Monsieur,

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

I cannot sufficiently admire God's goodness in the blessings He is bestowing on your work, which are evident in the crowds of people and the fruits He gathers from it. I thank Him for it with all my heart and especially for the strength He has given you to sustain such an overwhelming burden. May His Omnipotence fortify you more and more, both in body and in mind, together with all your workers. I embrace them and you with renewed sentiments of esteem and tenderness because of the disposition He has placed in each of you to be consumed for love of Him in the work that the salvation of souls demands of us. For this may His Holy Name be forever blessed!

The language of the country is still too new to M. de Musy for him not to encounter difficulties in it. I hope that a little time and application will make it familiar to him so that he can use it effectively in his work. Still, I am afraid he might work too hard at it and become ill. Please watch over his efforts so that he will moderate them. I am writing him a note.

In your letter of November 24—the last one I received—you mention the spread of the contagion in Rome and Genoa. I am hearing the same thing in letters from M. Blatiron and M. Jolly. We are very distressed indeed about this, Monsieur, especially since neither the change of season nor the prayers that the whole Church has offered during the Jubilee have yet been able to stem the tide of that disease nor cause it to subside. The sins of the Christian state must be very great, since they oblige God to exercise His justice in
this way. May it please His mercy to come in its turn to visit those poor towns soon and to console the many persons afflicted everywhere in one way or another! We must thank God fervently for having spared our houses until now and ask Him to continue to protect them to the end.

You are waiting for me to mention the long-awaited promised help. I wrote you that the Jubilee and the ordination [retreat] were keeping all our men busy, both here and in the country. We are now nearing the end of the retreat for the ordinands and are fast approaching the feast days. After that, God willing, we will send those we have designated for you, namely, a priest and a Brother. I hope they will be able to leave by the end of next week.

We have no news except that of the coming Mystery, which will show us the Savior of the world annihilated, as it were, under the form of a child. I hope we will be together at the foot of His crib to ask Him to draw us with Him into His lowly state. With this wish and in His love I am, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Martin, Superior of the Priests of the Mission, in Turin

2183. - TO DONAT CROWLEY, SUPERIOR, IN LE MANS

December 23, 1656

For the explanation you request, hold as a maxim that we must never accept any remuneration for our work, although we may accept the alms that people in their piety send us. So, if Madame . . .
should send you some money because you have worked on her estates and have incurred expenses there, you must not accept it. If, however, apart from this consideration, she were to offer you something through simple charity, you may accept it as an alms.

2184. - TO JEAN MARTIN, SUPERIOR, IN TURIN

Paris, December 29, 1656

Monsieur,

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

I received your dear letter of the fifteenth. You are the first person to tell me about the death of M. Lucas.1 This is a considerable loss for us, which we feel very deeply, but it is a great grace for him to have died as an apostolic man and to have given his life for his neighbor. This is the greatest possible act of charity that can be performed, as O[ur] L[ord] Himself has stated.2 You know how this servant of His, inspired to risk his life for the plague-stricken, asked permission to do so; having obtained it, he showed great courage in putting it into effect, after preparing himself by a retreat. God, who gave him to us, has taken him away from us; may His Holy Name be blessed!

Please thank God, Monsieur, as we have done here, for having honored the Company with such a Missionary, who preferred the salvation of souls to his own safety, for the glory of his Master. Like you, we have prayed for the repose of his soul, in the event that he still has some satisfaction to make, since Divine Providence

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Letter 2184. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.

1The author of his biographical sketch (cf. Notices, vol. 1, p. 145) believed erroneously that this was Antoine Lucas, one of Saint Vincent's first companions. In fact, it was Luca Arimondo (whom Saint Vincent always referred to as M. Lucas) who died of the plague on November 4, 1656.

2Cf. Jn 15:13. (NAB)
and Holy Church have ordered prayers to be offered for just persons who have died.

All the priests of that house, and of the Rome house as well, are disposed to follow the example of that dear departed man by risking their lives as he did; they await only the Cardinal's order, without which I have asked them not to do so. This gives us another good reason to thank God for having placed among us souls entirely detached from the world and as ready to leave it as to remain in it, when there is question of His service or good pleasure.

The news you gave me that the plague is subsiding in Rome and Genoa has consoled me greatly. I have received no letters from M. Jolly for two weeks. M. Blatiron's letter, dated the eighth of this month, says the same thing about Genoa. He said nothing to me about M. Lucas—an indication that he was still alive at the time.

We have thanked God—and I am still thanking Him—not only for the special blessings He has bestowed on your big mission in Villafranca, but for helping you to get through work so hard that it could have overwhelmed you. May His Holy Name, therefore, be ever glorified for all the graces He gave the people and the workers! May His Divine Goodness preserve the fruits of it and strengthen you more and more so that you may produce similar ones for years to come!

I am concerned that you took only a short rest and went back to work so soon. In the name of Our Lord, please moderate what you do and get all the help you can. We ask God to bless and keep you. The Jubilee we are celebrating in this diocese has given many persons cause to take from us all our workers and to go and prepare the people to gain it. This has prevented us from sending the man you are expecting. Please excuse me for this and for making you practice a little patience. We will definitely have him leave next

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3 In Piedmont.
week, God willing. In the meantime, I embrace you and your dear family with all the tenderness of my heart. I am, in that of O[ur] L[ord], Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,

i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Martin, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Turin, in Turin

2185. - TO FIRMIN GET, SUPERIOR, IN MARSEILLES

Paris, January 5, 1657

Monsieur,

I ask Our Lord to make this New Year a year of grace for you, to fill your heart and your family with the fruits of His blessings, and to preserve these fruits even to eternity.

We have paid two bills of exchange from M. Bonnaud and his associate, one for one hundred livres and the other for two hundred. When their bill for the two hundred fifty livres that remain is presented to us, we will try to pay it.

I received no letters from you in the last regular mail, and I have nothing more to tell you, except that I embrace in spirit all your men, and am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,

i.s.C.M.

At the bottom of the page: Monsieur Get

Letter 2185. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, Sister Hains Collection, original signed letter.
2186. - TO EDME JOLLY, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

January 5, 1657

If Brother [Oderico’s] inspiration to go to assist the plague-stricken moves him strongly and for a long time, or there is a dire need for this, or you are ordered to send someone there, you can let him make this sacrifice, provided he is prompted by supernatural motives. If he is seeking death for fear of a long period of suffering the discomforts of the dropsy with which he is threatened or for some other unworthy intention, you should dissuade him from it.

I strongly approve the satisfaction you gave M. J[ean]-B[aptiste]. I hope God will always grant the Company the grace of showing His kindness to everyone, especially to those who separate themselves from us, not only so that they will have no reason to complain of anything, but that, by heaping burning coals on their head, they will acknowledge to the end the charity of their good mother.

2187. - TO GUILLAUME DELVILLE, IN ARRAS

January 6, 1657

The three postulants you sent us have arrived. We gave them a


1It is clear from no. 2199 that the Brother in question here is Nicolò Oderico. He was born in Genoa on February 28, 1627, where he entered the Congregation of the Mission on March 4, 1654, and took his vows there in 1656.

2Giovanni Battista Tione, born in Lantosque (Alpes-Maritimes) on November 24, . . . , was ordained a priest in December 1634 and entered the Congregation of the Mission in Rome in 1642. As indicated here, he left the Company.

3Cf. Rom 12:20. (NAB)

warm welcome, since it was you who sent them.¹ You informed me of the reason why you had sent us the lame man who recently returned to Arras. I had indeed thought, Monsieur, that you had been pressured into it, and that, not being strong enough to resist the coercion of those speaking to you on his behalf, you were obliged to condescend.

I am inclined to think that the same thing happened to you again with regard to one of these three, named . . . . You did not see in him the qualities necessary for the Company, but you sent him anyway to satisfy those who asked you to do so, since you did not have the heart to refuse them and you saw good will in him. I am really sorry about that because of the displeasure you will have at our not accepting him into the seminary. We found that he was too poor in Latin. I am sending you a composition he wrote to show you that he is far below the level of studies he should have attained. All the men I have had examine him for the signs of a true vocation have concluded that he does not have them and have advised him to return home.

This obliges me to ask you once again not to have anyone else make the journey unless you think they are called by God. Not all those who present themselves are called, at least not those who lack the requisite qualities of body and mind suitable for our Institute and works. The two years of probation are not for discerning whether they have the requisite dispositions—this should have been done beforehand—but to strengthen them in them, and to build on this foundation the virtues that make a good Missionary.

¹Maximilien-François Cuvery, Charles Taquet, and a third man; the last-mentioned did not stay.

Cuvery was born in Arras (Pas-de-Calais) on January 6, 1634, entered the Congregation of the Mission in Paris on December 1, 1656, and took his vows there on December 3, 1658, in the presence of M. Delepiney. He spent some years at Fontainebleau before going to Madagascar in 1660, where he died on February 4, 1667.

Taquet, born in Arras on September 12, 1639, entered the Congregation of the Mission in Paris on January 5, 1657, and took his vows there on January 17, 1659, in the presence of M. Delepiney.
Consequently, Monsieur, we must have such freedom in making our choices that it is above any human consideration. “It was not you who chose me,” says the Lord, “it was I who chose and appointed you.” ² This is so that we may know that He alone has the right to call persons to evangelical functions. It means that there is as much a difference between one vocation and another as between the sun and the moon or between day and night because the vocation that does not come from God is only the shadow of a true vocation, although it may be covered with fine pretexts and the same clothing.

Still, Monsieur, I do not doubt your good discernment. but, when there is question of admitting candidates among us, I do not depend on my own discernment; after testing them in various ways, I ask the advice of several members of the Company. So I think that you also, to avoid being deceived, should take strong precautions, especially the following: always have them write in your presence, send us their compositions and, before sending them here to us, inform us exactly about their morals, age, health, qualities, etc., so we can decide whether they are suitable for us.

You ask if we will accept priests as postulants, even though they do not pay the one hundred livres for their clothes. Yes, Monsieur, we will accept them if that is all, provided they are otherwise satisfactory, because being dressed as priests, we assume that each will have his own cassock and cloak.

We also assume that the others who are not priests will bring their titles in proper form. Before sending them, please inform them about our most difficult practices and the submission required, so that they do not find them strange when they get here.

²Cf. Jn 15:16. (NAB)
Monsieur,

I ask Our Lord to make this New Year a year of grace for you, to fill your heart and your family with the fruits of His blessings, and to preserve these fruits even to eternity.

We have just lost a priest in Genoa who gave proof of being an apostolic man by giving his life for his neighbor, which is the greatest act of charity that can be performed, as Our Lord Himself has stated.² This servant of His, an Italian named M. Lucas,³ was inspired to risk his life to serve the plague-stricken. He asked this permission and, having obtained it, showed great courage by putting it into effect, after preparing himself well for it by a retreat. So, he served the sick very zealously for thirteen days; then he was stricken by the same illness. God, who had given him to us, took him away on the third day, fortified by all the sacraments. Please thank God, Monsieur, for the grace He granted him and for having honored the Company with such a Missionary who preferred the salvation of souls to his own safety, for the glory of his Master. Next, please pray and have others pray for the salvation of his soul, in case he still has some satisfaction to make. It is not in vain that Divine Providence and Holy Church have ordered this assistance for just persons who have died.

All the priests in that house are ready to follow the example of that dear departed one by risking their lives as he did; they await

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²Cf. Jn 15:13. (NAB)
³Luca Arimondo.
only an order from the Cardinal of Genoa. They would even have
gone before receiving it, had I not asked them not to do so. This
gives us another good reason to thank God for having placed among
us souls entirely detached from this world and as ready to leave it
as to remain in it, when there is question of His service or good
pleasure.

I received two letters from you. I have nothing to say about your
ordination [retreat].

As for the parish, make another effort to persuade His Excel-
ency 4 to bring about this union himself. If he still refuses, I consent
to your resigning it—providing he approves—to M. Redoys, his
chaplain, with the conditions you say you have agreed upon with
him, namely, that he will give the house a simple benefice of 150
livres and a pension for an equal amount taken from the above-
mentioned parish. The main condition, however, is that there be a
resident priest who has the necessary qualities for the guidance of
souls; you must be very careful about this.

As you wished, we have paid three hundred livres for you to
M. Dehorgny. We will also give M. Cramoisy what we still owe
you up to the last day of last year, and will take it from the first sum
of money that comes to us, God willing.

Please give the enclosed to M. Bajoue 5 as soon as possible.

I remain, in the love of O[ur] L[ord], Monsieur, your most
humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
 i.s.C.M.

At the bottom of the first page: Monsieur Chiroye

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4Pierre Nivelle.
5Emerand Bajoue, born in Céaux (Vienne), entered the Congregation of the Mission as a
priest on December 1, 1640, at thirty-one years of age, and took his vows on April 24, 1657, in
the presence of Antoine Portail. He was Superior in La Rose (1649-52) and Notre-Dame de
Lorm (1652-54). Bajoue died on February 28, 1671.
2189. - TO N.

January 11, 1657

Vincent de Paul writes about the expenditure in manpower and money involved in the Madagascar mission.

2190. - TO DONAT CROWLEY, SUPERIOR, IN LE MANS

January 13, 1657

I have been in touch with the salt tax officials. They think they were cheated by buying false salt and seem determined to get to the bottom of this, especially one person among them, [even though] he is one of our good friends. We will do our utmost to get them to exempt you from the past; in the future, however, please get your salt from the King’s silos and have this recorded in your ledger. Never buy it from any other, as you perhaps have done until now, in which case you acted contrary to our intention.

I praise God for the fifteen fine young students you have, and I am sorry about your two clerics’ lack of skill in guiding them. We have no men prepared for this. You must work at forming your own, as we try to train those who come to us. Take care to see them from time to time, show them by your own example how they should act and what sort of men they should be, stimulating the bile of one and the phlegm of the other, and by this means make them suitable for your purposes.

I am surprised at your request to me about whether you will allow M. de Liancourt’s Intendant to defray the costs of the Mission in Montfort.¹ Are you not aware, Monsieur, that a Missionary

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Letter 2190. - The first part of this letter is taken from Reg. 2, p. 127; the second, from the words “I am surprised at your request” is from Collet, op. cit., vol. II, p. 150. The dates given and the identity of the recipient lead us to determine that these are parts of the same letter. The person who received the excerpt quoted by Collet is confirmed by no. 2157.

¹Montfort-le-Rotrou, a district of Le Mans (Sarthe).
who works out of someone else's purse is no less guilty than a Capuchin who is paid a salary? I ask you, once and for all, never to give missions except at the expense of your own house.

2191. - TO JEAN CHRÉTIEN, SUPERIOR, IN LA ROSE

January 17, 1657

I asked you to send Brother Claude to Notre-Dame de Lorm, and you say that your need of him excuses you from doing so. I am sure he is very useful to your house, Monsieur, and that it will be inconvenienced by his loss, but when there is question of carrying out a decision of the Company, we must be very exact; otherwise we are opening the door to disobedience. I do not recall that any Superior has yet reached the point of substituting excuses for submission to such a specific order. You can be sure that we do not make changes without reflecting more than once on the matter and that the interests of your family concern us as much as those of another one. In taking your needs into consideration, however, we have also been attentive to those of the Montauban Seminary, which are very urgent, although you do not know what they are.

It is only right to return this Brother to the place from which you took him and give him back to the Blessed Virgin, the patroness of Lorm. It was she who drew him to that place, where she offered him to her Son, Our Lord. When you say that he is opposed to returning there, that does not mean he will not go back when you


1Jean Chretien, born on August 6, 1606, in Oncourt (Vosges), was ordained a priest on April 5, 1631, and entered the Congregation of the Mission on November 26, 1640. He was Superior in Marseilles (1645-53), sub-Assistant at the Motherhouse (1654), and Superior in La Rose (1655-62). On November 26, 1667, he was a member of the house in Troyes.

2Claude Lesseignet, born on April 24, 1628, in Montjoie (Lot-et-Garonne), entered the Congregation of the Mission as a coadjutor Brother in La Rose in June 1651 and took his vows on February 24, 1656, in the presence of M. Berthe.
tell him that this is our intention. The difficulty he had before was only with a person who is no longer there, so I hope he will live there contentedly and that you will let him go. I ask you to do this and to get a good servant in his place, as is done in some other houses.

You were misinformed when someone told you that your foundation was for four thousand livres; it is not even three thousand. Please God that six years from now it will not be reduced to half that amount! Those who preceded you, Monsieur, did not go so far or so fast as you have done. Perhaps you would have been as careful as they had you realized how difficult it is for us here to get the money you take from there and to preserve what little capital you still have. Since it comes from a domain of the King, it is founded on quicksand and subject to frequent taxes, cuts, and surcharges, in addition to the rebates that have to be given to the farmers every now and again because they are prevented from getting their dividends.

Several of us are often occupied, sometimes with trying to avoid seizures and sometimes with preventing these coaches from being resold—which is endless because every three years new contracts are made. Let us suppose, however, that you do not spend all your income; is it not just, Monsieur, that daughters should help their poor mother, especially when it is through consideration for their father and common Superior? Should not Saint-Lazare, which prepares men for other houses when they need them, be helped with this expense?
Monsieur,

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

I received your letter of November 27. I thank you for the good news you gave me,¹ and I thank God for the state of affairs, especially that the plague has come to a halt in Warsaw and our dear confreres have been assisted there by M. Fleury and you. May His Divine Goodness preserve and bless them, and you along with them!

The condition and place in which you now are doubtless try your patience; that is why you need strength to remain at peace. I sympathize deeply with you and often commend you to O[ur] L[ord] in a special way so that, if you conform your will to His in all the events of life, He will carry out His plans for you and grant you an ever greater share of His Spirit and His works.

We continue to pray for the King and the Queen and for the fulfillment of their just wishes.

When M. Sergent, who is now in Poland, was here, he asked me to write to Rome to find out what the late M. Quarré, who died of the plague there, left as an inheritance and what orders he had given regarding it. M. Jolly has sent me the reply, and I am enclosing an excerpt from his letter for you to show him, please, or to forward to M. Sergent. If I get any more news, I will send it on to you, and you can do the same with it.

I think I wrote you that one of our Italian priests, named M. Lucas, who risked his life through obedience to serve the plague-stricken, went to God three days after being stricken with

¹Thanks to the support of Austria, the King of Poland succeeded in recapturing Krakow toward the end of 1656.
the same disease. He had most zealously and courageously assisted
the other patients for thirteen days before that. Please thank God
for the grace He granted him and for honoring the Company with
such a Missionary, who gave his life for his neighbor; by so doing,
he performed the greatest possible act of charity.

All the other members of our houses in Rome and Genoa wanted
to do the same thing, but I asked them to wait until they were needed
or ordered to do so. The fact that God has placed among us souls
totally detached from this world and ready to consume themselves
for their Master is another reason to bless Him. I commend the soul
of the deceased and my own soul to your prayers.

We have no news here.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL,
I.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Ozenne, Priest of the Mission, in Glogau

2193. - TO FIRMIN GET, SUPERIOR, IN MARSEILLES

Paris, January 19, 1657

Monsieur,

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

I did not receive any letters from you in the last regular mail,
nor in the preceding one either, nor from any of your men. I have,
however, received one from the Consul in Algiers,1 and the elder
M. Alméras had another from M. de la Fosse, under separate cover.
I have not even received any from M. Le Vacher,2 although Brother

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Letter 2193. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, Sister Hains Collection, original signed letter.
1Jean Barreau.
2Philippe Le Vacher.
Barreau tells me he wrote by the same way, and I heard that several persons in the city have had letters from slaves, delivered through mail that had, however, been addressed to me. They say this happened because the Provence mail coach was robbed and all the packets opened. That is why the letters in them have gone astray, and those without an address will be lost. If you have written to me about any special or important matter, try to remember it so you can let me know.

As for me, I have no news to tell you. M. Alméras is better. Our men are working in various places. There is a rumor circulating that M. Le Blanc has been imprisoned by the English, but that piece of news is dubious. In whatever state he may be, as also Messieurs Duiguin and Lumsden, I recommend them to your prayers, together with all the needs of the Company.

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3Rene Almeras the younger.

4Francis White (Saint Vincent refers to him as François Le Blanc), born in Limerick (Ireland) in 1620, entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 14, 1645, took his vows on October 15, 1647, and was ordained a priest in 1651. He first went to Genoa, but his stay there was very short; sent to Scotland, he evangelized the Highlands with unflagging zeal. The exercise of his ministry there was forbidden; he was accused of saying Mass and was imprisoned for five or six months in Aberdeen in 1655. On his release, he was warned that he would most certainly be hanged if he did not stop ignoring the laws. He left the district but continued his apostolate. Except for two sojourns in France (1658-62 and 1665-68), White continued to work in Scotland until his death on February 7, 1679. He left the reputation of being a saint and an apostle. His portrait was long preserved and venerated in a room, known as the “Father White Room,” in Invergarry Castle. White is praised in several official reports addressed to Propaganda Fide. (Cf. Notices, vol. III, pp. 172-78; Patrick Boyle, “Les relations de Saint Vincent de Paul avec l'Irlande,” in Annales C. M. (1907), vol. 71, pp. 354-62.)

5Dermot Duggan (Saint Vincent spells his name Duiguin), born in Ireland in 1620, was already a priest when he entered the Congregation of the Mission on August 26, 1645. In November of the following year he was sent back to Ireland, returning to France in 1648. Two years later he left for Scotland, where he spent the rest of his life amid great dangers, animated with the zeal of an apostle and the courage of a martyr. He died on May 17, 1657, on the Isle of Uist, where an ancient chapel still bears his name and recalls his memory. (Cf. Notices, vol. III, pp. 114-121.)

6Thomas Lumsden, born in the Aberdeen diocese (Scotland), entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 31, 1643. On his return to his homeland, he traveled through northern Scotland: Moray, Ross, Sutherland, Caithness, and as far as the Orkney Islands. Driven out by persecution in 1663, he returned to France, where he died in 1672.
I send greetings, with all the affection of my heart, to your own heart and to your family. I am, in O[ur] L[ord], Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

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

2194. - TO FIRMIN GET, SUPERIOR, IN MARSEILLES

Paris, January 26, 1657

Monsieur,

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

I received with your letter of January 9 a packet from M. Le Vacher,1 dated December 20. This makes me think that no letter—either from you or from him—was lost, as I had feared.

You consoled me greatly by telling me of the good results of your mission. I thank God for blessing your exercises in that way and for the desire He has given other parishes to share in the same benefit. Had you been able to continue, I think God would have been very pleased, but I hope He will give you the means of beginning that work again at a later date, since you were obliged to interrupt it.

You say that the great disorder in the house caused by M. . . .

Letter 2194. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, Sister Hains Collection, original signed letter.

1Philippe Le Vacher.

2The name is illegible.
forced you to return and is even preventing you from leaving. Please inform me of the cause and the kind of these disorders because it is advisable for me to know.³

I am really chagrined about what happened with Brother Parisy.⁴ We will do what we can with His Holiness to have him absolved from his disobedience, since he committed it thoughtlessly.

I am sure M. Bonnaud urged you to take 350 livres from him and to give him a bill on us and that the other reasons obliging you to do this are quite weighty. However, the awkward position in which you placed us was even more difficult because that bill took us by surprise; we were unable to honor it and almost had a lawsuit on our hands. In the end, we paid it with borrowed money. If you had only known how strapped we are for funds, you would have been careful not to take that money without explicit orders. Please, Monsieur, let this be the last time you do so.

I would like to think that the rumor that is afoot, stating that the plague is in Toulon, is groundless because M. Huguier has said nothing to me about it. Still, if the galleys should return to Marseilles, you could leave M. Mugnier on duty at the hospital—where

³An effort was made to make this paragraph illegible on the original by crossing out words and covering them with other letters.

⁴The name Parisy was blacked out on the original, then cut out of the letter. The same was done in the letters of June 15 and July 20 to Firmin Get. The P, however, is still legible in all three places and the a is easily read here. Of the seminarians and coadjutor Brothers of the Marseilles house, the name of only one of them—Brother Parisy—began with P. Most likely he was the person who mutilated the three letters. When he later became Superior of the house (1671-75), he had access to the letters. He saw with regret that they dealt with his act of disobedience and the absolution he had to ask of the Archbishop of Rouen, François Harlay de Champvallon, in order to be ordained. The temptation was too great for him and he yielded to it. Parisy’s name was also mentioned in the letters of March 29 and August 31, but only with regard to other matters that did not jeopardize his reputation, so he left them untouched. This was a mistake; he should have noticed that the letter of August 31 betrayed him and made it possible for the reader, with no fear of error, to insert his name in the places from which he had removed it.

⁵The secretary had written “The Archbishop of Rouen.” The Saint crossed out these words and replaced them with “His Holiness.” It was, however, to the Archbishop of Rouen that Saint Vincent addressed himself.
you say he is already, with the sick from the galley that is in port—and call M. Huguier back with you to work at something else.

I have written to tell him to give three livres to a convict named Jacques Moger on the Richelieu, and thirty sous to Renaud Le Page on the galley Reine. Please give him four livres ten sous, and we will credit the money to you.

Enclosed is a bill of exchange from Messieurs Simonnet, by which you will receive from Messieurs Napolhon 525 livres. Please send the money to Algiers for the ransom of Emme Guillaume, a surgeon from Vaucouleurs in Champagne, who is a slave in that town.

I send greetings to your little community and am, in the love of O[ur] L[ord], Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

M. Huguier is pleading for help; he says the Administrators are leaving him without money but burdened with the patients of his hospital. If you can have money sent to him, you will relieve him of anxiety.

Addressed: Monsieur Get

2195. - TO JEAN BARREAU, CONSUL, IN ALGIERS

Paris, January 26, 1657

Dear Brother,

The grace of O[ur] L[ord] be with you forever!
About two weeks ago I received your letter of December 20. It

Letter 2195. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.
arrived very quickly and consoled me greatly by assuring me of the
good health and tranquility you now enjoy, for which I thank God.
According to the world, peace and health are the treasures of life;
according to the state in which you are, they are also two sources
of good, since they give you the means of serving God and the
people better.

I praise God also that you received the temporal assistance we
sent you, by which you have paid your debts to the Turks and, as I
would like to think, to your other creditors. I await your accounts,
for which you lead me to hope, to see the present state of your
affairs. I do not know, however, from where or from whom I can
expect the means of extricating you from your other commitments,
if you yourself do not find the secret to this in another way, as I am asking O[ur] L[ord]. I have already asked you to be attentive
to this, and I would have finished this letter without mentioning it,
were it not for the hope you give me of no longer committing
yourself for anyone whomsoever in future and of avoiding avanias
and expenses that are beyond your capacity. This obliges me to
express my joy to you for it.

I praise God that M. Raggio relieved your anxiety by paying
what he owed. The same does not hold true of the other man from
Genoa whom you ransomed. Because he was unable to pay, M. Blatiron had to take his father to court; after much trouble and
expense, the latter was sentenced to pay the money. But do not
expect anything from that because he has neither the money nor
the will, so M. Blatiron thinks that, if you could get half the sum
on friendly terms, it would be better to be satisfied with that than
to jeopardize everything by using force and constraint. I have told
him, however, not to make any settlement without your advice.

Since Jacques Lambert has received the two sums intended for

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1This word is in Saint Vincent's handwriting.
2A ransomed slave who was the brother of Father Baliano Raggio, a nobleman of Genoa and benefactor of the house there.
his ransom, and they are enough for him, in nomine Domini, he can
pay his own ransom whenever he wishes.

If you have ransomed Pierre Ribot with the alms I sent you,
please have him return to France as soon as possible, without
keeping him in your house, unless it is to await the first opportunity
to leave. The person who donated the money will be very glad to
see him; if he did not see him, he might wonder how this alms was
spent. Besides, since he is weak in the faith, he would always be
in danger while he remained among the Turks.

I ask O[ur] L[ord] to give you new graces in your new residence
and to forgive M. Constans \(^3\) the wrong he is doing the poor widow
of Le Creux. I do not know why you wanted to risk your money
with him, knowing as you did the bad state of his affairs.

I am sending M. Get 525 livres to be forwarded to you for the
ransom of Emme Guillaume, a slave in Algiers, mentioned in the
note I am sending you, and who wrote the enclosed letter. Let me
know when you get them, and get a receipt from that young man.

I ask Our Lord to be the life of your life and the sole aspiration
of our hearts. I am with all my heart, in His love, Monsieur, your
most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

Please explain to me, Monsieur, the story of that Flemish man
for whom you committed yourself, and let me know what you have
received from here through the last two captains.\(^4\)

Addressed: Monsieur Barreau, French Consul, in Algiers

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\(^3\)François Constans, former Chancellor of the French Consul in Algiers.

\(^4\)The postscript is in the Saint's handwriting.
Excellency,

I have just learned that God in His Providence has appointed you, through the Estates of Languedoc, deputy to the King, and that by this means Paris, which has heard so much about you and of the incomparable blessing Our Lord has given your leadership, has begun to tremble with joy at the hope of seeing your sacred person. God knows, Excellency, what great joy this happy news has brought me. I thank that same Providence for giving me reason to hope that I may receive your holy blessing once more in my lifetime before appearing before the judgment seat of God—if the gravity of my sins and the abominations of my life do not overflow the measure both of the patience and justice of God in awaiting my conversion before your arrival. I will live, however, in the hope that Our Lord will grant me this grace before I die and that you will do us the favor of coming to take up again your poor former lodgings at Saint-Lazare. We have enough room to house your household and attendants as well.

I am sure, Excellency, that there are many Communities and other persons of rank who will ask you for the same favor as I am

Letter 2196. - Reg. 1, fol. 26v, copy made from the autograph rough draft.

1Nicolas Pavillon was born on November 17, 1597. As a very young priest he placed himself under the direction of Saint Vincent, who had him teach catechism and work in the missions and the Charities, where his presence was deemed useful. Several times the Saint entrusted him with the conferences and retreats for priests. Appointed to the diocese of Alet in 1637, Pavillon accepted it only on the Saint's urging. This new office did not deter him from his apostolic works: he gave a mission in Rueil at Richelieu's invitation, then in Saint-Germain-en-Laye at the King's request. He was consecrated at Saint-Lazare on August 22, 1639, and went to his diocese accompanied by Étienne Blatiron. A zealous, intelligent Bishop, dedicated to reform, he justified the expectations placed in him. His episcopate would have been more fruitful had he been more on his guard against Jansenistic ideas. Saint Vincent begged him in vain to sign the formulary against Jansenism. Pavillon died on December 8, 1677. There are several biographies of him, notably that of Étienne Dejean, Un prélat indépendant au XVIIe siècle, Nicolas Pavillon, évêque d'Alet (1637-1677) [Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1909].
doing on behalf of the poor insignificant Company of the Mission, but I can well assure you, Excellency, that there is none that ask this favor more zealously than we do nor with such just reason and that I am hoping O[ur] L[ord] will grant us the grace of enjoying it. It is said that some saints, on returning to their native place, preferred to stay in a hospice. You, Excellency, will not find one in any of the residences offered you, and it is this, Excellency, that leads me to hope that your incomparable kindness and humility will enable us to obtain what this poor Mission and I request of you, prostrate in spirit at your feet. 


2197. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[January 31, 1657] ¹

Most Honored Father,

Upon my arrival, I saw Sister Louise Ganset, whom you know through Monsieur du Fresne.² She knows how to bleed and is an excellent schoolteacher. I immediately thought of suggesting her to Your Charity for Maule. She could leave as early as tomorrow, Thursday, eve of the feast of the Blessed Virgin. We had thought of not sending her outside the house again, both because of her age and for other minor reasons that are not important for Maule. However, I spoke with her this evening and realized that she can still easily undertake this service. If we have to withdraw her at the end of the summer because of her health, God will provide us with someone else.

¹The Bishop of Alet did not come to Paris.

Letter 2197. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

²Brother Ducournau added "January 1657" on the back of the original. Reference in the letter to Our Lady's feast, which could only be that of the Purification, February 2, allows us to determine the day of the month.

³Charles du Fresne, Sieur de Villeneuve, former secretary of Queen Marguerite de Valois. After her death in 1615, he became secretary, then Intendant, of Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi. Du Fresne was one of Saint Vincent's closest friends.
I must confess, Most Honored Father, that I am deeply affected when I see our Sisters straying from the path of fidelity. Now, if I have failed because of inefficiency or something else, I hope that Sister Louise will make up for my fault. I most humbly ask pardon of Your Charity for this and hope for your forgiveness, since I am, Most Honored Father, your most humble and very obedient daughter and servant.

L. de Marillac

Would Your Charity please [give me] a reply so that our Sister may leave by the Saint-Germain coach?

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

2197a. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

[1657]

I sympathize deeply with your worry; yet, I am glad you have disclosed it to me. For those whom God destines for something great or very special in His service, His guidance is such that He tries them first by repugnance, contradictions, aversions, and feelings of inconstancy,1 at one time to test them, at another to have them experience their own weakness, at another to detach them further from creatures,2 on other occasions, to dissipate the idle dreams of vain self-satisfaction; but always to make them more pleasing in His eyes. If you resist the temptation from which you are suffering, Monsieur, you can be sure that it will contribute to your spiritual advancement.

Letter 2197a. - Reg. 2, p. 294. Coste published this letter as no. 929 in vol. III. In vol. VIII, p. 626, he revised the date given in Reg. 2, stating that the Turin Archives had found a draft of this letter written by Brother Ducournau, who had penned in the margin the year 1657. For these reasons, the editors have repositioned the letter here.

1Instead of "by repugnance, contradictions, aversions" the rough draft has "by painful aversions."

2The text of the draft has "from created things."
Perhaps, however, you do not think it is a temptation, concealing itself, as it does, under the appearance of something good, for you say you no longer want to give scandal to the Company. Please believe that you could give it no greater scandal than to leave in order to go off and do your own will.

You say also that you love the Rule, but then you give proof of the contrary, stating that you do not want to be obliged to observe it. It is true that genuine charity makes us love good things, but it is also true that nature rejects those things that hold its freedom captive. It is to be feared that you would rather adhere to this rejection of the flesh than to the attraction of this virtue, since you say you no longer fulfill the Rule through pure love of God. Instead of correcting this fault, you want to ignore and even counteract this love by shaking off the yoke of Jesus Christ completely and taking yourself back after leaving self for Him. I ask His Divine Goodness not to permit this.

You really need to recognize the spirit motivating you and to consider at the same time that there is no man, however perfect and firmly established in his vocation, who does not sometimes suffer painful assaults. The enemy was so foolhardy as to attack even the Son of God to make Him adore him—the most horrible temptation that malice could have invented. Was there any one of the Apostles or any one of all the saints who did not need to do violence to himself in order to resist the attacks of the flesh and the world? You yourself told us what a great effort you had to make to enter our Congregation, coming here several times asking to be admitted, despite human nature which desired a refusal on our part. You said this, grateful that God's inspiration prevailed, and we listened to it with consolation, as an indication of your future victories over your passions. By His grace, you have, in fact, greatly mortified them since then, and if you compare your life as a Missionary to the one you led before, you will see a great difference.

\(^3\)Cf. Lk 4:12-13. (NAB)
Courage, then, Monsieur, let us be steadfast, for now that we are priests, we are obliged to greater perfection and to be of greater assistance to souls. Could it really be possible that, with the beautiful opportunities God gives you of doing so, a slight repugnance would make you abandon everything? God forbid, since the Apostle says that it is impossible for those who have been enlightened and have withdrawn from the light to return to the state from which they have fallen.⁴

In line with this, we see several who, whatever their good intentions and however fine their resolutions, nevertheless fall short when they have to put them into practice or when there is question of overcoming difficulties. Because they have failed grace, grace is wanting to them. Then scruples gnaw at them, their self-love fashions a conscience that aligns itself with sensuality, and nature takes the upper hand again. What I say is no exaggeration; experience proves this daily.

But I am saying too much about this to you, my dear Monsieur, because at the moment I am writing to you, you are perhaps free of the suggestion that was tormenting you. If this is so, I praise God; if not, I ask Him to deliver you from it.

Ask Him for this grace yourself; that is the first means I give you. The second is that, if the place where you now are or the persons who are with you are causing you any trouble, you may go to... I am writing to the Superior to welcome you with all possible cordiality; he will gladly do so because of the esteem and affection he tells me he has for you.

⁴Cf. Heb 6:4-6; Rv 2:4-5. (NAB)
Paris, February 2, 1657

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter of January 16, and I sent the note from the Administrators to the Duchesse d’Aiguillon, who told me she was going to set to work on their behalf. The first time I see her I will find out what she has done about it. Her absence has delayed this business.

We received twenty livres for a poor convict named Vincent Traverse in the last chain gang. I am writing to Monsieur Huguier to deliver them there, and I ask you to give him the money.

I praise God for the good results the Jubilee has produced in your family. God grant that each man may persevere in his present good dispositions!

With great difficulty, we paid your bill of exchange for six hundred livres; remember the request I made to you not to withdraw any unless you have received an order from us to do so.

Since writing this, I received your note of January 23, which does not contain anything needing a reply, and we have no news here worth writing to you.

I recommend myself to your prayers and to those of your little community, asking Our Lord to bless more and more both its head and members. It is in His love, Monsieur, that I am your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

The enclosed is for M. de la Fosse.

Letter 2198. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, copy made from the original in the Hains Family Collection, Marseilles.
2199. - TO EDMUND JOLLY, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

February 2, 1657

What remedies for dropsy can there be in Genoa and Turin that cannot be found in Rome? Even if there were, however, it is not a good thing for one house to unburden its sick persons on another, but it is reasonable for the house that has profited from their services to support and nurse them when they are ill. That is what I ask you to do with regard to Brother Oderico.

2200. - JEAN MARTIN TO SAINT VINCENT

February 3, 1657

By the mercy of God we have returned from the mission in Raconigi, where His Goodness was pleased to keep us in very good health during the six weeks of continuous work. This followed on the close of another mission that had already fatigued us considerably. We would never have dared to undertake this second one in one of the most densely populated places in Piedmont, had we not been ordered to do so specifically by the Archbishop of Turin, at the insistence of the clergy and the people.

Although we were helped with confessions by four good priests of the town and several virtuous monks who worked with us, we were still unable to satisfy fully the devotion of all those people, who pressured us so much that they did not leave us a moment of rest. A steady stream of them came to the sermons and catechism sessions, and the desire for confessions was so great that they got us up at midnight to render them this service. Some remained several days and nights in the cold of winter, without returning home, so they could get to confession.

By the grace of God, the good results and fruits of the mission corresponded to all those good dispositions by the large number of restitutions and reconciliations that took place. The clergy themselves, consisting of


1Probably Raconigi.

2Giulio Cesare Bergea.
about forty priests and clerics, gave the example to the people. We had weekly conferences for them, and they have taken the resolution to continue these. We established the Confraternity of Charity for the sick poor there, and its members have begun very zealously to work at rendering them service.

2201. - TO A LADY

If you use the money in this way, Madame, you can rest assured that it will be spent in the way those noblemen desired, for the advancement of the ecclesiastical state. In view of this, if you would please familiarize yourself with the good being done at Saint-Sulpice, you might hope for something similar when that Community is established in that place, since it is animated everywhere with the same spirit and has no other desire than the glory of God.¹

2202. - TO LOUIS DUPONT, SUPERIOR, IN TRÉGUIER

February 7, 1657

I have considered your reasons for not teaching the class in moral theology, and they are weighty enough to dispense you from doing so, but I see no reason that could have prompted you to withhold the letter I wrote to M. . . . That is a fault unheard of in the Company, and one that has greatly displeased me because it leads to a great disorder—that of depriving the Superior of the

¹This letter was written to a Lady of the nobility to encourage her to endow a seminary offered to the priests of Saint-Sulpice, using for this purpose the revenue of a foundation established by her predecessors for the formation of good priests.

means of replying to someone who has written to him, of enlightening and encouraging him in difficulties that may arise and, lastly, of explaining his intentions to him in a variety of circumstances. Does not your keeping his letters prevent him from doing so?

You will tell me you did not intend to withhold mine but to delay it, while awaiting my decision on your objection. However, you have given M. . . reason to complain about this delay and to think that no effort is being made to help him in the work that is overwhelming him. In addition, you have failed in simplicity by acting that way; you have also failed against God Himself, who is simple and who was obliging you, by your giving M. . . my letter, to ask him to continue to teach the two classes until you had explained to me the reasons why you could not teach one. Then you would have satisfied the Will of God in every way, and I would have added my request to yours—as I have done in the enclosed letter—to exhort M. . . to be patient with his overload of work until Easter, at which time we hope to send you a priest to relieve both of you.

Please accept this advice, Monsieur, and in the future deliver all my letters without opening or withholding them, unless I tell you to do so. Meanwhile, please send me back the one you kept.

2203. - TO GUILLAUME DELVILLE, IN ARRAS

February 7, 1657

If I am consoled, on the one hand, by the news that it is not true that you have been dangerously ill, I am very upset, on the other, to see that a Précis of the Rules of our Institute has been printed in your area.1 I am so deeply distressed by this that I cannot find words

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1According to Abelly (op. cit. bk. III, chap. XIII, sect. II, p. 224), the first sentence reads: "If I am consoled, on the one hand, by the news that you have returned to Arras, I am very upset,"
to express it to you because publicizing what we are and do is very much opposed to humility. . . . If there is any good in us and in our manner of living, it comes from God, and it is up to Him to manifest it, if He thinks it advisable. As for us, however, we are poor, ignorant, sinful men, who should keep ourselves hidden, as being useless for any good and unworthy of consideration.

That, Monsieur, is the reason why God has given me the grace until now to hold fast in not allowing anything to be printed that might lead to the Company's being known or esteemed, although I have been urged very strongly to do so, especially with regard to certain reports that have reached us from Madagascar, Barbary, and the Hebrides. Still less would I have permitted the publication of something concerning the essence and spirit, the origin and progress, and the works and end of our Institute. Would to God, Monsieur, that this were yet to be done! Since there is no longer any remedy, however, I will stop at that. I ask you simply never to do anything concerning the Company, without informing me about it beforehand.

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on the other, to see the copy of the Précis of our Institute, which was printed in that area. "Collet's text seems more exact.

2This pamphlet was approved on December 13, 1656, by Martin Denys, professor in the faculty of theology in Douai, and published a few days later. Its title was: Petit Abrégé de l'Institut de la Congrégation de la Mission, approuvé et confirmé par nos Saints Pères les Papes Urbain VIII et Alexandre VII, de son origine, de ses fonctions et de sa manière de vivre pour arriver à sa fin. [Précis of the Institute of the Congregation of the Mission, approved and confirmed by our Holy Fathers, Popes Urban VIII and Alexander VII, on its origins, functions and manner of living to attain its end.] The manuscript had been "sent from Paris to a devout person in the town of Lille, who had ardently desired it in order to learn the details of the mode of life in this Congregation, for the glory of God and the good of His Church." It is stated at the end (p. 11): "And this is partly the reason why there has been such a delay in publishing this Précis of their Institute because, until the Superior saw that this was God's Will, he was unwilling to give permission for this to the person who drew it up. He came to the conclusion that it was [God's Will] because of the repeated requests made to him by the one who asked for it and because of the holy purpose that made him desire it so ardently. Given in Paris on June 16, 1653." It is easy to understand that a publication of this nature would have displeased Saint Vincent.
Monsieur,

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

What you tell me about the steps you have taken so that our letters from Barbary do not get lost en route consoles me; please be vigilant about this. I do not know if I informed you that I received a packet from M. Le Vacher 1 a week after getting Brother Barreau's letter. I have already answered both of them.

I will have someone go to see the Provincial of the Mercedarians to urge him to keep his word to us about releasing the Consul in Algiers from the avania he suffered on their account.

I was unaware of the amount the said Consul advanced to M. Bégue 2 for his ransom. I do not know what that good man 3 is thinking about. Every day he gets himself deeper and deeper into debt, from which it will be difficult—if not impossible—to extricate him. He cannot say no to anyone, nor is he tactful enough to avoid avanias, so he takes on commitments and, in ruining himself, he ruins the office and consequently the means of helping the poor slaves. His manner of acting is too lenient, 4 and what distresses me is that it is difficult to remedy the situation.

As for the 375 piastres M. Bégue owes him—which were offered to you by the merchants who bought his farm on condition of dispossession and priority of mortgage—I will consult our council to find out what you should do and will let you know. Meanwhile, if you see any danger of this money being diverted elsewhere or seized by other creditors, it will be a good idea for

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Letter 2204. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, Sister Hains Collection, original signed letter.

1Philippe Le Vacher.
2A slave in Algiers.
3First redaction: "that poor man." The correction is in the Saint's handwriting.
4First redaction: "his manner of acting is poor." The Saint himself changed the sentence.
you to take it and commit yourself to return it if it falls due. It is better to keep it than to see it left for the use of others.

I cannot express my joy at the mission the Oratorians are giving in Marseilles and the great blessings God is pouring out on it. I thank His Divine Goodness for this with all the affection of my heart.

The Jubilee in Toulon is a preparation for M. Huguier's retreat and an opportunity for you to go there or to send him someone to help prepare the convicts to gain it, as he has asked you to do.

I am, with all my heart, in that of O[ur] L[ord], Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
Ls.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Gel

2205. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Feast of Saint Apolline [February 9, 1657]¹

Most Honored Father,

I never recall seeing anyone more worthy of compassion than a young woman who went to see you two days in a row last week. She is the daughter of a certain Madame du Lorier and brought Your Charity a letter in her husband's writing asking you to employ her or to find some work for her. This good young woman is in such dire need that she wonders if, in conscience, she may not take advantage of an opportunity that is presenting itself. Surprisingly enough, this comes from someone you know, who promises to put her at her ease, saying that there is no other inducement in this but need.

¹The year was added on the back by Brother Ducournau.
To prevent such a sinful offense against God, I thought, Most Honored Father, that it would be well to apprise the Ladies of Charity of this opportunity to practice corporal and spiritual charity. She says she has sometimes gone three or four days without bread. She claims she has been in these extreme straits for only five months, during which time she has tried to settle with her creditors because she was obliged to leave a large ironware shop at one end of the Pont-Neuf, but she says that it was not her fault. She was very well-mannered and asked me to check on the truth of all she was telling me.

If the Ladies are willing to help her, I will see that they are not misinformed. Although I do not know her, I recommend her to you with all my heart, for the love of God, through whom I have the honor to be, Most Honored Father, your most humble daughter and very grateful servant.

L. de M.

I most humbly entreat you to do me the charity of allowing me to speak with you before Lent.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

2206. - TO MADAME DE HERSE

February 15, 1657

Madame,

At the last meeting, I had a proposal made to the Ladies to change the place for a while and to hold it either at your house, Madame, if you were willing, or at Madame Fouquet's. 1 I did so because of the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, who fears smallpox, but since this proposal was left unresolved, and because I remembered

Letter 2206. - Reg. 1, fol. 27v.
1Marie de Maupeou, wife of François Fouquet, Vicomte de Vaux, Master of Requests and, later, Councillor of State. Among her eight children were Nicolas, the celebrated Superintendent of Finance; François, Bishop of Narbonne; Louis, Bishop of Agde; and several daughters who
that you had wanted the meeting to be held somewhere other than your house, I have asked Madame Fouquet to agree to their beginning tomorrow to go to her home, and in a few weeks a more convenient place might be chosen. I informed the Duchess of this and am off to tell Mesdames Barrillon and Traversay. I ask you most humbly, Madame, to notify Mademoiselle Viole. I hope to attend the meeting tomorrow and to assure you, if I have the honor of seeing you there, that I am, in the love of Our Lord, Madame, your... 

Vincent DePaul, 
I.S.C.M.

entered the Visitation Order, one of whom, Marie-Thérèse, became Superior of the Visitation in Toulouse. Marie de Maupeou was a woman of exceptional piety and immense charity, of whom Saint Vincent said that "if through some mischance the Gospels were lost, their spirit and maxims would be found in the conduct and sentiments of Madame Fouquet." "She makes devotion so attractive," he added, "that she encourages everyone to be devout." (Cf. Année sainte des religieuses de la Visitation Sainte-Marie [12 vols., Annecy: Ch. Burdet, 1867-71], vol. I, p. 627.) When she heard that her son, Nicolas, had fallen into disgrace, she exclaimed, "I thank you, O my God. I asked You for the salvation of my son, and this is the way to obtain it." She died in 1681, at the age of ninety-one, mourned by everyone, but especially by the poor, who called her their mother. In the catalogue of the Ladies of Charity, she is listed under the title of Madame Fouquet, the President's wife.

2Anne Petisau was the widow of René Regnault, Seigneur de Traversay and Counselor in the Paris Parliament. She was also the sister of President Méjard, and one of the Ladies of Charity most devoted to Saint Vincent and his works. Madame de Traversay founded the Monastery of the Conception, rue Saint-Honoré, and was responsible for the Daughters of the Cross after the death of their Foundress, Madame de Villeneuve.

3Born Madeleine Deffina, she was the widow of Jacques Viole, Counselor at the Châtelet in Paris. She was Treasurer of the Ladies of Charity of the Hôtel-Dieu, and her name recurs often in the correspondence of Saint Vincent, who greatly appreciated her charity, intelligence, and activity. Mademoiselle Viole died in Paris on April 4, 1678.
Monsieur,

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

After a long wait for your precious letters, one dated the third of this month finally reached us. It consoled us greatly, both for the health God gives you and the good you have just accomplished. I thank His Divine Goodness for this with all my heart, and will have the Company do likewise. We have great reason indeed to do so, since He sustained you under the weight of such a large, long mission, capable of overwhelming you, and blessed your work with a success so pleasing in His eyes and so useful to the poor people. May His Infinite Majesty be pleased to strengthen you more and more and to be glorified by your leadership and your works!

What I most admire in your letter, however, is the immense goodness of God in that which your founder, the Marchese, constantly shows us, who are most unworthy of it. It seems so vast to us that it leaves us with no hope of ever being able to acknowledge it—and still less to merit it. O mon Dieu! Monsieur, how clearly that servant of God makes us see, by the charitable care he takes of your foundation, the great love of God that is in his heart and the greatness of the Divine Mercy toward us. May Our Lord be pleased to be Himself his thanks and to bestow on this good nobleman the fullness of His Spirit, together with enduring and perfect health, for the advancement of His glory and the welfare of His Church!

That is all we can do in gratitude for our indebtedness to him and for the establishment he is procuring for you. I do not know what to say about the latter except that we must be submissive to whatever God and our Holy Father the Pope ordain through that
nobleman's mediation, so paternal in our regard. Along with that, Monsieur, we must try to obtain from God the grace to meet his expectations by the practice of the virtues and fidelity to our spiritual exercises. Convey to him the sentiments of respect, gratitude, and obedience of our Little Company, and of my own in particular, which cannot be expressed.

It is true that we have not yet sent you anyone from here to help you out, but I wrote to Rome more than a month ago to let you have an Italian priest, who will be ready to relieve you as soon as he arrives, instead of a Frenchman who would be useless for a long time because he would not be fluent in the language. M. Jolly has spoken well of his piety and ability and, since the plague has now ceased in Rome—or almost—he tells me he can send him via Milan, so I hope he will reach you soon. His name is M. de Martinis; perhaps you know him.

We have no news here, except the present ordination [retreat] and a few missions that are being given. I recommend all this to your prayers, and I embrace in spirit your little family; may God bless it.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL,
I.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Martin, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Turin, in Turin
Monsieur,

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

We have sought advice to find out if you can take the 375 piastres M. Bégue owes, which were offered to you by the merchants who bought his land, on condition of your binding yourself to return this money in case of dispossession and priority of mortgage. Our council does not think you should accept this condition because thirty years from now the Company could be called to account for this money, although M. Bégue has sufficient assets right now to pay his debts. For the very reason that he has the wherewithal to pay, you should not allow his property to be sold, if you are not paid unconditionally, but rather have it seized to get what is your due.

If those merchants who have acquired the said farm still have in their possession the price of this purchase, or part of it, as they make clear by the payment they offer you, it will be a good idea for you to have them divested of the money belonging to M. Bégue that they may have because, in the case of chattel, the distraining party is the first to be paid, especially when he can indicate to other creditors other property of the debtor to which they can lay claim.

As to your saying that, by receiving this money with an obligation to return it, the worst that can happen to you is actually to return it, the answer is that the money might be entirely lost to you. The debtor in question would no longer have the means of making a return to you, and you would have allowed his property to be sold or a writ issued for its sale without any opposition on your part, thinking it could be used as collateral; whereas, at present, you can
look for some guarantee on your payment. You have your council there; consult it about this and follow its advice.

I just received your letter of the sixth. God be praised that there is no plague in Toulon and that, in place of that affliction, His Providence has sent it the Jubilee to avert it from other evils! I am pleased that you sent M. Mugnier there to work with M. Huguier in such favorable circumstances. I heard that he has arrived there.

What you tell me happened in the house during your absence was a great disorder and of such a nature that you should have subsequently informed me fully about it. God be praised that you have remedied it and that all is now going well!

I will send the Duc de Richelieu the letter from the Administrators on the nomination of four persons, so he can select two of them to replace the two who are leaving office. I will also inform him that the first ones named are thought to be the most suitable.

The Duchesse d’Aiguillon has spoken to the Superintendent about the maintenance of the hospital and its chaplains, in line with the report sent by those gentlemen, and she has his word that it will be paid by the State.

Please give one écu to M. Huguier; he is to give it to Jacques Frange, who is on the galley Ternes. We received it here to be forwarded to him.

I was worried about not receiving any news from Tunis, when

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1Armand-Jean du Plessis, Duc de Richelieu, was born on October 2, 1631. He succeeded his father, François de Vignerod, brother of the Duchesse d’Aiguillon, as General of the Galleys (1653-81). In virtue of that office, the hospital for galley slaves came under his jurisdiction. He died on May 10, 1715.

2Nicolas Fouquet, born in Paris on January 27, 1615, became Attorney General of the Parliament of Paris in 1650 and Superintendent of Finances in 1653. Accused of embezzlement, and arrested in Nantes on September 5, 1663, he was judged, condemned to life imprisonment, and incarcerated in the Château de Pignerol, where he died in March 1680. He became reconciled with God in his last years and even composed some books of devotion. (Cf. Jules Lair, Nicolas Fouquet, Procureur Général, Surintendant des Finances, Ministre d’État de Louis XIV [2 vols., Paris: Plon et Nourrit, 1890].)
I received the packet from M. Le Vacher that you sent me. Enclosed is a letter for his brother in Algiers and another for M. de Vias.³

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

VINCENT DEPAUL,

i.s.C.M.

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

2209. - TO EDME JOLLY, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

February 16, 1657

I think that good priest who came to see you about entering our Company has good will. His merits will not lie in the fact that he is not much to look at, for the most handsome features are of no use to men in working out their salvation and are sometimes even a hindrance in doing God's work.

³Balthazar de Vias was born in Marseilles on September 19, 1587, and died there in 1667. In 1627 he had received from his father the office of perpetual Consul of Algiers. Saint Vincent subsequently bought the consulate from M. de Vias for Lambert aux Couteaux, with the financial assistance of the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, and the King immediately ratified the contract (cf. vol. II, no. 827).

Monsieur,

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

I received your letters of December 17 and 24. I thank God for the state of affairs, especially for your good health and that of our dear confreres in Warsaw. You will console me greatly by giving me news of them and you and of all that happens in general. Thank you for being attentive to this.

We pray constantly for you, for them, and for the whole kingdom—particularly for Their Majesties—and will continue to do so until God is pleased to restore things to their pristine state.

We have no news here. We are very well and so is the Company everywhere, thanks to Our Lord. I am, in Him, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

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

2211. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

February 16 [1657]

Most Honored Father,

Enclosed is the document that has caused me such concern. It was lent

Letter 2210. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.
Letter 2211. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

1 Year added on the back by Brother Ducournau.
to me again for a week. I am sending it sealed to Your Charity, so that it will be seen only by those whom you judge appropriate.

For the love of God, I entreat you to allow me to continue the diet of eggs and barley broth with which I began Lent. I have reason to believe that it tempers the heat of my blood because I feel some relief in the throbing of my arteries. I ask this favor simply of you until I see another need, since I feel obliged to do so, although I fear that it is more from attachment to my health than from concern about observing the precept, so wretched am I. Nevertheless, I believe that I am, Most Honored Father, your most humble daughter and very grateful servant.

L. DE MARILLAC

2212. - TO PROPAGANDA FIDE

[February 1657] ¹

Most Eminent and Most Reverend Lords,

Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, humbly represents to Your Eminences that two ships are preparing to sail this spring for Saint Laurent Island, commonly known as Madagascar,² and that Gabriel Laudin ³ from the Sens diocese and Marand-Ignace Arnoul from the Amiens diocese,⁴ two good members of the same Congregation, ask to be sent there to

¹Below the resume written on the back of the petition are the words: “The Sacred Congregation granted the request on February 26, 1657.”
²The departure never took place.
³Gabriel Laudin, born in Provins (Seine-et-Marne), entered the Congregation of the Mission on May 10, 1654, at the age of twenty-five, and took his vows on May 14, 1656. He was Superior in Amiens (1657-70) and Procurator General (1677-79). His brother Denis was also a Priest of the Mission.
⁴Marand-Ignace Arnoul, born in Cayeux-sur-Mer (Somme), entered the Congregation of the Mission on November 22, 1654, at twenty-six years of age, and took his vows on November 23, 1656, in the presence of M. Delespiney.
help those souls. He petitions Your Eminences to deign to appoint them Apostolic Missionaries for that island and to grant them the usual faculties. He will consider all this a special favor from Your Eminences.

Whom God, etc.

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

2213. - TO GUILLAUME DELVILLE, IN ARRAS

February 18, 1657

I bless God for the good condition of the Charity in Arras, for the fine way in which those in charge are governing it, and for their loving care in assisting the poor. We are all the more consoled to hear that the whole town is edified and pleased with the good Daughters of Charity, who take such great care of the sick and observe faithfully the customs of their Little Company, drawing down in this way the blessing of God on their work. I thank His Divine Goodness for this and ask Him to give them the strength of mind and body needed for their way of life.

I am very worried about Sister Marguerite Chétif's illness. Perhaps she is working too hard; if this is the case, she should moderate her activities in proportion to her strength, which I advise her to do.

If you find any strong, healthy young women suitable for the Charity, who are of irreproachable life, determined to humble themselves, to work at acquiring virtue, and to serve the poor for the love of God, you could give them the hope of being accepted.

Meanwhile, inform us of their number, situation, age, and qualities. They must be at least eighteen or twenty years of age and should bring the clothing they need for now, their linen and modest belongings, and money for their return, in case they cannot adapt to the way of life of this Little Company or are judged unsuitable for it.

2214. TO SISTER MARGUERITE CHÉTIF, SISTER SERVANT, IN ARRAS

Paris, February 18, 1657

Dear Sister,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter of January 29. It was a consolation to read it, but I am really concerned about your physical indisposition, of which M. Delville has written me, and still more by your spiritual indisposition with regard to your vocation and your Rules. On this I will tell you, Sister, that it is a pure temptation of the evil spirit who, seeing all the good you do, strives to turn you away from it. He would like nothing better than to snatch you from the hands of Our Lord by tearing you away from your work so he can get the better of you by such a shameful abduction.

To judge whether God has called you to the state of life in which you now are, do not dwell on your present dispositions but on those you had when you entered it. At that time, you frequently felt the inspiration for it, had prayed to know God’s Will, had sought the advice of your directors, and had not only made a retreat but tested your vocation with Mademoiselle Le Gras. Then, once you had freely decided on this way of life—before God and in answer to

Letter 2214. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original signed letter.
His call—He showed you that this resolution was very pleasing to Him. He has blessed you and your actions so much ever since then that you have edified those at home and abroad.

What reason do you now have for doubting whether you are in the state where He wants you to be? For it is evident from all these things that your vocation is from God, since you arrived at it through these surest of ways. It is also through them that He is accustomed to draw souls from the world to make use of them in that same world. The difficulties you encounter in living it out should not, therefore, cause you to doubt this truth, which was so well known to you from the beginning. Moreover, you should not be surprised that you are tempted, since today’s Gospel assures us that even Our Lord Himself was tempted. Nor should you be distressed by the dislike you feel for your exercises because, since they are painful and repugnant to nature, it grows weary of them and balks at them.

That is why it is to be hoped that you will moderate your work. I ask you to do so, Sister, so that it will be at least in proportion to your strength. If, however, the number of patients you have to nurse makes that impossible, you must let me know, and we will see about removing you from Arras or sending you some help.

I ask Our Lord, whom you serve so effectively, to be Himself your strength so that you may sustain with vigor and merit the exterior and interior trials you are undergoing and receive the reward promised to those who persevere. This reward is so precious that, in comparison, the sufferings of this life seemed to the saints to be only diversions.

I am replying to M. Delville about the letters written to our Ladies.

M. Portail is here and in good health, thank God; he thanks you for remembering him and asks you to heed the letter he wrote you. Mademoiselle Le Gras is also very well, as is your Little Company here, by the mercy of God; in Him I send greetings to Sister
Radegonde. I recommend myself to her prayers and to yours and am, Sister, in the love of [ur] Lord and His glorious Mother, your most affectionate servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Sister Marguerite Chétif, Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor, in Arras

2215. - TOUSSAINT BOURDAISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Fort-Dauphin, February 19, 1657

Monsieur,

Your blessing, please!

I am that miserable servant who was saved from shipwreck to break the sad news to you about my masters, your true children. All three of them are dead. M. de Belleville died at sea from vomiting, for lack of applying promptly from the beginning the usual simple remedy for that: all he had to do was to take a short rest after meals to allow for proper digestion. M. Dufour was here for a week, but he would not believe either me or the inhabitants, who told him to stay here and what he had to do to preserve his health. He is considered a saint by everyone, even those who betrayed him. In a short time he earned great glory both by his sufferings and by his work. Those ships were hard hit: five priests and more than two hundred persons died on them; they could not have had any more sick people.

M. Prévost died a month after M. Dufour; they are buried, side by side, at the foot of the cross they had raised. He, too, worked very hard.

While I esteem the virtue, motivation, and love of God that caused them to act as they did, I will tell you frankly that they went to extremes, for they waded through water fully dressed and never changed their clothes after

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1Radegonde Lenfantin.
a soaking rain. They practiced great austerity and sometimes ate only once a day. Had they moderated their zeal a little, they would still be fully alive, working for the conversion of our poor Indians. May God provide for this as He chooses! I say nothing to you of my own sorrow. I firmly believe they are doing more by their prayers in heaven than when they were on earth.

For lack of time, I am not going to write you about M. Prévost's life, which is very similar to that of M. Dufour; when the ships are leaving I am very busy, with no one to help me in any way. All I ask of God is to keep me free of material concerns. I have some livestock to help the poor; I had an enclosure made in a certain place for the animals and also for a garden. I have had a church and a house built; the latter is now being used as a hospital for the sick because it is near the village of the black natives. I will instruct them much better and will prevent many disorders. I had to go to a little trouble for all that, but it is done, thank God.

M. de la Roche-Saint-André, Commandant of the fleet, did me unparalleled favors: he gave me a cask of Spanish wine, a keg of brandy, a large barrel of flour and one each of vinegar, rice, and hard tack—in a word, everything I needed. I entreat you, Monsieur, to be so kind as to give him some simple gift.

I am also infinitely indebted to M. de la Roche's brother-in-law, the Chevalier de Sourdis. They rendered every possible service and honor to our priests, especially M. Prévost, who was on their ship. They are virtuous, praiseworthy persons. They left with me two very well-behaved young noblemen, who are related to them.

In the first letter I wrote you, I had asked that one hundred francs be sent to the wife of the elder M. Langlois. If you have not already done so, dear Father, please have them paid to her, together with another hundred francs, which he lent me when I needed money for livestock. I apologize, but this will be the last time I make this request. I owe two hundred livres to my man, which I will pay him here.

I ask you once again, dear Father, kindly to send some priests and Brothers; they must come straight here and stay for a year to learn the language, get acclimatized, and build a solid house. Give them only exactly what is on my list. If anything on it is too expensive or too difficult to get, forget it, and tell them they should at least follow the advice of the inhabitants and not do too much at first. The latter could all tell you that, if those men had taken care of their health, they would now be fully alive, especially M. Dufour.

As for me, I am well, thank God. I would be happy to see laborers working in the Lord's vineyard, which is so vast in this country. Had
M. Mousnier and our priests taken my word, all would be well now. As for me, the puniest of all men, I am well, thank God. I am proud, abrupt, ignorant, and sinful. I do not have enough time to pray or to think about myself. Were it not for your prayers, I would now be lost.

Kindly greet all our priests, dear Father, and ask them to offer me to God. I gladly prostrate myself at their feet and especially at yours, Monsieur and my very dear Father.

Your most obedient and very unworthy son and servant.

T. Bourdaise

T.S.C.M.

2216. - Toussaint Bourdaise to Saint Vincent

Fort-Dauphin, February 19, 1657

Monsieur and Most Honored Father,

Your blessing!

I am at a complete loss for words to express the bitterness of sorrow of my poor soul. God knows our regrets and tears when we landed on this island for the first time to find only the ashes of M. Nacquart, the one who was supposed to be a Joseph to receive us with honor as his brothers and a Moses to guide us in the terrible deserts of this solitude.

Letter 2216. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, seventeenth-century copy. M. Dufour's narrative of his journey to Madagascar (cf. no. 2095) is reproduced here almost verbatim in Chapter Two. Toussaint Bourdaise enclosed with this letter "a memo of things to be sent."

1Charles Nacquart, born in Treslon (Marne) in 1617, entered the Congregation of the Mission on April 6, 1640. After ordination he was sent to Richelieu. Designated for the first group of Lazarists (Vincentians) to be sent to Madagascar, he arrived there on December 4, 1648. He had learned the native language so well on the voyage to Madagascar that in a short time he was able to draft a brief summary of Christian doctrine, *Petit catéchisme, avec les prières du matin et du soir...* (Paris: Georges Jossae, 1657). (Cf. also Abelly, op. cit., bk. II, chap. I, sect. IX, §5 and §6.) A new edition of Nacquart's work, edited by Ludwig Munthe, Élie Rajaonarison and Désiré Ranaivosoa, has been published under the title of *Le catéchisme malgache de 1657* (Antananarivo: E...ge Institutet, 1987). He converted several Protestants, baptized seventy-seven Malagasy, and regularized the situation of the French who were living with native women. He evangelized not only Fort-Dauphin, but all the interior within a radius of roughly thirty miles (cf. vol. III, nos. 1179, 1183, and 1188). Exhausted by so much work, Nacquart died on May 29, 1650. In vol. IX of *Mémoires de la Congrégation de la Mission* are found his letters, diary, and testament, taken from old copies preserved in the Archives of the Mission, Paris.
When M. Mousnier died, consumed by zeal in less than six months, I felt his loss all the more because I was left all alone to bear the burden of it. This has been an open wound bleeding in my heart ever since. Although the hope of receiving some help through a fresh arrival of Missionaries has alleviated my sorrow at times, the extremely long delay of this hope has, nevertheless, often caused me renewed sorrow. What is even more deplorable is that, at almost the same time as I enjoyed this great benefit, so long desired and awaited, it was snatched away from me and I lost it irrevocably. As a result, dear Father, here I am in extreme distress and truly in a position of having nothing more to fear, since I have nothing more to lose nor perhaps anything for which to hope because this stony ground devours so cruelly not its inhabitants but its very liberators.

You understand sufficiently, Monsieur, what I have to tell you and what I would like to be able to omit telling you in order to spare your tears and my sighs. M. de Belleville, whom I never knew except by name and virtue, died on his way here; M. Prévost died after surviving the strain of the journey; M. Dufour, whom I came to know here just enough to appreciate the value of what I was to lose, also died. In a word, all the sons you sent to Madagascar are dead, and I, this miserable servant, am left alone to break this news to you. Although it is very sad and very distressing, it will still give you joy and consolation, when you learn of the holy life they led on land and sea, and the great blessings God bestowed on all their efforts from the time they left France.

I am going to give you, Monsieur, a brief account of this, after I have told you of the important events that took place on this island before the arrival of the ships. I will do it in this way to respect chronological order and, by the same token, to make my report clearer. In addition, the little news this first chapter will give you first about our nascent Church, will be able, in my opinion, to stop your tears somewhat and temper the sorrow that the rest of this account will possibly renew.

CHAPTER ONE

Concerning what took place in Madagascar between the last report and the arrival of M. Dufour.

Immediately after the departure of the French ship that brought you my last letter, dated January 15, 1656, I continued my modest work for these
poor people and began to prepare the neophytes for Candlemas,² which was the next big feast. I explained in detail the mysteries the Church presents to us on that day. When it arrived, they needed no other exhortation to persuade them to come because their holy curiosity to see the things I had explained to them had whetted their appetite, and they all arrived very early in the chapel, where we blessed the candles and then had the usual procession. This beautiful ceremony and their participation in it gave them a joy that was more apparent on their faces than I can express on this paper. To see themselves treated on this occasion as equals with the French was for them an overflowing measure of happiness and honor. This joy was accompanied by a modesty and devotion capable of touching the most hardened hearts. What struck me most forcibly, however, was the beautiful disposition I remarked in those—about fifty in number—who had the happiness of receiving Communion that day. This was due not only to the fervor, respect, and humility they manifested at Communion, but also to the magnanimity, openness, and contrition with which they told me their sins in confession. Even some of the children who were too young for Communion insisted on going to confession, which they did so simply and fervently that they softened my heart.

The little I perceived from their exterior led me to conclude that God, whose greatest delight is to be with the children of men, especially the simple, was operating still other marvels in their hearts. This led me to spend some time talking with them after dinner and to ask some of them what they had thought or felt during and after their Communion. The bravest among them replied that he said to God, Izaho mino anao, Zanahary fa nivolana (God, I believe You are there because You have said so). Another said, Tiak anao ampo (I love You in my heart). Another said that he “did not want to offend God any more” (Tsy hanota instony). One woman assured me that she was “delighted and felt warmhearted” (ravo sy mafana fonay tokaa). Ah! Monsieur, how very pleasing to God were these few, poorly arranged words, and how ashamed I felt when I compared my cold and cowardly prayers with their fervor!

Before ending our little conference, I decided to tell them that I planned to give instructions throughout Lent, especially on how to make a good confession and Communion. I added that I was asking all of them to be there to learn how to prepare themselves better and better for their Easter Communion. They were very attentive and persevering in this; moreover, they reaped much fruit from it, by the mercy of God.

²February 2.
Shortly after Easter, I had the happiness of performing a marriage ceremony for three of our Indian women at the same time, one with a recently-converted Englishman, and the others with two Frenchmen who had caused us quite a bit of trouble but are now doing very well, serving God faithfully, as their wives are also doing.

I cannot refrain from telling you about the modesty, zeal, and wisdom [of the daughter] of one of the local chiefs, who is married to M. Balar from Paris. It is marvelous how well she instructs her family and is interested in the conversion of other people. She hardly ever comes here without bringing someone new to be baptized. Her devotion to the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist seems no less admirable to me because, when she was just a new convert to our religion, she begged me to administer them to her.

Once, when she had heard that many recently-baptized persons were going to confession and Communion for the feasts at Pentecost, she came and asked for the same favor. When I told her, however, that she did not yet have sufficient knowledge to receive Communion, she said, "Then teach me now!" When I told her she would have to wait for a big feast day, she replied, Moraina loatra (That is too long, but I will wait because you wish it). On the appointed day, she and her husband did not fail to come to receive the Body of Our Lord, to the edification of everyone.

I was again deeply edified and even amazed to see here three married women, whom we had baptized. They told me first of all that they were coming for the sole purpose of going to confession and Communion. I asked them what was prompting them to this extraordinary devotion. They replied that it was to rid their fields of the valala (locusts) that were ruining everything. I said that this was a fine idea, but first they had to rid their own hearts of the sin that was more damaging than those valala in their fields. They told me in all simplicity that their hearts would no longer be bad. So, the next day I heard the confessions of all three and gave them Communion, and all three then returned home quite content. I have not as yet heard, however, what result their pilgrimage produced.

That same day another woman also came asking to receive Communion and said that it was so that God might give us peace. Oh! how gladly I administered Holy Communion to her! How willingly I joined my prayers to hers to obtain that peace from His Infinite Goodness, both for Europe and for these poor islands, where the war men wage against one another is no small obstacle to the true peace with God I am trying to obtain for them!

Since I am praising women, I can say that we have one here who is the strong woman God has allowed me to find at this end of the world. Her
husband was French by birth, but his morals were more vulgar and uncouth than those of our islanders. He was always involved in drunkenness and debauchery and, as is usually the case, when he began to sober up, he would beat this poor Indian woman and often even used to tear out her hair. I used my influence with the local chiefs to put a stop to these disorders. What I was able to do was to exhort this afflicted woman to be patient; it did not take much for her to resolve to do so. Content with unburdening the bitter sorrow of her heart with her abundant tears, she showed a most unusual resignation, to the point that, when that wicked husband fell ill of a painful malady, she cared for him as if he were the most amiable of all men. So God rewarded her longsuffering: touching the heart of this crude Frenchman, He turned it happily toward this worthy woman. The result is that he now loves her tenderly and has followed so well the good advice she gave him that he has abandoned his disorderly life. And that is how the unfaithful husband was sanctified by the faithful wife.

Some time ago, four or five neighboring villages retreated before the enemy, which made us fear some great disorder because of the constant nightly raids they were making. Once, they entered a village and killed a good twenty of those who were subject to the French, in addition to ten others who were badly wounded in this, including a woman who was stabbed fifteen times with an assegai. She was brought to me ten days later with a raging fever. Her wounds were so infected that the stench from the rotted parts was unbearable. This happened because the poor of this area cannot afford to have their wounds dressed by the Ombarasses (these are like the marabouts in Turkey; you might say they are doctors, sacrificers, or magicians, although their skill is nothing but superstition and trickery). So the poor leave their wounds as they are and put nothing on them. I gave her a little ointment and she soon recovered, with the help of God, although a nerve and a large blood vessel in her arm had been severed. When she was up and around, she brought her two children for me to baptize. She also wanted to give them to me as my slaves, but I would not receive them as such, explaining to her that there were no slaves in our religion.

Here is another little piece of news about our wars. A notorious thief, accompanied by about two hundred men, was holding the countryside and really giving trouble to our Frenchmen. This obliged the Governor to mobilize twelve hundred black natives, led by forty Frenchmen, to confront this barbarian and reconquer their old enemies of the Valley of Amboule. This succeeded very well because, fortunately, our army returned victorious.

One remarkable incident, among others, in this war was that one of our
Frenchman, named Grand-champ, made the big mistake of going to attack an enemy village single-handed. He was punished for his rashness because the natives swiftly massacred him, then let out horrible shouts of joy, saying that this was a great happiness for them and a sign of victory. Lastly, they cut off his head and hands and carried them to Dian Theron, the present leader of the white natives and our cruellest enemy. He is the father of the little boy who is at boarding school in the faubourg Saint-Jacques in Paris, and I think it would be a good idea to send him back to this country so that this Dian Theron might be more open to making peace.

Once, Dian Mananghe and a large number of his followers came here with four other Roandries (these are powerful lords but are vassals to the King of the region from which they come) to pay their respects at the fort. He is chief of the region of Mandrare, in the Machicore, and a descendent of Dian Bahouache, who was formerly chief of the entire region of the Machicore, Mahafalas, Manamboules, and half the island of Madagascar, and who, at his death left behind some sons and grandnephews who destroyed one another in internecine conflicts. This Dian Mananghe is a very intelligent, wise, discreet, and courteous man of average height, with very long, black, wavy hair. He has a wide beard, Arabic style, and is considered one of the most valiant men in the region.

His guardian angel took advantage of the occasion of this act of homage to bring him to our house to see and talk with me about four of his children, who had been baptized earlier. I spoke to him about his own salvation, and he listened quite willingly. The following day he came to the High Mass and said that it was beautiful: Soa misakabir Zanahary “It is good to pray to God,” he said. I asked him for news of his nephew, named Dian Masse, about whom I wrote you before, telling you how intelligent he was. He told me he was sick and that he did not think he would see him alive. This poor uncle wept when he told me that, for they love their relatives very much. I asked him about the nature of his illness, and he answered that he ached all over, had stopped eating, prayed constantly, and talked about me very often. One of the Frenchmen who came from that area assured me of the same things and also that he was asking for my prayers.

I sent him some medicines, which were very helpful to him but not enough to heal him completely of his illness, which was too serious and incurable; he had sores all over his body and had lost the use of his limbs. Nevertheless, I asked the uncle to have him brought here as soon as possible, and I would have his wounds dressed. He agreed to this, but I have had no news of him since then. He has probably died, and God will have mercy on him because of the good disposition of his soul, since all during his illness he manifested a lively faith, great patience, almost
constant application to prayer, and an ardent desire to be assisted spiritually by me.

At the time this good uncle was talking to me about his nephew, he had three of his children with him. These were Pierre Sandrois, fourteen years of age; Louis Besambo, his third oldest; and the youngest, named Pierre Lambo, who was ten or twelve years old. The father asked me if his sons could marry several women. I told him no because God forbade it, that when they were old enough, they could take a baptized woman for a wife and be married in the church, like the French, and if that wife were to die, they could take another, but never before then. After listening to all that, the father then said, To, to (you are so right, you are so right). And to his son, Besambo, he said, Anao tia mivady roa; zaho tsy tia. Zaho venena anao mivady roa; moa tsy baptise (You want to have two wives, but I forbid this. Are you not baptized)? The second said to his younger brother, Anao melopo; aka tia ratsy intsony (You have a tortuous heart; seek evil no longer).

All those persons asked me several questions about our faith and all were delighted, to the point that one of them presented one of his nephews to stay with me and be baptized. It would be very easy to convert these poor uncivilized people; this will happen when God chooses to send us a good number of workers animated with the apostolic spirit.

I was informed that the village chief of Imoro, four leagues from Fort-Dauphin, was seriously ill. (He was a good, rich old man of seventy, who was so loved by his subjects that for six months they had been offering a large number of sacrificial bulls for his health.) Knowing on good authority that he loved the Christians, I felt obliged to go and see him. I found him lying on the ground, leaning against a slave. He was so weak that he was scarcely able to speak any longer. There, in the presence of the whole village, which, upon my arrival, had come running, I spoke to him of the things of the other world and of the grandeur of the Catholic faith. I told him that, if he were willing to be baptized like the Christians, he would be placed in the ranks of the children of God and, when he left this life, would be in a state to go and enjoy all the happiness and contentment that people taste in heaven.

That good fellow, mustering the little strength remaining to him, told me forcibly that he really wanted to be a Christian. That is why, since his illness was getting worse, I baptized him in the sight of the whole assembled group. Afterward, I gave an exhortation, which was very well received by most of them, judging from some of them who told me in their simplicity that their spirits were soaring while I was speaking to them.

Then I said a few more words to the poor patient and gave him some
clove, which seemed to strengthen him a little. He asked me for some strong wine from France, which I promised to get for him. He wanted to give me a present, but I only thanked him for this, telling him that Baptism is so precious that nothing in the world could pay for it.

Seeing him so well disposed, I started back home with his brother, who accompanied me across the river. On leaving him, I gave him a little treacle and a mixture of hyacinth, and I learned that he recovered his health with this in three days' time. I feel particularly indebted to the Divine Goodness for this because, by means of the little remedies to which God gives His blessing for bodily ills, I am finding such ease in curing the souls of these good people.

I close this chapter with a little piece of news I heard a while ago, which is both happy and sad. The mother of Dian Machicore, one of the great chiefs of the area, who was more than one hundred years old, died after asking insistently for Baptism. She had not been able to receive it because she was at a distance from the place where I was. I was truly very distressed at not having been called early enough to help her in this final passage. Still, because it is possible that her desire in the face of this helplessness had caused her to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, my heart was consoled, and I have felt obliged to give her a place among our neophytes.

There are probably many others of both sexes who are saved here by this kind of baptism, but we also have to admit that the number of those who are damned [for want] of having someone to help them wash themselves in this mystical pool, is much larger. This is the greatest cause of affliction to me here, especially when I imagine their guardian angels saying to me, Domine, si fuisses hic, frater meus non fuisse mortuus.3 “O Missionary, if you had helped this man and woman, they would not have died this everlasting death.” Ah! dear Father, how often I wish that so many capable priests, who are doing nothing in France and who are aware of this great need of workers, would sometimes make a similar reflection and be strongly convinced that Our Lord Himself makes this reproach to them, and says to each one: Sacerdos, si fuisse hic, frater meus non fuisse mortuus. “O priest, if you had been on this island, many of my brothers, redeemed by my blood, would not have died damned!” Doubtless, this thought would stir up their compassion—and even dread—especially if they were to consider attentively that, because they have neglected this spiritual assistance, the same Jesus Christ will one day say to them these

3 Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. Cf. In 11:21. (NAB)
terrible words: Ipse (impius) in peccato suo morietur, quia non annuntiasti ei, etc. Sanguinem vero ejus de manu tua requiram.4

Oh! if only priests, Doctors, preachers, catechists, and others who have the aptitude for these far-off missions would heed all this, especially since they are accountable for the damnation of these souls, they would be much more careful about going in search of the lost sheep in order to bring them back into the fold of the Church! I ask God to give all of them the light and zeal they need to devote themselves effectively to the conversion of sinners, particularly of these poor islanders.

These, Monsieur, are the most notable things that took place from the year 1655 until the arrival of M. Dufour. Since he is no longer in a position to give you an account of his journey, I felt it would be more appropriate, before speaking to you of other things, to do this myself, as I heard it from his own mouth or from the notes he had prepared so he could write to you about it.

CHAPTER TWO

Concerning the journey of M. Dufour and his confreres of the Mission from France to the island of Madagascar.

I think you must have heard, Monsieur, how very mortified those three apostolic men were from the time they embarked because, instead of all three going on one ship so they could help one another and talk things over, as they were hoping, they were separated. There were four ships; one man was placed on the Maréchale, another on the Armand, and the other on the Duchesse. One other priest, who was not a member of our Congregation, was put on the Amirale. That, however, did not discourage them, rather it caused them to make a virtue of necessity and to submit to this order as a manifestation of Providence.

All four ships raised anchor from the Saint-Martin roadstead near La Rochelle on October 29, 1655. At the same time our Missionaries, each on his own ship, had appropriate prayers recited or sung to commend the voyage to God. Oh! who could express the contentment and joy they

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4He (the impious) will die in his sin because you have not given him warning. . . . Truly I will require his blood at your hand. Cf. Ez 3:18. (D-RB)
experienced at seeing themselves en route to go to win for Our Lord the many souls awaiting their help! Their joy, however, was soon mingled with sadness because of two incidents which occurred two or three hours after their departure.

The first is that the weather turned very bad, and many persons suddenly became seasick in the choppy waters, especially those on M. Dufour's ship. He himself fell victim to this, along with about eighteen others. As a result, he could not celebrate Holy Mass either on the eve of All Saints' or on the day itself, or even on All Souls' Day. He told me that he felt very bad about that.

The second thing that happened was that a priest named M. Cauderon, a native of Dieppe, who had set sail on the Duchesse, fell from the ship's prow into the sea. Although they immediately did everything they could to rescue a man in such a situation, it was useless; they could not save him. He was mourned by all, and everyone prayed for his soul. He was one of the greatest scholars of France in marine affairs, and devoted all his time to that. One day, when M. Dufour was talking with him, as he himself told me, he asked him in all simplicity how a person of his calling could devote himself to such unimportant matters, telling him how surprised he was that a priest like him was involved in a pursuit so little suited to his vocation. He replied that he was doing it with the intention of giving glory to God by serving the public and that his spiritual director consented to his continuing in this career. He also said he was really upset about having undertaken this long journey without his Bishop's permission and felt so remorseful about it that he wanted to deprive himself of saying Mass and administering the sacraments, except in case of necessity, until he returned to his own diocese. Meanwhile, he intended to live a good, holy life, with the desire of persevering in it until death. This caused everyone to think that God must have had mercy on him.

Of all the sick only one died, after having the happiness of receiving all the sacraments. Everyone else recovered soon afterward, by the grace of Our Lord, although still others became ill after those were cured, so that there were three or four who were sick—a very small number for the two hundred persons who passed Guinea, where often at least a third, and sometimes even half, of the persons died.

As for M. Dufour, he stayed in bed only about three days. His virtue was so great that none of his ailments prevented him very long from carrying out the duties of a true chaplain and attending to his usual exercises. He told me he had tried to observe every point of what had been decided during a conference he had with his dear confreres shortly before being separated from them. The topics they covered there were: public
prayers, catechism, exhortations, spiritual reading, and other means of advancing the glory of God and procuring the salvation of everyone during their voyage. They spoke especially of the best way to do all that without spoiling anything, which is very difficult—experience showed us every day at sea that people have to conform themselves to the various moods of the Captains, to whom it is often necessary to condescend in everything that is not wrong, although it may seem less good in the eyes of virtuous persons. In a word, great prudence is required to get anywhere with these sorts of persons.

Because M. Dufour was well aware that seamen like short prayers, he contented himself with chanting the Veni Creator Spiritus and having others chant it every morning, and reciting the Itinerarium, followed by the acts of adoration, thanksgiving, and contrition, as indicated in those books containing the spiritual exercises for the day. In the evening, they chanted an antiphon of the Blessed Virgin and the prayer for the King and read the five points of the general examination of conscience. In addition, they chanted the Pange Lingua on Thursdays, the Vexilla on Fridays, the Stabat on Saturdays, and Vespers on Sundays and feast days. No Sunday or feast day went by that M. Dufour did not celebrate Holy Mass. He would have wanted to—and had hoped he could—say it every day, as I heard from his own mouth. However, seeing that not everyone liked this idea, he was satisfied with that, believing that God would accept his good will as a sacrifice in this case.

Almost no feast day or Sunday went by that he did not have some Communion at the end of Mass. He gave an exhortation, but only for about a quarter of an hour, for fear of putting them off. Sometimes he also preached after evening prayers, but because there was always some incompatible occupation at that time, he had to content himself with preaching only after Mass.

On the feast of the Purification, twelve boys received their First Communion, after he had prepared them well beforehand for this holy action. Someone told me that he was helped in this by a good, pious soldier, who had a gift for instructing youth and for showing them how to pray. He added that he believed Our Lord had chosen him to be a catechist of the poor, uncivilized people of Madagascar and that he would have been delighted to become a member of our Company, if we had been willing to accept him.

M. Dufour also taught catechism three times a week during Advent and Lent. The very persons who almost never came to a spiritual exercise at another time came to these without fail. On days when there was no catechism, there was spiritual reading, either from the Lives of the Saints,
the Pédagogue chrétien, or some other good book. From time to time, he would pause at the salient points, which he repeated briefly, the better to point out the moral to those present, pondering them and applying them most effectively. This reading had a good effect on the minds of most of the sailors and soldiers. Not content with an hour of reading to which they listened together, several did another hour on their own.

Three times a week—Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday—he had the rosary said with two sides alternating, and all bowed their heads profoundly whenever the name of Jesus was mentioned. During Advent, hymns were sung in the evening; during Lent and after Easter, there were pious conversations, each one telling a good story, at the end of which M. Dufour would draw some moral so as to derive greater profit from it. All that, together with the good example of that faithful soldier and of many others, gave him great joy, since he saw that God was being served in that way. The only thing that bothered him was the blasphemies and bad language of the most insolent men. He restored such good order in this that, when any sailor or soldier was found guilty of it, he was put in chains or was made to ask forgiveness of God and of everyone and to kiss the floor. When, however, an officer fell into this fault, he could not remedy it, which greatly disturbed him. Still, he accomplished so much by his own words and example that, in the end, those men were a little more restrained and showed great esteem and respect for him.

Those two dear confrères tried to introduce the same exercises of piety on their respective ships. They succeeded very well in this, thank God, especially M. Prévost. If M. Belleville did not accomplish as much as the others because he was almost constantly ill, he made up for it by suffering and by edifying others with his virtues. Since the life and death of this Missionary can provide matter for consoling and edifying Your Charity and even the Company, I am going to give you a few brief details of it, especially what I learned from M. Dufour and even from the sailors who were on the same ship as he. Before that, however, you will be glad to know, Monsieur, the particulars of his illness and death.

So then, Monsieur, I can tell you that on the very day of his departure he contracted a slight fever that gradually weakened him. M. Dufour was not informed of this until two weeks later, when the Armand approached them. He went to see him immediately. After he had heard his confession, and the surgeon had assured him that it was nothing serious and that he would get better, he left him, asking Captain Régimont to look after him and to be sure to give him news of him from time to time, which he promised to do. But God allowed the patient's ship to drift so far from the others that it was given up for lost until, at the end of two weeks, the four ships
met at the cape of Sierra Leone to take on a store of wood and water.

M. Dufour visited him on his ship and, learning that the illness was worse, he went a second time; finding the patient disposed to go on land, he had him transported there. Since there was nothing to shelter him, he was placed in a cabin that was put up in haste in the nearest woods, with a boy to look after him. He remained there five or six days but, far from finding relief, he grew worse. This made him anxious to receive the Blessed Sacrament; that is why Messieurs Dufour and Prévost went to celebrate Holy Mass there, at which he received Communion. Two days after this Communion, which was on January 13, he was carried back to his ship. The next day, M. Dufour went to see him and he asked him to help him to die well. As many times as those priests in their charity tried to render him some service, that was the only request he made of them. Above all, he asked for Extreme Unction, which was administered to him soon afterward.

That was on January 17. The next day, when M. Dufour came back to see him, he noticed that he was much weaker than before, but the surgeon told him there was nothing to fear that day so he went away with M. Prévost. That same evening, however, he died between eight and nine o'clock, being able to speak right up until his last sigh. Oh! if only someone had recorded the words he spoke during that final passage! There is reason to believe that they were very holy and divine, since we are well aware that his heart was full of and aflame with the love of God and zeal for the salvation of souls.

The next day, a cannon was fired on his ship, which made us think he had died. Soon after, someone came to tell us that he had already been buried, meaning that, after some prayers were said for the deceased, he had been cast into the sea, according to the custom observed on ships when they are far from land.

We suffered this loss a little below the equator, off the Guinea coast; it was January 18, 1656. I leave you to imagine, Monsieur, how sad those good priests felt then—and how I feel now, having lost the support that was coming to me. Still, I continue to be consoled, confident that our poor black natives now have in him an intercessor in heaven, since before he even entered our Company, he had offered himself to God by a specific vow to dedicate his life to the salvation of their souls on earth. So it was a great joy for him, in the brief respite his illness gave him on the ship, to think of the blessed lot that had fallen to him of being destined by Providence and obedience for this work. Truly, the virtues he manifested in the short time he was at sea make it very clear that his vocation came from heaven.
From what I have heard, he was accustomed to holy mortification of the senses; forgetful of himself, he took what he needed so he could share it with others, even to the point of giving the other patients the preserves and other sweets offered him during his illness. At mealtime, he was satisfied with a piece of salt pork, the last food he took on the day he died. His purity was extraordinary and, when he was attacked with a paralysis, the greatest suffering he underwent was to see himself obliged to let some of his naked body be exposed. The boatswain's mate on his ship assured me that, on all the journeys he had made in almost every kingdom of Europe and Africa, he had never in any place seen a gentler or more charitable man than M. de Belleville. His gentleness was accompanied by generosity, and he was as noble by virtue as he was by lineage. This was apparent mainly on two occasions.

One was that, when several men from his ship boarded a small English vessel that was in the roadstead and took part of what they had found there, M. de Belleville spoke so convincingly to the Captain and made the episode appear so serious that, then and there, he ordered his officers to return everything. This was a great consolation to the English, who had four or five cannons fired in thanksgiving.

The other proof M. de Belleville gave of his generosity was to remedy a great disorder that was arising on his ship. There was a misunderstanding between two Lieutenants, who had already divided everyone on the ship into two factions—the Normans on one side and the Bretons on the other. In this disagreement, the Captain was nearly deprived of his authority. This generous servant of God had no sooner seen that than off he went to speak to the Admiral, explaining the adverse consequences of this disorder so effectively that one of those two Lieutenants was immediately put on another ship, and part of the crew was also exchanged. By this means a solid peace was established.

This generosity was even more apparent in the patience with which he endured the long and very great sufferings of his illness, and especially in his steadfast resignation to the great passage of death, which frightens even the most determined persons. When M. Dufour asked him if he was happy to die, he replied that he desired nothing more than to do the Will of God everywhere and in everything, particularly in dying for love of Him and for His service and, if Divine Providence chose to take him from this life at that time, he would not forget the poor primitive people of Madagascar, hoping that he could help them as much in heaven as he had done on earth, if God had mercy on him. May His Infinite Goodness be pleased to hear and answer his prayers and to send us many, many workers, filled
with the spirit that animated this good priest! May He grant me, wretch that I am, the grace of imitating his virtues!

Everyone on board the Armand was deeply saddened by the death of their good priest, and their sorrow was increased when, shortly afterward, five or six of them also died—not, in truth, without contrition but without confession because there was no priest. What overwhelmed them with sorrow was the fear that they would die like that without confession, since they foresaw clearly that they would be obliged to continue their voyage all the way to Madagascar without a priest.

I almost forgot to tell you, Monsieur, about some other disasters that preceded this last one, and which, in a certain sense, seem more deplorable to me than all the rest. I mean the death, without confession, of several persons on our ship and of those we encountered both on land and sea. When two longboats of our Frenchmen had boarded a small Portuguese vessel, two of our men were killed and several others were wounded there, notably M. Lamran, a Lieutenant on the Amiral, who lost an eye that was pierced by an arrow. What arouses greater compassion in me, however, is that in another incident a good sailor, who never swore, was killed by the natives in Sierra Leone because men from our ships had taken some of their men prisoners—for what reason I do not know. Because of this murder, our Frenchmen burned all the huts that made up the villages of those poor unbelievers. Oh! how much better it would be to go and give spiritual life to those poor people than to take away physical life in that way and to procure for them eternal benefits rather than deprive them of temporal ones in that way! Oh! how happy I would consider myself if I were to die in order to remove them from the shadow of death! But it is time now to continue our story of the outcome of our Missionaries' journey.

When the four ships arrived at the Cape of Good Hope, the Admiral and all the Captains resolved to send only the Armand to Fort-Dauphin, while the other three would sail to Fort Sainte-Marie, which is quite close to Madagascar, and where they want to make a new settlement. They decided that one of our priests who remained should be put on the Armand; M. Dufour volunteered and was accepted, after getting M. Prévost's approval. Those two Missionaries were perfectly united in heart by the love with which Jesus Christ had bound them and were closely united physically as well, in the hope of never again being separated, so as to live and to die together in Madagascar. So you can imagine their surprise, Monsieur, at this second separation, a mortification felt much more keenly than the first, since it meant being two hundred leagues apart from one another on different islands.
M. Dufour had no sooner boarded the Armand than he was asked to go to see a poor sick man. God knows how zealously he accepted this duty. He went immediately and heard his confession; right after the confession God called the man to Himself, although they had not thought he was so near death.

This first work of mercy he had just performed spurred him on to repeat the same exercises he followed on the other ship and to attend to them with greater fervor than before. Among others, he began to say Mass on Passion Sunday and to preach penance during it. He was so successful in this that those who had allowed ten Easters to pass—and some even fifteen or sixteen—were so moved by the word of God he was proclaiming to them that, unable to resist the divine inspiration, they resolved to put off their confession no longer. Most of them made a general one of their whole life, specifically a Huguenot who, touched by the truth of what he had heard, went to find him on Holy Saturday to abjure his heresy. A short time later, he made his confession to him and then received Communion from his hand. That was on Quasimodo Sunday.

M. Dufour’s zeal for the conversion of the poor black natives of this country was so great that during his voyage he started a confraternity to procure their conversion. For this purpose he designated for the members certain prayers and good works to be accomplished on certain days. He was planning to send you the regulations for it, but did not have the time to put them in good order, preferring above anything else to be very exact in drawing up in writing what he had to do for the conversion of these poor islanders. He was especially careful in making a list of even the slightest faults he thought he had committed on that voyage and, with an exemplary humility that put me to shame, he was planning to send a copy of it to the Company to dull, if he could, the luster of those beautiful things God had already done and seemed to intend to do again through him.

Finally, after sailing along so safely for such a long time, he came ashore on our land on May 29. I will tell you about that in detail, Monsieur, in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

Concerning M. Dufour’s arrival in Tolagnaro, a village on the island of Madagascar; what he did, and his departure from that place to go to the island of Sainte-Marie.

Two days before Corpus Christi of the same year 1656, everyone was most anxious to see some ships from France because it had been so long
since any had come there. To tell the truth, I myself was hoping for this more than anyone else because of the great need I had for some companions to be brought to me to give greater solemnity to the ceremony on that important day. Suddenly, a little child who was at our house spotted a ship. I cannot tell you how overjoyed this made us. We ran to the church to chant the Te Deum. Meanwhile, the ship entered the roadstead and left it at the same time. This soon put a damper on our joy and suddenly made our hearts fail. Finally, it returned to reposition itself near our shore and dropped anchor there. Oh! no longer was there any doubt about our happiness! Our hearts skipped with gladness, especially when we heard the cannon fire in greeting and saw the Chevalier de Sourdís and M. Guélton disembark. They first assured us that it was the Governor-General's ship and, to reassure us, that M. Dufour was on board.

O Lord, what a joy! I went on board to see him; we fell to our knees and embraced one another with God knows what rejoicing. He told me that the others were on Sainte-Marie and that M. Prévost was in good health on the Duchesse. However, when he told me that a man named M. de Belleville had died, I suddenly experienced great sadness in my heart. Because he confirmed to me that his death was caused by vomiting from seasickness—which is often followed by fever and sometimes death when it goes on for too long—and that the fear of falling victim to it might hinder our Missionaries from coming here, I can only tell you right now, Monsieur, that to cure this type of seasickness—from which I, too, suffered on the way here—there is no better remedy than to rest for a quarter of an hour after eating. The stomach still has to be allowed to empty out the first and second day. Those who have done that have not become ill, and without this remedy I would be dead. Oh! how much better it would have been for God to take me from this world, and not that apostolic man who would have worked so much better than I! But we must adore His Providence in that as in all else and resign ourselves to His Holy Will. This made me put to rest the sorrow I felt at that sad news so my heart could rejoice at M. Dufour's safe arrival.

I was, nevertheless, obliged to mortify a little longer my great desire to speak with him because the French from here were swarming around him, and the men from the ship were asking me questions. Among other things, they asked if all was going well at the settlement, especially since they had heard bad news about us at the Cape of Good Hope, namely, that our islanders had killed almost all the French. I assured them of the contrary.

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5Governor of Fort-Dauphin.
and that all was going well, thank God. I asked them the same question about their ship. They told me they had been at sea for almost eight months, had thought they were all going to die, and that there were still fifty sick persons on their ship. They said they had been away from the other ships for two months because of the storm that had separated them.

I finally broke off the conversation to try to meet with M. Dufour again. For this purpose, I asked permission of the Captain to take him on land, which he granted, begging both of us to look after the sick. Ah! mon Dieu! how sweet it is to be with one’s brothers, after having been separated and kept apart from one another for so long! I thought I was seeing an angel from heaven. He was as red as a rose, but that came only from the interior fire of his zeal, for at that time he was desperately anxious to be on land again. His legs were very swollen and black; yet, he was hiding this and seemed from his serene expression to be in good health.

That very evening, we planned what we had to do the next morning. Our first concern was to hear one another’s confession, then to go off—he to the ship to get the sick transported to land, and I to give orders to have them housed and their needs supplied—using the rest of the time to decorate the church for the feast day procession. For this purpose, I put up several little arches decorated with garlands of white paper and little rosettes of red ribbon. Our whole chapel was draped with very white linen. For lack of any other floor covering, palm leaves and tree branches were used to adorn the path where the procession was to pass. I even had straw matting laid on the ground in all the same places.

I asked M. Dufour to be the celebrant of this solemnity and to carry the Blessed Sacrament, which he did in a very reverent, edifying way. The Chevalier held the chasuble, the Governor and his Lieutenant carried the canopy, and four musketeers walked at the corners, together with four others who were carrying torches. Four little Indians, dressed in their best clothes, went ahead, each carrying a basketful of flowers, which they strewed along the way. Two others did the incensing, with genuflections, according to the French custom. I, wearing a surplice, stayed near M. Dufour to act as his deacon and to keep order. The rest of the people carried lighted candles. We processed in this way as far as the fort, where there was a repository as beautiful as our poverty would allow.

Those good neophytes, who numbered three hundred or more, were delighted and very devout. Their faith was strengthened more and more, seeing that such honors could be rendered only to a God. As we left the fort, all the cannons were fired, and the soldiers fired a salvo of musket shots. Then we went back to the church, where High Mass was chanted. M. Dufour gave a sermon, which touched many.
After Mass, the French took turns before the Blessed Sacrament. Our neophytes did not lose their places, for there were some of them there the whole time Our Lord was exposed. M. Dufour and I were kept busy looking after the sick.

His charity was so great that he did everything, even to getting the linen washed, including that of the heretics who were in good health. In short, if I wanted to speak with him, I had to do it during our rest period, which I hesitated to do because he needed it so much. He was never willing to act as a Superior, and did not sleep in a bed but on his mattress, stretched out on the ground. He used to go to visit all the patients before saying Holy Mass. I begged him to say it early in the morning and to take something to eat before going to see them. He did so for two days through condescension, but afterward, to excuse himself from this, he said he could not eat so early and was feeding himself too much. He was so busy with the sick that we scarcely had a moment to take our meals together.

He remained here only a week, during which we reflected on the things most important for the glory of God: first, to have a church built; to have a light burning continually before the Blessed Sacrament; not to allow women in the courtyard any more but to have a house near the door where they could pray; to have reading at table, and to eat outside the house only rarely.

Several times he told me how delighted he was to be out of the tumult and that he was in his element here. Still, after staying one week on this island, he began to discuss with me his departure for the island of Sainte-Marie. I begged him not to go but rather to tell M. Prévost to come here so that all three of us could learn the language together, become acclimated, and establish something solid. I said that the air on Sainte-Marie was unhealthy, causing many of our Frenchmen to die, and that I thought we would never see M. Prévost again. All the inhabitants told him the same thing. He refused to listen to us, which obliged me to ask the Chevalier not to allow him to make the journey because at that time he had scurvy, a nasty sea disease that affects the gums and legs. He managed so well, however, that he won over the Chevalier.

As soon as I had heard this, I asked in my rather abrupt way, with a little edge to it, what he was trying to do. I reminded him that he had been sent to help me out, that this was your intention, Monsieur, and that it was better for me to go there, since I was accustomed to the country. He gave me so many reasons, based mainly on charity for the neighbor, especially the sick poor, and on the urgency of doing good for other persons who were on the island, that I was forced to leave everything to his judgment.
Seeing that it was inevitable, I let him go in God's care. Beforehand, however, I supplied his modest needs: I gave him linen, some rassades (cloth that is made locally), and everything else necessary for Sainte-Marie. I made him take some little foodstuffs, although I had my doubts that he would ever taste them, no more than he had done with those he had brought from France, for he had already distributed them to the sick, keeping only about two jugs of Spanish wine for saying Mass. I told him how to take care of his health and how to act in the region, trying to make him see the importance of this. The better to make him commit himself to do this, I gave him a letter I was writing for the same purpose to M. Prévost. In it, I told the latter, among other things, of my joy at their arrival, together with the sadness this separation was causing me. I also begged him to try to preserve his health, not to work too hard in the beginning, and to urge M. Dufour to do the same. I gave him three upright Frenchmen to help him on the way and when he got there, assuring him that he could trust them and take their advice because they knew the language and the country very well and were fine men, greatly loved by the black natives.

I earnestly entreated him to return on the first boat and to bring M. Prévost with him to live with us and, as I have said, to learn the language. He promised that he would, assuring me that this was his plan as well, for the same reason. Finally, after we had embraced one another, with tears in our eyes, he set sail, to my great regret and that of all the French and even of all the black natives of this settlement, who already loved him very much.

No doubt you are expecting me to tell you now the outcome of his journey and what happened on Sainte-Marie and here during his absence. That is what I will explain to you briefly in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

Concerning what happened in Madagascar from the time M. Dufour left until the news of his death, and what happened on Sainte-Marie during his short stay there with M. Prévost.

M. Guelton, who had remained as Governor in this settlement, had moved Fort-Dauphin back, out of musket shot range. He thought it was too close to the native village, from which there was fear of being surprised by fire because all the buildings in this section of the country are constructed of wood. When I learned this, it made me resolve to work on our
own housing and gave me the chance to do so, since I was obliged to do it for the same reasons. So, to adjust to this change, I moved, placing myself between the French and the natives, to make it more convenient for both to come to prayers and instructions. At the same time, I had a little hut built to house the French who are spread out over the countryside, when they come to Tolagnaro. By this same means, I would have the opportunity to speak to them of their salvation and find out how they were behaving in their settlements.

I began also to put into practice what M. Dufour and I had planned, namely, to build a church in this same place. We are still working on it and, unless I am mistaken, it will be very beautiful and large enough to hold at least two hundred persons. May the Divine Goodness be pleased to shower His blessings in abundance on the first one He ordains to be built for Him in this place through our efforts! May He fill with His Spirit those who come here to see or hear the holy mysteries, and increase their number to such an extent that we will be obliged to build an even larger one!

I took with me also three little French boys, along with two sons of the King of Manamboule. All five were about two years old, the age at which we can be sure of finding and preserving innocence in them, mainly with regard to chastity, which is rarer here than you can imagine. Do not be surprised at this, since, as you have been able to see from our preceding report, fathers and mothers do not wait for their children of both sexes to reach the age of reason to teach them how purity can be lost; what is worse, they themselves prompt them to do so. This is really deplorable and shows the great need of these poor people for instruction.

I have already had four other little boys for a long time, who are now seven or eight years of age. They give me great satisfaction and the hope of seeing them cooperate one day in the conversion of others, especially two of them who already know how to read fluently at Mass.

I was thinking that all this might capture the zeal of M. Dufour and keep him in Tolagnaro. I was expecting him to be busy teaching catechism, after the daily noon distribution of alms to the black men and women, and also that he would take over the guidance of the French and the administration of the sacraments.

The better to oblige him to do that, I firmly intended to leave him some money as alms for the poor, particularly in the villages and for children abandoned by their mother during the hard times when they find almost nothing to eat. As for myself, I was planning to go to the neighboring territories to teach the people how to pray. So as not to be a burden to anyone, I had intended to leave a small supply of provisions in one of the
main settlements in the center of the area. In that way I could stay a week or ten days in one place, until someone in the village learned how to pray, so that later on he or she could teach the others in the same place and have them say morning and evening prayers. This is what is done in our settlement at Tolagnaro. I would take care to go there for all the major feast days of the year to facilitate having the divine service offered there.

I was quite pleased with these plans and often assured those poor black natives that I would soon teach them how to pray because one of my brothers had come to help me with that. This made them very, very happy. That is why I let up a little on spiritual matters to prepare and put the temporal ones in order so that, when M. Dufour came, we could really concentrate our efforts on the salvation of those poor people, giving complete charge of temporal affairs to a good layman he was supposed to bring me.

I was entertaining these thoughts and offering the daily Sacrifice of our Redemption, together with the prayers of our good Christians, for the safe return of M. Dufour. I had even reserved for him the administration of several baptisms, to rejoice and console him on his arrival, when, on September 27, people began to shout: "A ship! A ship!" Suddenly the Armand appeared and anchored here for the second time. We looked to see if M. du Rivaux was on it and if we could see M. Dufour. At the same time, the longboat arrived to put ashore M. du Rivaux, our Governor-General, who was making his entrance with a fine entourage. Everyone had the honor of greeting him. Immediately afterward, I asked him how M. Dufour was; he told me calmly that he had remained on Sainte-Marie and was well, but M. Prévost was really quite ill. As you can see, Monsieur, my joy was still mingled with sadness. Soon after, however, sadness remained as my only lot when I was told outright that M. Dufour had died. I felt as if I had been struck by lightning; it was the worst blow I have ever received on this earth. Everyone began to weep with me, even the black natives, who seemed already to be disheartened, seeing themselves deprived of the help they were expecting from Missionaries like him.

One of the little boys with me said in all simplicity: "What will you do now? You will soon die, too, because you are suffering too much." I told him that God would give me strength and that there was still another priest, who would come to be with me. I said that he was, in fact, sick but could recover, as many others had done. At the same time, I read the letter

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6French Governor-General of Madagascar.
M. Prévost had written me. In it he simply told me in general about M. Dufour's death, giving me almost no other news. He offered as an excuse that his already flagging strength did not allow him to write anything else and that I should take care to say some Masses for him, dead or alive. What consternation for me, dear Father! One was dead and the other already had one foot in the grave!

What increased my sorrow was my inability to learn with any certainty, either from M. Prévost's letter or from another source, the particular circumstances of M. Dufour's death or what he had done on that island of Sainte-Marie. I can tell you only what the Frenchmen who came back from there have reported to me since then; namely, that this good Missionary finally arrived on the island after much suffering and work along the way. His first concern was to visit the sick—of whom he found many—who were getting almost no help from anyone. That prompted him to set up a kind of hospital, where he did his utmost to help them, either personally or through others, to the point that he did not hesitate to go here and there asking for alms for them. Seeing that those who were with him were suffering, and he along with them, because of a food shortage, and wanting to share in their suffering, he sometimes ate nothing—or very little—until evening.

With all that, he continued to preach, teach catechism, and even to write and compile a dictionary of the local language. Meanwhile, he got the idea of making twelve crosses in honor of the Twelve Apostles and to go and set them up in the principal villages of the island. He asked and obtained permission of the Governor for this. When he was setting out on this short journey, he said good-bye to everyone, as if he was going to his death, and, although it is not very safe for us in those parts, he did not bother to take either weapons or an escort to defend himself. His only companion was a little black boy, from whom he tried to learn the local language.

He had a very hard time all along the way, suffering partly because he could not find enough food to eat, since the natives in those parts are unwilling to sell any to strangers, and partly because of the rain that is almost continuous there and the waterways that often have to be crossed without bridges or boats. If one's drenched clothing is allowed to dry or to grow cold on the body, serious illness usually follows; even some of the natives die in this way. Nevertheless, the zeal of this apostolic man prevented him from reflecting on all that, with the result that he did not take the trouble to get dry or to change his clothes, convincing himself that a Missionary would be pampering himself if he did so.

The fact remains that, after good M. Dufour had raised eleven of his crosses, which he called "stations" and before which he prayed, he tried
to drive the twelfth one into the ground, but he drove it into his own heart, for he was stricken with the illness from which he died. He was suddenly taken with a high fever; by the third day it had weakened him considerably, although, in the short periods of respite it gave him, he continued to hear the confessions of the other patients. In the end, all that hard work, together with the high fever, left him so feeble that when he was lifted up ever so little he immediately fainted. This bodily weakness did not hinder the strength of his soul. The heroic virtues he practiced, even at the height of his illness, made this truth quite evident, especially his patience in such acute pain, his resignation to the good pleasure of God and to the reception of the last sacraments, and his ardent, boundless charity. All that won the admiration of everyone who saw him.

Finally, on the eighteenth day of his illness, God willed to reward his labors and sufferings, calling him to Himself by a holy death to begin a blessed life in heaven. We have good reason to speak in this way when we consider the holy life he led, both before entering the Company and after being admitted into it, from what I have learned on good authority. In a word, he was always regarded as a true model and mirror of innocence and a constant doer of good works. I never noticed any fault in him except—if this can be called a fault—the excessive practice of virtue and mortification apparent in him, especially on Sainte-Marie.

But you know, Monsieur, that those kinds of actions are not for imitation, and our other Missionaries really must be told not to follow his example in that, so as to avoid placing themselves in danger of tempting God. Still, we cannot deny that they are admirable and holy in him in the eyes of God, who perhaps inspired him so strongly to practice them that he could not resist. His Divine Wisdom formerly acted in this way with several saints whose feasts we celebrate, and is even now doing the same with regard to many persons who live in well-regulated Communities.

Why does God act in this way, if not to show that He is admirable in His saints, or to let them die an early martyrdom in this way or another, before their zeal begins to taper off and perhaps disappear, or to increase by their death the number of Christians, since sanguis martyrum est semen christianorum? Lastly, it may be to shame and excite to virtue by their example those like myself who are sensual and unmortified, and who, blinded by self-love and human prudence, idolize their own health, under pretext of not wanting to kill themselves. Still, as I said before, no one should be counseled to go to the other extreme—which is indiscretion to

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7The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians.
a fault—especially when it is contrary to obedience. Furthermore, I cannot
refrain from adding two little marvelous things which, in my opinion, could
contribute to demonstrating the sanctity of this servant of God.

The first is that, in the letter I already mentioned, which he had begun
to write to the Company to give an account of his voyage and to disclose
di all the faults he thought he had committed during it, he noted his ingrati-
tude to God. "I fear," he said (these are his own words), "that I have not
thanked God enough for the immense favors I have received from His
bounty, especially in six or seven instances, such as granting me the favor
of being able to speak different languages, etc." These words are really
somewhat ambiguous, and I prefer to await your opinion about them to
comply with it, rather than give my own too hastily. It would have been
desirable for him to have written down the other graces received from
heaven, for they are most likely great and unusual; to my great regret,
however, he did not have time to continue his letter. Perhaps he was
waiting to put down the two favors God had granted him during his voyage,
one of which was that of having received into the bosom of the Church two
heretics, including the one we mentioned above, as some sailors have told
me.

The other is that, by his patience and long-suffering, he so completely
won the hearts of everyone on the ship that was bringing him that they
submitted entirely to him to avoid evil and to work at doing the good he
advised them to do, as we mentioned above. In the beginning, however,
this seemed impossible because he was thwarted and persecuted by most
of them whenever he tried to introduce any Christian practice. In my
opinion, the change that took place is, in a certain sense, one of the greatest
feats he ever accomplished. Those who know from experience what sol-
diers and sailors are like on such voyages will appreciate this.

The second, clearer wonder this man of God worked is that, when he
was coming here on the Armand for the first time, the sailors could not
locate our coastline—although they were near it—and spent two months
in this uncertain situation, in dire need of drinking water. This made
everyone prepare for death, particularly the eighty persons who were sick.

In the midst of this universal consternation, M. Dufour said that, if they
would do what he asked of them, they would definitely sight land in two
weeks. Unanimously, they said they would. Not satisfied with simply taking
their word that they would do what he had to tell them, he made them swear
to it. After that, he declared that what God wanted of them was for everyone
to commit himself by vow to go to confession and Communion within two
weeks. Only two scoundrels failed to do so and, by a just judgment of God,
they died shortly afterward without the sacraments.
When the two weeks were up—it was a Sunday—they came to him and said that his prophecy was not true because no land was in sight. Unruffled, he told them, "Pray, children," and then went off to say Mass, but they still saw no land after that. Then he went to dinner—still no land. The Chevalier de Sourdis and his Lieutenant went to him once again and said, "Monsieur, we are lost; you promised we would sight land at least by today and, although it is already very late, we do not see any." "Gentlemen," he said, "I promise that you will sight land today." Vespers began, and as they reached the Magnificat a sailor began to shout: "Land ho! Land ho!" He had them go on with Vespers; afterward, everyone began to rejoice and to bless God for the favor they had received through the intercession of His servant. This made them more aware of his holiness. He died on August 8, 1656.

Meanwhile, I was still unsure about what might have happened to good M. Prévost. I prayed constantly for him, but to no avail: on January 26, the ship named the Duchesse returned here, and I learned that I need not wait any longer for M. Prévost. M. de la Roche, who was always very kind in helping him in his needs, and to whom we were indebted for other reasons, told us first that several men on his ship had died, including M. Prévost, and that the latter had worked so hard with the sick that he had succumbed. Seeing himself deprived of such a chaplain grieved him more than all the other losses he had sustained. He told me several other things in general about the zeal and charity of this good Missionary, to which you yourself can attest from the good example of virtue he gave the whole Company for ten or twelve years.

This ship, which brought us such bad news, was inspected shortly after and, not being found seaworthy, was degraded, that is, stripped and dismantled to be completely rebuilt. Everyone was heartbroken, since it was very beautiful. They deplored this destruction, as did I in particular, seeing it such a loss for those who were so zealous for the advancement of God’s glory. He who is the Master of all, however, will know well how to reward them in a way more excellent than in gold or silver, particularly if they continue to put into practice the fine lessons our poor deceased confreres had the happiness of giving them during the entire voyage, especially if my sins place no obstacle in the way of this.

O Monsieur! would that all priests commiserated as much over the loss of souls as people do for the loss of temporal goods! Ah! how many more Missionaries would be seen risking their lives for the conversion of unbelievers than we now see! I ask God to give them the necessary light and efficacious grace to come here to work for the salvation of these poor, uncivilized persons and to make up for my deficiencies. I, in my unworthi-
ness, hold the place of an Apostle, whereas I am really only a festering sore of sin and ignorance, having merely the good will to please God and to obey my Superiors. I ask His Divine Goodness please to grant me the grace to do so. But it is time now to return to our poor neophytes.

CHAPTER FIVE

Concerning what happened in Madagascar since those priests died, and the present state of affairs.

I will tell you, then, Monsieur, that last All Saints' Day most of the new Christians went to confession and Communion, simply because I had told them it was a big feast day. This shows how eager they are to do their duty and is a reproach to the tepidity of many of the French and even my own. One of the French had fallen ill at Avaratra Malemy, less than two days away from here. I had to go there, not so much because of his bodily illness as for that of his soul, since he had not been to confession for a year and a half. As I was preparing to leave, I heard that the French army was ready to march and was taking the road to that same area. I volunteered to say Mass for them on the way, and they gladly accepted. So I left with the army, and it was a beautiful sight to see. Good order reigned everywhere, but especially for prayers, which were said daily, morning and evening, according to the custom that had been introduced. What edified me the most, however, was that, when we reached the province of Anossi, several of the French—even the high-ranking officers of our army, who were preparing to go on expeditions to Manamboule—would not leave without making their confession to me and receiving Holy Communion from my hand. When we were at Imoro, the review took place, and after supper they beat the drums in a large square. When everyone had assembled there, I said the prayers before my crucifix. Nearly two thousand black natives were all around us.

The next morning, I set up an altar in the middle of the square; at the same time several persons presented themselves for confessions, which I heard. Then I celebrated Holy Mass in the presence of the whole army. I could not preach at that time because of the urgent business I had elsewhere. I had to be satisfied simply with seeing the soldiers in their huts, saying a cordial, encouraging word to each. When that was done, everyone embraced, and we separated; they going in one direction, as they were ordered, and I in another to go visit my patient. Since it was a long way,
and I had eaten only some bad fruit, by the time I reached Avaratra Malemy I was not feeling well at all and had to lie down.

When evening came, I heard the confession of my patient and of the other Frenchmen who were there. I spoke also to the black natives from the villages, who came to see me. I told them of the grandeur of God and explained His commandments to them, saying that these were not the same as the commands of Kings, since they were not meant to demand their possessions but, on the contrary, to give them others that were more precious, such as a good spirit and eternal life in heaven. Afterward, they told me several times that what I told them was true. Next, I had the prayers said in the center of the village. Then, since I was feeling worse, I went back to bed. Along with the fever I had had all day, I had a very bad case of diarrhea that lasted all night long. The next day, for fear that something would happen, I tried to get back on the road—or rather to drag myself along. The truth is that my black natives carried me a good part of the time.

When I reached Tolagnaro, God restored me to health the very next day, and I felt that it had been merely a purging for me. However, M. du Rivaux was afraid that this illness might have dangerous consequences, so he forbade me to go away again and said that the French would have to be brought to our settlement. Moreover, I have good reason to thank God for permitting this illness because it caused me to return here sooner than I had planned, and thereby to be here in enough time to help a poor man who had been shot in the knee a few days previously and was dying. So, at midnight, after I had rested, I went to hear his confession and give him Extreme Unction. He died immediately afterward.

For some time now, I have had in our house a little boy named Jean. He is very handsome and virtuous, and everyone loves and envies him. The thought occurred to me to persuade him to stay with me permanently. He is the son of a Frenchman named Adrien Deschamps, who returned to France in 1650. Since it is the custom of the Moors here to give away their children in return for something else, I wanted to do likewise for his mother, all the more willingly because I felt she was needy. Rice is very expensive here and famine is great; furthermore, her husband, who was still in France, could not help her, especially since she had so many children to feed. After seeking the advice of the elders among the natives, I sent for her and, knowing she was hungry, told her I wanted to give her a present of rice. The woman immediately saw through my plan and the fact that I was only making the offer because of her son, which I admitted quite frankly. Suddenly she said: "Is he not yours? Did I not give him to you? What! when you feed him, do you not feed me also? Do you not see
that he is baptized?" And she said several other similar things that embarrassed me and made me wish I had never brought up the subject. The fact remains that she would never take anything whatsoever from me.

I admired the generosity, spirit, and prudence of that woman, and I have reason to hope that some day, God willing, she will be commendable for greater things by contributing to the conversion of others. There is another native woman here, who is eighty-nine years old and just as generous as the preceding one, for she works very hard to become virtuous. She goes out of her way to bring everyone to prayer and baptism. She has eight baptized slaves, whom she gathers together every evening to pray, and has already introduced several other families to this custom.

[This] woman was baptized almost forty years ago, by a happy coincidence whose details Your Charity would doubtless be pleased to hear. In the year 1615, on its way to the Indies, the Spanish fleet dropped anchor at Madagascar, where it remained for a short time for some reason or other. Meanwhile, a Spanish Captain captured a young noble named Dian Ramach, the son of Dian Ramassy, one of the great chiefs of the area. He brought him on board and took him to Goa, where he was instructed in the Christian faith, baptized, and renamed Dom Andrea da Souza da Saraureda by the Viceroy of the same name, who had him taken to Madagascar a short time later to be returned to his father. He had two Jesuits accompany him on the voyage, with some beautiful presents to be given to him: a gilded silver cup, a plate and saucer of the same material, several Spanish outfits of clothing, some arquebuses, whose barrels are still in good working order, a gold chain, two ducats, and a cross of the Order of Christ of Portugal, of which the Viceroy had made him a knight.

This young lord spoke Portuguese very well, knew by heart the whole Creed, the commandments of God, and all our little prayers. Yet, after having been in the country for one month, he left his venerable spiritual Fathers and went off with his bad natural father whose false religion he took up again. Since then, he has always continued to practice it—except for bigamy, for he was never willing to break our law of having only one wife at a time. Those good Fathers remained on the island for eleven months and baptized several children and adults there, including this good elderly woman—already married at the time—and her daughter, who is still living. The late Dian Machicore and several other chiefs were also instructed and baptized on that occasion. The black natives still remember those good Fathers; they say that one was named Dom Mariana and the other Patrebe. These two apostolic men had six Spanish servants with them and doubtless would have stayed longer here and won over the whole island for Our Lord, if Dian Ramassy, angry with them and not daring to
kill them openly, had not forbidden his subjects to furnish them with provisions. That is what made them return so quickly to Goa.

There is a soothsayer here named Ratsihomankena, which means "he who eats no meat." He is a small man about sixty-nine years old, simple in appearance, and a person of few words. This man is renowned for his prophecies, which most often turn out to be correct, so many people—even the French—believe what he says. In 1654 he predicted that in less than six weeks ships from France would be seen here. This turned out to be true because soon afterward the ones sent by the Duc de la Meilleraye arrived. Another time, when some Frenchmen asked him if M. de Flacourt, who was returning to France, would arrive there safely, he replied yes but that, when he was nearing France, he would encounter three enemy warships. That is exactly what happened, as he himself must have told you. Many other predictions of his have turned out to be correct, and I myself have been a witness to them. This caused me to wonder if this were not a real gift of prophecy that God might be giving to that man—as happened in former times with the Sibyls—to reward him for some outstanding virtue he possesses, for he seems to be a fine, simple, straightforward man.

Since he used to come very often to see me, I tried one day to get an explanation. I asked him if he spoke to the Kotolambo, which are goblins and sprites. He answered me in all simplicity that he did speak to them, and very often. I asked about the place where these demons dwelt and of what they were made. He told me they lived on the high mountains and appeared to have nothing but bellies, although they did not eat, and that some persons heard them talk and others heard nothing at all. I asked him if he dreamed about his predictions for the future while he was sleeping; he told me they came into his mind spontaneously, and I believe it because he gave answers for which he could not have had time to consult the demon. For example, when a person asked him whether his [the person's] father

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6Charles de la Porte, Duc de la Meilleraye, born in 1602, owed his rapid advancement as much to the protection of Cardinal Richelieu as to his personal valor. He was appointed Grand-Master of Artillery in 1634, Marechal of France in 1637, Superintendent of Finance in 1648, and Duke and Peer in 1663. It was he who gave Saint Vincent the idea of sending Missionaries to Madagascar. He died in Paris on February 8, 1664.

7Étienne de Flacourt, born in Orleans in 1607, governed the colony of Madagascar in the name of the Company of the Indies (1648-55) with innumerable difficulties, caused especially by the colonists who tried several times to kill him. After his return to France he worked in the administration of the Company. Besides a history of Madagascar, he also wrote a Dictionnaire de la langue de Madagascar, avec un petit recueil de noms et diction propres des choses qui sont d'une mesme espèce [Paris: G. Josse, 1658], which he dedicated to Saint Vincent.
was alive (something he could not know) and how many brothers and sisters he had, he replied clearly and unhesitatingly, and what he said about all that was true. I asked him if that inclined him toward what is good, telling him it was good to pray. He gave me a vague answer, either because he was not sure about this, or because he dared not say no, or for some other reason. So, I did not press him any more on that point. I asked him if this spirit liked priests, and he replied that it feared them instead. This made me think that they were evil spirits.

He predicted several other things, the truth of which is still unknown; among others he said that the entire island would be converted and baptized. Now, whether this prophecy is from the good or the bad spirit I cannot say. God grant that the result of it may be seen as soon as possible! There is good reason to hope for this—unless my sins place some obstacles in its way—because we are very close to seeing the truth of another similar prediction, which is that his wife and children will be baptized some day. In fact, only their poverty prevents them, and he promised me that he would be baptized as soon as possible, provided I would help him to make a living. I am doing this as best I can, so he comes to prayer every day and tells me that, when he learns how to pray well, he will go through the villages to teach others, as I do. Even now, he is no longer willing to give a reply to those who ask him something about their superstitions. As an excuse, he tells them he is afraid of me.

This man can do a great deal to set the others straight concerning the ollis, for he is one of the greatest masters of that. An oll is just a certain superstitious remedy, of which there are several varieties: some are made of herbs, roots, and concoctions of herbs; others are made of paper, with Arabic characters written on them, and are worn around the neck or sewn into the folds of their clothing. Others are made of little bits of wood, grains of sand, or other rubbish, which they wrap in pieces of cotton cloth or in fabric from France. It is to the latter ones that they attribute greater power. The most common ones are little bits of wood cut up and attached to certain small boxes in which they pour fat, honey, the juice of herbs, and other similar things. To these also they attribute great power. These poor deluded people believe that a familiar spirit animates these ollis; they ask them for everything they need, and imagine that even while they are sleeping they give them advice on all the difficulties they lay before them.

Recently, this good soothsayer came asking me to go to visit a man in his village. This person had not slept for a good three months and was suffering intensely from an abscess on his thigh that had become very swollen and as thick as a man's body. It was filled with pus, and the skin was so hard that it could not open on its own. When I saw this abscess, I
took a surgical knife and lanced it myself; more than a pail of pus was drained from it. Those poor people were in admiration at this. In three days he was healed. He had another one on his shoulder, to which I did the same thing, and shortly afterward he was completely cured.

The natives of the area are subject to a certain type of dysentery or grayish discharge called lora. It comes only from the bad food they eat for three months of the year. This sickness causes them to die within a week. They have no remedy to protect themselves against it. I gave them a little treacle, which cured them all. I have cured more than a hundred persons of it, by the mercy of God. Everyone comes to me for that purpose. There is reason to hope that the physical cures we procure for these poor people may dispose them for spiritual ones, as usually happened with the Apostles and with Our Lord Himself, seeing that they miraculously cured the body before converting the soul. Since we do not have this gift of miracles, we have to resort to natural remedies. You can judge from all this, Monsieur, the need to send us a good provision of drugs and medicines appropriate for these illnesses.

Last October, someone came and cast a fady near the fort. This is a sort of spell the inhabitants of this area use. The word means "interdiction, prohibition, or obstacle." These fadys consist of certain letters written on eggs, jugs, clay pots that have not yet been fired, wood, paper, and leaves. They think that this can cause us to die or become ill. This fady frightened the whole village, which thought it was already lost, but no one was harmed by it in any way.

A week later an old Ombiasse went to the village to have an animal sacrificed for a baptized black native who was recovering from an illness—as if by this superstition he would put flesh back on his bones and prevent the illness from returning. Be that as it may, he began by circling the animal three times and putting his foot in a hole. He had a red cord on his headpiece, filled with the hair of pigs, cats, cattle, and other animals, together with some herbs, bark, powdered wood, and roots. Then he slit the animal's throat, took some blood, which he sprinkled on theolis he had in this cord, and with the same blood traced some figures on the sick man's forehead.

I notified the Governor of this and he sent him off well chastened and banished from the village. The example of this punishment will prevent many evils in this region, especially because, in addition to the fact that these superstitions are partly responsible for delaying the conversion of the people, they also provide greater opportunity for stealing or extorting the property of others. The animal that the sorcerer demands must be
supplied by the sick person, or else he has to give the money to buy one—or
he steals one, which most often happens.

When one of our Frenchmen who was living in the settlement of Ikombo,
a full day's journey from Tolagnaro, fell ill and was dying, he sent for me.
I went to hear his confession and administer the other sacraments to him.
All the heads of the village—of whom there were many because of a
meeting that had just been held—came to me, asking me to drive the valala
from their lands. This is a sort of locust or grasshopper, which constituted
one of the plagues in ancient Egypt in the time of Moses and still continues
to afflict all those regions and even others, particularly Ethiopia, Palesti­
ze, and even the island of Cyprus. These insects fly through the air like
thick clouds or like the snow that falls in large flakes in winter. They fly
low, swooping down on the grass, which they devour right down to the
roots; in half an hour's time, they strip a field as if a fire had swept over
it. It is very sad to see the cattle start to grow thin immediately from this.
One good thing, however, is that they do not eat grass that is in the shade
or in the woods, so part of the herd is saved in this way.

These good people, then, were earnestly entreating me to protect them
from this infestation. I told them that, if all of them were baptized and would
forsake their sins, I was quite sure that God would drive them out but would
not do so as long as they were His enemies and continued to offend Him.
They told me immediately that they were willing to be baptized; but I was
in no hurry, not only because they showed no great desire to forsake their
vices, but also because experience has taught me to recognize that it takes
a long time to prepare adults for Baptism; otherwise, at the first tempta­
tion, they apostatize, causing great scandal in the Church. Still, when I see
them in danger of death, I have no problem baptizing them, if they wish.

Neither did I go to the trouble of instructing them at that time, but simply
prayed for the French who were with the sick man. All these poor,
uncivilized people stayed around the hut to listen; as soon as I had finished,
several of them said to me: “You have taken care of the French, but are
you going to leave us in the lurch?” That touched me. I had them enter
another hut, which suddenly was so packed with people that we could
hardly breathe, and there I had them say aloud the usual prayers.

One of the black natives of the French, still quite young, fell seriously
ill and sent for me to baptize him. I rushed over there and spoke to him
about God and paradise. He told me to baptize him as soon as possible,
which I did. Then I gave him some medicine, which brought him a little
relief. We were, however, unable to cure him. Since his illness was going
from bad to worse, he kept sending for me day and night, saying he could
not live without me and wanting me to pray for him. I pitied this poor boy,
for he was having violent convulsions in all his members. He finally died, saying over and over, Zanahary, izaho tia tokoa aanao (My God, I love you entirely).

These past few days, M. Barre, an inhabitant of Andranahary, a village just two leagues from the port, had been very sick and sent for me. After I had spoken with him and administered the sacraments, Dian Ramouse, who belongs to the white race but has always favored the French, asked me to go to see his wife, who was paralyzed, which I did. She begged me to cure her. I told her that the sickness of her soul was greater than that of her body and that the former should be cured first. I meant that to be a friend of God, who could do anything, one must be baptized. She said she was willing, provided her husband would have only her as his wife because he had two wives. The worst thing, the one that cuts me to the heart, is that the main lesson he and his wife teach their children while they are still very little is the one I mentioned above—training them and giving them practice in indecency. I dare not mention what else. Oh! what a diabolical means! Those heinous crimes, however, did not prevent the Divine Goodness from granting one of their daughters the grace of being baptized and then of marrying a Frenchman, M. Bore, a very upright young man and, above all, a good Catholic. That gives us reason to hope that, through their example and zeal, they will both one day procure the glory of God by the conversion of several of our Indians.

I spoke to you before of a black native named Maro, who speaks French well. He is now baptized and married; M. du Rivaux, our Governor, was the godfather. His little family is leading a truly Christian life. There have now been twelve marriages between black natives and twenty-three between French. This number is gradually increasing. Each inhabitant goes back to his settlement; on big feasts they come to church. I entreat you, Monsieur, to help us to thank God for all that and to ask Him to bless it more and more.

The Mahafalles nation sent ambassadors here to deal with the fort. They all came to pray and urged me to lend them religious objects, which I did, taking advantage of the opportunity to speak to them about God; I do not know if they will profit from it. They all took holy water on entering the church, and when the leader saw one of his slaves talking during prayers, he reproved him, telling him that he was not very intelligent if he talked in God’s house.

Shortly before All Saints’ Day, we were all delighted and consoled to see M. de Chamargou and M. Guelton return with the entire army in good health. We were also glad to hear that they had been successful in battle, since they brought back two thousand animals captured from the enemy.
and even some hostages taken from those who had made peace with them. What increased my joy and consolation, however, was the assurance given me that they did not fail to have morning and evening prayers said publicly. Furthermore, the black natives from those regions knelt down at the same time as they did, made the Sign of the Cross, and indicated that they ardently desired to be baptized.

I must add that those two sons of chiefs, whom I have in our house, also want to receive Baptism, together with their slaves. God willing, that will be done after the departure of the ships, when we will administer it to them with the greatest possible solemnity so that God may be more glorified by this, and the black natives, particularly the leaders, will be more edified and prompted to follow the good example those two will give them. We must confess that our religion is promoted more by the baptism of one noble chief than if we had converted a hundred common people. Experience shows this rather well.

That leads me to hope that the three who were baptized these last few years shortly before dying will, with time, cause Christianity to spread here, for they were the most powerful chiefs in the whole region and the ones most feared by everyone. I was informed that they did not have much time to live and would certainly die within a few days. This upset me greatly, since I knew that they were persons attached to their superstitions and false religion. Yet, God granted me the grace of opening their eyes; for after I had spoken to them of the truths of our faith, especially of heaven and hell, and had assured them that neither they nor anyone else could be happy after their death nor avoid the eternal pains of hell unless they were baptized, they immediately begged me to baptize them at that very hour and to bury them in our cemetery.

I cannot refrain from mentioning here the joy and edification the black natives gave me at the moment of burial, for suddenly a very large number of them came flocking to see lowered into the ground those they had formerly considered gods. They praised us and the Catholic faith a thousand times for having taken care to bury in this way even those very persons who wished us only ill. You see, Monsieur, how well disposed these poor Indians are toward their conversion and how much the example of the chiefs contribute to this. This is confirmed again with regard to our Frenchmen of high standing or in prominent positions, especially the Governors. Everyone patterns himself after them, and their words are always effective. May God in His grace preserve them for us! I think it would be well for you, Monsieur, to take the trouble to write to them, at least some of the more important ones, to thank them for all the kindnesses they have shown us. You might even recommend them in a very special
way to the prayers of the Company, that God may bless them more and
give them the zeal necessary to establish His empire here, making
this whole island truly Christian and entirely submissive to God and to the
King.

CONCLUSION

That, Monsieur, is the state of the affairs of God and of His nascent
Church. You see, on the one hand, the beautiful, rich dispositions for
extending this new kingdom of Jesus Christ. Already at least six hundred
of these uncivilized persons have received the light of the Gospel, and
sedentibus in umbra mortis lux exorta est.\textsuperscript{10} The number of those who
desire and await it is even much greater. If we judge the others by the
facility and lack of resistance of these, we may hope for the same from the
rest of the inhabitants; that is, of the four hundred thousand souls who are
on this land at the time I am writing and of a countless multitude of others
who, in the course of time, will receive from their ancestors this rich
inheritance. Meanwhile, although I am only a poor, humble, useless
servant, if I should happen to falter, as I am on the verge of doing every
day, and if no one were substituted in my place, alas! we would soon see
that our neophytes, and the others as well, would be shrouded in their
primitive darkness for time and perhaps also for eternity.

That, dear Father, is why God, who makes me see the dire need of these
poor people without instruction, without leadership, and without the
sacraments, urges me to prostrate myself in spirit at your feet as I do here
in body, and to say to you in their name, with all possible humility and
respect, mitte quos missuros es\textsuperscript{11}—send us some Missionaries, at least
three priests, according to your original intention. Those who came only
to die at our door were not sent for Madagascar; they were sent simply to
go by this route to heaven, where you have no less need of establishing
your Congregation than on earth.

I entreat you, then, dear Monsieur, to send us some others, and if these
painful events cause you to doubt even in the slightest the vocation of our

\textsuperscript{10} Light has shone on those who sit in the shadow of death. Cf. Lk 1:79. (NAB)

\textsuperscript{11} Send those whom you will. Cf. Ex. 4:13. (NAB)
Company to this work, think of the plans of Saint Bernard, when he advised a crusade for the conquest of the holy places, and that story of the campaign of the Israelites against the town of Gabaa.\(^{12}\) If you consider, Monsieur, that the outcome of both deeds was rather unsuccessful, although God sanctioned the first one by a miracle and the second by revelation, you will readily admit that the sad consequence of the voyage of our priests should not mean that their calling does not come from the same God, who, furthermore, has given sufficiently clear signs of this. In addition, Monsieur, you know that ordinarily Deus mortificat et vivificat,\(^{13}\) so there is reason to hope that the other men Your Charity will send will be more fortunate than the preceding ones, as happened with the Israelites who, after being beaten on two separate occasions and repulsed by the Gabaaonites, were victorious and took the town on the third assault.

True, dear Father, you are losing many sons and fine subjects, but I beg you, for the love of and by the compassion of Jesus Christ, not to be discouraged by that. Do not abandon so many souls who have been redeemed by the Son of God. Assure my confrères that the cause of the death of so many good Missionaries is not the climate of the country but rather overwork—there will always be so much of that here as long as there are so few workers—or excessive mortification, or the fatigues of the journey. I think you can alleviate the latter greatly by seeing that our priests are placed on the same ship, as the Jesuits have always done. For my part, the truth is that I am as well here as I ever was in France. Everyone is well, once they have been here a while and have become accustomed to the climate, as I have already said; the experience of our Frenchmen who are here makes this clear enough.

Furthermore, Monsieur, if I am so anxious to see Missionaries arrive here, I am just as anxious to see the Huguenots leave. M. Dufour converted two of them; God has used me to touch the heart of another, and there is yet another who is ready to abjure. Alas! however, there are still about fifteen of them, who are giving us a hard time. In the name of God, dear Father, capite nobis vulpeculas istas, quae demoliuntur vineas.\(^{14}\) They are ruining all the young plants in the Lord's vineyard; they have been so bold as to schedule their service at the same time as our Frenchmen have prayers. By giving our poor neophytes the hope of greater freedom by

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\(^{13}\) Gabaa is the spelling used in the Vulgate; in NAB it is Gibea.

\(^{14}\) The Lord puts to death and gives life. Cf. 1 Sm 2:6. (NAB)

\(^{14}\) Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that damage the vineyards. Cf. Song 2:15. (NAB)
permitting polygamy, they discourage them from being married in the Church. They speak disparagingly of the Blessed Sacrament of the altar and in this way are the reason that nomen Dei blasphematur inter gentes.\footnote{The name of God is blasphemed among the pagans. Cf. Rm 2:24. (NAB)}

In the name of God, I ask you once more to deliver us from this bad yeast, capable of spoiling the good dough we have here. Speak out; shout into the ears of the person who you know can remedy this evil, and do not stop until he is pleased to give the order to recall those people to France. After that, I have nothing else to ask of you except the continuation of your charitable advice and holy prayers, for I am convinced that, through you, God will always show me how I should act to bring those souls under His sovereignty and will grant me, through your prayers, the grace and strength to carry out faithfully His Holy Will that is made known.

I ask the same favor of our whole Company, and I hope God has made known to it my great need of the assistance of its prayers, even though the limited knowledge our confreres already have in this matter can suffice to spur all of them on, not only to pray for me but even to offer themselves to you, Monsieur, to come promptly to my aid, especially if they consider carefully that messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci.\footnote{The harvest is rich but the workers are few. Cf. Lk 10:2. (NAB)} To put it more precisely, there is only one worker here—and a very insignificant one at that—for an entire country that is larger than France. Moreover, if they deign to reflect on my particular need, they will see that I am now—and will be for a long time, perhaps—the only priest here; that is, in a worse situation than the laymen here for whom I am responsible. They receive from me, in sickness and in health, the necessary sacraments whenever they wish, and I—poor, miserable sinner—have no one to give me absolution; if I should fall dangerously ill, I will have to resign myself to dying without confession, without Holy Viaticum, and without Extreme Unction. This happened to our dear predecessor, the late M. Nacquant, who was, as you know, Monsieur, the only priest on this island for several years. His holiness could supply for the lack of the sacraments when he was in good health as well as at the hour of his death—a happiness I have no reason to hope for because of my sins, unless God has mercy on me.

If, I repeat, they reflect a little on this circumstance of my deplorable state, I am sure they will have compassion on it, several will doubtless take a lively interest in helping me in whatever way they can, and some will soon even say to you, Ecce ego, mitte me.\footnote{Here I am, send me. Cf. Is 6:8. (NAB)} Lastly, I am sure that Your
Charity, urged by that of Jesus Christ, will send us the long-desired help. While awaiting this happiness, allow me, prostrate again in spirit and body at your feet, to ask for your holy blessing and a large share in your Holy Sacrifices. I ask you, seeing the great need your poor child has of this favor, to grant it to me, my very dear Father. I am, Most Honored Father, in the love of Our Lord and of His most holy Mother, your most humble and very obedient servant.

T. Bourdaise
I.C.M.

2217. - TO JEAN-JACQUES PLANCHAMP, IN TURIN

Paris, February 23, 1657

Monsieur,

The grace of O[ur] L[ord] be with you forever! I ask Him also to give you the consolation your letter has brought me and to be His own eternal praise for the dispositions He gives you, especially your desire to attach yourself naked to His cross so that you may be more closely united to Him by the vows you intend to take. 1 Go ahead and take them, then, Monsieur, once the two years of your seminary have been completed. You could make a little retreat immediately beforehand to prepare yourself even better for this. Beginning right now, I join my intention to yours to offer such a holy oblation to God, asking Him to receive it graciously. I do so, full of hope that He will be greatly glorified as a result of this action, and the Company deeply edified. It is already greatly edified by the attachment you manifest for it and by your fidelity to the practice of the Rules and the virtues. M. Martin informs me that you are making progress in this, for which I thank God.

Letter 2217. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.

1Jean-Jacques Planchamp took his vows in Turin on May 12, 1657.
As for the total renunciation you plan to make of your chapel and your patrimony, I leave that up to you. Although it is more perfect to divest oneself of such things than to retain them, I still cannot advise you to do one thing rather than the other because our Rule permits those who take vows in the Company to retain the capital of their possessions and to will it to whomsoever they please at the end of their days or sooner. True, they may not have the use of the revenues, which must remain in the Company if they remain in it, or be given to their relatives, if they are poor. Therefore, if yours need to be assisted, you may let them have the use of your property and reserve to yourself the disposition of the capital; if you wish to give up the said capital right now in order to make yourself more and more like Our Lord, who willed not to possess anything, I can only strongly approve of such detachment. But I place the entire matter in your hands, to do whatever God inspires you.

I recommend myself to your prayers and to those of good M. de Musy. I embrace him and you with all the affection of my heart and am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
is.C.M.

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

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2 First redaction: "not only by will at the end of their days, but also by gift or otherwise." The correction is in the Saint's handwriting.

3 Word added by the Saint.
Monsieur,

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

I have just received your letter of February 9. I thank God for the dispositions He is giving M. Planchamp and for the good things you tell me about him. In line with that, I am writing to tell him he may take vows as soon as the two years of his seminary are up, and to do so in your presence, according to the custom of the Company.

I am also consoled that Brother Aubin has given himself to God in the manner he has done and for the way he prepared for this. Tell him I embrace him in spirit and gladly ask Our Lord to confirm in heaven the action he has just performed on earth, so that he may remain eternally united to this Divine Majesty, to whom he has bound himself by his vows.

To my great regret, the help you await from here—and which I so often promised to send you as soon as possible—has not yet set out. Please excuse me for this and convey my apologies to the Marchese. This delay is due to various unforeseen events that have occurred and to some new business that has arisen for a good priest from Savoy whom we have designated for you, which is still keeping him in the house where he is. We have already sent a priest there to take his place, but he needs a little training before he can fill it and before the other man, who is, as it were, the heart of the family, can leave. We will expedite his return here and his departure for Turin and will try to send a Brother with him, as you desire.

Meanwhile, because I see that you are overwhelmed by the heavy burden of your missions, I have asked M. Jolly to send you M. de Martinis, either by way of Marseilles, where he will go

Letter 2218. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.
1Aubin Gautier.
2On February 9.
through quarantine, or by way of Milan, if the plague has subsided in Rome, as we have reason to hope. He is a very fine, obedient, and exemplary priest, and his Superior has written me many good things about him.

You are no sooner at home, where I was hoping you would take some rest, than you speak of getting back to work, where I expect you are now. May God be pleased to strengthen you with His grace so that, by sanctifying your soul more and more, He will also sanctify, through it, the souls of the people!

I see no objection to your working in towns where there is no episcopal See or supreme court of justice, provided your work is in proportion to your strength.

I send greetings to your little community, and I ask O[ur] L[ord] to bless it and all that it does.

We here are all very well, thank God. We have sixty ordinands and about forty novices in the Internal Seminary. There are more ecclesiastics at the Collège des Bons-Enfants than it can accommodate; there are a good sixty-five from the outside. We no longer know what to do about accepting others who are applying for admission; beds are being placed where they never were before, and new means are being devised for putting them up. Saint-Charles Seminary is also very full. God has been pleased to bless the work of the Little Company almost everywhere. I say almost to exclude our poor confreres in the Hebrides and in Poland. Surrounded by the afflictions of war, they can let us know neither what they are enduring nor what they are doing. The only news we receive of them is old and unreliable. I recommend them and all our needs in general to your prayers.

In Paris they are trying to establish a large hospice, where all the poor beggars will be fed, instructed, and given something to do and will no longer be seen around the city nor in the churches. This is a highly approved plan that is well under way. They even want the poor Company to take over the spiritual direction there. The King and the Parlement gave us charge of it, with the approval of the Archbishop, and they did all this without ever mentioning it to
us. They have also given orders that the Daughters of Charity will take care of those poor people. May God be pleased to grant us the grace for this new work—if it is His will that we undertake it, which we have not yet quite decided to do!

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

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

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

2219. - TO FIRMIN GET, SUPERIOR, IN MARSEILLES

Paris, February 23, 1657

Monsieur,

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

When M. Delaforcade, the merchant in Lyons, was leaving for Bayonne, where he has now gone, he informed me that he had twelve hundred livres to be transmitted to us for the ransom of Dominique de Lajus, a slave in Tunis and a native of the town of Bayonne. I wrote to his partner, M. Garbuzat, to have them paid to

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The rights and duties of the Priests of the Mission are determined in the royal edict of April 1656 as follows:

ARTICLE XXIII: The Missionary Priests of Saint-Lazare are responsible for the spiritual instruction of the poor.

ARTICLE XXIV: They may receive their testaments.

ARTICLE XXV: With regard to policies and temporal affairs, they will be under the direction of the General Hospital.

ARTICLE XXVI: The Superior of the above-mentioned Missionaries will have a deliberative vote with the governing body in what concerns spiritual affairs.

Letter 2219. - The original signed letter was formerly the property of Abbé Roubieu of the Marseilles diocese. The present location of the letter is unknown.
you in Marseilles, and you would send them to M. Le Vacher. I ask you to do so, using all possible diligence and precaution to keep the money safe and to expedite this ransom. Please let me know what you have done about this. Enclosed are letters for M. Le Vacher, for the Consul, and for the slave himself concerning this matter.

The said Consul informs me that he needs the original of his commission from the Council, which I sent to you. Please forward it to him. If this does not work, we can have a copy made in the registry and correct an omission that occurred in the commission, which states that collated copies are not recognized as authentic.

I have just received your letter of February 13. Enclosed is one from the Duc de Richelieu for the appointment of two new Administrators. I am also sending the letter written to me by M. Desmarets, because of a caution it contains that you could use.

That is all I can reply to your letter. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
is.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Get

1Jean Le Vacher.
2Martin Husson.
3Saint Vincent wrote of this in no. 2156. Appendix 1 in this volume is the document in question.
4Jean Desmarets, Seigneur de Saint-Sorlin, member of the French Academy and Intendant of the Duc de Richelieu, was born in Paris in 1595. He wrote some very successful tragedies and comedies before devoting himself mainly to works of piety, translations of the Imitation of Christ, The Spiritual Combat, Avis du Saint-Esprit au Roi, and some articles attacking the Jansenists, Simon Morin, Homer, Virgil, and the pagan authors. He often consulted Saint Vincent; Saint-Cyran was frequently the topic of their conversations. Desmarets died in Paris on October 28, 1676.
Monsieur,

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

I just received your letter. I had someone notify you that the Superintendent of Finances \(^1\) promised the Duchesse d’Aiguillon to have the alms for the hospital and the salaries of the chaplains taken from the salt taxes of Provence. A few days ago, however, when I asked the said lady if this had been done, she told me it had not but that she would try to have it carried out. I hope that she, on her part, will do her utmost for this; I, on mine, will see that she is reminded of it.

What troubles me is that the chaplains are asking for remuneration for past services. I am not well acquainted with what is due to them, for how many years they demand payment, the stipends of each, how many they are now, if they have served continuously, and what they have received. When you have informed me about these things, we will try to satisfy them, as far as justice and our present means will allow. Meanwhile, I will discuss this with the Duchess, for we can do very little without her. On your part, Monsieur, try to mollify these gentlemen. Go to see them for that purpose, on your way to or from the mission you are supposed to give near Sainte-Beaume,\(^2\) and assure them that, if they are patient, we will try to procure what is their due—if not all, at least part of it.

As for your earnest request to be relieved of your office as Superior, consider how you began and how God has blessed you in it. This should help you to judge that, since you have a vocation

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\(^1\)Nicolas Fouquet.

\(^2\)According to the tradition of Provence, this place was famous because Mary Magdalene had lived there for a long time. Today it is a part of the commune of Plan-d’Aups (Var).
from God for the office of Superior that you exercise, you should bear it courageously and put your trust in Him in your difficulties. Please do so, while waiting for His Divine Goodness to arrange things otherwise.

Last week I sent you the appointment of two new Administrators, made by the Duc de Richelieu, and also a packet for Tunis. Please put this one with it—or send it separately if the first one has gone.

I ask O[ur] L[ord] to bless your mission. I imagine that the place where it is to be given is in the great plain close to Sainte-Beaume. Please take care of your health.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

Please send one écu to M. Huguier to be given to M. Martin de Lancre, a convict on the galley Prince de Morgue. I have just received another écu for Jean Meglat on the Manse; please give that also to M. Huguier.

The Duchesse d’Aiguillon just told me that the Superintendent has written to M. Foulé,3 Superintendent of Finances in Provence, that the alms for the hospital and the chaplains’ stipends for this year and the next are to be taken from the salt taxes.

Addressed: Monsieur Get

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3He was responsible for the construction of a hospital for galley slaves in Marseilles.
Monsieur,

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

I answered your last two letters. Since then I have received a third, the earliest one; it is dated January 5 but did not arrive until almost two months later. It speaks of the priests you have found disposed to enter the Company and your concern about where to receive and form them.

If your establishment consisted of two houses—one in the town and the other in the country, about which you wrote me, in line with the proposal that was made—an Internal Seminary could be set up in either one or the other. If this cannot be done or if there would be too long a delay, they should be sent either to Genoa or to Paris. Regarding Genoa, I do not know if the antipathy that I have been told exists between that State and the one where you are might have a bad effect on those transplanted seedlings. In that case, assuming they have the courage to come here or to Richelieu, you could send them to either. They could come through Lyons and take the river from Roanne as far as Orléans. From there they could travel by coach or by the Paris mail coach, or go as far as Tours and from there go a day’s journey by horseback to the Richelieu Seminary. They will be warmly welcomed there, but poor Saint-Lazare will have to pay all their expenses.

Wherever they go, we will take special care to give them a solid formation, but it is up to you to choose them carefully. In this way we could soon supply their country with good Missionaries, as the French find it difficult to adapt themselves to it.1 In any event, it will be well for you to consult the Marchese about it.

Letter 2221. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.

1The postulants Jean Martin was presenting either did not persevere or they postponed their entrance.
For the rest, I am very worried about you. In addition to the office of Superior, you bear the whole brunt of the work because you have no one to help you with the preaching. In the name of Our Lord, Monsieur, please do not take too much upon yourself; reserve the time between missions for the purpose of catching your breath a little. We, on our part, will continue to ask God to strengthen you in proportion to your need and to continue to be glorified by your works, which up to the present have borne much fruit by His blessing, for which we frequently thank him.

Abbe Broille took the trouble to come here twice but, unfortunately, I was not at home. I am told that he goes through the city publicizing the graces God gives you, and, through you, to the poor people. You should refer all of this to the glory of His Divine Goodness and attribute nothing to yourself but the shame of the unworthiness of the workers.

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

Vincent de Paul,
is.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Martin, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Turin, in Turin

2222. - TO N.

March 1657

They are going to put a stop to begging in Paris and gather all the poor in places suitable for maintaining and instructing them and giving them something to do. It is a vast, very difficult plan, but it is well underway, thank God, and approved by everyone. Many persons are contributing generously to it, and others are giving voluntary assistance. They already have ten thousand shirts and

other things in proportion. The King and the Parlement have strongly supported this and, without mentioning it to me, have designated our Congregation and the Daughters of Charity to serve the poor, with the approval of the Archbishop of Paris. However, we have not yet decided to commit ourselves to this work because we are still not sure that it is the Will of God. If we do undertake it, it will first be on an experimental basis.

2223. - TO FIRMIN GET, SUPERIOR, IN MARSEILLES

Paris, March 9, 1657

Monsieur,

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

I praise God for the hope you have of getting M. Bègue’s money unconditionally and without a lawsuit.

It is to be hoped that your dispute with the Abbot of Sainte-Colombe 1 will also end without going to court. If it depended only on paying him to have your cellar supported by his wall, I would agree to this, although it is not his due. However, the important thing is that he remove the privy opposite your entrance, or at least put farther away the pig he feeds near it, whose stench bothers you; for, if your legal advisor decides that you have a right to put a stop to this, it must not be tolerated. God be praised that you have made use of mutual friends, upright men, to come to an agreement! You have chosen the most commendable way, and this has greatly consoled me.

The difficulties you experience in your governance are not signs that it is not good; on the contrary, O[ur] L[ord] wants to show that

1An abbey in Saint-Denis (Yonne).
it is good because He is putting it to the test. There is nothing wonderful about a good ship staying afloat when things are calm because even a bad one would not sink at that time; but its merit is gauged when it is exposed to storms and withstands the tempest. You would be very fortunate if you had nothing to suffer as Superior, but you will be even more so if you remain firm in the midst of turmoil, for love of O[ur] L[ord] who has bound you to it. If your humility leads you to think that another man would stand up against this better than you, your charity should persuade you that it is up to you to put up with the trouble rather than shift it on to someone else. I have asked you to be patient, and I do so again.

I thank God that your seminary is flourishing in grace and numbers. I ask His Divine Goodness to make it grow more and more in both. The seminary here was never so full as it is at present. The father of M. Almeras has willed to honor us by his presence, after deciding to take the habit and title of seminarian in order to participate in the exercises. He has been doing so for a few days now, as far his eighty-two years allow! 2 This is very humbling for a Master of Accounts, the head of a very honorable family and a venerable old man. Having been great in this life, however, he has in this way found the secret of being so in the next, which is to make himself like a little child for the love of O[ur] L[ord], in whom I am, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

It would be a good idea for the Administrators to see M. Foulé, the Superintendent, to ask him to levy on the state, for this year and the next, the alms for the hospital and the stipends of the chaplains,

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2Collet states (op. cit., vol. I, p. 29) that Saint Vincent had already announced the same news on March 3 and 7 in letters that are no longer extant.
in accordance with the note that the Attorney General wrote to him concerning this.

Addressed: Monsieur Get

2224. - TO CHARLES OZENNE, SUPERIOR, IN GLOGAU

Paris, March 9, 1657

Monsieur,

The grace of O[ur] L[ord] be with you forever!
I received seven or eight of your letters in less than two weeks. The mere address fills me with joy, and the contents fill me with it to overflowing. I pour it out on the Company by sharing with it the news of your health and the good things you tell me, especially about the steadfastness God is giving you while you await His plans, which cannot yet be known. Please remain very joyful, Monsieur, so that you may have this joy in abundance for yourself and enough as well for the Mothers at Sainte-Marie, whose humble servant I am, and for the Daughters of Charity, to whom I send greetings. I ask Our Lord to be the peace and strength of them both, that they may make a holy use of their present state, until His Providence brings about a change for the better. We often beseech His Divine Goodness to make this happen soon. Recommend me warmly to them and to their prayers.

It is true, Monsieur, that the news you write us is, for the most part, different from what is given out here, but do not stop sending it. I am consoled by your exactitude to giving me your letters directly, and I thank you for it.

I told you I had some difficulty reading and understanding what

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3Nicolas Fouquet.
Letter 2224. - Archives of the Mission, Krakow, original signed letter.

1Visititation nuns.
you wrote to me in two letters about your interior state, and I asked you to let me know in less ambiguous terms what is going on within you. I will keep all that to myself, and I await this consolation to tell you my thoughts on it.

We paid the Scottish lady the one hundred écus you received there, and we got a receipt for them before we received the packet you sent me for the Nuncio. We still have the latter because he had already left to return to Italy. I will send it back to you, if you wish.

As for news, I can tell you we have no one who is seriously ill, thank God, but many are troubled with bad colds, which are going around here and which most of the men have caught.

We have nearly forty seminarians here, including the father of M. Almeras, since he decided a few days ago to take the habit in order to participate in the exercises, as far as his eighty-two years allow. This is a great abasement for a Master of Accounts, the head of a very honorable family and a venerable old man. Having been great in this life, however, he has in this way found the secret of being so in the next, which is to make himself like a little child for the love of Our Lord, in whom I am entirely, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL,
i.s.C.M.

I am writing to M. Desdames about the good reputation God has been pleased to give them and of the desire of some of the Bishops to use them in their dioceses. We must thank God for this favor, and those good Bishops for the honor they show them, but they must also be excused from these employments, both because of their small number—which does not allow them to separate nor go

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2Nicolò di Bagno did not return to France; he was replaced as Nuncio by Celio Piccolomini, Titular Archbishop of Caesarea.
too far away—and their lack of ability regarding the affairs they want to entrust to them.

Your last letter is dated January 15.

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

2225. - TO LOUIS RIVET, SUPERIOR, IN SAINTES

March 11, 1657

If, after what you told the Members of the Chapter, they still want you to obey their instructions concerning missions in parishes that depend on them, you must continue to point out to them that you can go only to places where the Bishop sends you because you depend absolutely on his jurisdiction. Say, however, that you are prepared to do what they wish, if they agree to make arrangements with this good Prelate and to delegate someone to obtain his consent.

2226. - TO THE DUCHESSE D'AIGUILLON

[March 1657] ¹

Madame,

The last time I had the honor of seeing you, I mentioned the


Letter 2226. - Reg. 1, fol. 72, copy made from the original, which was in Saint Vincent's handwriting.

¹ The name of the recipient is not mentioned, but the contents allow us to guess who it is.

² This letter belongs to the time when Saint Vincent decided not to accept the direction of the General Hospital; it was written, therefore, after no. 2222 and should be placed not far from no. 2231.
objection our Little Company is raising to taking on the spiritual care of the poor of the General Hospital. This is because of the small number of workers we have for such a major undertaking and the number we are being asked to send to Madagascar and other places. I will tell you now, Madame, that we still have the same difficulty. Accordingly, Madame, I ask you most humbly to excuse our helplessness and to do us the charity of persuading the Administrators to accept our apologies, assuring them that this will not prevent our going to visit and serve the poor whenever we can, subject to their good pleasure.

That, Madame, is the most humble request I now make of you in this letter, lacking the courage to go and present it to you personally for fear that it might cause you greater pain and because of my respect for you. I will, however, take the honor of going to see some of those gentlemen.

2227. - TO SISTER NICOLE HARAN, SISTER SERVANT, IN NANTES

Paris, March 14, 1657

Sister,

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

I received the letter you wrote me; it was a consolation for me to read it and to see that everything is going well. I thank God for this, especially for your desire to go to serve God in Madagascar. I do not know if He will take you at your word, but I do know that this zeal is not displeasing to Him. You will do well to continue to offer yourself to Him to go or to remain and, in general, to do whatever He may ordain, since you will all that He wills and

Letter 2227. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original signed letter.