased for Madame des Essarts to give you whatever remains, to be used in whatever way you wish.

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

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SAINT-MANDÉ, Marie de Portia de: 1353
SAINT-MAUR: 1355
SAINT-REMY, Pierre de: 1372
SAVEUSES, Charles: 1285
SAVOIE-NEMOURS, Henri de: 1360
SCONIN, Antoine: 1391
SÉGUIER, Dominique: 1400
SÉGUIER, Pierre: 1245
SEGUIN, (PATROCLE) Guillaume: 1521
SERRE, Louis: 1248
SINGLIN, Nicolas: 1636
SIRVEN, Pierre: 1627
SOLMINIHAC, Aïn de: 1220

T
TALEC, Nicolas: 1603
THIBAULT, Louis: 1211
TINTI, Abbé: 1220
TREFFORT, Simon: 1308
TUESDAY CONFERENCES: 1380
TURENNE, Henri de la Tour, Vicomte de: 1526

V
VAGEOT, Philippe: 1505