Vincent de Paul announces that François Le Blanc, a Priest of the Mission, has been discovered by Cromwell’s emissaries in the castle of the Marquis of Huntley and jailed in Aberdeen. He will doubtless be condemned to death.

1866. - TO LOUIS DE CHANDENIER, ABBOT OF TOURNUS

Paris, April 27, 1655

Monsieur,

Here at last are the patent and the letters for Rome you have so ardently desired in order to divest yourself, and everything is in the proper order.¹

I had the honor of writing you that I was to see the Cardinal² by his order and that I suspected he would do me the honor of speaking about a diocese for you, Monsieur. That, however, was

¹Saint Vincent was probably referring to the resignation of Saint-Pourçain Abbey in favor of the Congregation of the Mission.
²Cardinal Mazarin.
not the case. If His Eminence had done so, I would have told him what I told you; there was no need of that. Things went rather well, thank God. Apparently, his reason for seeing me was to do me an act of kindness, in consequence of the order the King gave our French Missionaries in Rome to return to France because they had given hospitality in their house to Cardinal de Retz. As a result, only four Italian Missionary priests are left in Rome, but His Majesty has kindly allowed us to send Monsieur Jolly back there, and he is leaving in two hours. If you would like to make use of him for your service, God knows how heartily he will do this.

Dioceses for you are often mentioned to me, Monsieur, but I tell all those who do so that you do not want to hear of this because the call of God does not seem clear to you in that. Indeed, I do not see anyone who is not edified by this, with the exception of one person, who cannot stomach the fact that you will not accept Die, in Dauphiné. I have not had the honor of seeing your sister, and I must confess that I am not looking for her because I do not have a pleasant answer to give her regarding your brother. Your sisters at Sainte-Marie are well, thank God.

Our little family is still the same. We have M. Berthe here with us now. God has taken to Himself M. Thibault, Superior in Saint-Méen. According to the Bishop of Saint-Malo, he was one of the most effective preachers in the world. People are telling us marvelous things about the rest of his virtues.

M. Le Blanc, the Irishman whom we sent to the Hebrides, was
taken prisoner in Scotland with a Jesuit and another priest. He runs
the risk of soon being hanged for the sake of religion, unless God
arranges matters otherwise.

We saw M. de Flogni, who consoled us greatly by telling us
about all your ways of acting and those of the Abbot of l'Aumône. 10
I thank God for this, asking Him to purify your dear souls and,
through you, the souls of the people entrusted to you.

M. Jolly's departure prompts me to conclude, renewing to you
and to the Abbot of l'Aumône the offers of my perpetual obedience.
Please accept this, Monsieur, and ask God's mercy on the most
abominable and despicable sinner in the world, 11 who is, Monsieur,
your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
I.S.C.M.

At the bottom of the first page: For Abbot de Chandenier

1867. - TO POPE ALEXANDER VII

Most Holy Father,

Since the poor widow of the Gospel, 1 who put into the Temple
treasury only two small copper coins, was not despised by God
because of her insignificant offering but merited, rather, the ap-

---

10 Claude de Chandenier.
11 Collet (op. cit., vol. II, p. 198) mentions a letter, dated April 23, 1655, which Saint Vincent
concluded with the words "who am the most useless, the most wretched, and who has the greatest
need of God's mercy, which I beg you to ask Him for me." This letter is no longer in existence,
and there is no record of the person to whom it was written. Coste speculated that the conclusion
may have belonged to letter 1866.

Letter 1867. - Vatican Archives, Particolari, vol. XXX, fol. 86, original signed letter, written
in Latin.

Cf. Lk 21:1-4. (NAB)
proval and praise of our Redeemer, I, too, hope and feel encouraged, Most Holy Father, that among the many letters being sent to Your Holiness by prominent persons from all over the Christian world, mine also, that is, the letter of the most unworthy Superior of the Mission, the least of all Congregations, will not be completely disregarded. It brings my congratulations to Your Holiness on your elevation to the Pontificate and my felicitations, which know almost no bounds.

I dedicate to you our entire Congregation and myself in particular. I am in my seventy-fifth year and have seen the promotion of many Sovereign Pontiffs, but I have seen none whose election has been so unanimously welcomed by peoples and nations as that of Your Holiness. This election was the object of the aspirations, prayers, and jubilation of all. With renewed courage, the Christian world hopes for all sorts of benefits from this event, especially for universal peace, which, as everyone knows and says, Your Holiness desires so ardently. God grant that Your Holiness may procure for us this gift of bountiful peace, and may He preserve you and grant you length of days!

These are the prayers and most sincere wishes presented to Your Holiness by the most humble, most obedient, and most unworthy servant and son of Your Holiness.

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

Paris, the fifth day before the Kalends of May, 1655

---371---

2Fabio Chigi had become Pope Alexander VII on April 7, 1655.
3Since the birth of Saint Vincent in 1580 or 1581, eleven Pontiffs had preceded Alexander VII.
4April 27.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
I am very distressed, Monsieur, that, because of my sins, God has not chosen to grant success to my mediation in the arrangement of the affair concerning your good brother. Had he abided by what you and I had agreed upon; namely, that, provided the Doctors, after having heard him, assured him that he could remain in his vocation with a sure conscience, the arrangement was as good as done. Since, however, they saw that he was not satisfied with that, and knowing that you, Monsieur, told me you would go back on your word if he did not accept what the good Father was proposing this past Sunday, they informed me the day before that they could not agree to this. They then asked me to release them from their promise to me, which I did, and to release your good brother from his the next day.

Now, I most humbly entreat you to allow me to tell you in all simplicity, Monsieur, that after having seen your good brother’s complaints and the response of these good Fathers, it has seemed to me that they are acting in good faith. I also think that this good Father would have done well and exactly to consent to the arrangement in the way to which you and I had agreed, and even to abide by the one that had been made at Saint-Denis.

I tell you this with all possible humility and respect, Monsieur, and also that I am and will be all my life, in the love of O[ur] L[ord] and His holy Mother, Monsieur, your most humble and very obedient servant.

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

... Another thing bothers me about our establishment in Turin, namely, My Lord, that I did not give sufficient thought to the first proposals regarding what is desired of us. I did so since then, however, when I saw the conditions of the contract, which the Superior of the Annecy house sent me, stating that we were to give six priests to preach and hear confessions in the town. I failed to let you know, My Lord, that this obligation of preaching and hearing confessions in the town is absolutely contrary to our Institute, for we have dedicated ourselves entirely to the service of poor country people and to the spiritual promotion of the ecclesiastical state. So, in order not to be hindered in nor diverted from these works by others that may keep us in towns, we have as a specific Rule neither to preach nor to hear confessions in those where a Bishop resides or where there is a Presidial Court, except for the ordinands and other members of the clergy or the laity who make retreat in our houses, especially since in those big towns there is usually a large number of good preachers and confessors, whereas there are very few in the country.

I ask your pardon, My Lord, for not having informed you sooner of what we can and cannot do; I had not thought about it. We will always be ready to render service to the Turin diocese in the way our Rule allows: to go and instruct poor country folk, hear their general confessions, reconcile them with one another, settle their disputes, and organize assistance for the poor who are sick corporally as well as spiritually, by establishing the Confraternity of Charity.


1Achille Le Vazeux.

2Royal courts established in the sixteenth century to relieve the pressure of appeals to the Parlements. In certain cases they also served as courts of first instance.
Those, My Lord, are our functions during the missions, and, after that is done in one village, we move on to another to do the same—all at the expense of the foundation, for we have given ourselves to God to serve the poor gratuitously. One group of our priests is engaged in that, while the others work in the town directing the seminary, the ordinands, and retreatants, if there are any. Then the latter group of priests goes to give missions in its turn. This allows the others to come to the house to recollect themselves and to do what the others were doing there.

I most humbly entreat you, My Lord, to allow us to act in this way and to persuade those who, with you, do us the honor of asking for us, to do the same. I shall await the honor of your orders so as to know your intentions and to try to put them into effect.

1870. • TO CHARLES OZENNE, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW

Paris, May 7, 1655

Monsieur,

I received your letter of April 8, in which you complain that I did not inform you of Monsieur du Chesne’s death. If that is the case, I was very wrong; perhaps my intense grief made me forget it. It is true, then, Monsieur, that God has chosen to take to Himself that servant of His, and it is one of the greatest losses this Little Company could undergo. God chose to draw him to Himself five or six months ago in Agde, after an epidemic illness of two months. I had written him several times to get out of that foul air and go to whatever house of ours he wanted. He, however, was full of excuses, not wanting to abandon his Community family, all of


1First reduction: “to take him in Agde.”

2First reduction: “but he did not want to do this.” Saint Vincent made the correction himself.
whom were ill, so much so that he had to get someone from the outside to look after them.

To give you an idea of the loss we have suffered in him, those who have seen the variety of all the virtues proper to Missionaries he had—his great zeal, mortification, candor, steadfastness, cordiality,3 the grace he had for preaching, teaching catechism, giving retreats to ordinands, love for his vocation, exactness in the observance of the Rules and customs of the Company, and the other virtues demanded of a Missionary—can judge what a great loss we have suffered. At the two or three conferences held concerning him, wonderful and amazing things were said by those who had known him very closely. Our Brothers who had lived with him in other houses and had been on missions with him gave us an inexhaustible account of the particular acts of virtue they had remarked in him. I have never seen greater fervor than that evident in the conferences held on this servant of God. I am sorry we did not have it all put in writing to send you; you would have seen what outstanding—even heroic—acts of virtue, mortification, and humility he practiced toward those he thought he had annoyed. If I can, I will ask someone to do a written summary based on the notes of those who spoke at these conferences, whom I will tell to hand in their comments.

To be sure, Monsieur, those who saw him did not know this. He was marvelously clever at concealing his interior and exterior practices. If there was anything that might have upset some of those with whom he lived, it was his hastiness. I assure you, however, that this really helped him to perform wonderful acts of mortification, which contributed greatly to the sanctification of his soul. Many among you knew him; I think it will be well for you to hold a conference about him.

God was not content to try us in that way; He did so again a short time ago in the person of Monsieur Thibault, Superior in Saint-

3First redaction: "his steadfastness, gentleness, and cordiality."
4The Saint inserted the word "great" between the lines.
Méen, who became ill during a mission he was giving. He had them carry him from there to his house in Saint-Méen, where he died two or three days later. This has deeply grieved his house and—from what I hear—the province, where God effected marvelous conversions through him, especially among the nobility. His Bishop, the Bishop of Saint-Malo, expressed to me his very great sorrow over his loss, and rightly so. He esteemed him so highly that he preferred him to any other preacher he had ever heard (he told me this himself) for the growth of the Lord’s vineyard.

In short, my sins are the reason why God has deprived the Company of him. I am sending you the letter that Monsieur Serre, his assistant, wrote, giving me the results of the conference they held on his virtues. You will see in it, though stated briefly, what great graces God had placed in this man, who was His servant; in a word, a model of a true, perfect Missionary.

I expect at any moment to hear of the death of Monsieur Lebas, Priest of the Mission in Agde. None of your family knew him because he made his [Internal] Seminary in Richelieu, and from there he was sent to Agde. Word has reached me from the latter place that he is sick and on the point of dying. If God has taken him to Himself, it is another big loss for the Company because he was a good member, who studied hard, and in whom in a short time the spirit of a true Missionary was apparent. Our poor late Monsieur du Chesne told me wonders about his virtue and grace in all our works, and the last letter Monsieur Lebas wrote to me made all that clear to me. I recommend him—living or dead—to your prayers, and also the illness of Monsieur di Martinis, a Missionary in Rome, who was sent there from Genoa, where he made his seminary.

That, Monsieur, is all the news I can tell you in this letter, except to add to it that Monsieur Jolly, Director of our [Internal] Seminary,

--- 376 ---

5 After the word “virtues,” the secretary had written “There are few people,” which he later scratched out.

6 First redaction: “and,” which the Saint replaced by “in a word.”
is leaving for Rome with Brother François, who is still in the seminary. The former is going to replace Monsieur Berthe in Rome. Messieurs Durand and Éveillard know good Brother François because he was under them at the collège of Saint-Charles and is an exceptional member.

You have consoled me by sending the quarterly allowance to Madame Zelazewski with her son, whom I greet most humbly. I continue to pray that God may give him His Spirit for the salvation and sanctification of his compatriots, as He did to Saint Hyacinth. I certainly have not lost hope that this may be so.

I will send the hat for the Officialis with our Brothers and will take the honor of writing to him by the same means. You did not indicate to me the proper terms for writing to him.

I praise God that the Daughters of Charity have opened their little schools, and am surprised that they have not been put to work caring for the sick poor of the town.

I am waiting impatiently for Messieurs des Noyers and Conrard. God knows what a pleasure it will give me to discuss matters with them. Meanwhile, I am, in the love of Our Lord, for you and your dear family, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL, i.s.C.M.

I ask you once again, Monsieur, to see M. Fleury for me and to offer him in my name the perpetual gift of my heart.

We will have our men depart on the first ship we hear is leaving

---

7Pierre François, born in Riceys (Aube) on November 11, 1627, entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 20, 1654, and took his vows in Rome on November 26, 1656, in the presence of M. Jolly. The Lyon manuscript gives a summary of the conference on his virtues, which was held in Rome after his death.

8Saint Hyacinth (Jaoek), born in Silesia in 1185, brought the Dominicans to Poland and attempted to unite the Eastern and Roman Churches. He died on the feast of the Assumption in 1251 and was canonized in 1597.

9This sentence is in Saint Vincent's handwriting.

10This sentence is in the Saint's handwriting.
for Poland. I will be greatly consoled to see Messieurs des Noyers and Conrad here before then.

Tell Mademoiselle de Villers that the little pet has deigned to begin to look at me and that he is my lesson in many things and makes me ashamed.

Il Signor Jean-Baptiste, who has filled the office of Superior in Rome, tells me that he has spoken to Cardinal de Sainte-Croix, Protector of Poland, to obtain the indulgences you are requesting for your Holy Cross Church, and that he has promised to ask for them. I have written him to petition His Eminence often for them and to send them on to you as soon as possible. He took the opportunity of making this request when he went to render an account to him of some missions he gave recently in his diocese.

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

1871. - MONSIEUR DE LA FONT, LIEUTENANT GENERAL
OF SAINT-QUENTIN, TO SAINT VINCENT

[Between 1650 and 1655]

The alms which, by the grace of God and your efforts, have been sent to this province and so justly distributed by those persons to whom you chose to entrust them, have kept alive millions of persons reduced by the

--- 378 ---
misfortune of war to the utmost extremity. I am bound to express to you the most humble gratitude of all those people. Within the past week, during the movement of the troops, we had close to fourteen hundred poor refugees in this town, who were fed each day from your alms. There are still more than a thousand of them in town, not to mention those in the country, who cannot get any food other than what is given them through your charity.

The misery is so great that those inhabitants remaining in the villages have only straw on which to sleep, and the most prominent persons in the area do not have enough on which to subsist. There are even some who own property worth more than twenty thousand écus but, at the moment, do not have even a piece of bread and have gone two days without eating.

Therefore, in virtue of my office and the knowledge I have, I am bound to entreat you most humbly to continue to be the father of this country in order to save the lives of so many poor sick and dying persons, whom your priests are assisting in such a worthy manner.

1872. - TO FIRMIN GET, SUPERIOR, IN MARSEILLES

Paris, May 14, 1655

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am very glad you have received the bill of exchange for one thousand livres. I will inform the Pastor of Havre-de-Grâce ¹ how difficult it is for the Consul in Algiers to ransom so many slaves with such a small sum of money, so that he will do something about it and send more than he has done. I will likewise notify the Duchesse d’Aiguillon and explain the same thing to her.

True, Monsieur, there was a time when Monsieur Valois ² had

---

¹Nicolas Gimart (1649-55) or François Dufestel (1655-56).
²Patrick Walsh (Saint Vincent refers to him as Patrice Valois). Born in Limerick (Ireland) in 1619, he entered the Congregation of the Mission on December 21, 1644, and was ordained a priest in 1646.
the same desires as you express to me, but, by the grace of God, he recovered from that state. I ask you, however, to hold back the letters which that Irish priest you mention will send him, together with those Monsieur Valois writes to him, and send them all to me.

I consent most willingly to your placing over the door of your new building the coat of arms for which you sent me the model.3

I am glad that Monsieur Bauduy arrived in Marseilles in good health and that Monsieur Champion and Brother Claude,4 who have returned from the country, are feeling better. In the event that I am unable to write to Monsieur Bauduy by this regular mail, Monsieur, please tell him that I greet him with all possible affection and will have the letter he sent to me delivered to his good brother, who is now Prior of the convent of the Celestine Fathers in Avignon.

If you think it advisable to send Brother Lemoyne5 to Monsieur Mugnier,6 do so; but I think, Monsieur, that it will be well for Brother Claude to stay in Marseilles a while longer.

If a merchant from Marseilles entrusts to you the sum of five hundred livres for the ransom of a poor slave named Jean Borray from Rouen, take them and send them to Monsieur Barreau in Algiers, asking him to work for the ransom of that young man. If I do not write to Monsieur Barreau today, I will send you the report I was given on that slave, and you will kindly send it to the Brother Consul.

3The seal of the Congregation of the Mission. On a silver background the Savior, in flesh-colored tints, is clothed in blue and red, His arms extended, His head surrounded by golden rays. The inscription reads: Evangeliare pauperibus misit me [He sent me to preach the good news to the poor]. In Armorial de la ville de Marseille (Marseilles, 1864), p. 252, Godefroi de Montgrand confused the coat of arms of the house with the personal seal of the Superior, on which was written around the image of the Savior, the words: Sup. dom. Massiliens. Cong. Missionis [Superior of the Marseilles house of the Congregation of the Mission].

4Brother Claude Le Gentil.

5Jean Lemoyne, received into the Congregation of the Mission as a coadjutor Brother in 1643. Firmin Gét sent him to Agde.

6Jean-Jacques Mugnier, Superior of the Agde house.
I am, meanwhile, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

Vincent de Paul,
i.s.c.m.

Enclosed is the name of the merchant who is supposed to supply the five hundred livres to be sent to Algiers for the ransom of Jean Borray.

Addressed: Monsieur Get, Superior of the Priests of the Mission, in Marseilles

1873. - Saint Louise to Saint Vincent

The young woman from La Roche-Guyon whom Sister Anne Hardemont brought with her is pressuring us to leave, saying that she could never get used to our way of life. I entreat you, Most Honored Father, kindly to let us know whether we should let her go. I have reason to fear that I have contributed to this, for she was saying recently that I was not very pleasant to her. It is true that I told Sister Anne that it would have been more advisable to wait until she had spoken to your charity about her.

Does not all this oblige me to put her off a while? I await your instructions, Most Honored Father, so I may obey them, unfaithful though I am to the practice of obedience. That is why I commit so many faults, for which I most humbly ask your pardon and your blessing for renewed strength, if it please your charity.

L. de M.

---

7First redaction: "note." The name was written on a note which no longer exists.

Letter 1873. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1Date added on the back of the original by the secretary.
Madame,

I venture to write to Your Highness to renew to you the offers of my obedience with all possible humility and submission. I send them along with that good monk who is going to see you to have the honor of paying his respects to you and to tell you how disposed the abbey of . . . ¹ is to accepting the Reform, together with the most appropriate means of accomplishing it. He has a good reputation and is from an excellent family. I hope, Madame, that Your Highness will be kind enough to listen to him: (1) because I know of your ardent zeal for the glory of God, which is so great that you do not even spare the persons who have the honor of belonging to you; (2) because in so doing, Your Highness will be the reason why, from now on, Jesus Christ will be honored and served more in that house—which cannot be the case now, in the state to which it is reduced, as the bearer of this letter will inform you; (3) because the late Bishop of . . . wrote me several times that he so ardently desired the introduction of the Reform into that house. I think it might have come to pass were it not for the obstacles put in its way by one of the prominent monks in the abbey, who had great credibility with the others. Since that time, however, he has died, and perhaps, Madame, God has permitted this delay to reserve to your son, the Abbot,² and to Your Highness the merit of such an important work.

¹Abelly states that this was a very important abbey.

²According to Abelly, this prince was very young and still under the tutelage of his mother. One might surmise that this was Charles de Paris, Comte de Saint-Paul, son of the Duchesse de Longueville. He was born on January 23, 1649, and was named Abbot of Saint-Remi in Reims on August 5, 1659. It would seem, however, that the abbey in question here was not in an archdiocese, but in a simple diocese.
My affectionate and tender greetings to your lovable heart and to all the members of your dear family. I ask Our Lord to bless them so abundantly that the blessing will be shared by the seminary and that all those in it, in whom you are striving to instill and perfect the ecclesiastical spirit, may in the end be filled with it. I do not recommend them to you; you know that they are the treasure of the Church.

Paris, May 21, 1655

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter of April 22, and the news it brought me of the attack of those powerful armies on Poland¹ has greatly distressed me. I ask Our Lord to take this kingdom under His special protection and to bless and sanctify the King and Queen more and more.

You surprise me by telling me that someone is saying² that I wrote you that long letter³ in my own hand six weeks ago, based on the information you gave me. You know this is not so, except

¹Charles X (Charles Gustavus) declared war on Poland (1655) under the pretext that Jan Casimir of Poland, who was asserting his own claims to the Swedish throne, refused to acknowledge him as King. Actually, Charles’ purpose in what is called the First Northern War (1655-60) was to extend the Swedish possessions on the southern Baltic coast. By the treaty of Oliva (May 3, 1660), Poland abandoned claims to the Swedish throne and ceded Livonia to Sweden.

²The words “someone is saying” were added in the Saint’s handwriting.

³Of April 2 (cf. no. 1857).
that you told me about the conference you had regarding banquets to which some members of the Company might be invited. What you told me simply as a recital of events gave me the opportunity to write to you on that matter—something I had to do so that the family there might conform itself to all the ways of acting of the Company. You are also well aware, Monsieur, that you did not write me about any of the things I mention to you in my letter. I acted in that way for reasons of uniformity, so necessary in a Company, and my fear that you might fail in it there.

Please let me know why you told me that you are distressed about what I said to you regarding the use of what the Queen and your parishioners send you and of what you get from your farm. Explain to me where there is any contradiction between what I wrote you in that letter and in those that preceded it, so I can tell you my little thought on that.

I gave you my opinion about taking walks, and it will be well for you to abide by it. I was not aware that the members of that house go for walks in the garden outside the time of recreation, especially two by two, except in cases of illness, nor that any well-regulated Community asks for butler at breakfast.

_Mon Dieu!_ Monsieur, how moved I was by what you told me of Monsieur Durand's being very ill with pleurodynia! 4 God be blessed that he is feeling better! I ask you to greet him for me, and tell him please to take care of his health. I also embrace the rest of the little Company.

I think I told you that we have sent Monsieur Jolly to Rome. The Bishop of Lodève,5 who has just returned from there, told me we should send Monsieur Berthe back there because he is well known and very well accepted by many of the Cardinals.

---

4Bornholm disease, characterized by sudden chest pain and mild fever, with a recurrence of these symptoms on the third day.

5François de Bosquet, Administrator for Justice in Languedoc, who later became Bishop of Lodève (1648-57), then of Montpellier (1657-76). He died on June 24, 1676. (Cf. Abbé Paul-Emile-Marie-Joseph Henry, _François Bosquet_ [Paris: Ernest Thorin, 1889].)
The Turks have been responsible for so many avanias—I mean groundless quarrels—against our Consuls in Algiers and Tunis, that we will most likely have to give up the consulates and keep only priests there. The Consul in Algiers is in debt for at least eight to ten thousand livres, which we have to find in order to get him out of there; otherwise, we would be committing ourselves beyond our power to pay those debts. This is very detrimental to Christianity because they are doing great good there.

The Consul in Tunis is being persecuted by the Dey, that is, by the King of that town, because he refused to have sent to him any cotton canvas—a kind of cloth used for making sails—and because he prevented a merchant from Marseilles, who had agreed to bring it to him, from doing so. The reason for the latter is that the Bull, In coena Domini, forbids all Christians to supply unbelievers with weapons and other materials that might be used for the war they are continually waging at sea against Christians. Now, it is very much to be feared that the above-mentioned Consul may suffer personally for this.

Those, Monsieur, are our little items of news and all I can tell you for now. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
is.C.M.

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

---

6Jean Barreau.
7Martin Husson.
8The words "from Marseilles" are inserted between the lines.
9On the day of the Lord’s Supper. Although Saint Vincent writes about “the Bull, In coena Domini,” there is, in fact, no Bull by that name. The papal letter he has in mind is entitled Pastorali Romani Pontificis (cf. Magnum Bullarium Romanum 6, p. 25), issued in 1655 by Alexander VII on Holy Thursday, i.e., In coena Domini [on the day of the Lord’s Supper].
I have gladly taken upon myself the responsibility of thanking you, in
the name of the poor of our countryside, for all your generosity toward
them; without it they would have starved to death. I would like to be able
to express to you their gratitude for this; I would make known to you how
these poor people use their little remaining strength to raise their hands
to heaven in order to draw down upon their benefactors the graces of the
God of mercies.

It is impossible to describe adequately the poverty of this province, for
anything said about it falls short of the truth. Consequently, you will get
more accurate information from the priests of your Congregation, whose
zeal and impartiality are so evident in the distribution of alms that
everyone is deeply edified by them. As for me, I thank you personally for
having sent them to us and for the good example they have given us.

1878. - TO FRANÇOIS BOULART

Saint-Lazare, May 29, 1655

Reverend Father,

A thousand thanks for the warm welcome you so kindly gave
to that good monk who came to see me this morning. He wanted
to express to me his apprehension about returning to the house
where he made his profession and about falling into the same
mishaps as before. He implored me to use my influence with you
that you might do him the charity of accepting him into your holy


1This Canon of Y (Somme) later became Archdeacon of Reims.
2Period during which bands of Missionaries traveled through Champagne distributing aid.

Letter 1878. - The original signed letter was stolen from the Sainte-Geneviève Library. Before
1840, it was owned by a bibliophile named Jacob. It later became the property of Laurent Veydt,
a collector of autograph letters, in Brussels, and at some point was put on sale by Charavay.
Congregation. I cannot refuse him this, my very dear Father, when I see his perseverance in the request he is making to you. In the name of O[ur] L[ord], my very dear Father, consider the matter before the Divine Majesty, in whose love I am, Reverend Father, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

1879. - TO FIRMIN GET, SUPERIOR, IN MARSEILLES

June 4, 1655

According to blessed Francis de Sales, swelling of the legs is a sign of perfect health for the future. Please tell Brother Claude this for his consolation, and greet him for me.

I was consoled to learn of the distrait by the English against the Tunisians, and I hope that France will do likewise. It seems likely that, if action were taken against those people, it would be successful. In that case, however, you would have no opportunity for earning merit, as you have right now, nor would I have reason to bless God for the concern He gives you for the interests of the poor slaves and for the good work you are doing in this.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am greatly consoled that you tell me in your letter of May 6 that Monsieur Durand is over his illness, and also that Sister Marguerite 1 no longer has a fever. I ask God to return her soon to perfect health and to strengthen Monsieur Durand’s restored health, so that he can apply himself all the better to learning Polish.

Please let me know, Monsieur, what sort of benefice is Vitkiski, which you mentioned to me, its value, whether it is far from Warsaw, and what obligations are attached to it.

When I wrote to tell you to send Monsieur Desdames to Sokółka, it was with the idea that this would perhaps be advisable 2 and his presence there would be absolutely necessary; for, otherwise, I would be far more pleased if all of you stayed together, especially since this establishment is just beginning.

I see no difficulty preventing you, Monsieur, from having a monk preach in your church so as to allow your Missionaries to give some missions in the country; it would be a great comfort to me if this could be done. I am greatly consoled also by what you tell me about having the letter I sent you reread to your little Company. However, I will be even more so if you hold a few conferences on the matters about which I am writing to you in this one.

I have deep compassion for that poor young German 3 you mentioned. I ask Our Lord to grant him the grace of recognizing his faults and making amends for them.

---

Letter 1880. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.
1Marguerite Moreau.
2First redaction: “necessary.” The Saint made the correction in his own handwriting.
3The word “German” was inserted by the Saint.
I most humbly thank the former Pastor for remembering me. Please thank him for me, Monsieur, and renew to him the offers of my obedience, entreating him most humbly to accept them.

My greetings to your entire little family, whom I embrace with all possible tenderness of heart, prostrate in spirit at their feet and yours. I trust they are working harder and harder to learn Polish and to become really fluent in it; otherwise, they would be useless in Poland and would deprive the Queen and Our Lord Himself of what they expect of them.

Before ending this letter, I cannot refrain from repeating to you how greatly consoled I am by good Sister Madeleine’s success with the little schools. It is also a great consolation to me that you, Monsieur, have arranged everything, with the result that your little recommendations to those good Sisters regarding the way they should carry out their duties so as not to displease others have turned out well, as I learned from your letter.

I know of nothing new right now worth writing to you, since the entire little family is still in the same state, except that we received news that Monsieur Le Blanc—who, as I wrote to you, had been taken prisoner in Aberdeen—who, as I wrote to you, had been taken prisoner in Aberdeen—has been moved from there to Edinburgh, another city in Scotland, where his life is still in great
danger. I continue to recommend him to your prayers, and I am, in
the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

In the name of Our Lord, Monsieur, share with me the results
of the conferences you will hold.\textsuperscript{11}

\textit{Addressed:} Monsieur Ozenne, Superior of the Mission, in Wars-
saw

\textbf{1880a. - JEAN BARREAU, CONSUL OF FRANCE, TO SAINT VINCENT}

[Algiers, June 5, 1655 \textsuperscript{1}]

Monsieur,

\textit{Your blessing!}

\ldots Today is June 5, and we thought that two ships, ready for Leghorn,
were to leave last week, but they were delayed because of the galleys that
left yesterday to go privateering. We think the latter are going to join the
ones from Tunis to go and capture a certain place in Calabria.

So, since the departure was so quick, I did not have time to inform you
of the duress under which our Pasha placed the Spanish Mercedarian
Fathers,\textsuperscript{2} forcing them to take two of his slaves for four thousand piastres,
after beating them with clubs. Otherwise, neither they nor the ransomed

\textsuperscript{11}This sentence is in the Saint's handwriting.

Letter 1880a. - Although Coste indicated that this was an original autograph letter preserved
in the Archives of the Mission, Paris, its present location is unknown. He had placed it in his
First Supplement, vol. VIII, no. 3312, pp. 535-38, stating that only one page of it remained.
Because of the date mentioned by Jean Barreau in the letter, the editors have repositioned it
here.

\textsuperscript{1}A comparison of this letter with no. 1845 and the letters of 1655 to Firmin gets leaves no
doubt as to the year it was written; the day and month are given in the first sentence.

\textsuperscript{2}The Order of the Redemption or of Mercy [Mercedarians] was founded in the thirteenth
century for the redemption of slaves by Saint Peter Nolasco. Father Juan Bautista Gonzalez
introduced the Reform into the Order at the end of the sixteenth century.
slaves could ever leave Algiers. Not satisfied with that, as the above-mentioned Fathers were on the point of leaving, they had to pay another three hundred piastres in exit fees, although they had agreed with the Pasha that the above-mentioned slaves would be exempt from all taxes.

I give you this information so you can inform that good Mercedarian Father who is supposed to come here to ransom some slaves that he has to make up his mind to take first those of obligation, namely, four from the customs house, one from the Aga, four from the Pasha, three or four from some officers, and several others from a few powerful persons who control the customs house. Unless he decides to meet their demands, not only is he in danger of being mistreated, but so are we, especially since, because he is a French priest, those persons will think that everything will be arranged by M. Le Vacher and me, and even more so if you oblige us to receive him into our house. That would be very prejudicial to us, because those persons are all friends of M. Constans, he will not fail, as always, to saddle us with this affair as well.

What is more, our Pasha is holding in his home two men from Marseilles, who have nothing; despite that, and to avoid further beatings, they have paid the sum of 3200 piastres. It is quite certain that he is just waiting for a similar opportunity to get rid of them, especially since he has news that someone from France is supposed to be coming to ransom some slaves.

Father Sébastien, who used to live in our house in Algiers, might perhaps pass this information off as questionable, given to prevent the

---

3 Turkish title of honor, usually implying respect for age.
4 Philippe Le Vacher.
5 Sébastien Brugière, a Mercedarian Father, had come to Algiers in March 1644 with his confrères, François Faure and François Faisan, for the ransom of slaves. The amount of money entrusted to him was sufficient to ransom two hundred slaves. Ninety-six other Christians were freed on the promise of 8990 piastres and the exchange of twenty-two Muslims. Brugière was held hostage while his companions returned to France to raise the promised sum, which they were unable to collect. To quiet his most pressing creditors, he had to have recourse to heavy loans at fifty percent interest, while his debts went on accumulating. In May 1643 a renegade Christian, who was trying in vain to get fifty piastres from Brugière for the price of a slave, attacked him with a knife and was about to kill him. Father Brugière escaped but fell, broke two ribs, and burst his spleen. Complaints were lodged at the custom house of the town; he was seized, condemned, and thrown into a horrible prison, where he was confined for two months. Then, because his health gave cause for concern, he was granted permission to go and live in the French Consul’s residence, under house arrest. He was still there on November 25, 1645, when he made a statement before François Constans, Chancellor of the Consul in Algiers, which Revue africaine (XXXV) published under the title “Certificat des souffrances du Père Sébastien.”
arrival of that good monk. I entreat you in this instance, however, to set them straight on this. Make them understand that it is the absolute truth and that never have so much violence and insolence been witnessed as at present. The Algerians are relying on thirty-six to forty ships that they have under their control, manifesting a general contempt for all the Christians in the world, except for the English, who have shown them that they have just as many and more powerful ships.

Our commerce in this country diminishes daily, and all the ships coming here lose money from the outset on their merchandise. The lengthy stay eats up the rest, since they are obliged to sell on long-term payments and to get money at a twelve percent loss. The result is that, when they leave, they go away with empty ships—or with so little that it is not worth mentioning.

Four boats have just left together, without giving me so much as thirty piastres, and one from which I received nothing. On the contrary, they were short five hundred piastres. I wanted to stop them but M. Constans prevented this, with the sole intent of discrediting me in Marseilles as a person unable to get payment for what is being sent to me for the ransom of slaves. He is jealous because for a year now he has not been sent even a hundred écus to ransom any slaves, whereas I have been consigned more than fifteen thousand, with which I have, by God’s mercy, satisfied everyone. What contributes to this attitude is that certain affairs were taken out of his hands and entrusted to me at the urging of the slaves who, seeing that he was doing nothing, requested their relatives to relieve him of the management of their ransom and to entrust it to me.

The affair of M. Sesty is one example; another is that of a young man from Marseilles, the son of M. Féris, a close friend and benefactor of the Marseilles house. Although he has always remained in his house, people were still unwilling to trust him. They had nineteen hundred piastres delivered to me against the advice he had given them and my pleas to the elder M. Féris and to M. Get, although he saw to it that I was not given charge of his son’s case. That would be damaging to me and would not arrange matters for his ransom, as events were to prove, since it cost 2100 piastres. In addition, M. Constans recently let it slip that distrust of the elder M. Féris cost him another two hundred écus and that he declared to that young man, in the presence of the above-mentioned master, that his father had sent him two thousand écus.

So you see how this man is behaving, without my giving him any cause to do so. Furthermore, I can get nothing out of him regarding the affair of the widow of Captain du Creux de Recouvrance. He keeps procrastinating, but I realize he has no intention of paying. He is a man against whom
neither force nor the law has any power, since he makes friends with those in charge of the customs house by procuring for them Christians who bring a high ransom, and personally gets slaves for them through the use of intimidation and threats.

I tried to obtain some information about a man named Louis Regnard, the son of Nicolas Regnard, a merchant jeweler in Paris, and Catherine Picaut. He is said to be a slave in Tunis, from where M. Le Vacher sent us the report, but I have been unable to find out anything. I think that, in the nine years I have been in this country, I would have had some news about him, had there been any.

I almost forgot to inform you that, of the share of the 316 piastres entrusted to us for the slaves from Le Havre, I have received only 181 piastres because the man who was supposed to give them to me claims he lost money on his merchandise and what he cannot pay here will be paid in Marseilles. All I could do was register my protest. That is why it is better to charter and load a ship and pay the tax to the Pasha than to put the money into the hands of the merchants or the masters. In addition, we must be very careful about the persons to whom it will be given, especially since all those who trade here are, for the most part, rather untrustworthy.

Two sealed packets to be consigned to me had been entrusted to the same man. He had the audacity to open them and use the contents for the purchase of his own boat. Then, too, when it came to the payment, he told me he had suffered a loss on his merchandise and pursued me for several sums of five hundred piastres. M. Constans prevented me from receiving satisfaction for this.

So you see, Monsieur, that we are faced with new affairs every day. These are so many crosses that I am finding very hard to carry. I entreat you to obtain for me from Our Lord the grace to make good use of them. For this purpose, please recommend me to the prayers of the Company, which I implore, humbly prostrate in spirit at your feet.

1881. - THE DUCHESSE D'AIGUILLON TO SAINT VINCENT

Friday

I am so unmannerly and incompetent that I had forgotten the meeting
we were to have tomorrow at your house, and Madame de Romilly sent notices to the Ladies that one would be held here on the same day—tomorrow—for the missions of the Levant.

Please see, Monsieur, if anything can be done to make up for my stupidity, for which I ask your pardon.

If you will please write a note stating your intention, this footman will take it to the Ladies who should be notified.

---

1882. - TO CHARLES OZENNE, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW

Paris, June 11, 1655

Monsieur,

I was sorry to hear of the death of the late Prince Charles because of the grief felt by the King and Queen and the loss suffered by the kingdom of Poland in his person. God has granted me the grace of celebrating Holy Mass for him. I intend also, God willing, to have a service celebrated for the intention of this great Prince to whom, as I have learned, you are indebted because he had given you permission to work among his people.

You have consoled me more than I can say by sending me the results of the conference you held with your little family and for the practical resolutions each one took. I hope all that will benefit the Missionaries, the clergy, and the people. It must be acknowledged also that, unless it is put into practice, you will be useless in that kingdom and in danger of losing the spirit of the Company, or at least of diminishing it.

---

1Louise Goulas, wife of Pierre Sublet, Seigneur de Romilly, Councillor of the King, Treasurer-General of the Military. She was very devoted to the work of the Foundlings.

Letter 1882. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.

1Prince Ferdinand Charles, Bishop of Wroclaw.

2First redaction: “and the public loss.”

3The Saint was most probably referring to the report of the conference he had requested in his letter of April 2 (cf. no. 1857).
Blessed be God for what you tell me—that your little family is going along as usual, that Sister Marguerite Moreau is completely well, and that the other Sisters have set to work! I send greetings to all of them and recommend myself to their prayers.

I am sending you the case of conscience for which you wanted the opinion of the Doctors of the Sorbonne. They have written it at the bottom of your presentation and have signed it.

I think that is all I can tell you for now, Monsieur, except that I send most humble greetings to your dear family and to you as well. I cherish you with all the affection of my heart and am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

I almost forgot to tell you that M. des Noyers ⁴ told me not to send the Daughters of Charity and our Brothers right now because the armies are at the Polish borders. We will hold off sending them until we receive further notice.

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

1883. - TO BROTHER BERTRAND DUCOURNAU

June 12, 1655

When you pass through . . . , will you please take the trouble to find out astutely, with your usual discretion, what I mentioned to you when you were leaving here.

---

⁴Pierre des Noyers, secretary to the Queen of Poland, who was in France at the time.

Monsieur,

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

This letter is a reply to the last two I received from you, one dated May 20 and the other May 27. I have almost nothing to say with regard to most of the articles; the main thing concerns the foundation the King wants to make at Nicporynt. His Majesty will make it in whatever way he pleases; still, if he asks your opinion on it, you could tell him that it would be desirable for the foundation to be made at his house of the Mission in Warsaw, with the obligation of keeping an assistant there, who could be removed ad nutum, or a permanent one, so as not to be so obliged to reside there [Nicporynt]. The obligation would include going there to give a mission every five years, to teach catechism every month, and, in a word, to see that the parish in question is well served and the people well instructed.

I ask Our Lord to be the reward of the many good works Their Majesties are doing and intend to do, and to give us the means and the strength to be of service to them in this. I am, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

_Addressed:_ Monsieur Ozenne, Superior of the Priests of the Mission, in Warsaw

---

Letter 1884. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.

'ad [his] pleasure. He would reside there as long as the King desired him to do so.
1885. - TO A BENEFACtor

1655

Please make use of the goods of our Company as if they were your own. We are ready to sell whatever we have for you, even our chalices. In this we would be doing what the holy canons ordain, namely, to return to our founder in his need what he gave us in his abundance. And what I am saying to you, Monsieur, is not simply a formality but is said before God and as I feel it in the depths of my heart.

1886. - TO ÉTIENNE BLATIRON, SUPERIOR, IN GENOA

July 2, 1655

I presented for the deliberation of our little council whether or not we should tolerate the fault committed by M... in getting his doctorate in Genoa without discussing this with anyone in the Company. Now, it was the unanimous opinion that he should be sent away and you be given someone capable of doing what he is doing. That is what we shall do shortly, God willing. It is advisable, however, for you to speak to the Cardinal 1 about this and even sound him out on it. You can tell him that apparently this priest has other plans than to remain in the Company.

---

Letter 1885. - Abelly, op. cit., bk. III, chap. XVII, p. 269, and the Brother Robineau manuscript, op. cit., p. 154 (cf. also Dodin op. cit., p. 131). The texts are the same, except for the last sentence: Robineau has compliment [politeness] instead of Abelly's cérémonie [formality].


1Stefano Cardinal Durazzo.
1887. - TO ANTOINE CHABRE

Antoine Chabre, Equerry and Lieutenant for Criminal Affairs in the Seneschal's Court and Presidial Seat of Auvergne, had congratulated Vincent de Paul on the recent nomination of one of his relatives, M. de Garibal, as Intendant of Auvergne. In this reply to Chabre, Vincent de Paul says that, being the son of a poor farmer, he has no relative of the rank of M. de Garibal.

1888. - TO FIRMIN GET, SUPERIOR, IN MARSEILLES

July 9, 1655

We will try to pay the bill of exchange for five hundred livres. Please accept one for six hundred, which the Duchesse d'Aiguillon is sending to Algiers to help build a hospital, and select a good patron. Blessed be God, Monsieur, that you have acted in such a way that, through your efforts, it is likely that you will recover what that master had not given to the slaves from Havre-de-Grâce in Algiers, or whatever, to the Consul! Rest assured that it is not improper for Priests of the Mission to demand justice for poor slaves so that they may be given what is being held back from them; rather, it is very meritorious and is edifying to good souls who know what true charity causes charitable persons to do. Alas! Monsieur, what kind of work did the Son of God not do in order to save us! I am going to give this news to the Duchesse d'Aiguillon.

Letter 1887. - Deposition of Antoine Chabre, witness no. 280 in the beatification process of Saint Vincent. Chabre was the son of the recipient of this letter.

Letter 1888. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, Marseilles manuscript.
1889. - TO JEAN-JACQUES MUGNIER, SUPERIOR, IN AGDE

July 9, 1655

Since I am aware of what is happening, I ask you, Monsieur, to give an account to the Vicars-General and get a receipt for the items you have received in inventory and will put into their hands. Then, take leave of them graciously, without uttering a word of complaint or expressing how glad you are to be leaving that place, and ask God to bless the town and the whole diocese. Above all, please say nothing from the pulpit or elsewhere that might indicate any discontent. Get the blessing of those gentlemen and see that the whole little family gets it, requesting it at the same time for me, who would like to prostrate myself in spirit with you at their feet and ask their pardon for the faults committed in that place.¹

¹The copyist added that, contrary to all expectations, the Agde house remained open. In 1656 Antoine Durand succeeded Jean-Jacques Mugnier and was still there in December 1659.

1890. - TO ÉTIENNE BLATIRON, IN ROME

July 9, 1655

From what I observe, the difficulties persist, but it cannot be otherwise, since you have as adversaries such a Cardinal and such an important body.¹ That will not prevent me, even if they had plucked out my eyes, from esteeming and cherishing them as tenderly as children do their fathers: *putant enim obsequium praestare Christo.*² I hope and pray Our Lord that each member of our Congregation will do the same.

²For *they think* they are doing a service to Christ. Cf. In 16:2. (NAB)
Please continue, Monsieur, to petition for our affair, confident that it is the good pleasure of God, who sometimes allows contradictions to arise even among the saints and the angels, since the same things are not manifested to both. The success of similar pursuits is often the result of the patience and vigilance exercised in them. The Jesuits spent twenty years petitioning [for their] consolidation under Gregory XV. The works of God have their moment; His Providence brings them about at that time and neither sooner nor later. The Son of God saw the loss of souls; yet, He did not advance the hour ordained for His coming. Let us wait patiently but let us act, and, so to speak, let us make haste slowly in the negotiation of one of the most important affairs the Congregation will ever have.

1891. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Sunday morning [Between 1639 and 1660]

It would be well for you to send someone to ask M. Beguin to come to see you, and for you to speak to him about that business, requesting him to smooth out everything; I will try to see M. Forne. It would be well for you to hand over that poor girl this morning.

---

3 Approbation of the vows.


1 Administrator of the hospice of the Petites-Maisons. This hospice, composed of cottages for the patients, housed nearly four hundred elderly and infirm persons of both sexes, afflicted with skin disorders, dementia, or social diseases. It was located near the intersection of rue de Sèvres and Boulevard Raspail, mainly on the site of Boucicaut Square, next to the present-day Bon Marché department store. Saint Vincent himself had preached a mission there before the establishment of the Congregation of the Mission (cf. Abelly, op. cit., bk. II, chap. I, sect. II, p. 20). He later sent members of the Tuesday Conferences there, where they did considerable good (cf. ibid., bk. II, chap. III, sect. III, p. 257).

2 Jean-Baptiste Forne, former Consul of Paris, Administrator of the Hôtel-Dieu, founder in 1658 of the Penitents convent in Courbevoie (Hauts-de-Seine).
to the person who entrusted her to you; I have just said this to M. Portail. It will be a good idea for her to go back to her own dress; if she needs something on which to live, give her an écu or two, if you see no inconvenience in this. Be at peace; you are doing what has to be done before God. If I have to say something in the matter, I will do so.

1892. - A PRIEST OF THE MISSION IN BARBARY
TO SAINT VINCENT

[Between 1645 and 1660]

We have a great harvest in this country, which is even larger since the plague because, besides the Turks converted to our religion, whom we keep hidden, there are many others who opened their eyes at the hour of death to recognize and embrace the truth of our holy religion. In particular, we had three renegades who went to heaven after receiving the sacraments. In addition, there was one recently who had been absolved from his apostasy and, at the hour of death, was surrounded by Turks who kept urging him to utter blasphemies, as they are accustomed to do on such an occasion, but he would never consent to do so. Keeping his eyes always fixed heavenward, with a crucifix on his chest, he died with sentiments of true repentance.

His wife, who had been a professed nun and who, like him, had renounced the Christian faith, also received absolution for her double apostasy, bringing to this every good disposition we could have desired. She now lives retired in her home and does not go out. We have assigned her two hours of mental prayer each day and some corporal penances, in addition to those of her Rule; however, she does much more of her own volition. She is so deeply moved by regret for her faults that she would willingly risk martyrdom to expiate them, were she not responsible for two

---

3M. Portail's name is scratched out in the original letter.


1Beginning of the Barbary mission.
little children, whom we baptized and whom she is raising piously, as a truly Christian mother should do.

Another renegade died near the site of our house, ending his life with the sentiments of a true Christian penitent. I am expecting a few Turks any day now in order to baptize them. They are very well instructed and most fervent in our religion, having often come to see me secretly by night. One of them is in a very prominent position in this country.

1893. - TO CHARLES OZENNE, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW

Paris, July 23, 1655

Monsieur,

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

I praise God that your young men are practicing Polish and making progress in it. Since they are bored for lack of any other practice, I approve of your putting them with some Community for a while,¹ if this is feasible and you see no great disadvantage in it. I have noted what you told me about the value and obligations attached to the Vitkiski benefice, and the present state of that affair. It seems very good to me, if God chooses to have it implemented. We must await the time He has ordained for that.

I thank God also that M. Desdames is working on the translation of mission materials, with a view to going to begin work with the poor people after the harvest. May God preserve and bless him!

I will be consoled to receive the results of your conferences, as you have led me to hope. I have already been greatly consoled by the better disposition you have noticed in Messieurs Guillot and Éveillard.

I saw your communication but am too busy now to write you

¹First redaction: "for a month." The change is in the Saint's handwriting.
anything on that topic. That will be for another time, when I am able to do so. Meanwhile, continue to direct all things gently, with reference to and confidence in the guidance of God, to whom I often recommend you and your family, whom I embrace most tenderly in spirit.

The personal belongings you requested have gone to Rouen, or at least are ready to go soon. They were packed, after being examined at customs and put in the coach for the above-mentioned town, to await the departure of a ship we have been led to hope will leave in two weeks time. Meanwhile, we are going to prepare for this journey the persons you are expecting.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL,
I.s.C.M.

I hope to have M. Berthe leave with our Brothers to go and make the visitation of your house. From there he will go to Rome, where he is needed.²

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

1893a. - JEAN BARREAU, CONSUL OF FRANCE, TO SAINT VINCENT

Algiers, July 26, 1655

Monsieur,

Your blessing!
I have never been so busy at the departure of the boats as I have been

²This sentence is in the Saint's handwriting.

Letter 1893a. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter. Costa published it in
at this one. I had already imagined that it was impossible for me to write to you, but Our Lord permitted the arrival of a new Pasha, who made his entry into the town this morning, to delay the departure until tomorrow. So, I am snatching the little free time I have to pay my respects and obedience to you, as I did to the people.

And to relieve you of worry, I confirm what I already had the honor of writing you in my previous letter, that I had been reimbursed by M. Franchiscou of Marseilles for the 643 piastres his masters had taken from me by force. This is undoubtedly a favor from heaven, brought into play by Our Lord at just the right moment, especially since I have been paid what was owed me by the Contador,¹ to whom I had sold twenty-four pieces of fabric for the ransom of two gentlemen from Saint-Malo. I was not expecting payment from him for a long time. Now, one of them is already free at present.

With all due humility and submission I accept your advice and exhortations not to become sad and lose heart. I have never had less difficulty nor more determination to see to the end the course that has been laid out for me.

The state of our affairs is getting worse and worse, especially since we are spending a lot of money and taking in very little. I had rented a rather reasonable house, for which we were paying only eighty piastres, but when the neighbors got wind of it they prevented us from entering it. After that, there was no time to find another, especially since they were all taken, so we are obliged to stay in this one, where we are greatly inconvenienced and for which we are paying 185 piastres rent. Furthermore, the arrival of the Pasha has not helped us much, since we gave him gifts worth fifty-nine piastres.

I would not be so saddened at the death of my poor brother ² if, during that long illness, Our Lord had given him a little time to put the affairs of his salvation in order. How formidable are God's judgments, Monsieur, and what a horrible thing it is to fall into the hands of God! It seems to me that the beatitude of the peacemakers can be applied to the state of our domestic affairs. May God grant us the grace that, possessing the earth that is promised to them, we may also enjoy what is promised to the poor in spirit! In the past ten years I have lost thirteen or fourteen of my closest

¹From the Spanish, meaning "chief accountant."
²Cf. nos. 1746 and 1845.
relatives. God be praised for everything and may He grant them paradise!

If the ships from Algiers did not go to the Levant, it was not for fear of what the Gazette states, since, at the mere rumor of the coming of the Algerian militia, everything pales. Those rumors must not be believed, and when the Gazette publishes such news, it is simply because it does not know what else to tell its readers, for lack of subject matter.

In your letter of June 24, you recommend to me Jacques Caudron from Dieppe. I spoke with him to find out what he might need, and he told me that with three hundred undebased piastres in this town he thought he could get out.

Neither two hundred livres nor six hundred are enough for Adrien Launier, whose wife gave two hundred livres, as you note. Men here do not come so cheaply as may be imagined there.

It is too risky to advance the money for the ransom of Roger Bourg on the promise of his relatives; the surest way is for them to send the money here.

By mistake a section of your last letter must have been left out because after ending and even signing the letter, the following page [has] the words "... as usual and is rather well, thank God, etc." I still do not know to what that refers. I am really chagrined at not knowing more about the news you intended to give us.

I praise God for having attracted good Guillaume Servin from Amiens. I can say of him what Our Lord said of Nathanael, and I am delighted that you are pleased with our Brother René Duchesne. I can truly assure you, Monsieur, that it is not my example that brings about these conversions, for I am rather a subject of scandal; but those whom God has chosen cannot fail Him.

I have not heard that M. de Neufchêze sent anything for poor Timothée Godeau, the Huguenot who became a Catholic. He would be free today if he had been willing to return to his vomit. What is true is that Monsieur Simon from Marseilles, who handles affairs for the Order of Malta, sent some rotten, old sardines and spoiled tobacco to this town, and Monsieur Constans has them here; I am told they were intended for the ransom of a man named Pierre Mercier from Talmont, and people say they were sent by M. de Neufchêze.

We gave as warm a welcome as possible to Father Sérapiot, a Mercedarian monk sent by his Superiors to reside here. I am amazed that those
Fathers, who are so familiar with this country, have forgotten the maxim of the Turks, which is to look at a person's hands rather than his face. He had no sooner come than he was already being hounded for money, and M. N., who is more an intermediary of the Turks than of the Christians, asked him if he had brought anything to give to the authorities. When the latter heard that they had nothing to gain from him, they issued a decree of expulsion against him. On his arrival, all the French were already thinking they were free, but their joy was greatly diminished when they saw that Father had brought no money. They are more intent on this than on spiritual assistance which, by the grace of God, they do not lack.

This good Father is not wanting in good will, but it is of very little consolation to them when it is not accompanied by concrete actions. His coming to this town has served only to put us in a worse light, causing some poor slaves to be beaten and, according to what was told us in the presence of this priest, made six of them become Turks in one night. All their masters wanted was the ransom they had been led to expect. In a word, after waiting so long, they saw this good Father arrive with no money, and in desperation they made their slaves become Turks.

When M. Constans was informed of this Father's arrival, the first thing he did was to have the house locked and the keys taken from the Christians and given to the Jews to prevent him from entering, although the Father had been especially recommended to him. This good Father, however, did not fail to seek his advice about his residence. In reply, he told him he could stay there freely and that, of necessity, things had to be that way, even though some persons (meaning us) might be opposed to it.

This showed Father the malevolent behavior of M. Constans in our regard, no matter how favorable he pretends to be toward us, as he himself has told us since then, especially since he did us the honor of asking our advice. We, however, gave him none except to go and ask it of M. Constans. The aforementioned Father perceived in this that our actions and conduct in his regard were very disinterested or even biased in his favor. In a word, when Father saw how unlikely it was that he would be able to establish himself here without offering any gifts, and that he would not be respected either by the Christians in question or by the Turks, he decided to return as he had come. This has truly distressed us because of the loss to the Christians as well as for the fact that word would certainly be spread abroad that we had instigated his departure, although we did all we could to secure his residence here, which pleased neither the Christians nor the Turks.

Our new Pasha leads us to hope for wonderful things. God grant that he will be as gentle as he seems!
Monsieur Le Vacher[d] is in fairly good health and is working constantly at the spiritual and temporal assistance of the poor slaves.

Please tell the Pastor of Le Havre—or have someone write to him—that, with the money he entrusted to me, I have ransomed the man named Nicolas Cotte for 172 piastres, the price he cost his master. We will send him back at the first opportunity. I also gave Pierre Bruneau seventeen piastres, the amount he was short for his exit fee. He went by way of Leghorn and wrote me from Genoa that he had boarded a warship to return to Flanders and from there to Le Havre. These two Christians are on the Pastor's list.

I am working on the ransom of a man named Jean Guillemare, who has been a slave for forty years.[5] So, we continue to work with as much fidelity as my ardent desire to call myself, Monsieur, your most humble, most obedient, and most affectionate servant.

BARREAU
L.C.C.M.

The Duchess has written us that she is sending 450 piastres for the construction of a hospital and everything that will be needed, but we have seen none of this money, except the thousand livres you sent us to use in helping those most in danger of apostatizing. She has asked M. Le Vacher to work assiduously at this and that we be reimbursed. Please enlighten us and let us know what we should do. Of the thousand livres, we were sent only 316 piastres, out of which ten piastres, one real, and six aspers[6] had to be taken out for damages amounting to thirty-two piastres, to be reimbursed to M. Get by the insurance.

I am deeply distressed by the loss of poor Pierre Ribot, which is bound to happen. In the name of God, Monsieur, help me to save this soul. Enclosed are some letters for his relatives.

This boat brought us only fourteen piastres in consulate taxes.[7]

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

---

Philatte Le Vacher.

[5]Barreau is exaggerating; no. 1857a says twenty-six years.


[7]At the end of this letter someone else added the following note: "In his letter of August 3 to M. Vincent, the Superior of the Marseilles mission states that he had received the money sent by the Duchess and would send it to Algiers at the first opportunity." In no. 1894 Saint Vincent mentions the amount he was sending to Firmin Get.
1894. - TO FIRMIN GET, SUPERIOR, IN MARSEILLES

July 28, 1655

... As for the avarice suffered by M. Le Vacher in Tunis, it is to be hoped that in the end M. de la Ferrière will be good enough to have him repaid for it, since it was only because of him that it happened.

Enclosed are two bills of exchange that I am sending you, one for 600 livres and the other for 855. Together they come to 1455 livres, 150 of which are for the ransom of a poor slave, in whose name M. Barreau, the Consul in Algiers, sent money from Genoa to the Duchesse d'Aiguillon. The rest is for building the hospital for the poor Christian slaves of the town of Algiers. Please send the above-mentioned sums to M. Barreau. It was the Duchesse d'Aiguillon who sent all that.

1895. - TO FIRMIN GET, SUPERIOR, IN MARSEILLES

July 30, 1655

I praise God that you have accepted arbitration for the quarrel instigated by that good gentleman who is your neighbor. It will be well for you to abide by their decision and to do all you can to avoid a lawsuit. If, however, this gentleman, through ill-will and unreasonable claims, lodges a complaint against you again, you will have to think about defending yourself, even if it should be in Dijon. Our rights will be upheld there as well as in Paris, where I do not think any appeal should be made.

Letter 1894. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, Marseilles manuscript.

1Jean Le Vacher.

Letter 1895. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, Marseilles manuscript.

1Get and his neighbor had been involved in a dispute about a garden (cf. no. 1899).

2The seat of one of the eight Parlements or judicial districts in France at this time.
Well now, Monsieur, since you acknowledge that the best thing for the Company is not to have parishes and that it is against the custom for individual confreres to have them, why then do you not do what I have asked you so many times to do, namely, to hand over to the Bishop the one you have? The reason of conscience you allege is a groundless scruple; for, even if it should happen that His Excellency might make a poor choice of a person for this benefice—which I do not believe—who told you that you would be responsible for this before God? That cannot be; on the contrary, you would indeed be responsible if you were to resign it to a man who would not carry out his duties well. You would then be guilty of that poor choice and perhaps of the mistakes he would make afterward. Apart from that, it is only right to hand over a parish you cannot keep to the authority of the one who gave it to you, above all, when it can be done with no danger, as you can do.

You are not at liberty to think ill of your Bishop nor—without being rash—to say he will provide a poor Pastor for this parish if you yourself do not provide him, especially since you do not know how he will act. If he made no mistake in choosing you, you must believe he will not be mistaken in the choice he will make of someone else. That is why I ask you, Monsieur, to hand it over to him, purely and simply, as soon as possible, so he can assign it to whatever capable person he wishes.
Since your soul is precious to me, everything that comes to me from you consoles me. That is how your letter affected me, although, at the same time, it had the opposite effect because I share whatever is affecting you, that is, great distress for the distress you are suffering. In this regard, let me tell you, Monsieur, that it seems as if Our Lord has permitted whatever is the cause of your patience being put to the test. I hope you will use it as He asks, for you can give Him great honor by submitting yourself lovingly to His guidance and resigning yourself to your change of duty so as to will only what He wills. You should at least stifle the outbursts of your own will in those feelings of agitated nature so as not to give in to it in its present troubled state for fear of aggravating the evil instead of curing it. In this you will be imitating the practice of doctors who administer no medicine to patients while they have a fever.

Nevertheless, Monsieur, if, after resisting for some time your desire for a change of residence—but not of duty—and praying fervently about it, you see that your suffering might in the end get the better of your strength, let me know. We will try to remove you from this danger by placing you in a peaceful state, which I wish for you with all my heart, well aware that without peace of mind it is difficult to succeed in any duty. But since it depends mainly on God and our own indifference, those two principles must be established in us and sought in these two sources. I ask you to do this and am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your...
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Our men and our Sisters are ready to leave and are only waiting for the ship to be ready.

God be praised for the good state of the family and for the fact that M. Durand is better! ¹

Thank you for the results of your conference, which I hope to read tomorrow.²

Paris has not yet been blessed with the grace of the Jubilee as has Warsaw, where you do not fail to pray fervently for the success of the King's army in the present need of the kingdom. We must hope ³ that His Divine Goodness will take this into consideration. We here pray constantly for the same end and offer to God both you and your family, to whom I send greetings.

Today we are sending M. François Vincent ⁴ and Brother Tratebas ⁵ off to Genoa, and M. d'Eu ⁶ to Rome. The latter will pick up a priest in Genoa and take him to Rome, where many workers are

---

¹After this were written the following words, which have been scratched out: "If I can, I shall send you today a letter for the Queen, in answer to the one with which Her Majesty honored me."

²These three words are in the Saint's handwriting.

³François Vincent, born in Gandelu in the Meaux diocese (Seine-et-Marne) in 1611, entered the Congregation of the Mission on April 2, 1649, and died of the plague in Genoa on July 13, 1657.

⁴Antoine Tratebas, born in Allauch (Bouches-du-Rhône), near Marseilles, in October 1632, entered the Congregation of the Mission in Paris on October 7, 1651, took his vows on October 20, 1653, and died of the plague in Genoa in August 1657. His family gave hospitality to Antoine Portail and other Priests of the Mission in 1649 during the plague that was ravaging the city of Marseilles.

⁵Louis d'Eu, born on April 8, 1624, in Fresnay-sur-Sarthe (Sarthe), entered the Congregation of the Mission on May 20, 1651, left it, and reentered on March 6, 1655, taking his vows in Rome on March 7, 1657. After Saint Vincent's death, he again left the Congregation, by order of the Archbishop of Paris, for some important business, but returned as soon as he was able,
being requested of us. We are also being called to Turin and Lyons.
May God grant us the grace to correspond with His plans!
I am, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

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

1899. - TO FIRMIN GET, SUPERIOR, IN MARSEILLES

August 6, 1655

The decision of the arbitrators on the garden dispute must be considered reasonable. Please abide by what it states and do what you can to get the gentleman, your opponent, to agree also. By acting in this way, there will be no lawsuit, and you will avoid the scandal, expense, and other inconveniences which would ensue. We are obliged, as Christians, to bear with our neighbor's ill humor and try to temper it. I hope you will do this with regard to him.

I am sending you a new prohibition from the King for the transport of contraband merchandise into Barbary, together with a letter for the Duc de Vendôme on the same subject. Monsieur Husson urged us formerly to explain clearly the need for this prohibition, which we have done. Please deliver it to Monsieur de Vendôme and seal the letter before giving it to him. If he is in Toulon, send it to Monsieur Huguier.

---

after the death of the Archbishop. The Bibliothèque Nationale has acquired one of his manuscript works, L'homme accompli (fr. 9625).

Letter 1899. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, Marseilles manuscript.
1Cf. no. 1895.
2César de Bourbon, Duc de Vendôme, Grand Master of Navigation and Trade.
Most Honored Father,

Allow me to entreat your charity to see that no mention be made of me in the election of Officers. The term First Assistant will suffice to make known that I am what I have been, and will not prevent me from being in this position any longer when God reveals that need to you. My reasons are that I think I should be totally dependent on the guidance of God, and if I were named by the Company that might have consequences for posterity. Moreover, I feel a certain repugnance at the idea of being appointed.

It is with the simplicity your charity has recommended to me that I take the liberty of making this most humble request of you. Likewise, I want to tell you of the objection most of our Sisters will have to the word “Confraternity” used alone and that it is to be hoped that the Company will never change its original structure so that the poor will always be served in this way. The example of those who began by being a Confraternity would not be satisfactory because it has taken the form of a religious order.

Most Honored Father, forgive your poor daughter and obedient servant.

L. de M.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Although I have never had the honor of serving you, I venture, nevertheless, to send you this letter for His Lordship de Brienne and to entreat you most humbly to help us get a passport issued for three Missionaries and three Daughters of Charity, whom we are to send to the Queen of Poland on her orders. That is why I am writing to the above-mentioned Lord, as also to offer you, Monsieur, my most humble service, with all possible affection. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

The three Missionaries are Thomas Berthe, Priest of the Mission; Jean Lasnier, and Aubin Gontier, coadjutor Brothers of the same Company; and Sisters Marguerite Chétif, Madeleine Raportebled, and Jeanne Lemeret.

Addressed: Monsieur Roquette, clerk of His Lordship de Brienne, at the Court


1Henri-Auguste de Loménie, Comte de Brienne, Secretary of State.
2Jean Lasnier, born in Moret, Sens diocese (Yonne), entered the Congregation of the Mission in Paris as a coadjutor Brother on January 1, 1649, at the age of twenty-five, and took his vows on January 25, 1656.
3The text here has Gautier, but everywhere else in the letters Saint Vincent refers to him simply as Brother Aubin, except in vol. VIII, no. 2912, where the letter is addressed to Aubin Gautier, Brother of the Mission, in Turin. Aubin Gontier is not included in Notices, vol. I, or in the Supplement, but the information for Aubin Gontier is similar to that given in Coste's note for the present letter. The editors have adopted the spelling and clarification of the information in Notices.

Aubin Gontier (Gontier), born on October 10, 1627, in Espauma (Chartres diocese), entered
1902. - TO FRANÇOIS BOULART

Saint-Lazare, August 12, 1655

Reverend Father,

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

That good monk I recommended to you told me you gave him a warm welcome and have even accepted him into your holy Congregation. This gives me reason to thank God and to thank you, as I now do, Reverend Father, for being so kind to him. I ask O[ur] L[ord] to grant you His grace and to grant me that of being of service to you in some way, so that I may not have received in vain the one He has granted me of being, in His love, Reverend Father, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

1903. - TO FIRMIN GET, SUPERIOR, IN MARSEILLES

August 20, 1655

It is a great nuisance to have a neighbor who looks out on you. This must not be tolerated, since you can prevent it because that good gentleman has no right to have a window on your side. So then, do whatever you can to oblige him to close it up. I do not mean through a lawsuit but by amicable arrangements through the

---

the Congregation of the Mission in Paris on August 16, 1654, and took his vows in Turin, in the presence of M. Martin, on February 9, 1657.

Letter 1902. - Sainte-Geneviève Library, Ms. 2555, copy.

1Cf. no. 1878.

Letter 1903. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, Marseilles manuscript.

2Cf. nos. 1895 and 1899.
intermediary of friends, going so far—in the event that he does it—as to offer to pay more than your share of the expense for the drains in order to divert them from his garden. If, when all is said and done, you cannot constrain him to do what he should except by going to court, you will have to do so and subpoena him. In that case, you could also argue for the drains if, as you have said, you have a good case.

1904. - TO LOUIS RIVET, IN SAINTE

August 22, 1655

I gave your letter to M. [Vageot], without telling him that you had written to me, and I took care not to let on anything of what you told me, not even that you mentioned it to me. You may freely and in all confidence inform me of everything; this is even a necessity for good order, when you see that something tends to destroy it.

1905. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Wednesday [August 1655] ¹

Most Honored Father,

Sister Anne ² informed me that it was too late to go to Bourbon ³ and that she had been told that the doctors had closed the baths. Perhaps they


Letter 1905. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Date added on the back of the original by the secretary.
²Anne Hardemont.
³Bourbon-L'Archambault (Allier).
plan to have them reopened next month because it would seem that summer will not go by without some hot weather. There are many other reasons to believe there is still enough time because, as far as we know, there are three coaches ready to go there.

I had been wondering, Most Honored Father, if your charity should not write to her to make her see the wrong she is doing if she blames us because she did not go, and send someone to assure her that it is good to go because, unless I am very much mistaken, she is up to something.

The matter is urgent because the reservation has not been made. Sister Marguerite⁴ awaits your orders, and I, your blessing. I am, for the love of God, Most Honored Father, your very poor daughter and servant.

L. de Marillac

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

1906 - TO MARK COGLEY, SUPERIOR, IN SEDAN

August 25, 1655

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The priest, of whom you say others are complaining because he does not help anyone, fears God. This fear will, I hope, cause him to shake off his laziness, with the grace of God and your gentle guidance—if not soon, at least with time. That is why I ask you not to lose patience.

It will be up to the Visitor to correct the peculiarities of the person you mention, who has his own seal and case, etc. I do not want to get involved in it, so that no one will think that you wrote to me about him.¹

⁴Sister Marguerite Chétil.


¹The first fragment ends here.
It will be a good idea for you to avoid as much as possible receiving visits from M... , who has left the Company, and his communications with individual members of your house. In fact, you should tactfully make him see that it would be well for him to seek employment elsewhere in order not to waste his time.

1907. - TO CHARLES OZENNE, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW

Paris, August 27, 1655

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received two letters from you, and you will be receiving two from me by this regular mail. You say nothing about the distressing news we have here that the Swedes have invaded Poland several times; this has grieved me very deeply. We here in this house are praying, and I am having prayers said everywhere, that God may be pleased to avert the storm and take the King, the Queen, and their Diet under His special protection. We have been told that their deputies have returned to the King of Sweden; God grant that they may bring back peace—but a peace such as God alone can give!

This hope has lessened our sorrow somewhat, and the uncertainty of what is happening has caused us to consider having a letter written to the Resident of France in Sweden, so that he might use his influence with the King of Sweden to grant protection to the nuns of Sainte-Marie and the Daughters of Charity, as well as the Priests of the Mission in Warsaw, if necessary. It is to be hoped

Letter 1907. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.

1The invasion of Poland and the southern shore of the Baltic by the new King of Sweden, Charles X (Charles Gustavus) (cf. no. 1876), whose victory was facilitated by the fact that the Polish nobles deserted their King.

2Baron d'Avaugour.

3The Visitation nuns.
that God 4 will not allow his army to approach; 5 but fear has prompted this precaution. It has also obliged us to write in haste to Rouen to recall M. Berthe and the Brothers and Sisters 6 who were on their way to join you and who left here last week. Apparently, my letter arrived after they had left because I have had no news of them since their departure.

May God be pleased to grant perseverance to that good young woman whom the Queen has placed as the first plant among the Daughters of Charity to become one of their members. May He also will, by His grace, to multiply them there and fill them with the virtue that has given them its name!

I pray with all my heart that God will receive into His glory the soul of that good deceased lady who gave you the patronage of Holy Cross. I ask Him also to sanctify more and more good M. Fleury, be pleased with the good he is doing, and carry out his holy intentions everywhere and in all things. I am filled with such good wishes for him, inspired by gratitude, powerless as I am to manifest it in any other way, since I am so useless in his service. You can, however, assure him of my obedience as often as you have occasion to do so.

Three or four ships are ready to leave for Madagascar. Maréchal de la Meilleraye, who is sending them, is asking me for two priests and wants them to be in Nantes by September 4. This is short notice, and our workers are too far away to comply with his orders, but we will do what we can. We have here in this house four native children from that country. 7

---

4The words "if necessary. It is to be hoped that God" are written by the Saint.
5The words "I cannot believe" followed but were scratched out.
6The Daughters of Charity.
7Étienne de Flacourt, who had disembarked with them at Saint-Nazaire on June 27, 1655, brought them personally to Saint-Lazare (cf. Flacourt, op. cit., p. 398).
I am, in the love of Our Lord, for you and your dear family, to whom I send heartfelt greetings, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,

i.s.C.M.

I have never experienced greater sorrow than that caused by the news of the situation in Poland, but I have also never been more confident that Our Lord will protect the King, the Queen, and their Diet.  

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

1908. - TO DONAT CROWLEY, SUPERIOR, IN LE MANS

Paris [August 1] 28, 1655

Monsieur,

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

I received your letter of August 23. I am pleased with the offers you made to the Bishop of Le Mans  regarding the ordination [retreat], but I am very sorry to see that nothing has resulted from them. I think you told me that the Bishop does not approve of our

---

8The postscript is in the Saint’s handwriting.

Letter 1908. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.

1The original has “October” but this is certainly the result of a distraction, as is evident from the first sentence and n. 7.

2Philibert de Beaumanoir de Lavardin. Although Saint Vincent did not recommend him for the episcopacy, he took up residence in Le Mans even before receiving his Bulls. He was not a model bishop; in fact, after his death, a rumor even spread that, on his own admission, he never had the intention of ordaining anyone. Several persons believed this and had themselves reordained. The rumor, however, was false. (Cf. Collet, op. cit., vol. I, p. 473.)
receiving the ordinands unless we feed them all at our own expense but that he also does not agree to our receiving some of them free of charge, unless we do it for all of them. The part where you mention this to me is a little vague, so I ask you to explain to me more fully what he told you.

I am really distressed about what M. Le Blanc is suffering with regard to his vocation. He is a good subject who merits our taking an interest in him. Please do whatever you can to take his mind off the thought of leaving. Perhaps his return to Saint-Lazare will rid him of this temptation. So, please send him to us in a while. We have a good priest in the seminary who sings well; we will give him to you in his place. Do not send the latter until the former arrives. Meanwhile, help him to raise his spirits and his trust in God.

I do not know the location of those meadows that the Lieutenant General's wife is requesting of you in exchange. I will ask M. Gicquel about it and will then give you my thoughts on this proposal.

I ask Our Lord to bless more and more your leadership and your

---

3 Charles Le Blanc, born in Roye (Somme) on July 15, 1625, entered the Congregation of the Mission on November 20, 1649, took his vows on November 21, 1653, and was ordained a priest the following month. In 1658 he set sail for Madagascar but had to return to Paris, after a violent storm snapped the masts and rudder and imperiled the lives of the passengers, forcing the ship to drop anchor at Lisbon.

4 Jean Gicquel, born in Miniac (Ille-et-Vilaine) on December 24, 1617, was ordained a priest during Lent of 1642, entered the Congregation of the Mission on August 5, 1647, and took his vows on May 6, 1651. He was Superior at the Le Mans Seminary (1651-54) and at Saint-Lazare (1655-60) (cf. vol. V, nos. 1908, 1912; vol. VI, no. 2157), and was Director of the Company of the Daughters of Charity (1668-72). He wrote an interesting diary of Saint Vincent's last days, which is preserved at the Motherhouse of the Congregation of the Mission. Gicquel died in 1672.
family. Enclosed is a letter for the Dean and another for M. Le Blanc.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL,
ls.C.M.

I sent forty écus to the Bishop of Cork. They say that twenty-eight members of the Irish clergy have arrived in Nantes, including an Archbishop and the Bishop of Killala. O Monsieur, what a source of grief!

At the bottom of the first page: Monsieur Cruoly

1909. - TO LOUIS RIVET, IN SAINTES

August 29, 1655

I am asking you to take over the direction of the family and the business affairs. The person is still here; we are thinking of keeping him but he wants to leave. Lock up and close everything, and be careful that he does not take you by surprise.

In my opinion you ought to sell the mare; Missionaries should not have such possessions, except when necessary. The Visitor will

---

5René des Chapelles.
6Robert Barry, who died in exile in 1667.
7Francis Kirwan, consecrated at Saint-Lazare on May 7, 1645, arrived in Nantes in August 1655. He spent the remainder of his life in Brittany and died in Rennes on August 27, 1661.
8The postscript is in the Saint’s handwriting.

1Above the number 29, someone else wrote 19, indicating some difficulty in deciphering the original figure.
2Philippe Vaeout, the former Superior in Saintes.
be going to see you in a few days; be as open with him as you would be with me, and tell him all that you told me. He will put everything in good order.

1910. - TO ÉTIENNE BLATIRON, SUPERIOR, IN GENOA

September 1655

I cannot refrain from telling you once again how greatly edified I am by your kindness, inconveniencing yourself by sending two of your priests to Rome to allow M. Jolly to satisfy so many important Prelates and Cardinals, who wish to make use of the Company in their dioceses. Oh! if God were pleased to give this spirit of support and adaptation to each individual, what great union and advantages would this procure for the entire body because we would regard the interest of others as our own! And with the strong sustaining the weak, everything would go better.

1911. - TO FIRMINT GET, SUPERIOR, IN MARSEILLES

September 3, 1655

Give the men we are sending to Genoa the advice you would take for yourself as to whether to go there by land or by sea.

Letter 1911. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, Marseilles manuscript.
1912. - TO CHARLES OZENNE, SUPERIOR, IN WARSAW

Paris, September 3, 1655

Monsieur,

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

I received your letter in the last regular mail and with it an increase of sorrow because of the present tribulations of P[oland], especially of the King and Queen. I must confess that it is one of the most poignant I have ever received because it concerns both them and the Church, which is suffering in this struggle. That is why we here are praying, and having prayers said everywhere, that God will protect that kingdom and be pleased to bless the armies and intentions of Their Majesties. I feel especially confident that He will do so and that, even if Warsaw is taken and the Missionaries along with it, He will not let any harm befall you; for, apart from the fact that you have been recommended to the protection of M. [d'Avaugour], France's agent with the King of Sweden, we know that when his predecessor was waging war in Germany he never harmed priests. Courage then, Monsieur! do not be surprised; what God guards is well guarded. We will continue to offer you to Him in a special way, and you must have great confidence in His paternal protection. That is all He wants in order to give Him cause to protect you; otherwise, He would have good reason to abandon you to the power of men.

When M. Berthe, the Brothers, and the Sisters were on the point of embarking, we recalled them and, at the same time, had four priests from various places leave for Nantes, where four ships are ready to weigh anchor for Madagascar. Now, not all four of those

---

Letter 1912. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.

1The name was omitted in the original.

2During the Thirty Years War (1618-48) Sweden, first under Gustavus Adolphus (1611-32) and then under Christina (1632-54), had invaded the German States and the Baltic region.
Missionary priests will board but only the first two to arrive, if they get there in time. In the event that they all arrive early enough, M. Dufour and M. Feydin will make the voyage, and the others—M. Gicquel and M. de Belleville—will return.

We have here in this house four little native boys from that country, whom we are raising in the spirit of Christianity to serve some day as an example to their compatriots. How do we know whether God, angered by the disorder of His own children of the Church, may not intend to transfer it among the unbelievers? May His Holy Name be blessed and His holy Will be accomplished in us all!

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

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.c.C.M.

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

1913. - TO LOUIS RIVET, IN SAINTES

September 5, 1655

This is to inform you that M. [Vageot] left here today without saying good-bye to us; therefore, he is not bringing you any letters from me. For this reason, Monsieur, do not acknowledge him any

---

3François Feydin, born in Allanche (Cantal) on May 25, 1620, was ordained a priest in September 1645, and entered the Congregation of the Mission on September 8, 1653. He never went to Madagascar; although assigned there a second time in 1659, he was again prevented from making the journey.

4Mathurin de Belleville, born in Brix (Mainche), entered the Congregation of the Mission on May 1, 1654, at twenty-seven years of age. He died at sea on January 18, 1656, from an illness he contracted as soon as the ship left the Saint-Martin roadstead, and was buried at sea off the coast of Sierra Leone (cf. Notices, vol. III, p. 160). On September 7, 1657, Saint Vincent gave a conference to the Daughters of Charity on his virtues (cf. vol. XI, no. 173).

longer as Superior nor even as a Missionary, and speak to him only in passing. Still less should you allow him to take anything whatsoever from your house. Please be firm in all these matters, and if he asks you for something, tell him you have to write to me about it. This is our intent. He obtained letters of appointment to Saint-Vivien \footnote{A small place near La Rochelle (Charente-Maritime).} parish ten days after his arrival, without saying a word to me about it—after the high hopes he had given us of living as a true Missionary.

---

1914. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

*Wednesday [Around September 1 1655]*

*Most Honored Father,*

_I am not aware of our having any sick Sister at Saint-Germain,\footnote{Letter 1914. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.} except the one who has been ill for a very long time and who, I believe, still has not fully recovered. I think a change of air will do her a great deal of good and that the air here would be better for her than elsewhere._

_Permit me to tell you, Most Honored Father, that my heart is often deeply troubled by the thought that the Company is very close to declining, and I foresee many problems if your charity permits this journey \footnote{In *Spiritual Writings*, pp. 472-73, L. 440, dated June 23, 1655, Saint Louise mentions for the first time sending Daughters of Charity soon to the Petites-Maisons in Paris for the service of the sick poor and the insane. On October 2 (ibid., L. 454, p. 486) she wrote that the work had begun under the direction of Sister Anne Hardemont.} because others have been refused the same thing for several reasons._

_Sister Julienne\footnote{Most likely Saint-Germain-en-Laye.} very humbly asks you to give her an answer about the proposal she made your charity concerning a ring that a very rich_
woman—on her own and without her husband's knowledge—gave to the church. She urgently needs a reply.

Monsieur l'Obligeois went this morning to reserve the vacant place at the Nom-de-Jésus.

I did not find Sister Anne Hardemont opposed to accepting the proposal for the Petites-Maisons, but I think it essential for your Charity to speak to us to make us understand the good to be done and how we should act there.

We have reason to wonder whether the Pastor of Saint-Roch 5 is going to send us away again. May the most holy Will of God be done, and by His guidance may I always be able to call myself, Most Honored Father, your most humble and very obedient servant.

L. de M.

I most humbly ask pardon of your charity for the liberty I have taken of speaking to you so freely. I noticed this as I reread my letter.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

1915. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around September 1 1655]

I will inform M. Guilloire of the objection you raise concerning the convalescent at Saint-Germain, but it will be a good idea for you to bring her back here for a rest and some fresh air.

You must accept God's guidance of your Daughters, offer them to Him, and remain at peace. From all eternity, the Son of God saw

---

5Jean Rousse, born in Fithiviers (Loiret), Pastor of Saint-Roch from June 30, 1633, until his death on October 13, 1659. In April 1650 he had sent two Sisters away from the parish (cf. vol. IV, nos. 1208 and 1370).


1This letter is a reply to the preceding one.
His companions dispersed and almost scattered. You must unite your will to His.

What reason does the Pastor of Saint-Roch have for acting as you told me? If this is a reason for honoring the sorrow Our Lord experienced on seeing Himself driven out of places where He was—and His Apostles as well—oh! how good it is to have similar opportunities of uniting ourselves to the good pleasure of God!

I will try to see you and Sister Hardemont tomorrow.

Addressed: For Mademoiselle Le Gras

1916. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

My great hope is that, with God's grace, you will contribute much to saving those people, and your example will serve to inspire your confreres with zeal for this good work. May it inspire them also to work at it in the places, at the times, and in the manner you will prescribe. Like another Moses, you will consult God and receive the Law from Him in order to give it to those whom you will guide. 1 Remember that the leadership of that holy Patriarch was gentle, patient, forbearing, humble, and charitable, and that, in Our Lord's leadership, these virtues appeared in their perfection so that we might conform ourselves to them.

---

1Cf. Ex 24:12. (NAB) The recipient of the letter had just been appointed Superior.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I take the honor of writing this letter to you to thank you once again for the good will God has given you toward our Little Company, which is most unworthy of it and, nevertheless, Monsieur, very grateful. I ask Our Lord to be your reward for the benefit you are offering us and the glory you wish to procure for Him. We will be obliged to ask Him for this all our lives, even if your intention regarding our establishment is not fulfilled. As I see some obstacles to this on our part, I entreat you most humbly, Monsieur, to allow me to represent them to you, in reply to the proposals you sent me.

First, we are too poor to maintain there the priests you request between now and the time they are to enjoy your donation.

In the second place, Monsieur, this foundation is not sufficient to feed six priests, even when they come into possession of it. It is our experience that at least a thousand francs are needed for three persons, and all we can do with twelve hundred livres is to support three priests and a brother or a servant. Half as much again is spent in the country, where the mission is given, as in the house.

Lastly, Monsieur, no priest would want to enter our Congregation if he were told that he could never offer Holy Mass either for himself, or for friends and relations, or for any other intention whatsoever except for a certain deceased person, as you wish to oblige those who would be given to you. We cannot, therefore, bind them to this, Monsieur, unless it is only three or four times a week.
at the most. Then, too, the Church does not allow Requiem Masses
to be said on certain days such as Sundays and the principal feast
days.

So, Monsieur, I hope that you in your kindness will excuse us
or, if it is God's plan that your own be carried out, that He will
prompt you to accept the conditions we can meet. We will await
this patiently, while continuing to ask God to preserve and sanctify
you more and more, and to give us—especially me—opportunities
to be of service to you. I am filled with esteem and reverence for
you and will be in life and in death, in His love, Monsieur,
your..."1

1918. - TO A PASTOR 1

Send here anyone you wish and I will take care of the expense.

1919. - TO PROPAGANDA FIDE

[September 1655] 1

Most Eminent and Most Reverend Lords,

Through the kindness of Your Eminences, at the request of

1The foundation did not materialize.

1This Pastor, unjustly slandered and obliged to file a lawsuit in Paris, could neither leave his
parish nor pay a lawyer.

Letter 1919. - Archives of Propaganda Fide, II Africa, no. 248, fol. 93, original unsigned petition,
written in Italian.
1The faculties requested in this petition were granted on September 23, 1655.
Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, François Mousnier and Toussaint Bourdaise, priests of the same Congregation of the Mission, have recently been appointed Apostolic Missionaries on Saint-Laurent Island, commonly called Madagascar. Because the harvest on the said island is abundant and the field to be cultivated is vast, and also because soon—that is, next October—there will be an opportunity to send other workers,² since a ship is supposed to be leaving at that time, the aforesaid Vincent de Paul humbly proposes to Your Eminences three other good subjects, namely, Claude Dufour, Nicolas Prévost, and François Feydin, priests of the same Congregation of the Mission, so that, if Your Eminences so please, you might accept the zeal of these servants of God, declare them Apostolic Missionaries to that island, and send them the usual faculties.

And because the petitioner, taking advantage of the departure of the ship, might wish to send yet other subjects for such an important work that will give great glory to God, he humbly entreats Your Eminences to allow that, if the imminent departure of this ship does not permit him to send their names in time, he may have those suitable for that Mission examined and approved by the Nuncio in France, and Your Eminences will be kind enough to send the usual faculties for them later. And he will receive all this as an outstanding favor of Your Eminences.

Whom God, etc.

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

---

²Three Missionaries: Claude Dufour, Nicolas Prévost, and Mathurin de Belleville, were on one of the ships which sailed on October 23.
1920. - TO FIRMIN GET, SUPERIOR, IN MARSEILLES

September 16, 1655

You will do very well to receive into your house 1 that good gentleman who wishes to give himself to God and to assist him with such a holy decision. So please treat him in the manner to which his person and lineage entitle him.

1921. - TO SISTER MARIE-MARTHE TRUMEAU, IN NANTES

September 18, 1655

Dear Sister,

Three days ago I wrote to you in Nantes that, in the event that those Fathers 1 want you and Sisters Henriette and Renée 2 to return to Paris, as they have written us, then the three of you should return together, and Mademoiselle 3 will welcome you with great joy. Therefore, Sister, I am sending this letter to you in Angers, through which you are to pass, to tell you that we await you in Paris, where I ask you and our two Sisters to come as soon as possible by the first opportunity available. We ask God to guide and possess you entirely in time and eternity.

Mademoiselle is better, thank God.

I send greetings to our two Sisters, and am . . .


1Probably for a spiritual retreat.

Letter 1921. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, Recueil de pièces relatives aux Filles de la Charité, p. 499.

1The Fathers of the Poor, Administrators of the hospital.

2Henriette Gesseaurme and Renée Delacroix. The latter, whose sister, Jeanne, was also a Daughter of Charity, was born in Le Mans and entered the Company in 1646. She went to Nantes in June 1649 and remained there until this recall to Paris to serve in Saint-Barthélemy parish.

3Saint Louise.
1922. - TO A PRIEST WHO HAD LEFT THE COMPANY

September 22, 1655

I have given the parish that you requested of me to another good priest, who is determined to take up residence and to do good. I would have been glad to be of service to you, after having seen you make the sacrifice of your possessions and of yourself to God for the salvation of the poor people if, by taking back such a holy action—as you have done—you had not given me reason to fear that perhaps you would be no more faithful to God in a new obligation than you were in that one.

Who would believe what you said about leaving us with the intention of serving souls better, since you had the opportunity in our Company to form good priests and pastors and to work in the missions helping the poor in rural areas? I esteem and love you all the same, knowing, moreover, that you have a good heart and mean well.

1923. - EDMÉ JOLLY, SUPERIOR IN ROME, TO SAINT VINCENT

September 22 [Between 1655 and 1660] ¹

Perhaps, Monsieur, I have misled you by my letters in which, through pride, I give a much better account of things than I actually accomplish, being so remiss and ignorant, a stutterer who finds it difficult to express himself, so imprudent and hasty, lacking in virtue and hardly suitable to occupy the position here that I do. Still, I could do so and I will, if God wishes it, as I believe He does, and as long as you order me to do so. I

¹Period during which Edmé Jolly was Superior of the house in Rome.
entreat you most humbly, Monsieur, to reflect a little on what I have just said; it is not humility but the pure truth, which I feel obliged to express to you.

1924. - TO CHARLES OZENNE, SUPERIOR, IN KRAKOW

Paris, September 24, 1655

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter of August 24. I have accompanied you and the whole group to Krakow with my sorrows and my good wishes. Our affliction increases in proportion as we learn of the enemy's progress. Despite that, however, I see no lessening of the hope God gives us that sooner or later order will be restored. We pray constantly for that and are having prayers said everywhere that God may be pleased to make the King's armies victorious and take up Himself the defense and government of that kingdom for the good of the Church, which is deeply affected by this war.

Meanwhile, I ask Him also that, wherever the Company may be, He will grant it the grace of submitting lovingly to the various effects of His guidance and render Him whatever little services it can internally and for others, as far as circumstances and opportunities allow. I certainly expect this of your zeal and courage and the fidelity of the entire family. Continue to tell the Queen of our deep sorrow for the present state of affairs and of our prayers for the King, for her, and for their Diet.

I have finally come to the conclusion that it is too much to put up with the liberties taken by Monsieur Zelazewski, which could subsequently be very harmful to the Company. It is, then, time to

Letter 1924. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.
1The Swedes had entered Warsaw on September 8.
remedy the situation, either by asking him to withdraw entirely, with the result that we have no more communication with him, or, if he still has any love for his vocation, to get him to promise that from now on he will live as a true Missionary in the observance and submission that he should. Please find out what his disposition is, Monsieur, and, depending on that, proceed in the manner mentioned above. Treat him respectfully and gently—even with signs of affection—but also firmly, telling him what it is advisable to say to him in this critical situation.

I thank God for having given the Company a new Polish priest having the qualities you described. God grant him the grace of persevering, and may He grant all of you that of living in such a way that the good odor of your life and work will attract others for the growth of our holy religion, for I think that is why His Providence has called you there!

I am writing to Rome that you have received the indulgences, and I will convey to Monsieur Jolly your sentiments of gratitude for them. May God be ever in the center of your heart and give you the strength needed in the present disturbances!

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

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Ozenne, Superior of the Priest of the Mission, in Krakow, Poland

1925. - TO MONSIEUR THOMAS,1 IN ANGOULÈME

September 25,2 1655

I have received your letter with the respect I owe to the excel-

1Register 2, p. 56, describes him as "a virtuous, well-to-do priest."
2In the Register 2 copy, the number 15 is written under the 25 in a different handwriting.
lence of your person and with most lively gratitude for the kindnesses you show us on all occasions and for the offers you now make. We are most unworthy of these, and I thank you most humbly for them. Concerning this, let me tell you, Monsieur, what I have already said to Monsieur de Blampignon, that it is one of our maxims never to go to a place if the Bishops do not call us there, and that everything we have, including our establishments, have come to us in this way. Now, far from our having been called in this way to Angoulême, the Bishop has even declared himself opposed to it.

A second reason why we cannot accept the benefit you wish to confer on us, Monsieur, is that parishes tie us down too much. We have taken them only under pressure and have resolved not to accept any more. The two or three we do have served only to make us realize what a hindrance they are to our functions, and how advantageous it is for us all to be obliged to go from village to village for the instruction and salvation of the people, without attaching ourselves to towns or certain parishes that cannot lack workers. It is to be feared that in the course of time our members might be satisfied with remaining in the parishes. I most humbly entreat you, Monsieur, to excuse us.

---

3Claude de Blampignon, born in Troyes in 1611. He was a Doctor of Theology, Abbot of Notre-Dame de l'Aumône, member of the Tuesday Conferences and of the Company of the Blessed Sacrament, Visitor General of the Carmelites, Director of the nuns of Saint-Thomas, and confessor of the Visitation nuns of the First Monastery in Paris. He introduced the Reform into several monasteries. Saint Vincent made use of his services in the missions at Saint-Germain (1641) and Metz (1658), and chose him several times to give the ordination retreats at Saint-Lazare. Blampignon died in 1669.

4François de Péricard (1646-87).
Monsieur,

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

Here is Brother Laurent, whom we are sending you to examine the mortar and to discuss all those matters with you. You know the gift God has given him for the welfare of the Company and his experience in domestic affairs. I beg you to follow his advice, as we do here in similar matters.

I really would like an arrangement to be made with the widow, letting her have the farm and half of the crop or, if that is not possible, that her son do the plowing and the other work and be paid a certain sum. This Brother will see what is advisable and how it should be done. If this good woman does not take the farm, we will have to help her, for I have great sympathy for her. Give her one écu a month for a while, whether she wants to stay with her son or go to Montmirail, either to the Daughters of Charity or some other house.

I just learned that there must be one hundred eighty acres of land. According to that, there are more claims of transfers and infringements on it than I thought. You will have to find out secretly who the claimants are, then get a subpoena for their withdrawal.

You told me you had something in particular to tell me; I am waiting for it.

I have given Brother Laurent your memoranda concerning the estimate so he can see if it is fair or too unreasonable. So much for that.

Letter 1926. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter. The last part, beginning with the words "If that poor woman's children," is in the Saint's handwriting.

1Perhaps Laurent Haxart, born in Colombe (Haut-Saône), entered the Congregation of the Mission as a coadjutor Brother on August 10, 1642, at twenty-one years of age, took his vows on April 22, 1646, and renewed them on December 3, 1656, in the presence of M. Bourdet.
As for the missions, I shall have the honor of seeing here the coadjutor of Soissons to get the one for Montmirail and will write to Sens about the one for Joigny. We will try to satisfy you as soon as possible with regard to changing the men who are with you.

If that poor woman’s children are not in a position to work the farm as your servants, to whom you could give only a certain amount of money and corn for the year on which to live, you might see if there are any other persons willing and able to take it, in the event that the poor woman can only do half.

Your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

We will try to satisfy you as soon as possible with regard to changing the men who are with you.

Addressed: To Monsieur Le Soudier, Superior of the Mission, in Montmirail.

1927. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

September 25 [1635] ¹

Most Honored Father,

We are being pressured to send someone to Chantilly. Monsieur de la Hodde advised us not to send back the Sister who just came from there. In fact, as much for her own sake as for the one who is still there and needs

²Charles de Bourbon, who became Bishop of Soissons in 1656, after the death of Simon Le Gras.

Letter 1927. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Date added on the back of the original by the secretary.
very good example, we will send another Sister, if your charity thinks it advisable.

We have one who is very discreet, and whom it would be wise to remove from Paris because her parents give her no peace. I have no fear that she will lose her vocation—because she has been in the Company for a long time—but it would be for her own perfection. If you approve, we will send her; I think she will be suitable.

Our last conference was on August 8. Can we hope to have one tomorrow, Most Honored Father, without inconveniencing you too much? Will your charity please let us know about this and, if it is to be on the explanation of the Rules dealing with the order of the day, should we prepare ourselves on the whole day or just part of it?

Please send your blessing and your answer, Most Honored Father, to your most humble daughter and very grateful servant.

L. de Marillac

Will your charity please remember Fontenay?

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

1928. - TO A RELATIVE

.... Would you dare refuse so many persons who are interven-

---


3"On Fidelity to the Rules" (cf. vol. X, no. 69).

4Saint Vincent went to the Sisters' house on September 29 to give his first conference on the explanation of the Common Rules (cf. vol. X, no. 70).

5Sister Julienne Loret, the Sister Servant, had just been named Assistant General of the Daughters of Charity. It appears that Saint Louise is asking Saint Vincent to consider a new Sister Servant for Fontenay-aux-Roses.


1Having obtained letters for a review of the court case condemning him to the galleys, this relative had brought the case before the Parlement of Paris in the hope that Saint Vincent might intervene for his acquittal.
ing on your behalf? I think not. Moreover, your age and infirmities make you unfit to bear the fatigue and expense of such a long lawsuit. In addition, if you had any hope of help from me, I assure you I shall give you none. I prefer to contribute to your salvation by advising you to agree to this settlement, the better to dispose yourself for death, than to see you consumed alive in the business of a long and doubtful lawsuit. I hope you will think seriously about all this.

1929. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL, IN TOUL

September 29, 1655

I see the pain both of mind and body that visits to those outside the Community give you. The best thing would be not to make them at all; but, as you say, there are occasions when it is difficult to get out of doing so. For my part, I try not to visit any Bishop, unless it is necessary, even though they have done me the honor of calling on me; and I do so in order not to be obliged to go and see all of them.

1930. - TO SEVERAL PRIESTS OF THE MISSION

[Around October 1655]

You know your health will be in danger in this new climate until

---

2 At the beginning of his letter the Saint asked his relative to consent to certain concessions in order to facilitate an agreement.
3 Saint Vincent’s advice was not heeded.

4 Antoine Portail was making a canonical visitation of the house in Toul.

5 These Missionaries, stated Abelly, “were working together in a very remote region,” but the
you get somewhat accustomed to it; hence I advise you not to expose yourselves to the sun and, for a certain length of time, not to apply yourselves to anything but the study of the language. Pretend that you have become children again and are just learning to talk, and in this spirit let yourselves be guided by Monsieur [Mousnier], who will take the place of a father, or, in his absence, by Monsieur [Bourdais]. Please look upon them in Our Lord and [Our Lord] in them. And even if you should be deprived of both, you would still have the special assistance of God, who has said that, if a mother should forget the child of her womb, He Himself would care for it. How much more should you believe that He will be good to you, dear Messieurs, and will take pleasure in raising, defending, and providing for you who have abandoned yourselves to Him and placed all your trust in His protection and power!

Well then, Messieurs, love one another, bear with one another, support one another, and be united in the Spirit of God, who has chosen you for this great undertaking and will preserve you for its fulfillment.

1931. - TO FIRMIN GET, SUPERIOR, IN MARSEILLES

October 1, 1655

I praise God for the good health of your family and for your own in particular. M. Bauduy wrote me that his health is declining in

letter gives the impression that they were about to set out and that their destination was probably Madagascar, a very hot country. Communication with Madagascar was so difficult that the Saint did not know if the two priests he had sent previously, Jean Mousnier and Toussaint Bourdais, were still alive. The recipients of this letter could only be Claude Dufour, Nicolas Prevost, and Mathurin de Belleville, who boarded ship at La Rochelle on October 29, 1655. This is the reason for the date assigned this letter.

Cf. Is 49:15. (NAB)

Letter 1931. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, Marseilles manuscript.

Francois Bauduy (cf. no. 1834, n. 4).
Marseilles and is asking me to spend six months in his native place to recover it—as if there were no other place in the rest of the kingdom suitable for his health. Kings who fall ill in their States do not go looking for other States where they can get well, nor do Bishops leave their dioceses, nor parish priests their parishes for a change of air, even though their own birthplace might be better for them.

I cannot, therefore, consent to his going to Auvergne, since we have no house there. If he wants to go to Notre-Dame de la Rose, in the Agen diocese, all right, let him go. M. Chrétien, the Superior there, will gladly welcome him, because I will write to him about it. Please give him the money he will need for this journey, if he really is disposed to undertake it. Were I not being treated for a slight ailment, I would write to him. Make my excuses to him, and tell him I love him dearly and that I hope and pray he may practice the lesson taught by O[ur] L[ord]: *Qui amat animam suam perdet eam, et qui odit inveniet eam.*

1932. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

October 3, 1655

I praise God that the ordination [retreat] you held went well. You see how this Divine Master has supplied for the lack of the priest you thought was necessary and that we should never be surprised when the men on whom we counted the most fail us. It is especially at that time that God does His work.

---

2*He who loves his life shall lose it, and he who hates it shall find it.* Cf. In 12:25. (NAB)

1933. - TO PIERRE DE BEAUMONT,¹ IN RICHELIEU

October 3, 1655

Regarding your intention to work hard at mortifying the judgment and self-will of your seminarians, let me tell you, Monsieur, that this cannot be done all at once but only gradually, gently, and patiently. Mortification, like all the other virtues, is acquired only by repeated acts, and especially this kind, which is the most difficult. So, you must be satisfied with leading your charges toward this step by step, without expecting to attain it for a long time to come because there is a long way to go, except when God is pleased to dispense with the usual means.

Yes, Monsieur, I am of the opinion that your house should pay its respects to Mademoiselle d’Orléans ² when she is in Champigny, ³ that two priests should go there—you and one other will suffice—and that you should say to her with great respect and modesty: “Mademoiselle, we are two Priests of the Mission of Richelieu, who have received orders from M. Vincent to come and pay our respects to Your Highness and to offer you our most humble services and prayers. We do so now, Mademoiselle, with all the respect and submission we owe to Your Highness.” If she speaks to you, listen to her without interrupting and answer any questions she may ask you.⁴

---

¹Superior of the Richelieu house and Director of the Internal Seminary.
²Anne-Marie-Louise d’Orléans, Duchesse de Montpensier, daughter of Gaston d’Orléans, Louis XIII’s brother, played an active part during the troubles of the Fronde. She was born in Paris on May 29, 1627, wrote memoirs, composed two novels, and sketched portraits. The Duchesse de Montpensier died in Paris on April 5, 1693.

³Champigny-sur-Veude, near Richelieu.

⁴Collet (cf. op. cit., vol. II, p. 270) mentions a letter of October 3, 1655, in which the Saint states that equanimity is a “special virtue . . . , a compendium of all the virtues, a ray, an exterior reflection of interior peace and beauty.” Perhaps Collet had in mind this letter to Pierre de Beaumont of which only a part still remains.
1934. - TO JEAN CHRÉTIEN, SUPERIOR, IN LA ROSE

October 3, 1655

I have no doubt that your humility causes you to shun positions of authority and to find it hard to carry out your office of Superior. I also am aware, however, of your submission to the good pleasure of God, who imposes this burden on you, and which prompts me to ask you, on His part, to carry it a little longer. I hope He will bless your leadership in La Rose, as He has done elsewhere, and I beg Him to do so with all my heart. You should not fear the difficulty of the dialect; Our Lord will see to it that it will soon be easy and familiar to you, if you give it a little attention. As for actions performed in public, preach courageously. I feel sure that, by observing our method, you will do this very well and effectively, having been called to it both by God and by the Bishop of Agen. All that remains for you to do is to be zealous and to put your trust in the grace of God, in whom, Monsieur, I am, your . . .

1935. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

October 3 [1655] 1

Most Honored Father,

For the past six years Sister Françoise, 2 our gardener, has always

1Barthélemy d'Elbène (1638-63).
Letter 1935. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.
2Françoise Fanchon, born on June 25, 1625, in Concise-Ieu-Pots (Picardy), entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity on August 9, 1644. She remained at the Motherhouse, where she worked in turn as gardener and cook, making her vows for the first time in 1649. Françoise did not know how to write and made a simple cross on the Act of Establishment of the Company in 1655. She later became Sister Servant in Saint-Médard parish. She died.
renewed her vows on the feast of Saint Francis, which is tomorrow. She entreats your charity to allow her to do so once again on this feast day of his. We therefore ask you kindly to let us know at what time you will say Holy Mass. Although you will not be saying it in the church, she will be mindful of it because she will be hearing Mass at the same time.

Permit me, Most Honored Father, to inquire about your health and to ask your blessing for our Sisters, especially the one who, to ensure her salvation, is asking to give herself to God. And I entreat you, for His holy love, to give me the assistance which, before God, your charity knows I need. I am, Most Honored Father, your most humble and very grateful daughter and servant.

L. de M.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

1936. - TO MARK COGLEY, SUPERIOR, IN SEDAN

Paris, October 6, 1655

Monsieur,

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

I have received two letters from you, dated September 16 and 27. The first concerns Mademoiselle de Neufville. We have not had a meeting for a long time because the principal Ladies have been away, so I have been unable to mention the subject of your letter. Please write me another one about it; keep it short but at the same time see that it explains the merit and the situation of the person, the good she has done and can do, her needs and present intentions, etc. Say, for instance, how long it has been since Providence led her to Sedan, that since then she has devoted herself to the instruc-

unexpectedly on May 12, 1689. Her companions stated that her charity and compassion extended to everyone.

October 4, feast of Saint Francis of Assisi.

Letter 1936. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.
tion of young Catholic women, taking into her home women of the so-called religion, when they want to be converted; that she bought and furnished a house for this purpose, keeping for her own support only an income of 300 livres; but now that she is elderly and has to have two persons with her, both to assist her in this good work and to nurse her, she cannot live on that, and this has prompted her to make the decision to retire and to sell the said house; that, to avoid this great evil, it is to be desired that God will raise up some good people to provide her with the means of meeting the expenses which this undertaking and her present state demand; that the sum is very modest, since two or three hundred livres will suffice with what she has (state whatever amount you think is about necessary, and no more, because people balk at being asked for too much); that, with this assistance during the short span of life remaining to this lady, she will leave her home and her furnishings for ever in order to continue the work she began. She even has a niece whom she has brought up who, after her death, will do whatever she shows her to be done, since she has decided to give herself to God for that purpose and will be able to live on the hundred écus she will bequeath her, etc. Write the letter in whatever way you please, provided it can be shown to others; make it urgent, succinct, and clear. This is the gist of it.

But can you not help that poor good lady out of the twelve hundred livres our Ladies donate to you annually, by giving her fifteen or twenty livres a month? For I am afraid I cannot procure any other relief for her; purse strings are very tight here and charity has grown cold. I will not fail to speak about her when the opportunity presents itself.\footnote{Huguenots.}

\footnote{To dissuade poor Catholic families in Sedan from sending their daughters to Protestant schools, Louise de Malval, Mademoiselle de Neufville, had opened a free school which, after her death, was directed by her collaborator, Mademoiselle de Mutigny. She had also founded a boarding school where young women were taught reading, writing, handwork, and, above all, morality. In addition, it provided shelter for women who wanted to abjure heresy. Suzanne Bailiff, Jeanne Tonneller, and Madeleine Vernier carried on her work, bringing seven Sisters of}
We will try to send you a Brother. I cannot say whether it will be François Prévost, until the business in his native place is settled. He has written about it and so have I.

I am enclosing a reply to the letter from the Father Guardian of the Convent at Charleville concerning a student.

We have nothing new except our retreats, which I recommend to your prayers. I am, Monsieur, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

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

1937. - TO A SUPERIOR

You mention starting on your building. O Jésus, Monsieur! do not even think about that right now! Our Lord showed great mercy to the Company by giving it the lodging it has, while we wait for His Divine Goodness to send us help. As for the inconveniences you allege, we will not be the cause of them, since we cannot do anything else. Then, too, I think this line of conduct has some relationship with God's guidance of His people. He permitted great

the Propagation of the Faith from Metz to join them. The little Community, of which Mademoiselle Marie Foucault was the first Superior, took charge of Mademoiselle de Mutigny's free school after her death.

François Prévost, born in Eu (Seine-Maritime), entered the Congregation of the Mission as a coadjutor Brother on March 6, 1647, at twenty-six years of age, and took his vows on November 4, 1655, in the presence of M. Bécu.

Letter 1937. - Reg. 2, p. 144. The letter is addressed "to a Superior who wanted to build without having the wherewithal to do so, and who was asking that the Saint-Lazare house contribute to it. He added that, for want of that, they were neglecting to do a great deal of good and this was even causing harm since, being poorly lodged, certain persons were falling into evil ways and growing weary."
disorder to reign for several centuries and the loss of an infinite number of souls, in order to establish a purely divine order and save them all by the coming, life, passion, and death of His Son. He sent the latter when He saw His people more disposed to receive Him after many warnings, many prophecies, and a yearning on the part of the people. If this is a false view of mine, I withdraw it; and if you offer me a better one, I will gladly accept it.

1938. - TO FRANÇOIS VINCENT, IN GENOA

October 8, 1655

I have received several letters from you since your departure and am greatly consoled by your safe arrival in Genoa, for which I thank God. This is a grace we have earnestly requested of Him and must be a foretaste of those He is preparing for you. We ask Him to fill you with them for the accomplishment of His plans for you in the place where you now are and in the work you are about to undertake, that you may be a means of union in the house, a living example of the Rule, a source of joy and edification to those who see you, and that each may recognize in you what a true Missionary should be. These are my heart’s desires and the hope I have conceived of the goodness of yours, which mine cherishes tenderly.
1939. • TO CHARLES OZENNE, SUPERIOR, IN KRAKOW

[October 8, 1655]

Monsieur,

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

I have received two regular mails now with no letter from you! I do not know the reason for this but, as I fear it may be due to the state of public affairs, I am deeply distressed—more deeply than I can say. I will still write to you every week in an attempt to express my grief to you and, through you, to the Queen, because of her present difficult situation. I also want to tell her of our constant prayers that God may be pleased to bless the King’s armies and protect the kingdom, as I hope He will do. Although the false rumors circulating here—which we do not believe—might lead to a lessening of this hope, I still have complete confidence, despite everything.

Two or three times, France has been on the brink of irreparable disaster, so much so that once the King had only one city loyal to him; and just two or three years ago we saw three armies in the environs of Paris, the King expelled, and the whole kingdom almost in a state of rebellion. Yet everything has now returned to its former state, and the King has never been more absolute.

God sometimes allows these great disturbances, which unsettle

Letter 1939. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.

1The date is missing from the top of the page, damaged by humidity, but the contents enable us to determine it. The letter was written while Charles Ozenne was in Krakow (September 24, 1655-December 17, 1655; cf. nos. 1924 and 1976) and while the Saint was making his annual retreat (late September or early October) and had received no news of Charles Ozenne for two weeks. This pinpoints it to one week before no. 1942, dated October 15, was written.

2Saint Vincent seems to be alluding to the period of the Wars of Religion (1562-98), when France was embroiled in religio-political civil wars and only Paris supported the King, Henry III.

3The civil wars of the Fronde (1648-52), an upheaval against Mazarin during the minority of Louis XIV. Brought on by the unpopularity of the Cardinal and his financial demands, and by the desire of the nobility to dominate the monarchy, the revolt was finally checked, and the monarchy emerged from this period greatly strengthened.
the most secure States, to remind earthly sovereigns that they are answerable to His kingship and are [just as] depe[ndent] as their own subjects. Later, He reestablishes them; in a word, He raises up and puts down wherever He pleases and whomsoever He wishes. It is for us to adore His ways and trust in His goodness.

Write and tell us, as best you can, about the state of affairs. If you miss the regular mails, all you have to do is use the one in Vienna, Austria, for I saw on the map that you are only fifty leagues from there. The Queen will never lack opportunities for writing to France, so I hope you will console us with your precious news.

May God be pleased to bless and console your little family! I embrace them with all possible humility and tenderness, particularly your own dear soul. We have no news here that I have not already told you. I began my retreat yesterday, which will prevent me from paying my respects to M. Conrard when he leaves, which, I have been told, is supposed to be tomorrow. M. des Noyers’ departure was so sudden that I was unable to have the honor of seeing him before he left. True, I was at his house on two or three occasions without having had the pleasure of seeing him—not indeed that I went there expressly to say good-bye to him, as I did not know he had to leave so soon, but simply to express my regret at the state of affairs in Poland [and to let him know] how obliged we are to Her Majesty.

---

4Humidity has damaged the original in this place.
5This passage bears a striking resemblance to the conclusion of Bossuet’s funeral oration for Henriette of France [Henriette-Marie, sister of Louis XIII; she married Charles I of England and died in 1669]. Bossuet was a disciple of Saint Vincent.
6Doctor of Louise-Marie de Gonzague, Queen of Poland; he was about to leave Paris to return to Poland.
7Pierre des Noyers, Secretary of the Queen of Poland, had been in France.
8This passage has been damaged by humidity.
Once again I ask Our Lord to be your light and strength in all the events of this life. I assure you that, in time and eternity, I will be, by God's grace, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,

i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Ozanne, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Poland, in Krakow

1940. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Eve of Saint Denis [October 8, 1655] ¹

Most Honored Father,

I most humbly entreat your charity to allow me to recommend my son to your prayers, which he needs to obtain from Our Lord, by the merits of the insults and injuries He suffered during His human life, the cure of his deafness, if this petition is not contrary to His perfect Will.²

I desire this only if it is accompanied by the grace of his making a firm resolution not to allow God to be offended in his little family. Good Brother Fiacre³ promised him he would begin a novena to the Blessed Virgin tomorrow, feast of Saint Denis. The thought came to me, Most Honored Father, to ask your permission to receive Holy Communion every day and perform some other good action on each of those days, provided my hardness of heart does not prevent me from doing so. Please let me know your will with regard to this.

Letter 1940. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Brother Ducournau noted the date on the back of the original.

²In the letters that follow, no further mention is made of Saint Louise's son, Michel Le Gras. Deafness obliged him to leave his post of Bailiff of Saint-Lazare in 1656. Michel died suddenly in February 1696, in his eighty-third year.

³There is no information available regarding this person.
The work of our Sister Officers seems to be going well, thank God. We began our little Council Tuesday on the subject of the return of our Sisters from Nantes and how they should be received, and we made suggestions of who should be sent to Châteaudun. However, the uncertainty of having to call the Sister Procuratrix there, because of the short time she has been in the Company, stopped us because we did not want to give rise to complaint.

We have great need of your instructions and holy guidance in everything for the perfection of this work which seems to be taking shape. I hope that God in His goodness will inspire you and will grant us the dispositions needed to obey you, since it is by His Will that I am, Most Honored Father, your most humble and very obedient daughter and servant...

L. de M.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

October 10, 1655

I received your letter with great joy—although you wrote to me in a troubled state—because I see in it that you are openminded and that God, who chooses to try you, has a hand in this. Those

4During the Assembly of August 8, 1655, the following Sisters were named Officers of the Company: Julienne Loret, Assistant; Mathurine Guérin, Treasurer; and Jeanne Gressier, Procuratrix. (Cf. Spiritual Writings, L. 456, p. 487, n. 1.)

5The Administrators wrote several letters concerning difficulties within the Nantes community. Only one, written by M. du Branday Grangecot on May 28, 1655, has been preserved. Coming to the defense of Sister Henriette Gessaume, whom the Administrators wished to keep because of her competence in the pharmacy, M. du Branday inveighed against Sister Marie-Marthe Trumbeau, the Sister Servant, and requested her removal.

6Sister Jeanne Gressier, born in Senlis (Oise), entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity around 1654. Although very young, she was named Procuratrix in 1655 and remained at the Motherhouse. She assisted Saint Louise on her deathbed (March 15, 1660) and wrote the details of her last moments. It was she to whom Saint Vincent confided the governance of the Company while awaiting the naming of a new Superiors General in August 1660.

who have given you the idea that you are not fit to direct a seminary
do not know you as I do, and because you have seen a certain
seminarian little disposed to profit by your lectures, it does not
follow that the others do not esteem you and are not advancing
under your guidance. Some persons are so perverse that, even if
they had a Saint Thomas to teach them, that could not prevent them
from revealing themselves as they really are. Please do not be
surprised at the indiscretion of some. Since everything changes,
God will take these troublesome persons from you and give you
others, more docile and more devoted to their profession, who will
make good use of your good example and instructions. Please
continue to give them these—at least until the arrival of the Visitor,
to whom you will tell everything; and, if he thinks it advisable to
relieve you of this duty, then we will give you another. We have a
variety of works, thank God, and I am willing to give you every
satisfaction.

1942. - TO CHARLES OZENNE, SUPERIOR, IN KRAKOW

Paris, October 15, 1655

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Three weeks have gone by without my receiving a letter from
you. I still continue to send mine by every regular mail, so that if
you do not have the consolation of news from us it will not be my
fault, and so that, if God allows it to reach you, you will be assured
of our prayers for the King, the Queen, the kingdom, yourself and
your family. We hear different rumors which keep us in a state
somewhere between hope and fear. As for myself, when I think of

Letter 1942. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.
the piety of Their Majesties and the prayers the entire Church is offering so that God will protect their States and religion, I have no doubt that He will; and, whatever people may say, I hope—even against hope itself—that the justness of their armies will prevail over the strength and flagrant injustice of their adversaries.

To this end I recommended to the Company this morning that they renew their prayers and redouble their acts of mortification. I think they are doing so on their own initiative because it is for such an important reason, and they feel so much obliged to do so because of the Queen’s kindesses. Please assure Her Majesty of this, as well as of the unwavering continuation of our prayers and obedience.

Mon Dieu! Monsieur, how worried I shall be until I receive some letters from you, informing me of the state of public affairs and of the Company! I certainly sympathize with you, knowing that your charitable heart is sustaining not only its personal sorrow but also that of others. May God be pleased to strengthen you in these hardships, enlighten you in your doubts, and bring you safely to the place where Providence intends to lead your little bark. Trust firmly in God’s guidance and encourage your people to have this trust in the present disturbances; the storm will abate, and the calm will be greater and more pleasing than ever.

We have no news here. The Company is going along as usual, and everyone is well, except M. Le Gros, who fell ill at Montauban, while making the visitation of our houses in Gascony, and is not yet out of danger. Please pray for us. I will give you more news when I am more certain that my letters have been delivered to you.

Meanwhile, I am, Monsieur, in life and death, in the love of O[ur] L[ord], your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
I.s.C.M.

Since I wrote the above yesterday, we have been told, and rumor has it, that the King has defeated the King of Sweden and taken
him prisoner, and this rumor is widespread in Paris.\textsuperscript{1} O Monsieur, how wholeheartedly I ask God to bless more and more the King, the Queen, and their kingdom!

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

1943. - TO FIRMIN GET, SUPERIOR, IN MARSEILLES

October 16, 1655

The avania against M. Le Vacher in Tunis\textsuperscript{1} should be paid for by a bolt of cloth; you know what kind is needed; please have it bought and sent to him as soon as possible. Do not pay more than two hundred livres for it.

1944. - TO THE MARCHESE DI PIANEZZA

October 19, 1655

My Lord,

In accordance with your order, we are sending you four of our priests. They are such that, with God’s grace, they will be able to render some little service to Our Lord with regard to the poor country folk and the ecclesiastical state. However, in order to do

\textsuperscript{1}The rumor was false.

Letter 1943. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, Marseilles manuscript.

\textsuperscript{1}Expelled from Tunis by the Dey, under the pretext that he was preventing Christian slaves from becoming Muslims, Jean Le Vacher went to Bizerte. Through the intervention of the Consul, he was able to return to Tunis a month later. To thank the Dey for his clemency, he wanted to make a gift to him of a bolt of cloth (cf. no. 1990).

Letter 1944. - Reg. 2, p. 68.
this effectively, it is essential, My Lord, that, in conformity with our Rules and customs, they do not preach nor hear confessions in the city of Turin or in other episcopal cities, with the exception of the ordinands, retreatants and seminarians, when there is an ecclesiastical seminary; and above all, My Lord, they must not be assigned to assist nuns—all such things would be a hindrance to preaching the Gospel to poor country folk in the spirit of Our Lord.

You will find many shortcomings in these poor Missionaries. I very humbly beg you, My Lord, to bear with them, remind them of their failings, and correct them, as a good father would his children. I transfer to you the authority God has given me for this. Would to God I were in a position to avail myself of the advantage they will have of approaching you, My Lord, and of profiting by the words of eternal life that fall from your lips and the many good examples your life gives to everyone! I would hope for some help from them to amend my life and be more deserving of becoming your...

1945. - TO JEAN MARTIN, IN LYONS

Paris, October 22, 1655

Monsieur,

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

May it please His Infinite Goodness that this letter finds you in Lyons in good health and well satisfied with your journey.¹ Since your departure, a business matter has arisen with us that is advisable for M. Deheaume² to handle, obliging us to give you

---

¹Martin had been sent to Turin to head the establishment founded by the Marchese di Pianezza.

²Pierre Deheaume, born in Sedan (Ardenne) on August 20, 1630, entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 8, 1646, took his vows in 1651, and was stationed in Turin and Annecy (1656); he was Superior in Marseilles (1662-65) and Toul (1667-69).
M. Planchamp 3 in his place. He is going to leave on the coach for Lyons, where he may arrive at the same time as you. He is a very good priest who, with the help of God, will be of service and consolation to you. I am writing to tell the Marchese di Pianezza what a fine man he is so that he will accept him, despite his blindness. I have already written to inform him that you are on your way. Enclosed also is a note for M. Deheaueme, telling him to wait in Lyons, where we need him. Please see that M. Delaforcade gives him 5 the money he needs for his assistance.6

I beg Our Lord, Monsieur, to be pleased to continue to protect you and to be Himself your guide in the purpose of this journey and on the journey itself. I am, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL, i.s.C.M.

Please let me know very soon what you arrange with the Vicar-General and M. Charrin.7

Addressed: Monsieur Martin, Priest of the Mission, in Lyons

3Jean-Jacques Planchamp, born in Mionnay (Ain) on December 8, 1627, was ordained a priest in 1651, entered the Congregation of the Mission on April 29, 1655, and took his vows in Turin on May 12, 1657, in the presence of M. Martin. He left the Company in 1659.

4First redaction: "so that he will go." The words "to wait in Lyons" are in the Saint's handwriting.

5First redaction: "Please give him." The words "see that...gives him" are in the Saint's handwriting.

6The words "his assistance" are in the Saint's handwriting.

7M. Charrin of Lyons wanted to fund an establishment of Missionaries in that city. As noted in no. 1917, the foundation never materialized.
Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am writing this letter to send you the one I have taken the honor of writing to the Marchese di Pianezza about your journey, and to tell you that something has come up since your departure which requires that M. Deheaume leave you in Lyons and remain there for a few days, until I tell him the place to which Our Lord is calling him.

We are sending you in his place M. Planchamp, a very fine priest who left this morning by coach to join you in Lyons; he is also bringing you a letter from me and one for M. Deheaume. I hope both you and he will adore the guidance of God in this unexpected change and that it will find prompt and loving acceptance in your hearts. I ask this of Him with all my love, and also to preserve and bless you so that you may accomplish His plans for you. I am, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Martin, Priest of the Mission, in Lyons

1947. - TO ÉTIENNE BLATIRON, SUPERIOR, IN GENOA

October 22, 1655

With regard to the vows, God and Our Holy Father the Pope

Letter 1946. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter. The first sentence indicates why Saint Vincent wrote this letter; its contents are the same as those of no. 1945, which was sent on the same morning.

have been pleased to approve those we make. I have received the Brief for this, and we have offered it to Our Lord as the work of His hands. M. Jolly is supposed to send you an authentic copy of it, which I ask you to present to Cardinal Durazzo, as the result of his prayers and recommendations.

As for dependence on the Bishops, I can assure you that I have done nothing to prompt the explanation that appears in the said Brief. I neither wrote nor spoke about it, either at home or abroad; it was given by those whom the Pope had appointed, and they judged it appropriate to set it forth in its present form. Now, you know that the Will of God cannot be made known to us more clearly in events than when they happen without our intervention or in a way other than we requested. Nevertheless, it is true that the Bishops have absolute power over us for all external functions, as well as for seminaries, ordination [retreats], and missions.

1948. - TO EDMÉ JOLLY, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

October 22, 1655

We have received the Brief containing the approbation of our vows, thank God. It is to Him that we are principally indebted for

---

1The Brief of Alexander VII, Ex commissa nobis, of September 22, 1655 (cf. vol. XIII, no. 113; also Acta apostolica in gratiam Congregationis Missionis, p. 16), confirmed and approved the custom already in use in the Congregation of the Mission: the taking of simple vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and stability, after two years of probation (Internal Seminary), with a view to working until death for the salvation of the poor people of the rural areas. The Brief added that only the Sovereign Pontiff and the Superior General could give a dispensation from these vows.

2The Brief exempted the Missionaries from the jurisdiction of the Ordinaries [mostly local Bishops] in everything except external functions [purely diocesan works subject to the jurisdiction of a Bishop]. It also declared them, notwithstanding this privilege, part of the body of the secular clergy.

this, since it is true that, without special guidance on His part, it would have been impossible for us to have surmounted the difficulties. It is He who, by His grace, has disposed the Cardinals, Doctors, and the others, including the Pope himself, who have contributed to the success of this affair, to favor us in this plan for the consolidation of the Company. It is likewise He, Monsieur, who has chosen you to be the promoter and, as it were, the soul of this petition. Here, He gave you the inspirations for it, and there He has blessed your leadership in a way somewhat surprising, going even beyond our hopes. May His Divine Goodness be ever glorified for this; may He be your reward for the trouble you have taken and make you aware of my gratitude!

Thank you for what you tell me about dependence on the Bishops. We will comply with it, since the Will of God has been made known to us by this Brief. I am informing M. Blatiron that the nature of this dependence, in the sense of the terms that have been laid down, was explained by those Doctors to the deputies, without my ever having written or said anything on the matter. This should banish the difficulty he finds with that, for he thinks it was due to us, and that the Bishops will be offended by it. I think they will have no reason for being so, inasmuch as they have absolute power over all our external functions.

1949. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

October 22 [1655]  

Most Honored Father,

Will your charity please take the trouble to read these letters, for fear lest they contradict the ones you are writing?

---


1Date added on the back of the original by Brother Ducournau.
Sister de Saint-Albin is very upset about the matter she discussed with you. She says she cannot bring herself to say anything about it to Monsieur Portail or even to wait for his return before giving the order to remove an infant from its wicked mother. Perhaps she would like to take care of this matter before taking off the habit of the Daughters of Charity, in order to give the impression that she is performing an act of charity, but I fear the consequences. Please tell us, Monsieur, what we are to do.

I think my little fever is caused only by my bad spleen, which is getting hard and covering part of my stomach. If this is the key to leaving this world soon, then I really need to learn how to prepare for it. I await this from your charity so that I will not be shipwrecked as I enter the home port of my voyage, guided solely by your directives and the orders of Divine Providence, since you know that I am, Most Honored Father, your very humble daughter and most obedient servant.

L. de Marillac

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

1950. - TO DONAT CROWLEY, SUPERIOR, IN LE MANS

October 27, 1655

In the name of Our Lord, please do not think about getting a horse, because of the inconveniences that have arisen in houses that have had them. I am well aware that I give this bad example, but God knows my embarrassment and pain at not being able to do otherwise. I also know that, if any house in the Company should have a saddle horse, it is yours, given the number of farms and the amount of business it has. However, because of the conclusion

---

2Jeanne de Saint-Albin entered the Daughters of Charity as a widow, was assigned to Nantes in June 1647, and was recalled to Paris in December 1650. She almost left the Community in October 1655 (cf. Spiritual Writings, L. 457, p. 488), but her name was still on the personnel list after 1660.

other houses might draw from this, your house, Monsieur, should
do without one to rid them of this pretext.

There have been Superiors who, having a horse in the stable,
took the opportunity to go riding, make visits, and waste time
transacting business of little or no importance outside the house,
thereby neglecting matters within their families, who complained
of these frequent absences and the scandal they caused. In view of
all this, I hope you will accept the deprivation of such a means of
transport and continue to use a hired horse, when you need one.

1951. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

Blessed be the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who inspired
you so gently and yet so strongly with the idea of the Mission you
have undertaken for the spread of the faith. Blessed, too, be that
same Lord, who came into this world not only to redeem the souls
you are going to instruct, but also to merit for you the graces you
need to procure their salvation and your own! Since, then, all those
graces have been prepared for you, and our good God, who grants
them, desires nothing so much as to lavish them on those who truly
want to make use of them, what is there to prevent you from being
filled with them, destroying by their power all that remains of the
old man in you and the darkness and ignorance of sin in those
people? I would like to hope that, for your part, you will spare
neither labor, nor health, nor life itself to do so; that is why you
have given yourself to God and risked the dangers of a long
journey. All that remains now is for you to make a firm resolution
to put your hand seriously to the work.

Now, to begin and to succeed well, remember to act in the spirit
of Our Lord, unite your actions to His, and give them an utterly


1Cf. Col 3:9. (NAB)
noble, divine goal, dedicating them to His greater glory. By this means, God will shower all sorts of blessings on you and your work. However, you may not perhaps see them—at least to their full extent—because God, for very good reasons, sometimes conceals from His servants the results of their labors, but He does not fail to give very great ones. A plowman has to wait a long time before seeing the fruits of his plowing, and sometimes he does not see the abundant harvest his sowing has produced. This very thing happened to Saint Francis Xavier who, during his lifetime, did not see the admirable results his holy labors produced after his death, nor the marvelous progress made by the missions he had begun. This consideration should greatly expand your heart and keep it raised to God, confident that all will go well, even though you may think the opposite.

1952. TO EDME JOLLY, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

October 29, 1655

We have proposed the Brief of our Holy Father \( ^1 \) to the family here—priests, seminarians, and coadjutor Brothers. I explained to them how, from the very beginning, God was pleased to give the Company the desire to place itself in the most perfect state possible, without entering the religious state itself; that, to this end, we had taken vows to unite ourselves more closely to Our Lord and to His Church, the Superior of the Company to its members, and the members to the head; that this was done in the second or third year; \( ^2 \) that these vows of poverty, etc., were simple, and that we renewed them two or three years in a row; that finally we made a

---


\(^1\) *Ex commissa nobis* of Alexander VII, issued September 22, 1655 (cf. vol. XIII, no. 113).

\(^2\) On September 9, 1629, according to the manuscript book of customs of the parish of Fontainebleau (Rectory archives).
Rule about them, which was approved by the Archbishop of Paris,\(^3\) and that we then made them together but scarcely had we done so than some members of the Company complained, and this spread abroad. This caused us to call a meeting of the principal Doctors of Paris, and when we asked them whether it was permissible for us to do what we had done, they replied in the affirmative.

Next, we held an assembly here of the principal Superiors and some senior members of the Company,\(^4\) at which we dealt with this subject, among other things. They were of the same opinion as the theologians and thought we should continue, despite the difficulties encountered in this from both within and without. But because the evil spirit, who always opposes the works of God, surrenders only as a last resort, the same difficulties continued and increased, obliging us to consult those theologians again to ask if they were of the same mind, in view of the difficulties that were arising once again. They still held to their original opinions and gave them to us in writing. Three very prominent Jesuits also signed the document; this, however, was not forceful enough to put an end to the opposition.

We held a second assembly of the principal Superiors of the Company,\(^5\) including those in Rome and Genoa and the senior members of the same Company. As happened the first time, they were of the opinion that we should continue. For all that, the opposition did not let up, and we were obliged to have recourse to the oracle of the Will of God, who had given us a Brief by which he confirms our vows in the way we have taken them.

When we had said these things to the assembled Community, we then had the Brief read both in Latin and in French, and I asked all of them if they were ready to accept and submit to it. They declared aloud that they were most willing to do so and that they

---

\(^{3}\) On October 19, 1641 (cf. vol. XIII, no. 87).


\(^{5}\) In July-August 1651 (cf. Official report of the Assembly of 1651, vol. XIII, no. 104).
thanked God and our Holy Father for it. Afterward, they all signed the minutes, containing almost everything I have just said, and the copy of the Brief. The proceedings were certified by two notaries.⁶

On two different occasions, we discussed with our senior priests who were in Rome the purchase of San Giovanni Mercatelli, and several of them made their prayer on the same subject, namely, whether it was advisable to agree to enter into negotiations for this house. In the end, it was decided not to do so because of the parish attached to it and because, by serving it, we would be acting absolutely contrary to our Rule, which prohibits us from doing such work in towns, particularly in Rome. That would serve as a pretext in the future to do the same everywhere and to be content with this work alone, abandoning that of going in search of poor sinful souls in the country, since it is said that the Italian temperament is not inclined to hard work. That would be a great pity and would tend to pervert the spirit Our Lord has bestowed on the Company.

So, please let us leave it at that, Monsieur, honoring patiently the state of the Son of God—who did not wish to have a place of His own on which to lay His head ⁷—until He Himself chooses to withdraw us from this state.

1953. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Sunday evening [October 31, 1655] ¹

Most Honored Father,

Two Sisters spoke to you at one of the last two conferences, and your

---

⁶Cf. vol. XIII, no. 114, Act of Acceptance by the Saint-Lazare house of the Brief, Ex commissa nobis, October 22, 1655.
⁷Cf. Mt 8:20. (NAB)

Letter 1953. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.
¹Brother Ducournau noted the month and year on the back of the original.
charity told me of their desire to make their vows for the first time tomorrow, the Feast of All Saints, for which they have prepared themselves. Will you kindly grant them this grace, for the love of God, and offer them to Him during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass? One has been in the Company for seven years, the other for six, and both have given good example for several years now.

Two other Sisters, who made their vows on this same day, also ask your charity if they may renew them. They seem to have done nothing contrary to them, and they want to persevere. One is from Dammartin, the other from near Maule. Of the first two, one is from Richelieu, and if the other is not from here, she has lived in Paris for a long time. Their names are: Perrine, Marie, Geneviève, and Avoie. I ask your charity’s blessing for them and for the entire Company.

I hope Monsieur Bécu did not forget to ask you to give us a little conference on one of these feast days, if there is no danger that this will tire you out. Were it not for the length and importance of the subject I would not be so insistent. This leads me, Most Honored Father, to hope for the forgiveness now being asked by your most humble and very grateful daughter and servant.

L. de M.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

---

2Avoie Vigneran entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity around 1646-47. Her two sisters, Geneviève and Marie, were also Daughters of Charity. In 1658 Avoie was sent to Ussel, where she encountered many difficulties. She speaks of her sufferings with great feeling to Mademoiselle (cf. vol. VII, no. 2767) and to Monsieur Vincent (vol. VIII, no. 3241). Perrine, Marie, and Geneviève cannot be identified more specifically.

3Perhaps the conference of November 2, 1655, "On the Maxims of Jesus Christ and Those of the World" (vol. X, no. 72).
1954. - EDME JOLLY, SUPERIOR IN ROME, TO SAINT VINCENT

[Rome, around November 1655] 1

Oh! if everyone knew God's Will in this affair, 2 the difficulties He has overcome against all the powers opposed to it and against all odds of success, and if He Himself had not done so by His sovereign power, as those aware of the situation fully acknowledge, then so many precautions would not be necessary to propose its acceptance. The advice of the Procurator General of the Cistercians is that you, Monsieur, should inform all the houses of the Company of what transpired in this affair, the strong opposition we had to face, and the admirable Providence with which God guided the affair, clearly demonstrating that He alone wanted it done and was doing it against all human odds, because such was His good pleasure.

1955. - TO JEAN MARTIN, IN TURIN

Paris, November 9, 1655

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

M. Deheuame wrote me that, after leaving Paris, he changed his mind and has decided willingly to go to Turin and remain there as long as obedience requires. I have told him, then, to go and see you to make the fourth man, since M. Jean-Baptiste, 1 whom we had been considering for that post, has been assigned to give missions in the Viterbo diocese. The Bishop there is Cardinal Brancaccio, 2


1Since this memo concerns the promulgation and acceptance of the papal Brief, Ex commissa nobis, of September 22, 1655, Coste assigned the above date.

2The steps being taken for the approbation of the vows.

Letter 1955. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.

1Giovanni Battista Taone.

2Francesco Maria Brancaccio, Bishop of Viterbo, Porto, and Capaccio, became a Cardinal in 1634 and died on January 9, 1675. He is the author of a collection of Latin essays.
and I cannot tell you how deeply we are indebted to him. So, Monsieur, please welcome M. Deheaume, the bearer of this letter, who is a worker full of good will. You already noted this when you were on the road with him, as you informed me. He is anxious to help you labor in the vineyard of Our Lord, in whose love I am, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

I had a fever for three or four days, but have been completely free of it for two days now. I recommend myself with all my heart to your prayers, and, on my part, I ask Our Lord to bless your work in that country.

Addressed: Monsieur Martin, Priest of the Mission, in Turin

1956. - TO ÉTIENNE BLATIRON, SUPERIOR, IN GENOA

November 12, 1655

I thank God for the special devotions you are planning in order to ask God, through the intercession of blessed Saint Joseph, for the spread of the Company.¹ I ask His Divine Goodness to accept them. For more than twenty years I have not dared to ask this of God, thinking that, since the Congregation is His work, its preservation and growth should be left to His Providence alone. Reflect-

¹Collet (op. cit., vol. II, pp. 143-44) states that Saint Vincent had written previously to M. Blatiron (August 14, 1654) to "congratulate the Superior in Genoa for seeking the mediation of that glorious Patriarch in finding workers capable of cultivating the Lord's vineyard. He advised him to say Mass, or have Mass said, every six months in the chapel dedicated to him [Saint Joseph]." Saint Vincent wanted Blatiron to lead people in his apostolic journeys "to have devotion to and confidence in" this faithful guardian of the "Immaculate Mother" of Jesus. The words in quotes are all we have of Saint Vincent's letter, which has since disappeared. (Cf. Mission et Charité, no. 80, p. 100.)