The last two regular mails did not bring me any letters from you. I am sorry about that and am always, in the love of Jesus and Mary, 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

1695. - TO LOUIS RIVET,\(^1\) SUPERIOR, IN SAINTES

January 9, 1654

Vincent de Paul urges Louis Rivet to ask God, through the intercession of Saint Joseph, for the success of a matter involving the salvation of the neighbor.

1696. - TO NICOLO DI BAGNO, NUNCIO IN FRANCE

Saint-Lazare, Friday at noon [January 23, 1654] \(^2\)

Monseigneur,

Yesterday I finally had the honor of visiting the seigneur whom Your Most Illustrious Lordship had ordered me to see.\(^2\) He apolo-

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\(^1\)Louis Rivet was born in Houdan (Yvelines) on February 19, 1618; he entered the Congregation of the Mission on June 13, 1640, took his vows on October 16, 1642, and was ordained a priest on September 19, 1643. He was placed in Richelieu in 1646, then at the Saintes Seminary, which he directed for several years (1648-50, 1656-62, 1665-73).

\(^2\)This letter was accompanied by a coded dispatch, written in Paris on January 23, 1654.
gized for not coming to see me, and received with attention and respect the proposal I made to him, saying he would write to his master about it. I came away consoled by the way he received this proposal. He told me he would come to see me.

I, Monseigneur, renew to Your Most Illustrious Lordship the offers of my perpetual obedience and am, in the love of Our Lord, Monseigneur, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

At the bottom of the page: His Excellency, the Nuncio

1697. - TO SISTER JEANNE-FRANÇOISE, IN ÉTAMPES

Paris, January 24, 1654

Dear Sister,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have not written you nor have I received any letters from you for a long time. How are you and what are you doing? Do you have many orphans on your hands? Please let me know their number and what they need the most—food or clothing—and if you still have some wheat left or money to buy what is most urgent, while waiting for some additional help to be sent to you.

Mademoiselle Le Gras is fairly well, and God is blessing your Little Company. I am sure you are still being faithful to God and

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3This interview dealt with the rumor of sending to Rome a member of a religious Order, apparently to deal with the affairs of his Order, but in reality to negotiate the conferring of benefices by the Pope.

Letter 1697. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original signed letter.

1Cf. nos. 1656 and 1658 for the last known letters of Saint Vincent to this Daughter of Charity.
to your exercises. I thank His Divine Goodness for this and ask Him

to continue to grant you His holy graces.

I am, in His love, Sister, your affectionate servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,

i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Sister Jeanne-Françoise, Daughter of Charity and
Servant of the Sick Poor and the orphans of Étampes, in Étampes

1698. - TO NICOLAS GUILLOT, IN WARSAW

Paris, January 30, 1654

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am writing to you just to keep up our correspondence, since I
have not yet received any letters from you from the last regular
mail, to which I might reply.

If M. Ozenne has arrived, I embrace him with great affection
and devotion, along with you and the rest of the family. May God
be pleased to unite all of you so closely by an indissoluble bond of
charity that you may be recognized by this mutual friendship as
true children of Our Lord, who, by word and example, desire to
attract others to His love! I ask the Holy Spirit, union of the Father
and the Son, to grant you this grace.

Please assure of my obedience and deep gratitude those who
honor you there with their protection and assistance—persons such
as M. Fleury, the former Pastor of Holy Cross, M. de Saliboski, and
the Officialis, if he has returned.

We have no news here, except that I have been informed by
Rome that the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide wants to

Letter 1698. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.
ask us for seven or eight priests to be sent to Sweden and Denmark. We have had it on good information from there that, in all likelihood, they will have good results there and will not be hindered, provided they have no public service of our religion. I await the final order to prepare some men either within the Company or outside of it.

Next week, with God's help, three men will leave here for Madagascar—two priests and a Brother, who will sail from Nantes, where the ship awaits them. If another ship leaves soon, as we are led to hope, we will be able to send the same number again. Mon Dieu! Monsieur, how consoled good M. Nacquart will be by this long-awaited assistance, if God grants them the grace to reach port safely and if He has preserved this good servant of His!

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1Toussaint Bourdaisie and Jean-François Mousnier.

Toussaint Bourdaisie, born in Blois (Loir-et-Cher) in 1618, entered the Internal Seminary of the Congregation of the Mission in Paris on October 6, 1645, and took his vows there on October 7, 1647. He was ordained a priest in 1651, even though his talent and knowledge had been questioned a number of times (cf. vol. XI, no. 177). In 1654 he was sent to Madagascar, where he died on June 25, 1657 (cf. Notices, vol. III, pp. 180-214).

Jean-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, as this letter indicates, where he died in May 1655. His biography was published in vol. III of Notices, pp. 129-46.

2René Forest, coadjutor Brother, born in Boussay (Loire-Maritime), entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 5, 1650, at thirty-three years of age. He departed for Madagascar in 1655.

3He had already been dead for almost four years. Charles Nacquart, born in Treslon (Marne) in 1617, entered the Congregation of the Mission on April 6, 1640, and was sent to Richelieu after his ordination. Designated for the first group of Lazarists (Vincentians) to be sent to Madagascar, he arrived there on December 4, 1648. He had learned the native language so well on the voyage to Madagascar that in a short time he was able to draft a brief summary of Christian doctrine, *Petit catechisme, avec les prières du matin et du soir...* (Paris: Georges Josse, 1657). (Cf. also Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. IX, §5 and §6.) A new edition of Nacquart's work, edited by Ludwig Munthe, Élie Rajaonarison and Désiré Ranaivosoa, has been published under the title of *Le catechisme malgache de 1657* (Antananarivo: Egede Institutet, 1987). He converted several Protestants, baptized seventy-seven Malagasies, and regularized the situation of the French who were living with native women. He evangelized not only Fort-Dauphin, but all the interior within a radius of roughly thirty miles (cf. vol. III, nos. 1179, 1183, and 1188). Exhausted by so much work, Nacquart died on May 29, 1650 (cf. *Notices*, vol. III, p. 93). Coste mistakenly gives May 21, 1651 as the date of death (cf. no. 2010, n. 1). *Mémoires*, vol. IX, contains his letters, diary, and testament, taken from old copies preserved in the Archives of the Mission, Paris.
The Company is going along as usual everywhere and is working successfully in several houses, especially in Italy and Barbary. We have no news of those in Scotland; however, I have been assured that I will receive some in a few days.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL,
I.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Guillot, Priest of the Mission, in Warsaw

1699. - TO MARK COLEY, SUPERIOR, IN SEDAN

Paris, the last day of January 1654

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Send us your good brother ¹ whenever you wish; we will gladly welcome him here for love of you—even into the Company, if he wishes to enter it. If not, he will make a retreat of a week or so; then we will see what he can do, so that we can find him some position or put him to work here. In a word, you can be sure that we will look after him as your brother.

Send us also the two convert girls you have in Sedan who are in danger of relapsing into their heresy if they are left any longer

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¹Laurence Cogley (Saint Vincent spells his name Laurent Coglée), born in Carrick-on-Suir (Lismore diocese), Ireland, on August 10, 1627, entered the Congregation of the Mission in Paris as a coadjutor Brother in February 1654, and took his vows on March 25, 1659 in the presence of René Alménas.
with their parents. M. Cabel wrote to M. Dufour about them, in
order to find a place for them in Paris. I mentioned it to our
assembly, which has authorized me to have them come and be
placed with the others at the Propagation of the Faith, where a
Lady offered to see that they are admitted. So, we will be expecting
them.

I greet your dear family.

Lastly, it seems that a ship will be leaving next month for
Madagascar; we are preparing three men to be sent there.

I am in a hurry to finish, and I am, in the love of O[ur] L[ord],
Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
I.s.C.M.

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

2 Pierre Cabel, born in Chézery (Ain), was ordained a priest on March 13, 1642, and entered
the Congregation of the Mission in Annecy in January 1643, at twenty-six years of age. He
arrived in Paris on February 24, 1644, and was sent to Sedan, where he took his vows on August
9, 1645. He was Superior there (1657-63) and in Saint-Méen (1670-71). He was Visitator for the
Province of Champagne and took part in the General Assembly which appointed René Alméras
as Superior General. Cabel died at Saint-Laize on September 26, 1688, leaving the reputation
of an exemplary priest. His biography, written by one of his contemporaries, was published in
vol. II of Notices, pp. 315-337.

3 Claude Dufour, born in 1618 in Allanche (Cantal), entered the Congregation of the Mission
on May 4, 1644, shortly after his ordination to the priesthood. He was first sent to Montmirail
(1644), then put in charge of the seminary in Saintes (1646-48). He was very virtuous but of a
rigid and unobliging kind of virtue. In his eyes the life of a Missionary was too soft; he persuaded
himself that the life of a Carthusian was more suited to his love for prayer and mortification.
Saint Vincent was of an entirely different opinion, so Claude Dufour, always docile, abandoned
his plans. To free him from temptations of this kind, the Saint put him on the list of priests to
be sent to Madagascar. While awaiting the day of departure, the Saint assigned him first to
Sedan, then to Paris, entrusting him with the Internal Seminary there during the absence of
M. Alméras, and finally to La Rose as Superior (1654-55). Sea voyages were long in those days;
M. Dufour left Nantes in 1655 and arrived in Madagascar in August of the following year.
However, he died on August 18, 1656, just a few days after his arrival. (Cf. Notices, vol. III,
pp. 14-23.)

4 The work of the Propagation of the Faith was founded in 1632 by a Capuchin, Father
Hyacinthe, for the conversion of Protestants and the assistance of new Catholics. It had received
the King's confirmation and the approval of the Archbishop of Paris and of the Holy See, but
was dissolved by Mazarin because of a disagreement over the choice of a director.
My good Sister,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Thank you for the letter you sent me. I was really pleased to have news of you and of the state of the poor orphans. I praise God for the care you are taking of them. I brought your letter to the meeting of the Ladies of Charity. Mademoiselle Viole kept it and said she would be responsible for replying to you and for doing what is necessary to give you the means of helping those poor children; I will remind her of this one of these days, when I am supposed to see her.

Meanwhile, I am sending this boy back to you, and I ask you to continue to serve Our Lord in those little creatures. He is the Father of Orphans, and since you hold the place of mother for them, He will be your great reward for this. I ask Him for this with all my heart; I ask Him also to give you the patience and the other graces you need for this good work.

Mademoiselle Le Gras is well, thank God. In His love I am, Sister, your most affectionate servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Sister Jeanne, Daughter of Charity and Servant of the Poor, in Étampes

Letter 1700. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original signed letter.
1701. - TO NICOLAS GUILLOT, IN WARSAW

Paris, February 6, 1654

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Two regular mails have arrived without bringing me any letters from you. I am worried because I am ignorant of the state of your health and that of the Company, and of what news you have of M. Oze. This causes us to pray more attentively and insistently for all of you. So, I await this precious consolation from your letters.

Meanwhile, know that [we] are well here, thank God, and that everyone is striving to advance in virtue—some more, some less—especially the seminary. It now has twelve to fifteen men, most of whom are very promising, as are those in the Richelieu seminary, where there are nine or ten under the direction of M. de Beaumont.¹ M. Le Gros ² is Superior of the house.

Many of our men here are out giving missions. Our Collège des Bons-Enfants is full and is running well under M. Cornuel.³

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¹Pierre de Beaumont, born in Puiseaux (Loiret) on February 24, 1617, entered the Congregation of the Mission on February 23, 1641, took his vows on October 4, 1643, and was ordained a priest in March 1644. He was imprisoned as a result of the lawsuit over the establishment of the Saint-Méen house. De Beaumont became Director of the Internal Seminary in Richelieu, and was twice Superior of that house (1656-60, 1661-62).

²Jean-Baptiste Le Gros, born in 1614 in the Coutances diocese (Manche), entered Saint-Lazare as a priest on June 24, 1644, and took his vows on June 29, 1646. He was Procurator of the Motherhouse (1648-51), then Superior of Saint-Charles Seminary (1651). He was still at Saint-Lazare in 1652-53, and was Superior in Richelieu (1653-55). Since he was in Richelieu on February 6, 1654, he probably arrived there at the end of the preceding year. Le Gros died in Montech, near Montauban (Tarn-et-Garonne), in 1655. (Cf. Lyons manuscript, fol. 226-30.)

³Guillaume 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),
M. Alméras made the visitation there, and we have asked him to stay on a few days to help the family put his recommendations into practice. After that, we can send him to do the same in other houses because God is really blessing him in this important task. Recently he went to Brittany and Poitou for that purpose.

Saint-Charles Seminary is gradually being reestablished under M. Goblet, who is still not well. He has only three teachers and fifteen or sixteen pupils, five of whom come here for the philosophy classes given by Brother Watebled, who is teaching it very successfully to eight or ten of our seminarians. M. Cruoly is doing likewise in theology with our other pupils.

M. Mousnier and another priest will leave for Madagascar Monday, God willing, with Brother René, who has lived there already. They are leaving on a ship we were not expecting; we were waiting for the members of the society who usually go there to send their ship, which they plan to do soon; in which case, we shall send more Missionaries on it.


*Thomas Goblet, born in Rohan (Morbihan), entered the Congregation of the Mission on August 18, 1648, at twenty-two years of age.

Jean Watebled, born in Tully (Somme) on August 19, 1630, entered the Congregation of the Mission on January 1, 1646, took his vows on January 2, 1648, and was ordained a priest in October 1654. He was Superior at the Collège des Bons-Enfants (1659-68), Saint-Charles Seminary (1671-73), and in Le Mans (1673-76), returning as Superior to the Bons-Enfants (1676-79). Watebled was made Visitor of the Province of Champagne in 1668, and of the Province of France in 1672 or earlier, remaining in this office until April 4, 1682.

*Donat Crowley (Saint Vincent spells his name Cruoly), born in Cork (Ireland) on July 24, 1623, entered the Congregation of the Mission on May 9, 1643, took his vows in November 1645, and was ordained a priest in 1650. He was among the group of Missionaries sent to Picardy in 1651 for the relief of the people reduced to destitution by the war. Saint Vincent afterward appointed him Director of Students and theology professor at Saint-Lazare (1653-54), and sent him next to Le Mans as Superior. In 1657 he returned to Saint-Lazare to teach moral theology. Later he filled the office of Superior in Richelieu (1660-61), at Saint-Charles (1662-64), Montauban (1664-65), Agen (1665-66), and Saint-Brieuc (1667-70). Sent to Le Mans in 1676, he was Superior there (1687-1690), after which there is no trace of him.

* Toussaint Bourdaise.

*Brother René Forest.
The men in Scotland and the Hebrides are doing well, so I hear, but I have had no letters from them—not that they are not sending me any, but I was told recently that the letters are going astray.

There is good reason to praise God for the reports I am getting from all our houses, where everything is going well, thank God, with regard to health as well as to spiritual exercises.

Our border areas are still in a deplorable state, and Paris continues to assist them by sending generous alms. These are distributed by several of our Brothers and other charitable persons whom we have working at that.

So much for our little news items. Please share them with M. Ozenne, who is with you now, I think. I embrace him, together with the whole family, with all the affection of my heart, which is totally yours. 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 Guillot

1702. - TO CARDINAL ANTONIO BARBERINI,
PREFECT OF PROPAGANDA FIDE

[February 6 or 7, 1654] ¹

Monsieur,

Because your incomparable goodness to us merits my taking the honor of thanking you often for it, I do so in this letter, with all the humility and gratitude I owe you, on behalf of our Little Company and in my own name. I assure you, Monseigneur, that one of my


¹The date is determined by the announcement of the departure of the priests of the Mission in three days.
greatest consolations is knowing that we have a share in the affection of your loving heart. I thank God for this, asking Him to make us worthy of this favor. So, we are entirely yours in a twofold way, I might say, since this is so both by duty and by affection.

We are awaiting here the nomination of the Bishops requested for Tonkin and Cochin-China. Provision for their maintenance is being made in Avignon. This would have already been done if the importance of the matter and the number of persons on whom it depends had not delayed it.

One of the priests proposed to accompany them is a close and trusted friend of mine. I had thought of sending with them someone they did not know, who might inform you exactly of the state of our holy religion in those countries. Since I feel sure, however, that this friend of mine will apprise you fully of everything with great care and sincerity, there will be no need to entrust this to someone else. I know of no one more reliable than he.

We are busy with the departure of two Missionaries for Madagascar, taking advantage of a ship going to the Indies, which I have been promised will call at that island coming and going. The company which usually sent ships there has not done so for five years because of the troubles in this kingdom. It now plans to send a ship there soon, and I have undertaken to send on it two more of our priests to join the others who are leaving earlier. I do not want to lose such a sure, ready opportunity as this, even though it is unusual.

Of the seven priests whose names we sent formerly to the Sacred Congregation, Monseigneur, some have died and a few of the others are no longer in a position to make the journey. I shall, therefore, present two new ones to the Nuncio for his approval and blessing on behalf of Our Lords of the Sacred Congregation, and we shall send the names afterward, in conformity with the decrees of the Sacred Congregation of February 10, 1653. I hope to send off the first ones within three days and that you, Monseigneur, will grant us the favor of honoring us with your continued benevolence
and protection. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monseigneur, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
Ls.C.M.

1703. - TO THE CANTOR OF LAON

[February or March 1654] ¹

We are sending a priest of our Congregation to visit the poor Pastors and other priests of your diocese in need of assistance. He will try to gather them together, with the permission of the Vicar-General, to discuss some means of helping the abandoned parishes and to see that none is left without spiritual assistance. He will then distribute clothing to them and settle on what they will have to be given monthly. He will also check on the state of the poor, especially those in rural areas. In all that, he will follow your advice.²

¹ René Almère was sent to the diocese of Laon in February or March 1654. (Cf. no. 1713.)
² The presence of M. Almère in Laon contributed greatly to the restoration of public worship.

The Ladies of Charity had the idea of using publicity to come to the aid of the provinces devastated by the wars. With the most interesting and touching passages from the letters of charitable persons working with the poor in those regions, they compiled accounts, which were printed and distributed throughout Paris and the large towns. This publication lasted from September 1650 to December 1655. The Bibliothèque Nationale (R 8370) possesses a collection of 130 pages entitled: Recueil des relations contenant ce qui s'est fait pour l'assistance des pauvres, entre autres ceux de Paris et des environs, et des provinces de Picardie et de Champagne, pendant les années 1650, 1651, 1652, 1653, et 1654 (Paris: Charles Savreux). These reports, commonly called Relations, were used extensively by Abbé Maynard in Saint Vincent de Paul, sa vie, ses temps, ses œuvres, son influence (vol. IV, pp. 164ff.), and by Alphonse Feillet, who published the text in 1856 in Revue de Paris, and used it in La misère au temps de la Fronde et Saint Vincent de Paul (Paris: Perrin, 1862). Feillet's work is extensively documented and highly recommended as a source of information on the pitiful state of France during the wars of the Fronde and the charitable activities of the Saint during this period.

We read in Relations, April-May 1654: "The priest of the Mission ... assembled the poor Pastors by deaneries and inspired them with a renewed desire to attend to their parishes. Some of them have taken charge of two or three parishes, where nothing remains but the remnants of a few poor families who hid in sheds or took refuge in churches. The Pastors were given cassocks and were promised a modest subsistence each month. They have been sent vestments and missals..."
I praise God for your candor in revealing your interior dispositions to me. I have no fear that your temptations will get the better of you. Few persons are not subject to the ones you suffer—including the greatest servants of God, who has allowed even the saints and the Apostles to be tried in this way. His grace, however, is sufficient to prevent them from yielding, and He gives it to those who ask it of Him, especially the humble and those who avoid the occasions of these vile temptations so as not to be exposed to them; this is absolutely necessary.

As you have already overcome similar perils, by the mercy of God, which were even more dangerous because they involved honor and temporal interests, I trust He will grant you the same grace now, especially since you are sincere in being open about yourself and ready to follow the orders of holy obedience. Now, it is said that the truly obedient person will speak of victory; this assures me of yours, with the grace of God, to whom I offer you for this end.

I cannot reply in detail to your dear letter because I am busy with other matters. In conclusion, I ask you to return here on the coach. I am writing to tell Monsieur Pennier to give you whatever to celebrate Mass. Some churches needed new roofs over the altars, and windows had to be put in to prevent rain from falling on the Sacred Host, or heavy winds from carrying off the Host during the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries. In a word, these visits have been such a blessing that we can say that at present, no village—except one—is deprived of the consolation of a Pastor.”

1Jacques Rivet, coadjutor Brother, born in Houdan (Yvelines) on September 11, 1620, entered the Congregation of the Mission on December 16, 1641, and took his vows on April 22, 1646.
2Cf. Prv 21:20. (D-RB)
3Denis Pennier, born in Torigni (Manche) on November 19, 1619, entered the Congregation of the Mission on August 12, 1644, was ordained a priest on Holy Saturday, March 31, 1646, and took his vows in December 1646. He was Superior of the Tréguié house (1653-54).
you will need. It will be a great consolation for me to see you, as you can imagine, and it will be the same for your good mother, who is well. We shall await you ardently and patiently.

1705. - TO CHARLES OZENNE, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW

Paris, February 13, 1654

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have just learned from a letter dated January 15 that you were supposed to arrive in Warsaw that very day or the day after, so I embrace you in spirit with special affection. It is difficult for me to tell you what joy this gives me and how frequently I thank God for having guided and sustained you on such a long, trying, and exhausting journey. I ask Him to draw His glory from your stay there.

You see the state of affairs there, so I shall say nothing to you about that. My only desire is that God may give us the spirit of profound gratitude for so many benefits bestowed on us by the King and the Queen, and for the assistance that other good souls give to the Company, for love of God and of Their Majesties. I ask Him also that we may apply ourselves constantly to divine matters and the salvation of our neighbor, in accord with their intentions.

It would be well if M. Desdames, who is beginning to speak in public in the vernacular, could be in Warsaw to help M. Zelazewski with parish work, and that God will help you to find a good Pastor for Sokółka. I do not think, however, that you should suggest this right away, unless you are ready to open a seminary, or some other circumstance should make his presence necessary for you.

Letter 1705. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.
God continues to bless the Troyes house and M. Rose’s leadership. Twenty-two seminarians are there, and they are doing well. We have sent M. Ennery there for their classes—or rather Providence has led him there for another good work we had not foreseen: two Irish regiments have been sent to winter quarters there. More than a hundred girls or women of good character and many little children are with them; they have been expelled from their country because of their religion, and all are living in dire poverty. So, M. Ennery is their Pastor; he preaches to them and instructs them, administers the sacraments, and gives clothing to the naked and other assistance to the most needy from the alms sent to him from Paris.

Brother Dassonval is not completely cured but is on the mend.

The Bishop recently gave M. Rose the parish of Barbuise with the intention of uniting it to the Company. It is located near... and has an income of two thousand livres. There is a fine house there and expenses are few. Still, we are having a little difficulty with that. We shall think about it.

M. Mousnier and M. Bourdaise left Tuesday for Nantes, where they are going to sail for Madagascar with Brother René, who has already made this trip. I recommend them to your prayers.

The nuns who left with you are still in Abbeville with M. de Monthoux, who has asked the Bishop of Geneva if he can return.

1Nicolas Roze, born in Transly (Pas-de-Calais) in 1616, entered the Congregation of the Mission as a priest on December 7, 1641. He was Superior in Troyes (1653-57).
2John McEnery.
3In the district of Nogent-sur-Seine (Aube).
4Left blank in the original.
5The Director who was to accompany the Visitation Nuns to Poland.
6Charles-Auguste de Sales, born in Thoren (Haute-Savoie) on January 1, 1606, was the nephew of Saint Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva. Charles-Auguste was Provost of the Saint-Pierre Chapter in Geneva, Vicar-General and Officialis for his uncle, and in 1635 was elected Dean of the collegiate church of Notre-Dame in Annecy. In 1643 he was named Coadjutor to Dom Juste Guérin and was consecrated on May 14, 1645, with the titular See of Hebron. On November 3, 1645, he succeeded Bishop Guérin in the Geneva diocese, which he governed until his death on February 8, 1660.

At the beginning of his episcopate, Charles-Auguste de Sales was benevolent toward the Priests of the Mission. On May 13, 1646, he wrote to the Madame Royale [Christine of France,
Mother de Pra has also asked to be relieved of making the foundation in Poland. At another time I shall write to you about the state of this affair.

Meanwhile, I ask Our Lord to guide you according to His Will and to bless the work He has placed in your hands.

I send cordial greetings to good Brother Duperroy and am, in the love of O[ur] L[ord], Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL, i.s.C.M.

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

1706. - TO NICOLAS GUILLOT, IN WARSAW

Paris, February 20, 1654

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
I praise God once again for M. Ozenne's arrival, for the warm

Duchess-Regent of Savoy, sister of Louis XIII; she governed during the minority of her son, Charles-Emmanuel II: "These good priests are a wonderful help to us for missions in the villages, for the ordinands, seminaries, retreats, instructions and catechism classes, and all at no cost to us." (Cf. Canon François Fleury, Histoire de l'Église de Genève [3 vols., Geneva: Grosset et Trembley, 1880-81], vol. 1, p. 230.) Later, his sentiments changed.

7Anne-Françoise de Pra, born in Burgundy, received the Visitation habit on February 15, 1639, at the First Monastery in Annecy. In 1646 she founded the convent in Dôle and became its first Superior. After completing two three-year terms, she went back to Annecy. Returning to France after her ill-fated voyage to Dover, she ceded the office of Superior of the mission to Poland to Mother Marie-Catherine de Châtain, who was in Aix-la-Chapelle at the time, and went to the Amiens monastery as Directress. Following a four-year sojourn in Annecy, she was named Superior in Bordeaux (1656-62) and Dôle (1667-73). After three years at the First Monastery in Annecy, she was elected Superior in Tours in 1676, dying there on May 4, 1677, at sixty years of age.

Letter 1706. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.
welcome you have given him, and for everything else you told me, particularly for the fact that people are working hard for the establishment of the Company and that M. Desdames has been recalled to Warsaw. This bringing together of the members and the presence of the leader will strengthen the family so that, by the grace of God, it will be able to undertake new works in the service of the Church and overcome the obstacles the devil and the world may put in the way. I hope this will not be due to you but that, on the contrary, you will contribute greatly to all the good that will be done both within the Community and outside it, especially to acknowledge, honor, and please our benefactors.

I am not surprised that persons of the profession you mention have tried to prevent the parish from being given to the Company. Apart from the fact that their intentions may have been good, God ordinarily allows good plans to encounter setbacks so that, when they succeed, people may know that it was He who brought this about. May His Holy Name be forever blessed for the fruitful beginnings of your mission and the great plans He has for the work and for the workers! Let us humble ourselves, Monsieur, for fear lest there be anything in us that may displease Him, but let us also have great trust in His infinite mercy, which will cause Him to overlook our weaknesses. I beg you to implore His graces for me who am, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,  
1.s.C.M.

I have just seen the note you wrote to Auxerre.¹ O Monsieur, how that distresses me! Is it possible that, after Our Lord has used you in such a worthy manner, you have the heart to abandon His work in this way? Ah, Monsieur, what do people say of those who abandon the children they have brought into the world? Oh! how

¹The birthplace of Nicolas Guillot.
many regrets you will have on judgment day for having deserted the Lord's army! In the name of God, Monsieur, let us not be shipwrecked in the harbor. Offer your trials to Our Lord; ask Him to restore a perfect spirit to you and to grant you the grace of corresponding to His eternal plans. I am, in the hope that He will do so.

Addressed: Monsieur Guillot, Priest of the Mission, in Warsaw

1707. - TO FRANÇOIS FOURNIER, IN AGEN

February 22, 1654

Although I am rather busy, I will try, nevertheless, to answer your letter, which contains six or seven questions.

The first is whether the vow of obedience made to the Superior General obliges one to obey a local Superior. My reply is yes, because the vow is made to God, and every Superior represents God to us. It is also the intention of the Superior General that we obey local Superiors, who hold his place, provided it be in the way our Rules prescribe.

In reply to the second question, let me say, Monsieur, that we are not permitted to hear the confessions of laypersons in the towns, if we are not giving missions there, except for those making their retreats in our houses. Furthermore, this must be done in our own churches or chapels and no others, even if we are asked to do so by influential persons and friends of the Company and the Vicars-General give permission, because our Rule forbids us to do so.

2Cf. Ps 51:14. (NAB)

Letter 1707. - Reg. 2, pp. 69 and 19. The excerpt on p. 19 begins with the words "As for your question about how a person observes" and ends "should be our intention and our hope." Since it belongs neither at the beginning nor the end of the excerpt on p. 69, we have inserted it in the most appropriate place.
Our Rule also forbids us to serve nuns of any Order whatsoever. Unless the Bishops order us expressly to do so, we must avoid this, not only for spiritual direction or confessions, but even for Mass, whether or not they are poor. It is up to the Bishops or their Superiors to provide for such needs; we should confine ourselves to our own functions, without becoming involved in other duties that might divert us from them, as subservience to nuns would do. If I have allowed M. Edme ¹ to go to the nuns of Sainte-Marie who have no chaplain, it is because this is a necessity and because of the order given him by the Bishop of Agen.² However, now that the plague has stopped raging in the town and the diocesan priests have returned, those nuns will find enough of them to serve them, and the Bishop will agree to the Company’s dispensing itself from this. That is why I ask it to excuse itself and make them understand that it is our custom always to act this way because such an attachment would prevent us from working at what is essential, namely, the salvation of the country people, who usually lack instruction and spiritual assistance.

Perhaps they will say that I am the first to contravene this practice, especially since I have the care of their monasteries in Paris. Know, however, that I had this duty before the Mission was established ³ and that from the time God brought it into being I have done all in my power to be relieved of directing them, even to let almost eighteen months pass without going near them.⁴ I had to yield, however, to the force of a higher authority because Cardinal de Retz, the Coadjutor of Paris,⁵ ordered me several times to continue. These are my replies to three or four questions in the third paragraph of your letter.

¹Edmé Meneutrier, François Fournier’s Superior.
²Barthélemy d’Elbène (1638-63).
³Saint Vincent had been named Superior of the Visitation nuns in Paris by Saint Francis de Sales in 1622.
⁴In 1646, Saint Vincent made a retreat resolution to resign as Superior despite the protestations of the Sisters. Cardinal de Retz, under pressure from Marguerite de Gondi, the Marquise de Maignelay, obliged the Saint to continue. (Cf. vol. III, no. 1018.)
⁵Jean-François-Paul de Gondi, Abbé de Buzay, future Cardinal de Retz, son of Philippe-Em-
As for the fourth, in which you want to know whether the priests we send from one diocese to another have faculties to hear confessions without presenting themselves to the Ordinary, my answer is no, except when the Bishop has instructed the Company to give missions in his diocese, as is the case in this diocese and in many others.

No matter where we are established, we are obliged to make a commemoration in the Office and to solemnize the feast of the patron saint of the parish, with an octave, even though we may not be the Pastors.

I cannot reply to the sixth question, as to whether the seminarians in our seminaries are exempt from making their Easter duty in the parish, because that has to be determined by the Bishop. I advise you, then, to consult him when he returns so as to do nothing contrary to his intention. This does not apply to our coadjutor Brothers because our Company, of which they are members, is a body approved by the Church, and this body has a head who is, as it were, their Pastor.

As for your question about how a person observes the fourth vow, which is to devote himself for his entire life to the salvation of the poor people of rural areas, although he is employed only in

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manuel de Gondi, General of the Galleys, and Françoise-Marguerite de Silly. On June 13, 1643, he was named Coadjutor to his uncle, Jean-François de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris, and was consecrated on January 31, 1644. Although he played an active role in the Fronde, the Queen—no doubt to win him over—obtained the Cardinal's hat for him on February 19, 1652. Discontented with his influence and plots, Mazarin had him imprisoned at Vincennes. Becoming Archbishop upon the death of his uncle (1654), and consequently more dangerous to the Prime Minister, de Retz was transferred to the château of Nantes, from which he escaped to Spain and then to Italy. In Rome the Priests of the Mission gave him hospitality, upon the order of Pope Innocent X. Because of this, Mazarin very nearly let all the force of his anger fall upon Saint Vincent and his Congregation. After the accession of Pope Alexander VII (1655), who was less benevolent to him than his predecessor, Cardinal de Retz left Rome on a long journey to Franche-Comté, Germany, Belgium, and Holland. He returned to France in 1662 after Mazarin had died, renounced the archbishopric of Paris, and received in exchange Saint-Denis Abbey. Age and trials had made him wiser; during the last four years of his life, some persons even considered him pious. In this peaceable, studious, simple-mannered man, concerned with paying off his numerous creditors, no one would have recognized the ambitious, flighty, and restless Prelate who had stirred up Paris and made the powerful Mazarin tremble. The Cardinal died on August 24, 1679.
seminaries, my answer is that, first of all, it is by being prepared in spirit, ready to go to preach missions at the slightest sign indicated to us, and secondly, because forming good Pastors and diocesan priests who will subsequently go to instruct the poor people in rural areas and exhort them to lead good lives is, indirectly, to work for their salvation. At least this should be our intention and our hope.

Lastly, you ask me if the Prelates have given to all Missionaries established under them a general authorization to absolve reserved cases. No, Monsieur, they have not all given it, and of those who have done so, some have placed restrictions on it; so much so, that we have no authority in dioceses except that granted us by our Bishops. Furthermore, we have to request it, and the authority they give us always presupposes the consent of the Pastors, without which we must not make use of it except when it cannot not be conveniently requested of them and we judge that they will probably have no objections. In that case we may do so.

I think that should be sufficient to clear up your little doubts, which can come only from your attachment to carrying out God's Will and our little observances in all things, for which I thank His Divine Goodness.

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1708. - TO MONSIEUR DE LA HAYE-VANTELAY

February 25, 1654

My Lord,

Although I do not have the honor of knowing you, I venture, nonetheless, to offer you my most humble services and those of the Little Company of the Mission, of which I, though unworthy, am the Superior. I entreat you to accept them, My Lord, together with the humble request I join to the letter that the King has written you.
In it he asks you to use your influence with the Grand Turk ¹ to grant Monsieur Husson, the French Consul in Tunis, an authenticated declaration ordering that, in conformity with the articles of the former capitulations agreed upon by our Kings and His Highness,² the following nations pay without objection the consular duties to the said Consul of France and his successors. These are: the French, Venetians, Spanish, inhabitants of Leghorn, Italians, Genoese, Sicilians, Maltese, and all Greeks—both those subject to His Highness and the others—Flemish, Dutch, Germans, Swedes, Jews, and, in general, all those, regardless of nationality (except for the English), who trade or will trade with Tunis, Cape Nègre,³ [Fumaire] Salade,⁴ Bizerte, Sousse, Sfax and all the other ports, harbors, and beaches of the said kingdom of Tunis.

If possible, My Lord, may the said patent also include everything else stated in the report I am sending you. If this is not done, the said Consul, sent there by the King to maintain his authority among his subjects, to settle disputes which may arise among merchants residing or trading in the said town, and to seek redress for them with the Dey or Pasha and other prominent persons when they are mistreated by the Turks, could not carry out the just intentions of His Majesty. This is especially the case since the English Consul, in virtue of a new patent he has obtained from the Grand Turk, is trying to interfere with the consulate of France and to usurp its rights over part of the above-mentioned nations, con-
trary to the former custom. By means of bribes, he is being supported in this by the Turks.

Perhaps you will find it strange, My Lord, that priests like us, who have given themselves to God to instruct the poor people in rural areas and to promote virtue in the ecclesiastical state, are, nevertheless, involved in a temporal affair and one so far removed from their functions as is this one. My answer to that, My Lord, is that we committed ourselves six or seven years ago to assist poor Christian slaves in Barbary spiritually and corporally, in sickness and in health. For this purpose we have sent there several of our confreres, who strive to encourage them to persevere in our holy religion, endure their captivity for the love of God, and work out their salvation in the midst of the trials they are undergoing. They have done so by means of visits, almsgiving, instructions, and the administration of the holy sacraments, even during the plague. As a result, we lost four of the best members of our Company during the last epidemic.

To facilitate this good work, they had to be placed in the beginning with the Consuls as their chaplains, for fear lest the Turks not allow them to practice our holy religion. But when the Consul died, the Dey or Pasha, at the request of the French merchants, ordered the Priest of the Mission to fill this office. And when a very pious, upper-class person saw the good this fine priest was doing in that duty, she used her influence with the King to have us given the consulates of Tunis and Algiers—we never had any thought of that—and His Majesty has allowed us to fill these positions with whatever capable persons we find suitable for our plan.

These abuses went back several years; both Martin de Lange, the former French Consul in Tunis, and Jean Le Vacher had suffered from them.
Boniface Nouel, Jacques Leage, Jean Dieppe, and Julien Guérin.
Jean le Vacher.
The Duchess d’Aiguillon.
We have chosen for this, My Lord, two members of our Company who are not priests but who understand business matters. In addition, the man we sent recently to Tunis had been a lawyer in the Parlement of Paris; his only interest in going there is to serve God and the neighbor. M. Barreau, who is also from a distinguished Parisian family, has done the same in Algiers. So, My Lord, since both share the same ideals as our priests, they live together as brothers and have all in common. After taking out what they need for their modest upkeep, they use the profits of the consulates, together with what we send them from France, for the corporal and spiritual assistance of poor Christian captives and to procure the liberty of some who have very little. These latter, for want of thirty or fifty piastres, would be in danger of remaining slaves their whole lives and perhaps of being lost through despair, as has happened to several since the Mathurin Fathers have discontinued their ransoming. It will soon be ten years since they have had anyone released.

Apart from all those good works, My Lord, they perform another very important one: maintaining the enslaved priests and monks in their duty. They do this by means of gentle reprimands and favors or, when those means are ineffective, by the authority of the spiritual sword they wield in their roles of Apostolic Missionaries and Vicars-General of the diocese of Carthage. The great

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9Benjamin Huguier and Jean Barreau, clerics.

Benjamin-Joseph Huguier, born in Sézanne (Marne) on March 10, 1613, was an attorney at the Châtelet of Paris before his admission into the Congregation of the Mission on September 15, 1647. He served in Tunis (1649-52), returning to France by way of Marseilles in May of 1652, took his vows the same year, and was ordained a priest in February 1655. After ordination, he became chaplain of the galleys in Toulon. However, he felt drawn to Barbary, and on September 19, 1662, he was sent to Algiers with the title of Vicar Apostolic. While nursing the plague-stricken there, he contracted the illness and died of it himself in April 1663. (Cf. Mémoires C.M., vol. II, pp. 221-30.)

10Martin Husson, a layman.

11The Order of the Most Holy Trinity for the Redemption of Captives (Trinitarians), founded by Saint John de Matha, went back to the twelfth century. It took its name (Mathurins) from the Paris convent built on the site of an old chapel dedicated to Saint Mathurin.
license that used to reign among these churchmen, which discouraged the Christians, caused several of the latter to convert to the Muslim religion and inflated the courage of the Turks, the witnesses of these disorders.

I tell you all this, My Lord, to point out to you the merit you will acquire before God in carrying out our request, since it concerns not only the person or office of the Consul in Tunis, but the service of the Church. This patent will provide our priests with the means of serving souls better and of consoling the suffering members of Our Lord who are the most abandoned in the world. Consequently, My Lord, you will have a large share in their good works, and we shall continually ask His Divine Goodness to preserve you for His glory and the good of that domain.

We know no one there who can promote this affair or furnish the funds. That is why, My Lord, we dare to hope for this favor entirely from your great kindness. Please instruct your secretary to expedite this legal document, once it has been granted you, and to draw up two authentic copies of it, one for Monsieur Husson in Tunis and the other for us at Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris. Do me the honor also of letting me know what sum you have advanced for all this; we shall place the money immediately in the hands of the Ambassador’s wife. I had the honor of seeing her and she led me to hope that she would speak to you in our behalf. I am, My Lord, in the love of Our Lord, your most... 12

VINCENT DEPAUL,  
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur de La Haye-Vantelay, Councillor of the King in his Council and Ambassador of His Majesty in the Levant

12Neither the King's letter nor the one written by Saint Vincent had any effect. The English Consul succeeded in having his claims established, even in Constantinople. His encroachments continued, and Martin Husson would again complain about this later. (Cf. Gleizes, op. cit., p. 87.)
1709. - TO NICOLAS GUILLOT, IN WARSAW

Paris, February 27, 1654

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I cannot tell you how distressed I am to see that you have sent word to Auxerre that you hope to be there soon. Alas! Monsieur, would you have the heart to abandon a work Our Lord has entrusted to you and in which He has used you in a manner all His own, calling you and blessing you in a very special way? In the name of God, Monsieur, do not yield to this horrible temptation. I ask this of you, prostrate in spirit at your feet and with tears in my eyes. I hope for this from the Goodness of God and from your own. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Guillot, Priest of the Mission, in Warsaw

1709a. - PIERRE SCARRON, BISHOP OF GRENOBLE, TO SAINT VINCENT

March 1, 1654

Around this same time [1654], Pierre Scarron, who had been Bishop of Grenoble for thirty-three years, was thinking of asking for M. Olier as...
his Coadjutor. He was convinced that Olier, despite his infirmities, would draw down as many blessings on his diocese and produce as many good results as would the most zealous and tireless worker. Because the Bishop felt sure he would refuse this honor, he wrote to the Queen asking her to remove all obstacles by giving Olier a formal command to accept the office of Bishop. To assure greater success, he entrusted his letter to Saint Vincent, to whom he wrote at the same time, as follows:

Long ago, Monsieur, Her Majesty, with full confidence in your wisdom and prudence, made you the judge of the merits of all the clergy in her kingdom. This has prompted me to tell you about a plan, with which God has inspired me in my declining years, to share the concerns of my diocese with Abbé Olier. His actions are as far above envy as the esteem and reputation he enjoys are below truth. That is why, for fear lest he might in his modesty oppose my request, I have sought an order from the Queen to reinforce the purity of my intention, whose aim is the honor of the Church and the welfare of my diocese. I entreat you to back it with your influence and to deliver the letters personally. 4

1710. - A PRIEST OF THE MISSION TO SAINT VINCENT

After a few hesitations, which Saint Vincent succeeded in dissipating, he decided to become a priest and was ordained on May 21, 1633. The first years of his priestly career were dedicated to the work of missions. He participated in the labors of the priests of Saint-Lazare, whom he edified by his zeal and humility. Saint Vincent calls him "a man given over to the grace of God and completely apostolic." In 1635, for reasons still unexplained, Olier changed from the direction of Saint Vincent, his confessor for three years, to that of Father de Condren. This was not a desertion—far from it. In 1649 he wrote, "For extraordinary affairs, we do not fail to see Monsieur Vincent, and for ordinary matters, all our brothers assembled." He did not open the Vaugirard Seminary or accept the pastorate of Saint-Sulpice until he had consulted the Saint. "Monsieur Vincent is our father," he often used to say to his seminarians. Olier died on April 2, 1657, assisted by his holy friend. The latter consoled the priests of Saint-Sulpice in their sorrow; we still have an excerpt from the address to them on this occasion, which has been attributed to Saint Vincent (cf. vol. XIII, no. 51).

4Faillon added in the margin after this text "Attestations auth., p. 325." The Bishop's efforts to have Olier as his Coadjutor were unsuccessful.

Letter 1710. - Abelly, op. cit., bk. II, chap. XI, sect. III, p. 400. Abelly combined several excerpts from different letters; we prefer to publish each excerpt separately.

1These lines were published in Relations, January-March 1654.
than a hundred villages. In them we found elderly persons and children almost completely naked and frozen, and women in despair, perishing with cold. We clothed more than four hundred of them and distributed spinning wheels and hemp to give the women something to do.

The relief efforts begun for the parish priests have continued. When we brought them together by deaneries, we found some who had almost nothing, so we gave them clothing and cassocks. We also furnished their churches with vestments and missals and had the necessary repairs done on the roofs and windows to keep the rain from falling on the Sacred Host and to prevent the wind from carrying it off during the celebration of Mass. This is why the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is now celebrated in a large number of churches, where the people are now receiving the sacraments. Without this help, the churches would be completely deserted and abandoned.

1711. - TO THE MONKS OF MONT-SAINT-ÉLOY ABBEY

March 4, 1654

Messieurs,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The high opinion in which I have long held your holy house, because of the sanctity of your Prelate, whom I saw previously in Paris, and because of your own excellent reputation, has always given me a great desire to be of service to you. I can also say that, when I was in a position to do so, I tried to serve you on every occasion that presented itself. Now that Providence does not allow me to do so any longer, it still gives me the opportunity to express my good will to you.

You may have heard that your election of three of your monks, whose names were sent to the King so that a choice might be made.
of one of them as your Abbot, in accordance with the custom of Artois, has been thwarted by a person of rank, who has obtained this abbey. This has greatly distressed the two monks you sent here to present the petition for this matter. In the midst of this consternation, God has offered them a very good means to make up for this unfortunate outcome. It is, Messieurs, to suggest that you ask Her Majesty for Reverend Father Le Roy, a monk of Saint-Victor, to be your Abbot, by way of postulation and not by election, even though he is not a member of your house. This would be on condition, however, that he change nothing in the abbey either in its discipline or in temporal affairs. Since they have consulted me on this, I have decided to give you my humble opinion, pointing out to you some of the advantages that should accrue to you from it. I hope you find it acceptable.

(1) You will avoid a great evil by not having as Superior a person lacking the spirit of your holy Order.

(2) By this means you will still maintain your right of election.

(3) Since Reverend Father Le Roy is an Augustinian like yourselves and enjoys the reputation of being a good monk, he is, consequently, capable of governing this abbey according to your customs and intentions.

(4) He is the brother of M. Le Roy, chief clerk of M. Le Tellier, who is very influential and one of the best men I know in this world.

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Abbey and took his vows the following year. He became secretary to Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld, directed the Congregation of France as Superior General (1640-43, 1665-67), and was named Assistant in 1647 and 1650. He was Coadjutor of the Sainte-Geneviève Abbey during his first generalate, and Abbot during the second.

*The Governor of Arras. He had requested the abbey for his uncle, a member of the Premonstratensian Order (Norbertines).


Michel Le Tellier, born April 19, 1603, was Secretary of State (1643-66), Chancellor, and Keeper of the Seals of France (1677-85). During the Fronde, he supported Mazarin and his policy. "As Councillor of State," he remarked one day, "I had a great deal to do with M. Vincent. He did more good for religion and the Church in France than any man I have ever known; but I especially observed that at the Council of Conscience, where he was the most important member, there was never any question of his own interests or of the ecclesiastical houses which he had established." (Testimony of Claude Le Pelletier, 12th witness at the process of beatification.) Le Tellier died on October 28, 1685.
This being the case, Messieurs, you are assured of having a powerful protector at Court, your privileges and possessions will be respected, and no one will dare to harm your monastery or your farms.

For these reasons, Messieurs, I am sure you will decide to propose this good monk, since you will find in him everything favorable that you might hope to find in one of your own men. I earnestly hope for this for the good of your Community, assuring you that my only interest in it is the glory of God. I am in His love, Messieurs, your most. . .

1712. - TO JACQUES DESCLAUX, BISHOP OF DAX

[1653 or 1654] ¹

I must confess, Excellency, that it would be a great joy for me to see you in Paris. However, I would regret just as much your coming here in vain, since I do not believe that your presence here would have any good results in this miserable period when the evil of which you have to complain is almost universal throughout the kingdom. Wherever the armies have passed, they have committed the sacrileges, thefts, and acts of impiety your diocese has suffered. This has happened not only in Guyenne and Périgord but also in

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³Pierre Le Roy was canonically elected Abbot on April 28, 1654, and remained in office until his death on February 17, 1685. He was, says Adolphe de Cardevaque (L'abbaye du Mont-Saint-Éloi (1668-1792) [Arras: A. Brissy, 1859], p. 105), "one of the luminaries of the Estates of his province, and on several occasions had the honor of being sent to Court as deputy of the clergy. The Council of Artois was present in a body at his funeral." Interesting details regarding his election are given in the work of Claude du Moulinet (Histoire des chanoines réguliers de l'Ordre de S. Augustin de la Congrégation de France depuis l'origine jusqu'en 1670 [4 vols., Bibl. Sainte-Geneviève, Ms. 604], vol. III, fol. 144ff.).


¹The contents of this letter prove that it was written at the end of the second war of the Fronde, before 1655.
Saintonge, Poitou, Burgundy, Champagne, Picardy, and many other places, even around Paris.

Everywhere in general the clergy—and the people as well—are greatly distressed and bereft. Linen and clothing to cover them are being sent from Paris to those in the nearest provinces, and alms to help them to live; otherwise, very few would be left to administer the sacraments to the sick. When people ask the clergy to reduce the tithes, they say that most of the dioceses are asking for the same thing and that, because everyone is suffering the hardships of the war, they do not know who should have this reduction.

This is a general scourge, with which God has chosen to try this kingdom. And so, Excellency, we could do no better than to submit to His justice, while waiting for His mercy to remedy so much misery. If you are a delegate to the General Assembly of 1655, you will at that time be able to claim more justly some relief for your clergy. Meanwhile, it will be a consolation to them to enjoy your dear presence there, where it does so much good, even for the King’s service....

1713. • TO CHARLES OZENNE, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW

Paris, March 6, 1654

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

None of your letters has reached us this week; that is why I have nothing in particular to say to you, except that I am enclosing a few

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2The Bishop of Dax was not elected to the Assembly of the Clergy—what we might call today a National Bishops’ Conference. Nevertheless, he came to Paris at the end of 1655 to lay before the Assembly the distressed state of his diocese. (Cf. Abbé Antoine Degert, Histoire des évêques de Dax [Paris: Poussielgue, 1903], p. 330.)

Letter 1713. • Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.
lines I have written to the former Pastor of Holy Cross to thank him for having adopted you as his own children by handing over to you his parish and house. See if the letter is appropriate and whether it is expedient to deliver it to him. If so, put it in a proper envelope and seal it.

There is no change in our little news. We are all still in good health, thank God. M. Dehorgny is Superior at the Bons-Enfants because we needed M. Cornuel elsewhere. Our ordinands left very satisfied, and we were greatly edified by them. Two devout young Doctors of the Sorbonne gave them the conferences very effectively. Soon we shall have to begin the same exercises again, and God grant that we may have the same success! Meanwhile, we are going off to give a few missions, which will last until after Easter. They will not cause us to forget you and your retreat, for we shall continue to offer both to God.

Good M. Alméras has gone to make a tour of the ruined parishes of the Laon diocese to assist the poor Pastors and to encourage them to remain in residence and extend their ministry to their neighbors deprived of priests. He will distribute to them vestments, clothing, and a little money. Brother Jean Parre, who is in the same place, will continue, under his orders, to assist the poor people whom the war has left with nothing. Brothers Mathieu and Jean Proust are doing the same in the dioceses of Reims and Noyon.

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1Brother Mathieu Régnard was born on July 26, 1592, in Brienne-le-Château, now Brienne-Napoléon (Aube). He entered the Congregation of the Mission in October 1631, took his vows on October 28, 1644, and died on October 5, 1669. He was the principal distributor of Saint Vincent's alms in Lorraine and also during the troubles of the Fronde. His daring, composure, and savoir-faire made him invaluable to the Saint. Régnard made fifty-three trips to Lorraine, carrying sums of money varying between twenty thousand and fifty thousand livres. Bands of thieves, who had been alerted to his passage and knew what he was carrying, watched him closely, but he always arrived safely at his destination with his treasure. His company was considered a safeguard: the Comtesse de Montgomery, reluctant to journey from Metz to Verdun, decided to do so only after having procured Brother Mathieu as a traveling companion. Queen Anne of Austria used to enjoy listening to him tell of his adventures. Régnard's biography is in vol. II of Notices, pp. 29-33.

2Brother Jean Proust, born in Parthenay (Deux-Sèvres) on March 12, 1620, entered the Congregation of the Mission on June 25, 1645, and took his vows on October 28, 1647.
If good M. Desdames has arrived in Warsaw, I embrace him, along with the rest of your dear family. I am, in Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

At the bottom of the first page: Monsieur Ozenne

1714. - TO JACQUES CHIROYE,1 SUPERIOR, IN LUÇON

Paris, March 8, 1654

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I thank God for M. Pignay’s2 arrival, for the Bishop of Luçon’s satisfaction with him, and for the new duties he has given him. Through these duties he will surely render great service to God and to the diocese. I praise God also for the arrangements you made for the retreat for the ordinands. I hope that, from now on, through the zeal and assistance of this apostolic man, you will labor in this good work.

We shall wait, then, until God inclines the above-mentioned Bishop to bring about the union of the parish; otherwise, it will not be done.3 Still, I see that all the unions of similar benefices are

Letter 1714. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.

1Jacques Chiroye was born in Auppegard (Seine-Maritime) on March 14, 1614, and entered the Congregation of the Mission on June 25, 1638. He served as Superior in Luçon (1640-50, 1654-60, 1662-66) and Crécy (1660-62). He did not take his vows until March 9, 1660. Chiroye died on May 3, 1680.

2Nicolas Pignay, priest of the Rouen diocese and Doctor of the Sorbonne. In his will, dated August 10, 1671 (Arch. Nat., M 213, n. 8), he is identified as: “Headmaster of the Collège de Justice . . . living at the Bons-Enfants.”

3There is no document to prove that the union ever took place.
effected by Bishops and not by the Pope. Let me know if I have already sent you, as I think I have, a copy of the documents to be drawn up, so as to observe the formalities and to do the thing validly, as has been done for the union of the parish in Saint-Preuil with the Saintes Seminary. If you do not have them, I will send them to you.

It is consoling to me that your workers are laboring in the missions while you help M. Pignay get his bearings and situate himself in these new surroundings.

We shall then, pay the Le Mans house, on your behalf, room and board for Claude Bajoteau, to be deducted from what we owe you. I shall inform M. Lucas about it by the next regular mail so that he will mark it paid.

The Company here is in the same state. God is blessing it in a special way in Italy. M. du Chesne, who was in Marseilles, has gone to open a new house in Agde, Languedoc. M. Alméras is in Picardy to assist the poor pastors and to distribute vestments, clothing, and money to them so that they will not abandon their parishes. He is also getting help to the poor, whom the war has stripped of everything. Three of our Brothers are doing this same work both in Champagne and in Picardy.

I am in town and night is upon me, which obliges me to conclude by embracing you and your dear little family, prostrate in spirit at your feet and those of M. Pignay. I renew to him the offers of my

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4 Commune in the district of Cognac (Charente).
5 A boarder at the Le Mans Seminary.
6 Antoine Lucas, born in Paris on January 20, 1600, had pursued higher studies at the Sorbonne. He entered the Congregation of the Mission in December 1626 and was ordained a priest in September 1628. His zeal, talent for preaching, and skill in debate were greatly appreciated by Father de Condren, as well as by Jean-Jacques Olier, who asked Saint Vincent for him for his personal instruction and for the conversion of a heretic. Lucas was in La Rose in 1645, Superior in Le Mans (1647-51), and was then placed in Sedan. He died in November 1656, a victim of his zeal for the plague-stricken. (Cf. Notices, vol. I, pp. 135-46.)
7 François Fouquet, Bishop of Agde, had drawn up a foundation contract, which Saint Vincent refused to sign because it contained clauses that were very burdensome. Matters remained at a standstill until 1671, when the establishment finally closed.
obedience and to you the gift of my heart. I am, in that of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL, i.s.C.M.

At the bottom of the first page: Monsieur Chiroye

1715. - A PRIEST OF THE MISSION TO SAINT VINCENT

Despair had driven several young women of quality in various places in the border areas of Champagne to distressing extremes. The best remedy seemed to be to remove them from danger, so we have begun to place them with the Sisters of Saint Martha in the town of Reims, where they are being instructed in the fear of God and trained to do some little task. Already thirty daughters of nobles from these parts are in this refuge; some of them had spent several days hidden in caves to escape the insolence of the soldiers.

This charitable work and the rescue and placement of all the others we find in similar danger will cost a great deal because, in addition to what must be paid for their board, they must also be clothed. We hope, however, that the charity of the persons who have made such a good beginning will continue and increase rather than decrease.

Letter 1715. - Abelly, op. cit., bk. II, chap. XI, sect. III, p. 401. Abelly combined several excerpts from different letters; we prefer to publish each excerpt separately.

1These lines were published in Relatons, January-March 1654.

2The Hospital Sisters of Saint Martha, who served in many hospitals in Burgundy and Champagne during the Ancien Régime [France before 1789].
Monseigneur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The news I have to give you will perhaps surprise you: the Archbishop of Myra has died from a severe inflammation of the lungs, after an illness of twelve or thirteen days. The Nuncio did me the honor of coming here to inform me of it and, as I was preparing to go and see him the next day, Tuesday, the tenth of this month, I learned that he had died that very morning.

He was taken to the Franciscans in the evening, and the service, at which the Nuncio was present, was held there on Wednesday. Several influential persons were also there; in particular, some gentlemen representing the Ambassador of Portugal, who showed great concern for the deceased and his affairs. He had put his papers in order and had a seal placed on the most important ones, and he gave orders that they be forwarded to the Sacred Congregation.

A difference of opinion arose over his place of burial because the Pastor in the faubourg Saint-Germain, where he had lived, wanted it in his church. In the end, however, he gave him over to his Order.

I tried to be of service to this good Archbishop as best I could and to do as he wished, as you had instructed me; I regret not having done so more effectively and of being deprived so soon of this
opportunity of obeying you. I shall await others from you, and from
God the grace of being able, in some way, to acknowledge your
incomparable protection and goodness in our regard.

There is in this city a good old man, eighty years of age, who
lived with the late Archbishop of Myra. He is a foreigner, and
people say he is the Patriarch of Antioch, although he is alone and
shows no sign of being a Prelate. I tried to persuade him to join up
with some monks who are returning to his country, but his age and
infirmities do not allow this.

I most humbly entreat you, Monseigneur, to make use of the
authority you have over me in any way you wish. I am, in the love
of Our Lord, Monseigneur, your most humble and very obedient
servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,

At the bottom of the first page: Bishop Massari

1717. - TO CHARLES OZENNE, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW

Paris, March 13, 1654

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received at the same time two of your letters, dated February
5 and 12. I read them with fresh sentiments of gratitude to God and
to the Queen, who take such good care of you and your estab-
ishment. Since Her Majesty acts solely out of pure love of God,
He is the only one who can reward her great acts of charity. I see
that she has done new ones for you and is on all occasions a good

3The secretary had written Smyrna here and earlier; the Saint himself changed the word to
Myra.

Letter 1717. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.
mother to you. Please God you will always be good servants to her and true Missionaries.

I praise God for the warm welcome the Bishop of Poznan has given you and for his good will toward the Company. The union of the parish \(^1\) must be accepted in the way he has proposed to you, since it is the custom of the country, and that he give the title for life to the person whom we designate for it, under such conditions that the one named may do nothing contrary to the intention of the Company.

I ask God to bless abundantly the mission you are giving at Holy Cross and that this first grace may act as a seed to multiply to infinity this kind of work and its good results. But how will you manage, Monsieur, if Messieurs Guillot and Zelazewski leave you? I certainly am deeply grieved at their desire to do so, and I am sure you are using every possible means to retain them, especially the latter, since the other man is quite determined to go back home. It is a great pity that, just at the time when he can render good service to God in Poland, he is turning his heart and his steps toward flesh and blood. He has written to those at home that they will be seeing him soon, and I am sure that, leaving the country in which you now are, contrary to the advice of everyone and the order of holy obedience, he will also leave the Company. I hope, nevertheless, that God will not permit him to go where his inclination is leading him.

I fully approve of your sending Brother Posny back, since M. Fleury desires this and the former is behaving so badly toward him. I am really displeased at his fault because we are so much indebted to this good servant of God.

We are going to prepare a priest, a seminarian, and a coadjutor Brother for you—or at least two seminarians, one of whom will be able to teach in the seminary and is preparing to become a priest soon—who will set out at the first opportunity.

\(^1\)Holy Cross parish in Warsaw.
Mademoiselle Le Gras is writing to you. Her letter 2 dispenses me from saying anything to you about your questions to me concerning the Daughters of Charity because she is answering them, in accord with the decision we took.

I recommend myself to your prayers and assure you of the continuation of ours. I cordially embrace good M. Desdames and all the Little Company. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
is.C.M.

At the bottom of the first page: Monsieur Ozenne

1718. - TO FIRMIN GET,1 IN MARSEILLES

March 13, 1654

You must make up your mind to be patient regarding the house that looks out on yours and the neighbor living there, who is beginning to annoy you. You must not expect to have everything as you wish and not experience the inconveniences that persons cause one another.

2The present location of this letter is unknown.

Letter 1718. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, Marseilles manuscript, original.
1Firmin Get, born in Chépy (Somme) on January 19, 1621, entered the Congregation of the Mission on January 5, 1641, and took his vows in January 1643. In 1648 he was placed in Marseilles, where he was Superior (1654-62), except for a very short time spent in Montpellier (1659-60) to open a seminary, which lasted only a few months. Later he became Superior in Sedan (1663-66, 1673-81) and Le Mans (1670-73), and Visitor of the Province of Poitou, an office he held until April 4, 1682.
Excellency,

I am writing you this letter for two reasons: first, to renew to you the offers of my obedience, with all the reverence and affection you know Our Lord has given me for your sacred person and, second, to make you a very humble request on behalf of the Chapter of Beauvais. You may have heard of the difference arising between it and the Bishop about the order given for the publication of the Bull against the new opinions. This induced the members of this
Chapter to ask the Holy See for representatives to investigate that affair. They did not, however, obtain what they wanted because, instead of you, Excellency, they were given your Officialis, whom they do not know.

For this reason, they wanted me to entreat you most humbly, as I now do, to let us know if the Officialis is a man high-minded enough to place God’s interests above human considerations, as should be done, and whether they can be sure of that in this instance. In addition, Excellency, would you kindly recommend this affair to him as God’s affair? You are aware of its importance; I know how much you have the interests of God and the Church at heart and that the recommendations made to you about this never annoy you.

That is why, Excellency, because of the urgency of taking action in this matter, I hope you will not disapprove of the liberty I have taken but will honor me with a word of reply as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, I am, in the love of O[ur] L[ord], Excellency, your...

VINCENT DEPAUL,
I.s.C.M.

1720. - TO CHARLES OZENNE, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW

Paris, March 20, 1654

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have nothing in particular to tell you because I have not yet received your letters, although someone went twice for them to Madame des Essarts,¹ who informed me that they had not yet arrived. God grant that they will bring us only good news!

Letter 1720. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.

¹As early as 1652 Madame des Essarts looked after the affairs of the Queen of Poland in France.
We have no bad news here, thank God. True, almost everyone in the Genoa house has been sick, in one way or another, but they are all getting better now, although a few are not completely cured. They are going to open an Internal Seminary again and continue a devotion they began—and we along with them—to ask God, through the merits and prayers of Saint Joseph, whose feast we celebrated yesterday, to send good workers to the Company to work in His vineyard. We have never felt the need of this so strongly as we do now because several Cardinals and Bishops of Italy are pressuring us to give them Missionaries. The men in Rome and Genoa continue to work so fervently and successfully that they are held in very high esteem, by God's mercy.

M. Thibault, Superior of our Saint-Méen house, writes me that he has given a five-week mission, in which he clearly recognized that the mission is purely the work of God. Among the good results he pointed out to me, he says that everyone remained in church from morning until night on the three final days of the carnival, and that, in reparation for their past excesses, they resolved voluntarily to take only bread and water during those days. This was observed so exactly and generally by all the inhabitants that only two or three of them at the most failed to perform this act of penance. That is certainly marvelous.

A few of our priests have gone to give a mission four leagues from here; it is the fifth or sixth one this winter. Then we also have

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2Cf. Mt 9:37-8. (NAB)
3Louis Thibault, born in Ferrières-Gâtinais (Loiret) on March 29, 1618, was received at Saint-Lazare on August 21, 1637, and was ordained a priest in April 1642. From his post as Superior of the Saintes house, he was recalled to Paris in 1646, where he took his vows and dedicated himself zealously and successfully to the missions. From 1648 to his death in February 1655, he was Superior of the Saint-Méen house. During his missions he would seek out pious persons wishing to detach themselves from the world and would assist them in the choice of a religious Community. The Company of the Daughters of Charity greatly benefited from his zeal. (Cf. Notices, vol. III, pp. 124-28.) After the death of his sister, his parents decided to dedicate themselves to God's service—the father with the Priests of the Mission, the mother with the Daughters of Charity. Whether they actually did so is uncertain.
the ordinands who are coming, and we shall finish the Lenten season with them as we began it. By means of conferences and the distribution of vestments, clothing, and alms, M. Alméras continues to encourage poor Pastors in the border areas to remain in residence and take care of their people. At the same time, he supervises the help our Brothers are giving the poor, who have lost everything.

I recommend to your prayers all our works and needs. Enclosed is a packet of letters for you and a letter I have written to M. Desdames telling him that I share his joy in the happiness he has of being with you. I am, 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 Ozenne

1721. - TO STANISLAW ZELAZIEWSKI, IN WARSAW

Paris, March 27, 1654

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Your letter gave me much joy because it came from someone whom I greatly esteem and cherish. It has equally distressed me, however, seeing the resolution you have taken to withdraw from the Company, abandoning in this way God's work when it would seem that you are even more obliged to commit yourself to it. God caused you to come to France, leaving you here to have you join us, forming you in the humanities, piety, and ecclesiastical functions, then leading you back to your own country and, at the same

Letter 1721. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, seventeenth or eighteenth century copy.
time, opening the door to so much good you can do there by remaining in the state in which He has placed you. Surely, if you reflected carefully on His plans for you, you would not want to stray so far from your vocation nor make yourself responsible on judgment day for having lost such a beautiful opportunity.

You say you are not happy in the Mission. That, in itself, is not a sign that God does not want you there. Perfect contentment is never to be found, in whatever place and condition one may be. This life is full of annoyances and troubles both of mind and of body; it is a state of continual agitation, which snatches peace of mind from those who think they possess it and eludes those who seek it. Did Our Lord lead an easy life? Did He not experience the trials and tribulations we fear? He was the Man of Sorrows, and we want to be exempt from suffering! He speaks to us of the Cross only so that we might have a share in His glory, and we would wish to follow Him without enduring anything! That is impossible. We must renounce ourselves in order to serve Him, and tomorrow’s Gospel assures us that the man who loves his soul will lose it, and the man who hates his soul in this world will preserve it to life eternal.

This may also serve as a reply to your pretext for leaving, namely, your poor health—as if it should be dearer to you than the glory of God. You know how you feel right now, but you do not know how you will feel later. Who told you that leaving your vocation will make you feel better, or that, if you remain in it, you will always be in poor health? No one knows that, and yet you are willing to make an irreparable mistake by imagining it is so! We see some men in the Company who have the same ailment as you but not one who does not recover from it. I myself had it in my youth, and I hope that you will likewise be cured of it, once age has tempered your blood.

Concern for your mother should not oblige you to leave either,

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1Cf. Is 53:3. (NAB)
2Cf. Jn 12:25. (NAB)
because you know what the Queen has told you will be done for her relief and what the Company has promised you. I am sure you can assist her better by remaining a Missionary than by returning to the world.

After all these arguments, Monsieur, you have good reason to fear that there is some fickleness in your conduct and that, because of a spirit of worldliness, you want to shake off the yoke of J[esus] C[hrist]. What will you say to Him one day when He reproaches you for the loss of so many souls, if you refuse to lend them a hand, seeing them on the brink of ruin through want of instruction and encouragement to do good? You will reply to me that you are determined to work at their salvation outside of the Mission, and I say to you, Monsieur, that you will perhaps do as a few others who have left: finding themselves deprived of the grace of their vocation, they have done very little of what they had planned to do, and several have faded away with their empty pretexts.

The example of so many priests in the world, who avoid work because they are so attached to their own comfort and run after the desire for possessions and the satisfactions of this present life, should cause you to fear being swept away by this torrent, if you forsake the little boat in which God has placed you, where you can render great service through the graces He attaches to it and the talents He has given you. Why should you not fear that He will abandon you if you abandon His cause in this way? And if the Company should happen to fail in that through your fault, He could demand a very exact account of you for that, especially since your departure will deter others from entering it. In addition, making it clear by this scandal that you esteem neither its institution nor its functions, you will deprive it of the high esteem in which it is held and, consequently, of the means of producing good results. See where all that leads, Monsieur, and, in the name of God, resist this temptation.

As for your asking me if you might remain with the Missionaries without being a member, to work with them and still remain free, we will not do that. We have never granted this to anyone; it would
encourage others to leave and to hope for the same thing. Naturally, everyone loves his freedom, but we must beware of this as of a broad road that leads to perdition.³

So, then, Monsieur, please do not expect that, but give yourself to God to serve Him all your life in the manner and in the state in which He has placed you. You have such favorable opportunities to do so that you cannot refuse them unless you want to risk your own salvation along with that of countless souls. On the contrary, by working at their sanctification you assure your own, and by remaining in the Mission you will preserve it. Your example will cause many Poles to enter it to receive in it the spirit of the ecclesiastical state and to multiply the workers in the vineyard of the Lord who has such great need of them.

It is for this that you have been called to it, and I hope that His Divine Goodness will grant you the grace to persevere through the intercession of Saint Casimir, to whom I recommend you. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

1722. - TO CHARLES OZENNE, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW

Paris, March 27, 1654

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am sure you are distressed, seeing that two workers want to leave you just when you have the greatest need of them. I know also, however, that you find your peace of mind in God, who allows

³Cf. Mt 7:13. (NAB)

Letter 1722. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.
this upset in order to consolidate His work, and is able to advance
the Company by a thousand other means. Perhaps he has permitted
M. Guillot to sprain his foot to avoid the sprain he wants to give to
his vocation, which would surely be in danger if he returned to
France. Perhaps also, after these initial agitations, He wishes to try
M. Zelazewski by the temptation he is undergoing and to constrain
them both to remain steadfast in the place and in the state in which
He has placed them, by the consideration of the good that both can
accomplish and the evils they will avoid. I certainly do not know
how they could absolve themselves of such a fault, if they were to
abandon God's work when it was going along so well and leave
such an important foundation in its beginnings.

I am writing to the last-mentioned about this. Above all, I am
setting him straight about his thought of remaining with the Mis-
sionaries when he is no longer one of them, joining them in their
work whenever he pleases, provided he has his freedom. That is
unheard of in the Company, and such an example would be very
harmful to us. If he leaves, he must stay away; otherwise, he will
do us a twofold disservice.

I praise God that you now have good M. Desdames with you. I
am sure both you and he find this consoling, and I feel in my own
heart that this is the case. I embrace him with all my affection. Have
Brother Duperroy ordained a priest as soon as possible.¹ One good
soldier is worth ten, and God will certainly bless your little flock
even if the loss you fear should occur. It is He who has called you
to Poland, has shown you such a bountiful harvest, and wants you
to begin work on it, relying on a special trust in His grace and not
on your own strength, since you have so little.

We shall, nevertheless, prepare the reinforcements you are
requesting, and will have them leave at the first opportunity. They
are: a coadjutor Brother who, I think, will be that young man from
Germany who lived in Warsaw and speaks Polish; ² he is strong,

¹He was ordained on April 4, before this letter reached Charles Ozenne.
²Perhaps Jean Meusnier, born in the village of Munau, Trier diocese, in 1634. He entered the
sufficiently pious, and intelligent. In addition, we will send a priest and, if possible, a seminarian who can teach in the seminary. I have in mind a very fine, capable young man, who even wants to go to Poland. You mentioned M. Gigot, but I do not think he speaks Latin well, and he has no aptitude for languages. Still, please let me know what you think of him and the good you have noted in him which makes you think he is suitable for that country.

Last Saturday God took to Himself the Archbishop of Paris. At the same time, Cardinal de Retz took possession of this church by proxy and was received by the Chapter, although he is still at the Bois de Vincennes. Providence had directed him to set up a power of attorney for this purpose and to name two Vicars-General. He did this a few days before he was arrested, when he was planning to journey to Rome, in case God should call his uncle while he was traveling. So, these Vicars-General, two Canons of Notre-Dame, are performing their duties and, on their orders, we now have the ordinands. Everyone admires this foresight, the effects of which are so timely—or, rather, the guidance of God, who has not left this diocese a single day without a Pastor, while certain persons want to give it someone other than its own.

Time and paper are running out. I greet the little family and 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 Ozenne

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Congregation of the Mission as a coadjutor Brother in 1653 and took his vows on January 25, 1656. Meunier did not go to Poland.

2Denis Gigot, born in Drumet-Maria (Seine-et-Marne), entered the Congregation of the Mission on July 22, 1647, at the age of twenty-two, and took his vows on October 9, 1649, in the presence of M. Bourdet.

4Jean-François de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris (1623-54), died on March 21, at four o'clock in the morning. At five o'clock, the Sieur de Labour, the appointed delegate, took possession of the archiepiscopal See in the name of Cardinal de Retz. When Le Tellier arrived at Notre-Dame to prevent the customary formalities, he was too late. The prisoner, de Retz, learned about his uncle's death the same day by a prearranged conventional signal. The priest who
1723. - TO SISTER JEANNE-FRANÇOISE, IN ÉTAMPES

Paris, March 28, 1654

Dear Sister,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
You give me pleasure by informing me from time to time of the state and number of your orphans. I continue to offer you to God and to ask Him to bless your work.

I showed your letter to the Ladies, who thought it advisable for you to give an account of your expenses to the Lieutenant-General's wife. Mademoiselle Viole asks that you let her know if you have received the letter she wrote you.

Do me the kindness of praying to God for me.

Mademoiselle Le Gras is rather well, and your Little Company is doing rather well also, thank God. I am, in Our Lord, Sister, your very affectionate servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,

Addressed: Sister Jeanne-Françoise, Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor, in Étampes

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celebrated Mass the following day in his presence raised his voice as he said: Joannes Franciscus Pausus, antistes noster [Jean-François-Paul, our Bishop].

Letter 1723. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original signed letter.

1Marguerite du Tartre, wife of Gabriel de Bry, Sieur d'Arcy and Lieutenant-General of the legal jurisdiction of Étampes.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Your letter of March 5, like the preceding ones, consoled me greatly, seeing that the Queen in her kindness is tireless in doing good for you in every way and on all occasions. For our part, we never fail to thank God for the graces He grants her, and we ask Him to continue to do so in abundance.

Her Majesty has good reason to be displeased with the return of M. Guillot and the departure of M. Zelazewski. I ask God to forgive them. As for myself, I admire a soldier who is so faithful to his captain that he would not dare to retreat when there is fighting to be done, nor stop without his consent, under pain of being punished as a deserter from the army. An honorable man would never abandon his friend in time of need, especially if they were in a foreign country. Why? For fear of acting like a coward or of being boorish. I repeat, I admire the fact that, those persons have, through human respect, more courage than Christians and priests have, through charity or through their good intentions.

These two priests were called for the first foundation of the Mission in a great kingdom where there is infinite good to be done, and where everything desirable is being prepared in order to succeed well and to reap an abundant harvest. Nevertheless, they are abandoning God’s work in midstream, regardless of the entreaties made to them and the arguments presented to them. When I consider their behavior, I must confess that I do not know what to say or think. In this, however, as in all else, we must conform ourselves to the Will of God and adore the wisdom of His ways. We will, therefore, send you other men to replace them as soon as
possible, with the help of God. I asked you to let me know how you plan to use M. Gigot, whom you are requesting.

I praise God that M. Desdames has already preached in Polish in Warsaw and that Brother Duperroy is anxious to make progress in that language. I hope it will gradually become familiar to you and that God will bless all your desires, since they tend toward Him. I hope also that He will bless your family and your work for the service of the Church and the consolation of Their Majesties.

I will send your letter to the Archbishop of Rouen; I sent to Troyes the ones you wrote for there. We have no news and I could not give you any because of the office of this holy day, which is keeping us busy and which obliges me to conclude by embracing you at the foot of the cross of Our Lord. I am, in Him, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
J.s.C.M.

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

1725. - MARTIN HUSSON TO SAINT VINCENT

Tunis, April 4, 1654

I am writing to you this time in the absence of Monsieur Le Vacher. He left for Bizerte on the eighteenth of the past month and did not return until the twenty-sixth. On the thirtieth he went to a place called La Cantara, where he had gone at the end of last year. After dinner I am sending Le Sargy to meet him so that they can return together tomorrow morning. I

1François de Harlay de Champvallon. The letter in question probably concerned Nicolas Duperroy, a native of that diocese, who was going to be ordained the following day.
2Good Friday.

Letter 1725. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.
1Jean Le Vacher.
2El Cantara, about eighteen and a half miles north of Tunis.
fear for his health, which is good, thank God, despite all this hard work. In the long run, however, nature may begin to feel its effects.

I do not know how he will be when he gets back. On the last journey he made to La Cantara, he had a priest to help him, who was in bed when he had to leave. As a result, he had to bear the burden of the work all alone for the two days and three nights he had to stay there. More than eighty Christians are there. He took with him only fifty piastres as a reserve to assist the slaves and took only the same amount to La Cantara because that is all we can do. Thanks to Our Lord, we never stockpile money.

Once the Easter feasts are over, he will go to Mammedia to give another mission. It is only two leagues away from here, and a good sixty Christians there are very badly treated.

We both wrote to you shortly after the beginning of last month, and I hope that our letters have been delivered to you by now.

All our prisons are vying with one another in preparing repositories for Our Lord. If the ship had delayed a day or two, I would have been able to tell you something about them. I will do so at the next opportunity.

M. Le Vacher is working at getting the money for Toussaint Le Rond sent from Algiers. Once he has it, he will try to ransom him.

Enclosed are some letters from slaves from several places for various provinces of France. M. Le Vacher told me to make up the packet and send it to you.

I cannot recommend myself sufficiently to your prayers and to those of the whole Company, in order that I may not occupy ineffectively a place where there is so much work to be done for God. In His love I am, Monsieur, your most humble and affectionate servant.

Husson

1726. - TO JACQUES CHIROYE, SUPERIOR, IN LUÇON

Paris, April 8, 1654

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

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3Present-day Hammamet, about six miles south of Tunis.

Letter 1726. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.
— 120 —

It is very unwise to give your parish to the person you mention, whether he remains in the Company or leaves. A man who behaves poorly in a Community will not do well in a parish. It is, however, advisable for you to lay down this burden, but on someone else. I will recommend another person to you; let me think about it.

The little priory M. Pignay is offering you is better in his hands than in yours. Please do not get involved in that. Unions are more difficult than you think, and if he resigned it, as he did with the ones he had in Gascony, it could happen that it might be lost both to you and to him, as were those others.

We have no news here, nor do I have anything else to say in reply to your letters of March 10 and 18, the last ones I received. M. Alméras is still in Picardy, engaged in helping the poor Pastors.

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 Chiroye

1727. - TO SISTER MARGUERITE MOREAU,¹ IN WARSAW

April 8, 1654

In compliance with the reproaches of the Queen of Poland, Vincent de Paul advises Sister Moreau to supervise very carefully the young persons hospitalized in her house.

¹The parish in Charnais (Vendée).
²The first draft had: “some good person.” The correction is in the Saint’s handwriting.

¹Marguerite Moreau, a native of Lorraine, was born in 1623 and entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity in 1646. In June 1647 she was sent to Angers. A strong personality, she found it hard to get along with Sister Cécile Angiboust, the Sister Servant. In 1651 Saint Louise was thinking of naming her Sister Servant in Angers; instead she chose her for Poland, where she went on September 7, 1652, with Sisters Madeleine Drueçon and Françoise Douelle. She
1728. - TO FIRMIN GET, IN MARSEILLES

April 10, 1654

I am sending you a large packet of letters for the slaves in Barbary, as I did recently, through M. Delafourcade, a merchant in Lyons, and I am sending it by coach to reduce the high cost of postage.

1729. - DERMOT DUGGAN, MISSIONARY IN SCOTLAND, TO SAINT VINCENT

April 1654

We are infinitely obliged to thank the Divine Goodness unceasingly for the many blessings He has been pleased to shower upon our modest labors. I will tell you only a little about them because it is impossible for me to expound on them all.

I visited the islands of Uist, Canna, Eigg, and Skye. On the mainland, I visited the districts of Moidart, Arisaig, Morar, Knoidart, and Glengarry.

The island of Uist belongs to two chieftains: one is named Captain Clanranald and the other MacDonald. The area belonging to the former is completely converted, with the exception of only two men, who want nothing to do with any religion in order to have greater freedom to sin. About a thousand or twelve hundred souls have been brought back to the

refused to remain in Warsaw with the Queen while her two companions were going to serve the poor in Krakow. Sister Marguerite died of typhus in Poland on September 29, 1660.

Letter 1728. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, Marseilles manuscript, original.
1Delafourcade forwarded money, packages, and letters for Saint Vincent and the Missionaries.

1Dermot Duggan (Saint Vincent spells his name Dulguin), born in Ireland in 1620, was already a priest when he entered the Congregation of the Mission on August 26, 1645. In November of the following year he was sent back to Ireland, returning to France in 1648. Two years later he left for Scotland, where he spent the rest of his life amid great pietie, animated with the zeal of an apostle and the courage of a martyr. He died on May 17, 1657, on the isle of Uist, where an ancient chapel still bears his name and recalls his memory. (Cf. Notices, vol. III, pp. 114-121.)
fold of the Church. I have not yet been to the other end of the island, which belongs to MacDonald, although I have been asked to go.

There is a minister who wants to discuss controversy with me by letter; I have replied to him, and I hope for good results from this debate. The nobles have invited me there and that is all right with the chieftain. I am all the more determined to go, especially since I know that the minister is more fearful of this and would like to dissuade me from it. The two servants they sent me returned home as Catholics, by the grace of God, and I heard their general confessions after preparing them.

Most of the inhabitants of the little island of Canna, and some on Eigg, have been converted. As for the island of Skye, it is ruled by three or four chieftains, one part by MacDonald and his mother, another by MacLeod, and the third part by MacFimine.\footnote{Possibly a misspelling of MacSimine, MacSimon, MacSymon, or MacShiomoun.} Now, in the first two parts, many families have been converted, but I have not done anything in the part that belongs to MacFimine.

As for Moidart, Arisaig, Morar, Knoldart, and Glengarry, all have been converted or have decided to take instructions when we find time to go to each village. There are from six to seven thousand souls in all those places, which are far away, difficult to visit on foot, and inaccessible to persons on horseback.

Early in the spring I went to another island, named Barra, where I was delighted to find the people so devout and anxious to learn. It sufficed to teach a child from each village the Pater, the Ave, and the Credo, and, two or three days later, the entire village—adults as well as children—would know them. I received the most influential persons into the Church, among them the young chieftain, his brothers, and his sisters, with the hope of getting the elder chieftain on the next visit. The son of a minister was among these converts; his piety greatly edifies the whole area, where he is well known. I usually defer Communion for a while after the general confession so that they may be better instructed and even better prepared by a second confession. I also do this to excite in them a greater desire and ardor for Communion.

God made it apparent that among those receiving Holy Communion were five persons who did not have the proper dispositions: after they put out their tongues to receive the Sacred Host, they could not withdraw them. Three of them remained in this state until the Sacred Host was removed; however, after making their confession again with better dispositions, they
finally received the Bread of Life with no difficulty. The other two have not yet returned, and God has willed to permit these extraordinary consequences to inspire greater awe in the other Christians of this area so that they might bring better dispositions to this divine sacrament when they approach it.

In addition, we saw several wonderful things brought about by virtue of holy water, which has been very helpful in inspiring many poor persons with deep sentiments of piety. We baptize many children, and even adults of thirty, forty, sixty, eighty years and over, once we are sure they have never been baptized. Among them are some who had been troubled and harassed by ghosts or evil spirits, but, once they received Baptism, they were completely delivered from them. Now they never see them any more.

1730. - A PRIEST OF THE MISSION TO SAINT VINCENT

1654

Besides the four hundred poor persons we clothed, we also found near the town of Laon almost six hundred orphans under the age of twelve, in a state of pitiful nakedness and need. Alms from Paris have given us the means of clothing and assisting them.

1731. - TO PHILIPPE VAGEOT, SUPERIOR, IN SAINTES

Paris, April 15, 1654

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
I am writing to you in haste because it is night, but with deep
affection, seeing the blessings God has given to your mission in Thenac and your heavy labors in town and country. I thank God for this and ask Him to preserve and bless you more and more.

As for the priest you are expecting, we have not yet been able to send him. We will do so as soon as possible, with the help of God.

In the name of Our Lord, I ask you to make La Marguerie your next mission. We should have given it a long time ago, and M. de la Marguerie is complaining about this not only to me but to our friends. To spare you both the trouble and expense of this mission, take one hundred livres for it; despite our own poverty, we will give them here to whomever you indicate to us. If M. de la Roche is still in Guimps, ask him to come and help you; he will gladly do so.

We have no news here, nor do I have anything else to reply to your letters of March 7 and 28, the last I have received. I sent M. Alméras the letter you wrote him. He is still in Picardy, busy assisting the poor Pastors there and in Champagne. Three of our Brothers are with him, helping the poor people.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL,
 i.s.C.M.

I entreat you, in the name of Our Lord, Monsieur, to give the mission I mentioned to you. I have given instructions to have a

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cleric on May 3, 1645, at twenty-three years of age, and took his vows on October 12, 1647. In September 1648 he was ordained a priest and was placed in the house in Saintes shortly after ordination. He was Superior there from 1651 to 1655, the year he left the Company.

Near Saintes (Charente-Maritime).

2Near Saintes (Charente-Maritime).

3On October 31, 1633, Élie Laïans, Sieur de la Marguerie, had given Saint Vincent two hundred livres from the town hall revenues "on condition that every five years he would send three priests and a Brother to give missions for four months, round trip included, in the diocese of Angoulême." (Cf. Arch. Nat., M 211, file 1.)

4Near Barbezieux (Charente-Maritime).
transferral of the foundation made to you, and I will send it to you as soon as possible, but I beg you to open it without fail.3

At the bottom of the first page: Monsieur Vageot

1732. - TO JACQUES CHIROYE, SUPERIOR, IN LUÇON 1

April 16, 1654

It is not at all wise to give the parish of Chasnais 2 to the person you mention, whether he remains in the Company or leaves. Experience has taught us that those who do not conduct themselves well in Community do no better as Pastors. Furthermore, this example could be harmful to us, especially since others might claim afterward that, because they gave us reason to dismiss them, we should be obliged to give them some compensation. It is still advisable for you to resign this benefice, but to another man. I will recommend someone good to you; let me think about it. Meanwhile, please act gently with this priest, without letting his defiance or his anxieties upset you but bearing with him as best you can. If he leaves, have patience; it will be without good reason.3

The little priory M. Pignay is offering you is better in his hands than in yours because of your state, which has caused you to take God as your portion and to renounce all earthly possessions. In addition, it is unheard of for a Missionary to accept and maintain

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3The postscript is in the Saint’s handwriting.

Letter 1732. - Reg. 2, pp. 52, 162.

1This letter is very similar to no. 1726, dated April 8. Either the latter was never mailed or, when Saint Vincent wrote to Jacques Chiroye on April 16, he had forgotten about his previous letter. Variations in the texts warrant treating this letter as distinct from no. 1726. In addition, the sources are different: Archives of Turin (no. 1726) and Reg. 2 (no. 1732).

2Near Pontenay-le-Comte (Vendée).

3The first excerpt ends here.
a benefice in the Company, unless it is to unite it to the body. Now, for several reasons, the union of that one cannot be effected or hoped for, and there would be reason to fear that, if M. Pignay were to give it up, the same thing might happen as happened with the ones he tried to unite to the Agen Seminary. They are lost to him as well as to us.

1733. - TO CHARLES OZENNE, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW

Paris, April 17, 1654

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am deeply grieved by the withdrawal of those two confreres, who could have been so useful in helping you with the Lord's work. We must, however, be submissive to His adorable guidance and think of others we can send in their place. I am looking everywhere and at each of our men in order to make a choice by which God will be honored, the Queen will be satisfied, and you will get some relief. I have decided to send you two seminarians we have here from the Le Mans diocese. One of them is a gentleman, now teaching the humanities at Saint-Charles Seminary; the other has just finished theology, in which he was very successful. Their

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Letter 1733. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.

1Nicolas Guillot and Stanisław Kazimierz Zalewski.

2In 1645, within the enclosure of the property of Saint-Lazare, Saint Vincent established Saint-Charles Seminary for youths completing their studies in the humanities; not all the students, however, aspired to Holy Orders. Before Cardinal Richelieu died, he endowed twelve students; others paid room and board. The seminary stood on the corner, facing rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis, which today, on the side of the uneven numbers, meets Boulevard de la Chapelle.
names are Brother Simon and Brother Éveillard, and they could be ordained priests in a little while. I will write to Rome to obtain the extra tempora for them, and M. Berthe will mail them to you so that, on their arrival in Warsaw or soon after, you could have them promoted to Holy Orders.

I am also thinking of sending you a fine priest from Artois whom we have here—a wonderfully good man who has some facility for speaking Latin but who perhaps will not have much exterior grace for preaching. I will think it over and we shall see; we shall also see about sending you a coadjutor Brother. I think it will be the one I mentioned to you—that good Brother from Germany who has lived in Poland. I see no one more suitable, even though he has had no training in the care of the sick, as you desire.

In any event, Monsieur, we will send three or four persons to

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3René Simon, born on September 21, 1630, in Laval (Mayence), entered the Congregation of the Mission on August 5, 1650. He was a professor at Saint-Charles Seminary, then a missionary in Poland, where he was ordained a priest in 1654. He returned to France the next year, took his vows on January 25, 1656, and was then sent to Genoa. Simon became Superior of the Annecy Seminary in 1663 and of the Turin house (1665-67). He was named Secretary General in 1668 and, after participating in the General Assembly of that year, was appointed Superior in Rome and Visitor of the Province of Italy. In 1677 he was recalled to France, and the following year was made Superior of the Cahors house, where he died in 1682 or shortly thereafter. Simon was very useful to the Congregation, especially because of the favors he obtained for it from the Holy See. His biography was published in Notices, vol. II, pp. 447-51.

4Jacques Éveillard, born in Nogent-le-Bernard ( Sarthe), entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 12, 1647, at sixteen years of age, took his vows on October 13, 1650, and was then sent to Poland. Recalled to France the following year because of political unrest in Poland, he was given the chair of philosophy at Saint-Lazare by Saint Vincent. René Almirat appointed him Superior of Saint-Charles Seminary in 1662, but during the year sent him to Noyon in the same capacity. In 1668 he recalled him to put him in charge of the Collège des Bons-Enfants. Éveillard left there in 1674 to become Superior of the Warsaw house. He found such favor with the King, Queen, and Ministers that Edme Jolly, who was dissatisfied with his administration, had to use great circumspection to recall him. Because Éveillard continued to plot in order to remain in his position, the Superior General expelled him from the Congregation, notifying the Visitors of this in a circular letter dated June 29, 1680.

5An indult from the Holy See granting Religious Institutes the privilege of conferring Sacred Orders outside the times prescribed by Church law.

6Both were ordained priests in September.

7Abel Pouchin, born in Aubigny (Pas-de-Calais), entered the Congregation of the Mission as a priest on October 28, 1653, at thirty-four years of age. He died on September 10, 1654.
Rouen as soon as possible so they can set sail at the first opportu-
nity. We will choose young people preferably because they have
more aptitude for foreign languages than the older men, who find
them very difficult to learn.

I wrote you my thoughts regarding M. Zelazewski’s wish to
remain with the Missionaries and wear the collar whenever he
likes, despite his departure. Please explain to the Queen that this is
unprecedented in religious Orders and other Communities; they
never allow those who have left to remain with them or wear the
habit. Tell her also that this would be a scandal to the Company
and that grave consequences would ensue: others, in order to have
greater freedom, might desire the same privilege; for, naturally,
everyone is glad not to have to depend on anyone else, and to go,
come, and do whatever he pleases. Furthermore, if that young man,
regarded as a Missionary by persons outside the Community,
should commit some fault (God forbid!), it would be imputed to
the Company. Then, too, no matter how long he stayed or what sign
he bore as being a member, he could not prevent himself from
telling his friends that he does not belong to it. By this means,
everyone would know it, and several inconveniences might arise.
So, it is preferable that he have no contact with the Company, but
stay very far away from it. Nevertheless, if Her Majesty wishes the
contrary, she has only to give an order; we will do in this and in
everything else whatever pleases her.

I praise God for her goodness in dealing so benevolently with
us. So as not to render yourself unworthy of this favor, you must
act very candidly, trustfully, and simply with her, but with great
respect and submission, as I know you now do. I praise God also
for the foundation Her Majesty wishes to make and for your efforts
to find a place and to encourage the Bishop of Poznan to effect the
union of the parish* before he goes to Rome.

The entrance of the Muscovites into the States of Their Majes-

*Holy Cross parish.
ties is a cause of distress, but we must hope that God in His
goodness will impede their efforts and protect that kingdom, in
consideration of the piety of Their Majesties and the great good
they are doing. We ask this constantly of His Divine Goodness, and
for an end to the plague in Vilna and elsewhere.

There are many things I could say to you about the journey of
the nuns of Sainte-Marie, but I am saving them for another time.

I ask O[ur] L[ord] to continue to honor you and your little family
with His blessings. I am, for it, and for you in particular, Monsieur,
your most affectionate servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
I.s.C.M.

I thought we should send you some young people because they
will adapt more easily. I hope to have them and a Brother leave in
one month at the latest.

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

1734. - THOMAS LUMSDEN, MISSIONARY IN SCOTLAND,
TO SAINT VINCENT

1654

As for the mission we are giving here in the lowlands, God is blessing

9Today, Vilnius (Lithuania).
10The Visitation nuns.
11The postscript is in the Saint's handwriting.

3Thomas Lumaden, born in the Aberdeen diocese (Scotland), entered the Congregation of
the Mission on October 31, 1645. On his return to his homeland, he traveled through northern
Scotland: Moray, Ross, Sutherland, Caithness, and as far as the Orkney Islands. Driven out by
persecution in 1663, he returned to France, where he spent the last years of his life.
it abundantly and I can say that, since the time the inhabitants fell into heresy, all of them—rich as well as poor—have never been so well disposed to recognize the truth and be converted to our holy faith. Every day we receive into it several persons who come to abjure their errors—even some of very high rank. At the same time, we work at strengthening the Catholics by the Word of God and the administration of the sacraments.

On Easter Sunday I was in the house of a laird, where more than fifty persons received Communion, among them twenty new converts. The great success of our missions makes the ministers very jealous; they lack more the power than the will to sacrifice us to their passion. We, however, trust in the goodness of God who will always be our protector, if He so pleases.

1735. - JEAN LE VACHER TO SAINT VINCENT

Tunis, May 6, 1654

Monsieur,

Your blessing!

I was unable to write to you at the beginning of last month with very dear and most honored Monsieur Husson because I was in the country. I thought, therefore, that I should not lose this opportunity, even though it is indirect, to tell you what blessings Our Lord has been pleased to give our poor suffering Church throughout this Lenten season, even to the day of the triumphant Resurrection and since then. All the poor slaves in this region admit that they have never seen anything like it nor so many confessions, Communions, or even conversions.

The first two mentioned above went as high in this town as fifteen hundred and more. In Bizerte and some holding places where I had the happiness to go, it was over five hundred. There were seven conversions: two English, two French Calvinists, and three Greek schismatics. More than thirty Catholics who, driven to despair at seeing themselves totally abandoned by their relatives into the wretchedness of slavery, had decided—some of them nine years ago, some ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five years and even longer—never to go to confession or Communion or even to hear Holy Mass, and were habituated to every sort of sin and vice.
To put some fear into the latter, after having been as patient and gentle with them as possible—without ever making any progress with them—and to persuade them all to go to confession and Communion at Easter, I explained to all the Christians, before I left for Bizerte and a few of the holding places, that, in conformity with the custom in Rome and throughout Italy—a custom never observed in this country—I wanted each of them to present his certificate of confession and Communion. On this would be written his name, nationality, and the name of the priest or monk who had administered the sacrament to him. In this way I could distinguish the Catholics from the heretics and those among the former who were trying to persevere scandalously in their refusal to go to confession or Communion. Then I could declare the last-mentioned disobedient to the Church and, consequently, excommunicated, and the heretics would be known as such.

I had also intended to go to a mountain region called, in the local dialect, Rasgibel. It was rather close to the ruins of the town of Utica, where there are a number of holding places in which many poor slaves were living. I wanted to hear their confessions and distribute Communion to them because of the Easter season and to prepare them for the voyage on the galleys, where they were usually sent from that place. A slight illness, however, which came upon me after I had been to Bizerte and a few holding places, prevented me. I will do so as soon as Our Lord gives me the opportunity of being able to go there.

Ô Mon Dieu! my dear Most Honored Father, what good we could do in this region, humanly speaking, if we were as rich as we are poor! The Turks from Algiers, who came to this region on ships from their town destined for the service of the Grand Lord, brought many women and little children from different nations to be put up for sale. Since we had a small fund for charity, I saw in this a good, holy opportunity for a truly significant ransom. Because I had nothing of my own of which I could justly dispose without your authorization, I would gladly have pledged my freedom to procure the redemption of one of those innocent creatures, so as to be able to preserve him or her for Our Lord.

I have just obtained from the Dey that our priests and monks who are slaves will be exempt from the galleys and from all sorts of work; in addition, their owners are expressly forbidden to require anything of them in this regard, under penalty of incurring the punishments he may choose to inflict upon those who contravene this. So that everyone will know this,

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1 The Sultan.
he has ordered the head of the customs office to communicate it to all the
guardians of the prisons, with whom he called a meeting for this purpose.

I still have not received the letter about the death of that good Franciscan; I was told it had been written to me from Tripoli, by way of Malta. I informed you about it in my latest letters, since there is no resident missionary there representing the Sacred Congregation.

I have sent to a good French priest from Lyons named Monsieur Gouion, who is a slave in that place, the faculties of the apostolic mission, with the power to exercise them in accord with the authority granted me for this situation by the Sacred Congregation. I really would have liked to be able to go and visit that poor Church but both our poverty and the needs of our own Church, especially in the rural areas, do not allow me to do so.

I am, Monsieur, in the love of the Spouse of both Churches, Jesus Christ, my dear Master, your most obedient and very affectionate son and servant.

JEAN LE VACHER,
i.a.C.M.

1736. - JEAN LE VACHER TO SAINT VINCENT

Tunis, May 6, 1654

Monsieur,

Your blessing!

Ten ships from Algiers, sent to the army of the Grand Lord, dropped anchor in the port of this town and brought us the enclosed letters. They gave me the opportunity to write to you by this indirect route, both to forward them to you and to pay you once again my most humble respects and obedience. I also want to tell you how distressed we are not to receive any of your very dear letters, after the large number I have sent you all during this year and at the end of last year. We have received no reply to them, although they were of the utmost importance to us.

We are very anxious to learn what steps you have taken to have the

Letter 1736. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.
letters of the Grand Lord delivered to us, so we can show them to the authorities of this region, who are asking us for them.

A Moor from this area, who was a passenger on a ship from Leghorn and was carrying M. Husson's patent, was [captured] by M. Coglin. A few days ago, the Moor came to see us to be reimbursed for the payment of his ransom and for merchandise he claims was taken from him, including a watch which he says was very valuable. They estimate that this comes to a considerable amount. The difficulty in which the return of this Moor placed us was not only our [in]ability to satisfy his demands when the Dey—on whose orders he claimed he was sent to Leghorn—should come back from the camp, but also to be able to meet the demands of the Jewish traders. Their merchandise had been seized by M. Coglin on the ship from Leghorn, even after they had obtained a passport from His Majesty in their favor. In particular, this wretched Moor had led the Dey to understand that M. Husson was not the Consul because M. Coglin, who had captured him, disregarding his patent, tore it into a thousand pieces as soon as it was handed to him.

As a result, M. Husson was obliged for the second time to provide credentials from the King to the Dey to prove that His Majesty had appointed him to that post. The Dey then told him he had not doubted that but, for greater assurance, it was desirable for him to have letters sent from the Grand Lord. So you can judge from this, Monsieur, the need we have for those letters so frequently requested.

A few days ago two Corsair ships from this country captured a boat from Marseilles, which had taken on cargo at El Kala,2 and a barge from Genoa, which had taken on cargo at Tabarka;3 then they brought them to this town. Both had surrendered without putting up a fight, and the Dey, like his predecessors, had promised to hand over all the Frenchmen, together with the ship and their merchandise, if they surrendered in this way. When M. Husson went and asked for everything, as the former had promised to give it back to him, he was able to get only four persons: the owner of the boat, one of his sons, around eleven years of age, his secretary, and the pilot. All the other persons—there were twelve of them—the ship, and its cargo he had given to the man who had captured them. He obliged the four he handed over to pay the ransom of this Moor captured by M. Coglin, and took down the names of all those whom he had

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1The first syllable was omitted in the original.
2A small port in Algeria, near the Tunisian border.
3A small port near the Algerian border.
made slaves, leading M. Husson to believe that it was in order to hand them over in exchange for a similar number of Moorish or Turkish slaves in France, if they were sent for. He also said that, if the Moorish or Turkish slaves were brought to France, he would likewise return all the French slaves to that country. O Mon Dieu! Monsieur, what a chance to effect a beautiful and very useful redemption, and with such great ease, if only we had a few good agents!

Thank you for instructing M. du Chesne to send us a little wine. Perhaps his own need did not permit him to incur this expense. He had asked me to get some from a boat from Marseilles, which had brought a few bottles of it to this town. Our extraordinary poverty, however, did not allow me to pay the high price the merchant was demanding. We are beginning a season when the water might be good; otherwise, we are at great risk, especially M. Husson, who is slightly ill.

We hope for some very necessary charitable human assistance, along with a share in your Holy Sacrifices and the prayers of the whole Company. I am, in the love of O[ur] L[ord] and of His holy Mother, Monsieur, your most obedient and very affectionate son and servant.

JEAN LE VACHER,
L.C.M.

1737. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Saint Michael's Day 1 [May 8, 1654]

So then, here we are, back home again, Mademoiselle. I thank God for your return, for the health He gave you during your journey, and for all the graces He has granted you. I ask Him to keep you in the same good health and to sanctify your soul more and more.

Since people are accustomed to my absence, I am taking advan-

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Letter 1737. - Original autograph letter, formerly the property of the Miséricorde de Narbonne, 3 rue d’Aguèseu. Its present location is unknown.

1There were two feasts of Saint Michael: May 8 and September 29. The former is obviously the one mentioned in this letter because on September 29, the eve of his annual retreat with a part of the Community, Saint Vincent would not have written: "Since people are accustomed to my absence, I am taking advantage of this to make a short retreat."
tage of this to make a short retreat. Please assist me with your prayers, Mademoiselle, that I may make it in the Spirit of Our Lord. Forgive me if I do not have the joy of seeing you before I finish it. I am sure we still have some business to settle. We will take care of it the first time I leave the house, with the help of God. In His love I am, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
iss.C.M.

M. Perraud is going to ask you to allow his sister to stay with your Daughters at Saint-Paul to learn how to write; he says she will take care of her own meals. If her presence does no harm, this would be an act of charity.

1738. - TO ÉTIENNE BLATIRON, SUPERIOR, IN GENOA

Paris, May 8, 1654

Monsieur,

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

I received your last letter, bearing an April date, but the day of the month is missing. It mentions the principal results of the mission of Gavi and the obstacles the evil spirit put in its way. I thank God for this blessing and ask Him to grant these people the grace to persevere in the good state in which you have left them. These are fresh reasons for admiring God's guidance of you and

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2Hughes Perraud, born in Arguel (Doubs) on October 3, 1615, entered the Congregation of the Mission on January 5, 1640, took his vows on March 23, 1644, and was ordained a priest in 1646. He was placed in Saintes (1646) and Richelieu (1651), and died in Paris on December 26, 1659.

Letter 1738. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.

1A town in Piedmont, province of Alessandria (Italy).
your works, and for humbling yourself more at the sight of His great mercy.

I do not wish to have an opinion different from that of your great Cardinal-Archbishop ² concerning the foundation that good senator wishes to make. So, do not accept it, since he is not in favor of it, any more than you are. It seems to me, however, that if we were offered a like amount here, we would not refuse it, provided the conditions were not excessive, but reasonable. Since you have left the matter to the care of M. Christophe Monchia, ³ I hope it will be settled, if it is feasible.

Please renew the offers of my obedience to this good servant of God and recommend me to his prayers. Do the same with those other gentlemen and benefactors, even His Eminence, when you think it appropriate.

I thank God for the safe arrival of Messieurs Jolly and Levasseur and for having preserved the latter from harm in the accident he had. Please send us the former at the first opportunity, if he has not already left. It is not advisable for him to remain in Genoa, because of his health as well as his business, since we had him return from Rome for these reasons.

M. Guillot, who was in Poland, returned two days ago. He is well and we are going to prepare two or three good men to be sent there. That foundation is progressing very well with the Queen and even the Bishop, as regards the functions of the Company, which is going to open a seminary and conduct retreats for the ordinands.

The Agde establishment is very promising. M. du Chesne is planning to open two seminaries there at the same time, one for the diocese and the other for the Company.

We have no news from the other houses. Everything is going

²Stefano Durazzo, Legate in Ferraro, then in Bologna, was created a Cardinal in 1633 and was Archbishop of Genoa (1635-64). He died in Rome on July 22, 1667. Cardinal Durazzo was always most gracious and very devoted to Saint Vincent and his priests.

³Giovanni Cristoforo Monchia, a diocesan priest in Genoa who provided great support to the Missionaries there.
along as usual here and elsewhere, thank God. Our only concern is M. Alméras, who became sick in Laon a few days ago. He had been all over that diocese and had traveled to a few others to visit and help the poor Pastors and supervise the aid being given to the people, in which three of our Brothers are engaged. I recommend them, especially M. Alméras, to your prayers, and all our needs in general.

When Brother Rivet arrives in Genoa, you could send Brother Claude back to us, or whomever else you choose. I spoke to you in greater detail about this in my last letter. The first-mentioned could leave Moulins around the end of May to continue on his journey. He has two brothers in the Company, one a priest and the other about to be ordained. His mother is working with the Daughters of Charity.

I frequently offer you, your leadership, and your community to Our Lord, in whom I am, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
I.S.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Blatiron

1739. - A PRIEST OF THE MISSION TO SAINT VINCENT

Rome, 1654

During the last mission we gave, high up in the Apennine Mountains,

5Louis Rivet, who was in Saintes at the time.
6François Rivet, born in Houdan (Yvelines) on July 28, 1628, entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 12, 1647, took his vows on November 6, 1650, and was ordained a priest on April 1, 1656.

we discovered a general disorder. Even though it is common in Romagna, it is, however, much more widespread in these isolated places. All the young people, boys as well as girls, amuse themselves with vain, foolish love affairs, often with no intention of getting married. They usually do not confess these, much less the harmful effects resulting from them—dangerous private conversations in which they often spend part of the night, especially on the eve of feast days. Based on these bad attachments for one another, they have no respect for churches, going there only to be seen and to make eyes and immodest gestures at one another. Besides the bad thoughts and other interior disorders, this is sometimes followed by very scandalous, serious falls, which, however, do not deter others nor make the parents more careful to prevent similar ones.

So, having learned of this abuse and all those distressing, perilous consequences, we spoke in our sermons as strongly as we could to abolish it. But the evil seemed incurable, and people were at no loss for reasons to be proud of it, which really worried us. Finally, however, with the grace of God, we remedied this by refusing absolution to anyone whom we did not see truly determined to give up absolutely all those foolish love affairs. This made a deep impression on them and was the reason why almost all of them relented. I read publicly to them in Italian from a chapter of the book of Philothea, which treats of this failing and revealed clearly to them the faults they were committing, as if the author had written it just for them. Several, in tears, expressed regret for the past and good dispositions for the future. May God grant them perseverance!

Lastly, Monsieur, although in the beginning the Pastors of those places looked upon us as spies and made the people suspicious of us, nevertheless, when they saw our simple manner of acting, our deference toward them, the way we gave our missions and, particularly, our lack of self-interest, they all remained attached to us, and I can say that we have won their hearts. Several persons have even attested to this by their tears.

I cannot omit here something that occurred in a nearby place, where a priest was living a very disorderly life. He had boasted publicly that he had never come to any of our sermons; shortly afterward, however, by a just judgment of God, it so happened that, on the very spot where he had made that boast, he was murdered in a despicable way by another bad priest, who had spoken fine words to me to make me believe he was trying to change his life, but with no results.

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1. The Introduction to the Devout Life by Saint Francis de Sales.
Monsieur,

Although I do not have the honor of knowing you, I venture, nevertheless, to offer you the services of the Little Company of the Mission, of which I am the unworthy Superior. In this capacity, Monsieur, I am also Superior of the Daughters of Charity, who serve the sick poor of the parishes and the foundlings of the city and faubourgs of Paris who are fed and raised in a hospital at the boundary of the faubourg Saint-Lazare. I am also Chief Administrator of another little hospital in the faubourg Saint-Martin, recently founded for the care of forty poor persons.

Now, those poor Sisters have had about one hundred thirty loads of firewood brought from Compiègne for their house and these two

Letter 1740. - Reg. 1, fol. 31.

1The Treize-Maisons [thirteen houses] on the Champ-Saint-Laurent, near Saint-Lazare, was one of the establishments caring for the foundlings.

2The Nom-de-Jeux [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 of the Saint's choice. After discussing his plan with the benefactor, the Saint decided to spend 11,000 livres for the purchase of the house called the Nom-de-Jeux, 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 3400 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 Vicar-General on March 15, 1654 (the Archibishop 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 twenty male and twenty female artisans who, because of old age or infirmity, could no longer earn their living; to occupy their time, they were provided with looms and tools. Men and women were housed in separate wings; although they came together in the same chapel for Mass, they were not permitted to see or speak to one another. The Daughters of Charity served them; 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-Jeux 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.
hospitals and are appealing to you—and I along with them—to entreat you most humbly to exempt them from the new tax placed upon the importation of firewood, which the guards at the city gate are trying to exact of these three poor communities. They will be under the obligation of praying for you, and I along with them to render you my obedience, whenever God is pleased to give me opportunities to do so. I am, in His love, Monsieur, your . . .

VINCENT DEPAUL,
L.s.C.M.

1741. - TO FIRMIN GET, IN MARSEILLES

May 13, 1654

You are right to send me by way of friends the large packets from Barbary. It will, however, also be well for you to open them to take out the letters addressed to me and send them to me by post. Send the others by a cheaper way, after you have packed them up once again.

1742. - TO FIRMIN GET, IN MARSEILLES

May 22, 1654

I hope to send you with this letter a bill of exchange for a thousand livres, which is supposed to be brought to me drawn on M. Napollon.1 Please cash it and send the money to Algiers, to-

Letter 1741. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, Marseilles manuscript, original.
Letter 1742. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, Marseilles manuscript, original.

1The Napollon brothers, Jean and Louis, were bankers in Marseilles.
gether with the letter I am writing to M. Le Vacher for the ransom of an old man, a captain from the Île de Ré, who is a slave in that town. Please do so at the first opportunity, once you have insured that amount—something you must never forget to do.

1743. - TO CHARLES OZENNE, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW

Paris, May 22, 1654

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

God grant that what I wrote to M. Zelazewski may be effective in touching his heart! That, however, does not seem likely, given the fickleness of his spirit and his self-love. God has permitted that, in the early stages of every Community, several persons leave, some even in the midst of scandal. He has His own reasons for this; it is for us to be prepared for it and to adore His ways.

We are, as I told you, stepping up the departure of the men we have assigned to you; I hope they can be ready by the end of the month. Let me know what you think of M. Guillot, in case he decides to return to Poland. If he comes to this decision soon, I will send him with the others, without awaiting your reply.

I am glad that your opinion agrees with mine with regard to M. Gigot and his Latin. We shall see if we can send you someone more suitable.

We recently sent M. Chardon to Troyes to be prepared for the

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2Philippe Le Vacher.
3Island in the Atlantic Ocean, near La Rochelle (Charente-Maritime).

Letter 1743. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.

1Philbert Chardon, born in November 1629 in Annecy, entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 3, 1647, took his vows in October 1649, and was ordained a priest during Lent 1654. That same year he left the Company but was readmitted in Rome; from there he was sent to Genoa (cf. no. 1771).
work of the missions; he has done rather well in his studies. Furthermore, they needed help because of the parish in Barbuise for which they are responsible. The Bishop wants to use the revenue from it—about two thousand livres—for the maintenance of the seminary.

I recognize that it is time that people there [in Poland] see our works and that the Queen, who has gone to such great expense for us, would have good reason to complain about a further delay. May God forgive those two men who have left you in your time of need! So, you must do what you can with M. Desdames and M. Duperroy.

I wrote to you about a means for opening a seminary, and you led me to hope that you would have the ordinands by Pentecost. If God grants you this grace, it will be a great consolation to me because of the edification of the people and the good the clergy can receive from this.

As for the attacks you fear from a certain Community, I hope from the goodness of God that they will not occur, and I ask you to make every move to prevent them, forestalling those good Fathers by your marks of respect, services, and deference, as we try to do here, and it is no great trouble for us. Furthermore, I am determined, even if they throw mud in my face, never to show any resentment, nor break with them, nor deviate from the esteem and honor I owe them in the sight of God. If they forget themselves and say or do something offensive against your little bark, even if it is done purposely to make it sink, bear with it for the love of God, who will save you from shipwreck and calm the storm. Do not complain or even say a single word about it. In spite of everything, continue to compliment them when you meet, as if nothing were amiss.

Never be surprised by such happenings but be ready to receive them well because, just as there was a clash among the Apostles,

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2Commune in the district of Nogent (Aube).
3François Malier du Houssaye (1641-78).
and even among the angels,⁴ who, for all that, did not offend God because each was acting according to his insights, God sometimes allows His servants to contradict one another and one Company to persecute another. There is much greater evil in that than is imagined, although they all may have good intentions; ⁵ but there is always great good for those who humble themselves and offer no resistance. May God grant us the grace to be in that number!

O Dieu! Monsieur, how happy I am that you are getting along with M. Fleury like a child with his father and that he is more satisfied with your frankness now than he was in the beginning! Moreover, he could not fully appreciate it at first, nor could you have been so candid with him, as after a long succession of circumstances. I hope that the more you advance, the more he will have good reason to be pleased with your submission and trust in his regard, since you will prefer to fail more by excess than by falling short, given the exceptional obligations we have toward him and the exemplary gratitude I see you have in his regard. Assure him often that mine cannot be put into words.

I praise God that the Queen is satisfied with M. Duperroy's reply to her. It would really surprise me if he failed in obedience and steadfastness, but he still must ask God for these.

The Nuncio gave me great joy the day before yesterday by telling me that the Muscovite ⁶ has no designs on Poland, that he is on the point of sending an Ambassador to France and another to the Estates of Holland, and that his ambition is to arrogate to himself the title of Emperor of all Christians. May God be pleased to restore everything to His glory and to universal peace, preserve the King and the Queen, sanctify their sacred Majesties, protect their states and accomplish their goals! These are the prayers we

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⁴Cf. Rv 12:7-9. (NAB)

⁵The secretary had written: "There is not as much evil as would seem in this because all have good intentions." The corrected form is in Saint Vincent's handwriting.

⁶Perhaps Tsar Alexis I (1645-76), head of the Russian Empire.
offer frequently to Him and continue to offer daily, without forgetting their Missionaries or you in particular. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,

i.s.C.M.

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

1744. - TO FRANÇOIS BOULART

Saint-Lazare, May 26, 1654

Reverend Father,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I venture to renew to you the offers of my service with all possible humility and affection. When the Vicars-General heard that we were giving the mission in Charenton,\(^1\) they wanted a Bishop to go there to administer Confirmation. It so happened that the one the Pastor\(^2\) has chosen has neither his crozier nor miter here. I ask you, therefore, Reverend Father, kindly to lend him yours for such a good purpose, and I will be responsible for them. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Reverend Father, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,

i.s.C.M.

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1A town near Paris.

2Barthélemy Archer.

Letter 1744. - Sainte-Geneviève Library, Ms. 2555, copy. The location of the original, put on sale by Charavay and purchased by the Marquis de Gerbéviller, is now unknown; a copy was formerly preserved in the Château de Gerbéviller.
Monsieur,

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

Enclosed is the bill of exchange I mentioned to you in my last letter. It is from Messieurs Simmonet 1 on Messieurs Napolon for a thousand livres. Please withdraw the money and send it to Algiers for the ransom of a slave from the Île de Ré, together with the letters I wrote to M. Le Vacher 2 and Brother Barreau. You have one of them and I am enclosing the other.

I am also writing to Tunis, and to M. Jolly, in case he is with you, for certain documents he is supposed to send us. I strongly fear, however, that he will not pass through Marseilles because I have heard from Genoa that he left there on the tenth of the month to go to Nice by sea; from there he might go through Provence and come straight to Paris. That would leave you in your overburdened state for a longer time than I thought. If the Providence of God permits this, I ask His Divine Goodness to keep you strong while waiting for us to send you someone to relieve you. But, before doing so, we will await news of M. Jolly.

The Duchesse d'Aiguillon misplaced the order she had obtained from the King to use the money—which you know about—for your building; she is now trying to get another one. I sent her two different models of letters. If this is not done today, it is to be feared that it will not be done for a long time because the King leaves tomorrow to be crowned in Reims.

If the Bishop has sent you the ordinands, what service are you rendering them and how are you managing all alone? I am sure you have found someone to help you; even so, I ask you to give over

Letter 1745. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, Sister Hains Collection, original signed letter.

1Paris bankers.
2Philippe Le Vacher.
the care of the sick in the hospital to some outside priest, until you get a member of the Company. It is better to do that, cost what it may, than for you to be overworked. I ask Our Lord to be your first and second assistant.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL,

i.s.C.M.

M. Dehorgny thinks you should lease your garden for two or three years, and I ask you to do so. Meanwhile, we will weigh the advantages and disadvantages arising from this.

Addressed: Monsieur Get, Priest of the Mission, in Marseilles

1746. - TO JEAN BARREAU, IN ALGIERS

Paris, May 29, 1654

Dear Brother,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I wrote to M. Le Vacher ¹ a week ago about a bill of exchange for a thousand livres, which the Bishop of La Rochelle ² had earmarked for you for the ransom of a good old man from the Île de Ré, who is a slave in Algiers. Since I have been unable to write to you since that time, I do so now to ask you to do what you can to obtain the freedom of this poor man. I also want to tell you that

Letter 1746. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.

¹Philippe Le Vacher.

²Jacques-Raoul de la Guibourgié, born in 1589, was the widower of Yvonne de Charette and father of several children when he was ordained. In 1631 he succeeded his uncle as Bishop of Saintes, then went on to Maillezais, and finally to La Rochelle when the episcopal See was transferred there. Very few other Bishops were so closely associated with Saint Vincent. He died in 1661.
I received your accounts, which consoled me, as did your letter, brief though it was. I thank God for your fine management of the house and business matters.

I hope to send you soon someone to make a visitation of your house and the one in Tunis as well. The Archbishop of Arles is also urging us to do this because he wants to make use of his services for the ransom of certain slaves from his diocese. M. du Chesne would be good for that, and perhaps he will be the one we will choose, if we can take him from Agde, in Languedoc, where he is opening a seminary. Please send us for this purpose a passport from the Pasha or the Customs Office. Leave a blank for the name, if possible, because of the uncertainty of who will be making the journey, and mention that it is for the ransom of certain slaves.

Did you send to Tunis the money I had given to you for the ransom of the son of Madame Le Rond, the cooper’s wife? If not, please do so as soon as possible.

We are greatly distressed about five or six slaves for whose ransom I sent you a large amount of money almost a year ago. You informed me that the ship which brought it to you had arrived in Algiers at the beginning of Lent, but since then we have not heard anything about what you did nor the present situation of those slaves. Meanwhile, their relatives, who have every right to ask us for news of them, are badgering us a little, and we no longer know what to tell them.

I sent word to Bayonne that four hundred piastres were needed for the ransom of Joannes de Mauléon, as you wrote us. Because his relatives could only provide one hundred fifty, I suggested they give them to Dominique de Campan from Capbreton, who has arrived home, in the place of a like amount I sent you for Campan, who is now asking us to be reimbursed. You can give it to Mauléon,

François-Adhémar de Monteil de Grignan (1643-89).

The last phrase, from "and mention," are in the Saint’s handwriting.

Toussaint Le Rond.
who will perhaps find a way to augment it by some little trade, in order to earn the rest of his ransom, or, if someone from France goes to Algiers for a ransom, perhaps he might be given what he still needs. I have not yet received the reply about this.

As for news, we are well, thank God. True, M. Alméras almost died in Picardy, where he was assisting the poor Pastors with vestments, clothing, and money, to keep them from abandoning their parishes. In addition, aid is being distributed elsewhere to the poor to sustain them in their poverty; this is being done by one of our Brothers. Now, since M. Alméras is feeling better, he has orders to come here to convalesce. M. Dehorgny is running the Collège des Bons-Enfants, M. Cornuel teaches the classes there, and M. Goblet is in charge of Saint-Charles Seminary. Both places are doing well, thank God, as are our other houses, from the reports I have of them. They have had the second ordination since the death of the Archbishop of Paris.

M. Guillot, back from Poland, has given us high hopes for our establishment in that country. I am referring to the results that will be achieved there, by the grace of God, because the foundation has already been made—or at least is well on its way. We are being asked for more workers than we can supply, both for that house and for another, which a Polish nobleman wants to establish. We will send off three or four men next month.

We have no news of good M. Nacquart, who is in Madagascar, nor of Messieurs Mousnier and Bourdaise, who went to relieve him. There is no need for alarm about the latter two, however, because they have not yet arrived.

A short while ago, in a letter from M. Lumsden, who is in

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6*Relations*, April-May 1654, relate how a Priest of the Mission encouraged the local clergy to continue serving the faithful despite the ravages of war in Laon (cf. no. 1703, n. 2).

7The misery affected all classes: young women of the upper class were prostituting themselves in order to survive; everywhere, half-naked people, the starving, abandoned orphans, and young girls were trying to escape the soldiers. The persons sent by Saint Vincent distributed generous supplies of bread, clothing, and tools, and placed homeless young women in shelters.
Scotland, we heard that his mission and that of the other Missionaries in the Hebrides are going rather well. He gives no details because, since they are living among heretics and are in a country at war, the letters are opened. That is why we receive them only rarely.

Our houses in Italy have never been doing so well as they are now. Furthermore, they are having very good results with everything. Several Cardinals and Bishops are asking for more Missionaries than we can give them. We are preparing a fair number who are still in the seminary pursuing their studies, but they are not sufficiently formed, and not all of them persevere. We have good reason, therefore, to ask God to send good workers into His vineyard, and we have a short, special devotion for this purpose, in imitation of the Genoa house, which has begun this. I ask you and good M. Le Vacher to assist us, and please share these little pieces of news with him.

I praise God that you both have but one heart and one soul. This is desirable for several reasons, particularly that you may be a consolation to one another in a place and in duties where you receive almost none from others. I pray that you may find it most abundantly in God, while awaiting that of a happy eternity.

I am, dear Brother, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL, i.s.C.M.

Your brother, the Procurator, has fallen ill of a disease for which your brother and your brother-in-law, on the advice of relatives, have asked us to take him in at Saint-Lazare, which we will do. We must honor Our Lord in the state in which He was when they

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6Cf. Lk 10:2. (NAB)
6Philippe Le Vacher.
6Cf. Acts 4:32. (NAB)
wanted to tie him up, saying: *quoniam in frenesim versus est*,\(^{11}\) so as to sanctify this state in those whom His Divine Providence might place there. Rest assured, Monsieur, that we will take care of him. Try to conform your will to that of Our Lord in this, as you do in all things.\(^{12}\)

*Addressed:* Monsieur Barreau, French Consul, in Algiers

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1747. - TO FRANÇOIS ADHÉMAR DE MONTEIL DE GRIGNAN,
ARCHBISHOP OF ARLES

[May 29, 1654] \(^1\)

I received your letter, Excellency, with the respect and reverence I owe to one of the greatest and finest Prelates of this kingdom and with a very great desire to obey in whatever you wish to order me. I thank God for the zeal he has given you for ransoming the poor members of your diocese who are enslaved. In withdrawing them from the imminent danger of being lost, you will be doing a great act of charity and a work most pleasing to God. You will also give good example to the other Prelates to bring back to the fold their poor lost sheep, a great number of whom are in this same danger.

That we might do our part in cooperating in this and in obeying your wishes, we will gladly send some of our priests to effect this ransom. I am writing today to the Consuls of Tunis and of Algiers, telling them to send us passports so that they may travel in safety, according to your orders.

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\(^1\)Abelly gave no date for this letter, indicating only that it was addressed to an Archbishop. A comparison with the preceding letter clearly shows that no. 1747 was written on May 29, 1654, and was addressed to the Archbishop of Arles.

\(^11\)That he was *out of his mind*. Cf. Mk 3:21. (NAB) In the Saint-Lazare compound there was a building for the mentally ill.

\(^{12}\)The postscript is in the Saint's handwriting.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received two of your letters at the same time and with the same date, together with the one the Queen did me the honor of writing to me. I cannot have the honor of replying today either to her or to you, except to tell you that we will do as you wish as soon as possible, by the grace of God. I am speaking about sending men, books, and perhaps some Sisters. What is preventing me from writing to you at greater length is that I returned last evening from the country and today I am weighed down by many letters and business affairs.

I cordially embrace your dear family, and you in particular, constantly asking Our Lord to continue to bless them. In conclusion I confess that the good things you tell me have consoled me immensely, along with the testimony Her Majesty has given me of her satisfaction with your leadership. May God be blessed for this! I am in Him, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

Enclosed is the name of that Polish nobleman and what M. Berthe has told me about him. He is the one who is asking us for Missionaries and who wrote me a letter in Latin, as he was about to return to his own country.

Three weeks ago I informed you that a certain Polish nobleman learned in that city of Rome of the aims of our Institute. Before leaving for his own country, he did me the honor of sharing with
me a plan he had of founding a mission in a town named Velopole,\(^1\) from which comes his title of Count Velopolski. From what I hear, he owns a large estate, over which he has such absolute, independent rights that, apart from a case of high treason, no one can interfere in the area over which he is the lord. He is so highly respected in Poland that the King has honored him by making him Governor of Biecz \(^2\) and Bochnia.\(^3\)

I give you all these details, Monsieur, so that you will know that this good nobleman is a powerful, wealthy man of integrity. To inaugurate this foundation, he offers the parish in his town, worth six hundred écus or more. He will have a house built and will provide funds for everything, with all the satisfaction we could possibly desire, so he says. He states that the cost of living is so inexpensive in the area that a man can live decently on an income of fifty écus. These estates lie on the border of Poland, near the town of Danzig,\(^4\) and much good is to be done there because of the many heretics around the place where he wants to found the mission. Please answer his letter, which I am sending on to you, Monsieur, and kindly send us your letters; I will give them to the person here who has instructions to send them to him in Poland.

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

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\(^1\)This is the name given in the original. It is probably the French form of a town in Poland, but we have been unable to find it on the map.

\(^2\)A small town in western Galicia.

\(^3\)A town near Biecz.

\(^4\)Present-day Gdansk.
Monsieur,

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

M. Jolly arrived here safely, thank God. We will have him sign the resignation for the union, and I will send it on to you, along with a power of attorney to be sent to Toul in order to take possession. I received his Bulls, as I have informed you.

I received also the letter from that good Polish nobleman. We shall see what I should answer him. We must bless God for not allowing that the house you are in be sold to you, and await patiently another time and opportunity. I cannot believe that O[ur] L[ord] will not take care of your establishment, after the good services His Divine Goodness has been pleased to obtain from it and the edification the neighbor receives from it. It was mentioned in a gazette in Rome; when the Queen of Poland read it, she was greatly consoled and had M. Ozenne write and tell me so.

I thank God for the rest of your letter. I cannot write anything more in this one because I have many more to do. I went to reestablish a Confraternity of Charity in the country, returning from there very late yesterday, and today I am overwhelmed with work. I am, more than ever, if that is possible, Monsieur, in the love of O[ur] L[ord], your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,

i.s.C.M.

At the bottom of the first page: Monsieur Berthe

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1749. - TO THOMAS BERTHE, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

Paris, June 5, 1654

Letter 1749. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.
June 12, 1654

I was consoled to see in your letter the inclination God is giving you to serve Him well. I thank His Goodness with all my heart for the manifold graces He bestows on you and, through you, on many souls; I thank Him also for your aspiration to do ever better and better. It is well to stir up good desires in this way, Monsieur, for even if the results do not correspond to them because of some involuntary deterrent, God is still honored; in His sight the will is taken for the deed. That is why He gives an eternity of glory to His servants, even though they may have served Him for just a short time. He takes into account not only what they did but also the love with which they wanted to do more, and the more extensive this desire, the greater their reward.

I ask Him to increase in you and animate you with ever greater zeal so that the poor in the rural areas will feel the effects of it for their salvation, and our little Congregation will be edified by your example. It is a great joy for me to learn that the Rome house has already experienced this in a particular way and that you have even gone to work giving a mission with another two of our Italian priests. I send them greetings through you and embrace them tenderly along with you.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am enclosing a memo requesting that the Huguenot wife of a recent convert in Paris be sent to us here. Act in conformity with it, and if you can furnish the money required to pay her debts and travel expenses, please do so, provided those debts are not too heavy. In the latter case, let me know their amount, and I will see that you are reimbursed for whatever you pay out.\(^1\)

I consulted a counselor-clerk of this Parlement about the three Catholic orphans who are with [their]\(^2\) Huguenot mother. He does not think they can be taken from the mother and brought up elsewhere in our holy religion, if the case goes to court in Sedan, because the Sovereign Council of that town is composed of persons belonging to the so-called religion, and they would not allow it. Nevertheless, they could not refuse to call a meeting of the relatives to give their opinion on the matter. Perhaps, however, most of them are Huguenots, and their opinion would undoubtedly be to leave these poor girls in their present danger. This being the case, it is better not to take that route. The only remedy we see is to obtain letters patent from the King to evoke this cause before his Privy Council and to forbid the one in Sedan to examine the case. I will see if there is reason to hope for that. Meanwhile, send us the names of the father, mother, and children and whatever information you can get.

In reply to four or five of your letters, let me say that you should not give the Capuchins any hope regarding their desire to preach in your church on certain days of the year. Not that you may not

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\(^1\)The question had probably been brought before the meeting of the Ladies of Charity.

\(^2\)The word in the original was sa, meaning "his" or "her."
invite them to preach there sometimes, when you think it appropriate, but do not tell them in advance either the day or the month, so that this will not be binding on your church. That is something a Pastor must never do, especially with a Community such as that.

I think it will be a good idea for you to conform to this house as regards linen breeches in summer, and for morning prayers, where we omit the Angelus, etc.

I will have someone look for an ivory crucifix to send to M. Demyon, but do not mention it to him beforehand.

We do not know where to put your cook-shopkeeper, except in a small hospice we have here for the elderly who work according to their capacity and who do not go out. Now, this restriction might upset that poor woman, so it is inadvisable to place her there.

Your good brother is writing to you. He is beginning to speak and understand French well and has not changed the way he dresses.

I praise God for the abjurations you are receiving, and I ask Him to give you ever greater grace in order to draw into the fold of the Church those many souls who have gone astray.

M. Dufour has been out giving a mission for a week now, and we are going off to begin a second one.

You ask me whether you should allow or forbid violin music in church for weddings.

Your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL, 
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Cogleé, Superior of the Mission, in Sedan

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3Brother-in-law of the Marquis de Fabert.
4The hospice called the Nom-de-Jésus.
5Laurence Cogley.
6Saint Vincent left the sentence unfinished.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am glad you prepared the Tunis report to be presented to the Sacred Congregation and that the Cardinals were satisfied with it. I thank God for it, and I thank you, Monsieur, for the large part you played in this work.

The letters you sent me from the Bishop of Sarsina and M. Vincenzo Greco both gladdened and humbled me. I cannot answer them right now because I spent three days in the country and found a great deal of business on my return. All this prevents me from carrying out this duty; I will do so some other time.

As for the house of the Irish people that is for sale, we should not even consider buying it, according to what Messieurs Dehorgny and Alméras have told me, for reasons you may know. Wait for a better opportunity.

By the first occasion that presents itself that is not too costly, we will try to send you the books published by the Louvre, which you request.

M. Alméras no longer has a fever, nor do I have any other news to give you.

I ask O[ur] L[ord] to continue to bless your leadership, your family, and your missions. 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 Berthe

Letter 1752. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.

1Cesare Righini (1646-57).
May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, fill our hearts and our minds.

I consider the letter Your Lordship wrote to M. Brin one of the greatest proofs of your benevolence. This is especially so since the Jesuit, Father Artagan, mentioned to me several times that he had written to you in order that he might obtain from us a summary of the nature of our Institute, which he would like to send to a prominent man, whom he names. I thank Your Lordship most sincerely and am indebted to you for very good reasons, both because of the nature and situation of the place in which you would like to see our Little Congregation and for the distinction of the ends you propose. May God reward you for this!

I sent a brief summary of our Institute to the distinguished Father

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Letter 1753. - Reg. 1, fol. 56v, copy made from the rough draft, written in Latin.

1James Dowley (Jacques du Loys), Doctor of Theology of the University of Paris (1644), was Vicar-General of Limerick, his birthplace, when the Protestants captured the town. After a lengthy stay in Spain, he went to Rome, where he lived for ten years. On July 9, 1669, Propaganda Fide named him Vicar Apostolic and on May 4, 1676, Bishop of Limerick. He died in 1684 or 1685.

2Reference to the recent death of Edmund Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick, enables us to assign this date.

3Cf. Phil 4:17. (NAB)

4Gerard Brin, born near Cashel (Ireland), entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 14, 1639, at the age of twenty-one. He took his vows on November 2, 1642, and was ordained a priest in 1644. Of all the Irishmen whom Saint Vincent received into his Congregation, Brin was perhaps the most accomplished. He was sent from Le Mans in 1646 to the mission in Ireland, which was financed by the Duchesse d'Aiguillon; there, with several other confères and compatriots, he did boundless good (cf. Abelly, op. cit., bk. II, chap. 1, pp. 154-55). Driven back to France by persecution, Brin went as a missionary to Saint Vincent's native region. Some time later he was named Superior in La Roche (1652-54), and subsequently held the same position in Troyes (1657-58), Meaux (1658-60), and Toul (1660-62). He returned to Ireland in 1662 or 1663, resuming his apostolic work with a zeal that age had not slackened. Neither illness, which brought him twice to the brink of the grave, nor a month in prison could stop this heroic Missionary. Brin died in Thurles (Ireland) sometime between October 9, 1683, the date of his will, and February 25, 1684, the date of its admission to probate.

5Father Hartigan, an Irish Jesuit.
Artagan, who received it kindly [and promised] to see that it reaches Your Lordship. As for me, I place my heart in yours, Your Lordship, with all possible respect and holy awe, that you might offer it to the all-good and greatest God and recommend me to His infinite mercy. I, in turn, will remember Your Lordship in my prayers and petitions as long as I live, asking God to bestow success and blessing on your holy works and undertakings.

M. Brin is not in Paris; he is 150 leagues away and much closer to you than we are. He is in charge of a small house we have in Notre-Dame de La Rose, in the Agen diocese, in Gascony. I will let him know that we have carried out your orders.

The death of the Most Reverend Bishop of Limerick, which occurred in Brussels three or four months ago, affected me deeply and nearly overwhelmed me. I had offered him hospitality in our Saint-Lazare house, in the event that he might think it well to come to Paris, but God did not judge us worthy of welcoming such a great Prelate and preferred to take him with Him into His eternal dwellings. May He be pleased to give us some favorable opportunity to show our gratitude to Your Lordship in a matter which concerns you in a special way! We would accept it eagerly, happy to respond in some way to your generous, continued interest in us. This, Reverend Lord, is the earnest wish of the most humble and obedient servant of Your Lordship.

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

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These words are not in the copy, but the sense requires them.

Edmund Dwyer.
My good Sister,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I was glad to receive news of you and to learn of your continued care for the poor orphans. I thank God for this and for the zeal He gives you to serve Him in this good work. I ask Him to continue to grant you His graces.

You did well to send the older children to the village to go into service and earn their living. As the others become ready to be sent as well, I ask you to free yourself of their care because the Ladies are having a hard time with, or are growing weary of, this expense. I will see them tomorrow, however, to try to have something sent to you so you can continue a little longer to feed and raise the littlest ones.

Once again I ask Our Lord, who willed to be a child Himself, to give you His Spirit for this duty and for all the others in which His Providence will place you. Continue frequently to offer Him your work and to raise your heart to Him, asking Him to bless you and telling Him that you want to be faithful to Him always. This is the grace I ask of Him, recommending myself to your prayers to obtain a similar grace for me. I am, in His love, dear Sister, your very affectionate servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Sister Jeanne-Françoise, Daughter of Charity, in Étampes

Letter 1754. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original signed letter.

1First redaction: “cannot or will not.”
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

You inform me that the King was kind enough to give you nine mares and a stallion, and that the Queen continues in several ways her royal, charitable acts of generosity. Since Their Majesties constantly do good for us, we must pray constantly for them.

Please let me know whether the establishment being requested in Greater Poland is the same as the one about which a Polish nobleman, a Governor of that region, wrote me from Rome, as I have already mentioned to you,1 or whether it is another.

We hope to have the reinforcements you requested leave around the fifteenth of next month. We have been led to hope that a ship will be leaving from Rouen for Hamburg at that time. We will try to send you Brother Durand,2 who is teaching at Saint-Charles, together with the two I already assigned you, and M. Guillot, who

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Letter 1755. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.

1The Comte de Velopoiski.

2Antoine Durand was a chosen soul. Born in Beaumont-sur-Oise (Val-d'Oise) in April 1629, he entered the Congregation of the Mission on September 15, 1647, took his vows in 1651, and was ordained a priest in September 1654, a few days after his arrival in Poland. He returned to France in 1655, was assigned to Agde, and became Superior there the following year. The Province of Savoy sent him as delegate to the General Assembly in 1661. In 1662 he was put in charge of the house and parish in Fontainebleau, a very important and delicate position because of the dealings that the Pastor in that town was obliged to have with the Court. In his interesting memoirs, published by Abbé Octave Estournet (Journal de Antoine Durand, prêtre de la Mission, premier curé de Fontainebleau (1661-67) [Fontainebleau: Libr. cathol., 1900]), he retraces the events in which he was involved during his stay in Fontainebleau. From there Durand went to Agde (1679-81), then to Dijon (1681-83), Sedan (1683-90), Saint-Cyr (1691-92), and the Arras seminary (1692-95); in all these places he was Superior. Despite his advanced age, he was given the duty of Secretary General, which he performed until 1707. For two years he was also Director of the Daughters of Charity. Besides his memoirs, he wrote three books still in manuscript form: Vie de la Soeur Julienne Loret, Fille de la Charité Livre contenant les marques d'un homme juste (Bibl. Maz., Ms. 1250); and Réflexions sur les masques, le bal et les danses, avec quelques pratiques pour les trois jours qui précèdent le carême, Ms. 1679. The exact date of his death is not known. His biography is given in Notices, vol. II, pp. 389-424.
has offered to go back. If M. Zelazewski were more stable, that would give us good reason to bless God. Still, I adore His guidance in the inconstancy of this young man and ask Our Lord to give him a share of His own steadfastness.

You did well to pay for the two Jacobuses received in England, without mentioning it to the Queen.

I was consoled by the sermon preached by M. Fleury, and I thank God for blessing this action. I ask God to preserve him for the sanctification of that Court and to give success to the Diet now in session, to the satisfaction of the King and for the peace of the kingdom.

Enclosed is the letter from Tunis that was forgotten last week and one from M. du Chesne, which has arrived since then.

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 Ozenne

1756. - TO FIRMIN GET, IN MARSEILLES

Paris, June 26, 1654

Monsieur,

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

I am writing you a short letter, since I am in town very late and in a big hurry, with almost nothing to tell you; I did, however, receive your letter of the fifteenth with the packet from Algiers.

I am pleased that you have found a good gardener and have had a decent return on your garden.

3English coins minted under James I (1603-25).

Letter 1756. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, Sister Haims Collection, original signed letter.
I do not know how those slaves who came from Algiers can complain. Certainly, I have always indicated to M. Barreau the amount of money for each individual slave. He must not have received my letters. I have not yet seen the letters from those slaves.

I would be very glad if the Administrators would lend you the money you need for the building. Please do your best to obtain this favor from them, so as not to draw on us the bill of exchange for three hundred écus, which I mentioned to you in my last letter; we would have a hard time paying it. Nevertheless, if you are obliged to do so, please remember not to make it payable for two weeks, in order to give us time to look for the money.

I would be willing for you to grant the right of way through your garden to M. Abeille because he is your neighbor and M. Sossin is asking you to do so. However, since it is for a permanent easement, you should ask them to excuse you from doing so, unless M. Abeille compensates for this easement by granting you access to his water supply. In that case, I gladly give my consent.

God be praised for your good health and your holy employments! I ask Him to continue to grant you His grace. I am, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

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

Addressed: Monsieur Get

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1Jean Abeille.  
2A notary in Marseilles.
My good Father,

I received the letter you wrote me, and I see in it your continued concern for this kingdom. Thank you for this. My Lord, the King, is planning to open a little seminary in this house in Meuporense, where I have been for the past two days, and to entrust it to some of your Missionaries. War is preventing us from doing many things—at least from doing them as well as we would like.

Please have the Daughters of Charity leave as soon as possible; give instructions that one of those new ones be appointed Superior of their little family as soon as she arrives. I ask you to dispose her also to have great trust in that good Lady, named Mademoiselle de Villers, who is with me. Ask des Noyers about her; he will tell you about her virtue and her work here. In a word, you be the judge of this because she has been at the Court for four years, and not a single person has complained about her; everyone, however, has experienced her charity. Her humility is as great as could be desired in a person.

I must admit that I am not completely satisfied with the conduct of one of the Sisters here—not that she is not a good Sister, but she is a little coarse and sharp. Persons who stay at her house find it difficult to bear with her because she is not at all condescending. In addition, she is offended every time someone proposes something to her, except taking in children; and you know that charity must not be limited.

Therefore, good Father, I ask that you and Mademoiselle Le Gras instruct the Sister you are sending as Superior to obey whatever good Mademoiselle de Villers tells her and to accept in charity both the older girls and the younger ones. The latter are often in greater danger than the others. Moreover, I ask you not to believe anything about this affair except what I write you. My only concern is to see that my outlay of money is put to good use; otherwise, I could no longer keep it up.


1 The year of Nicolas Guillot’s return to France.
2 Maid of Honor to the Queen; she died in 1658.
3 Pierre des Noyers, secretary to the Queen of Poland.
I accepted Mademoiselle de Villers' refusal to do what you asked her in your letters, not only to satisfy her but also so as not to oppose M. Ozenne, who was against it. He said that the Sisters here felt the same way, and he promised me that things would improve. I believed him, but I see that I was mistaken. I hope that, in their spirit of obedience, the new Sisters you send me will not fail in this. The conditions still hold about not changing anything regarding their Institute and the direction of the Priests of the Mission. I tell you quite frankly that otherwise I cannot proceed with my plan for their establishment because until now I have seen nothing really reliable in their behavior.

Please accept all this as coming from the trust I have in you, and I ask you not to write anything about it here.

M. Guillot will give you the replies he received from Sweden.

LOUISE-MARIE

1758. - TO THOMAS BERTHE, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

July 3, 1654

We are grateful to that good priest from Piedmont for expressing the desire to have our Company established in Turin. Perhaps that means that we ourselves should ask for the empty house he mentioned to you. We will not do so, however, because it is our custom, as you know, never to insert ourselves into any place unless we are called there. If we say that we should do so on this occasion because it would open the door to the advancement of the glory of God in that region, we should think the contrary. We should hope that God will be more honored by our submission to His Providence in awaiting His orders than if we ventured to anticipate them.
I thank God that you know the art of tearing yourself apart—I mean the way to humble yourself truly by recognizing and revealing your faults. You are right in believing yourself to be as you describe and to be most unsuitable for any kind of duty; it is on this foundation that Our Lord will base the execution of His plans for you. In addition, however, when you make these reflections on your interior state, Monsieur, you must raise your mind to the consideration of His Adorable Goodness. Granted, you have good reason to mistrust yourself, but you have greater reason to put your trust in Him. If you are inclined toward evil, you know that He is incomparably more inclined to do good and to do it even in and through you.

Please make your prayer on this and, during the day, raise your heart to God from time to time to ask Him for the grace of grounding yourself firmly on this principle. Then, after considering your own miseries, you will always direct them to His mercies, dwelling more on His munificence toward you than on your unworthiness in His regard, and more on His strength than on your own weakness. With this in view, abandon yourself to His paternal embrace in the hope that He Himself will accomplish in you what He expects of you and will bless whatever you do for Him. Therefore, Monsieur, keep your heart ready to receive the peace and joy of the Holy Spirit.

Letter 1759. - Reg. 2, p. 333. The Avignon manuscript mistakenly addressed this letter to a priest of the house in Rome.

1Toussaint Lebas, born in Josselin (Morbihan) on November 1, 1625, was ordained a priest on May 25, 1652, eve of the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity, and entered the Congregation of the Mission in Richelieu on January 2, 1653. A short time later he was sent to the Agde house, where he took his vows in 1657, in the presence of Thomas Berthe. Lebas was Superior in Narbonne (1671-73).

2The Avignon manuscript erroneously dated the letter June 12, 1654.