29. - DEPOSITION AT THE PROCESS OF BEATIFICATION
OF FRANCIS DE SALES

(April 17, 1628)

In the name of the Lord. Amen.

On April 17, 1628, in the eleventh indiction, in the chapel of Saint Monica, of the convent church of the Visitation Nuns of Paris, the Reverend Vincent de Paul, a priest of the Dax diocese, Superior of the Priests of the Mission, and Royal Chaplain of the Galleys of France, was questioned, after being introduced by Reverend Father Juste Guérin 1 of the Congregation of Clerks Regular of Saint Paul, Procurator for this cause. Summoned by the judges and advised of the gravity of perjury, he swore, in the presence of the said judges, with his hand on his heart, as is customary for priests, to tell the truth, concerning both the interrogations and the articles, setting aside all hatred, favor, fear, gain, etc., in this cause, and he answered the pertinent questions of the judges as follows:

To the first he replied:—I know that perjury in all cases, but especially in those of canonizations such as this one, is a very serious mortal sin, which, by the grace of God, I never want to commit.

To the second:—My name is Vincent de Paul; I am an unworthy priest about forty-eight years of age, Superior of the Priests of the Mission, and Royal Chaplain of the galleys of France.

To the third:—I have not only confessed my sins and received Holy Eucharist for Easter, but I also confess several times a week and, by the grace of God, celebrate the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass daily, as a rule.

Document 29 - Parisian Remissorial Process concerning the life, morals, and miracles of the Servant of God Francis de Sales, transacted in Paris, 1628 (Archives of the Congregation of Rites). This document was published, with its French translation, in Annales Saéstennes, 1907, nos. 5-7. The original is in Latin.

Remissorial letters play a vital part in the process of canonization mandated for the Church by Pope Urban VIII (1623-44). As shown here, a lengthy set of questions, composed by the Promoter of the Faith, was sent to the Bishops where the Servant of God was known, and those who knew him were interrogated on each question. These are Saint Vincent's responses to the Remissorial sent to Jean-François de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris. They were given during the remissorial process in Paris.

1Juste Guérin (cf. II, 31, n. 3).
To the fourth:—No one has told me how or what deposition I should make concerning matters in this cause, nor do I hope for any material compensation, but only the greater glory of God and of His servant Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva when he was alive.

To the fifth:—Never, by the grace of God, have I been accused of any crimes, nor been investigated, nor brought before any judge; nor have I, by name been denounced publicly nor excommunicated.

To the sixth:—I have come here, summoned by Father René Ferrier, *vice-postulator* in Paris for the cause of canonization of Francis de Sales, Bishop and Lord of Geneva, of happy memory. Regarding those things I observed in my dealings with him, as well as other things I learned from those worthy of credence who were with him longer than I, I testify in all truth before God and Christ Jesus that what follows is true. And it is certainly evident to me that he had to an eminent degree an orthodox faith and spared no efforts in his desire to spread it—even to the point of exposing his own life to many dangers—by his ardent zeal to convert the heretics whose numbers had greatly increased over a period of almost seventy years in the Duchy of Chablais, in the territories of Ternier and Gaillard in Savoy, near Geneva, where the faith was almost completely lacking; through his pious efforts and works many thousands of heretics there were converted and returned to the Catholic Church.

These things are true, public, and well known.

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*Vice-Postulator in Paris for the cause of canonization of Francis de Sales.*
I know, moreover, that the Servant of God was accustomed to convey the sweetness of the same faith to all those who listened to him, both in debating as in hearing confessions, to such a degree that his listeners found it easy and pleasant to follow him when he explained lucidly and clearly the more sublime and obscure mysteries. Because of this it happened that even heretics themselves were in admiration of him, although generally obstinate in the beginning.

And this also is well known and public.

Nor do I think that I should pass over what I heard from his own mouth, in the friendly conversations with him which I enjoyed, that he used to shed tears while rereading the chapters of his own books, for he seemed to realize that he did not write them on his own ability, but by the inspiration of Almighty God. This caused me to experience a certain devotion and tender affection; indeed I felt that the Servant of God was divinely enlightened.

I assert this to be true.

I will add, furthermore, that, because of that same friendship mentioned above, with which he honored me, he opened his heart and told me that he could sense when someone was inwardly moved by his preaching. “For I noticed,” he said, “that something went out from me, not through any inspiration of mine and with no forethought, in a way of which I am totally ignorant, but uttered by me through divine impulse.”

The outcome was to prove this, for people would approach him after his sermons with compunction of heart, referring to words of his that had moved them interiorly. I believe this is very true, and I am speaking the truth in affirming this testimony that, not only did his words inflame everyone like burning darts, but also that every action of his was a sermon.

These things are true, public, and well known.

To the twenty-fifth article, concerning hope.—I know for certain that the Servant of God, imbued with a most serene peace and great gentleness, directed his steps to his native land. Filled with this abundance, he dispelled all his fears, except that fear which is the chaste companion of love; in addition, always remaining the same, trusting very peacefully in the divine goodness, he was not over-
whelmed by any hardships, no matter how serious. On the contrary, aided confidently by that same divine hope, he showed great energy in lifting the spirits of others, to which all who met him and happily followed his direction can most faithfully testify.

That the Servant of God finished his course steadfastly, justly, and happily is clear from the fact that, at the moment of leaving this life, when asked whether he feared death, he replied that he trusted in the Lord. Again, when asked whether he would be upset to leave the Congregation of the Visitation Nuns in an unfinished state, he replied: “He who has begun it, will Himself perfect it, perfect it, perfect it.” 3 When someone presented the objection from Ecclesiastes: “Oh how bitter! O death, how bitter is the thought of you!” 4 he continued it, saying: “for the man at peace amid his possessions.” It is clearly apparent from this that, far from earthly considerations, he clung to God alone, in whom he had placed all his hope. And receiving Extreme Unction with a cheerful spirit, he softly answered the prayers of each of the anointings.

Persons worthy of credence have reported these things to me, along with those who have written his life.

To the twenty-sixth article, on the love of God:—The Servant of God loved God with an ardent love; the proofs from which I deduce this are as follows:

1. A most serene peace, sign of the very close bond uniting him to God, which I, as well as many other persons, carefully observed.

2. His efforts to destroy sin, contrary to charity, working assiduously (as everyone knows) equally with the rich as with the needy, without distinction of sex, administering the sacraments, especially Penance, through which sin is abolished.

3. To promote the honor of God more and more (having already overcome sin, which is opposed to it) he made himself accessible to all, without distinction—Religious as well as secular and laypersons—who came to consult him on matters of conscience.

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3Cf. Phil 1:6. (NAB)
4Cf. Sir 41:1. (NAB)
4. I deduced his most ardent love of God when I observed the very peaceful tranquillity of the Servant of God, proceeding from his recollection in the presence of God, and his very ardent desire for interior dialogue with God, from which he drew the gentlest sentiments in his familiar contact with the Divine; his writings, redolent with them, give testimony to this.

5. I deduce this from his burning desire of conformity to the image of the Son of God, and I observed how the Servant of God conformed himself to Him in this way. Very often when he was in my presence, I marveled how a mere creature could reach such a level of perfection and so sublime a summit of loftiness of spirit, despite human frailty.

6. The fact also that, impelled by the abundant outpouring of Divine Love, he published an immortal and clearly very noble work entitled *Treatise on the Love of God*, a faithful testimony of his most ardent love of God and indeed an admirable book, which has all those who read it proclaiming the gentleness of its author. I took great care to see to it that this book was read in its entirety in our Community as a universal remedy for all who are dispirited, a goad for the sluggish, an incentive to love, and a ladder for those striving for perfection. Would that it might be studied by all, since it is so worthy! There would be no one who could escape its ardor.

*To the twenty-seventh article, on his love for the neighbor:*—I know for certain that the love of the Servant of God for the neighbor was perfect. I give as evidence of this truth:

(1) The burning desire for each and every person’s progress in those things pertinent to salvation, inflaming others with the same ardent, zealous love of God that he himself felt. I observed this in him during private conversations.

(2) That he was deeply imbued with these words of Jesus Christ the Lord, “As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me,” is clearly evident when one considers that he never turned anyone away from him, either for temporal or for spiritual matters; in fact, among the regulations he wisely set down for

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5Cf. Mt 25:40. (NAB)
his household, he especially wanted to ensure that his servants not prevent anyone who wanted to see him from approaching him.

I shall mention only one thing especially, regarding help for the needy, among many works of piety which would be too long to recount, omitting mention of the silver vessels he ordered to be sold to aid those in extreme poverty: when a certain priest indicated to him that he was oppressed by poverty, he immediately looked for a dressing room, removed his own shirt, and handed it to the priest. Today, many miracles are performed through it.

The Servant of God was no less distinguished by his immense charity toward the neighbor in administering spiritual benefits and those conducive to salvation, for which he spared no efforts. On the contrary, he welcomed all comers with his keen, open mind, omitting nothing that could give any hope of salvation, and this to the detriment of his own health. He was motivated by two incentives: first, the great sorrow with which he was tormented by the loss of souls; second, his ardent zeal for their salvation in order that he might be able to restore to the true Shepherd those that were lost.

I learned that these things are true from my private conversations with him, as well as from his reputation among the people.

(3) That he never stopped preaching the Word of God, marvelously transforming souls by it when hearing confessions, administering the other sacraments, and catechizing children in all the places mentioned above, and he did this without sparing himself many inconveniences.

(4) That is obvious to me; I observed it in the very great honor in which he held the faithful workers in the Lord’s vineyard, and, on the contrary, in the sorrow he felt at losing any of them when he exchanged this life for death.

(5) The fervor of this Servant of God was distinguished especially in his sermons (which I considered a spoken Gospel), enkindling a powerful flame of spiritual devotion in his listeners. He distinguished himself in private and familiar conversation, in which the participants were spellbound; for he so accommodated himself to the capacity of each one that, considering himself a debtor to all, he would not let anyone who consulted him—be it on a
serious matter or simply a scruple—to leave without being satisfied and filled with consolation. When I reflected on the words of the Servant of God, they stirred such great admiration in me that I was compelled to believe that he was the man who best imitated the Son of God while he was here on earth. What increased my amazement was that such a distinguished man, involved in affairs of the greatest importance, would allow himself to be detained by any person whomsoever, no matter how lowly, sparing no efforts until the person was fully satisfied. He brought about the peace of mind and tranquillity of so many!

These things are true, public, and well known.

To the twenty-eighth article, on the cardinal virtues:—I. On prudence:—I know for many reasons that the prudence of the Servant of God was distinguished to an eminent degree.

(1) He established wonderful order and just regulations in his household and in his entire family to such a degree that nothing idle nor upsetting was apparent in his home or family.

(2) He governed his diocese so prudently—despite the fact that it was under diverse jurisdictions, namely that of the King of the French and the Duke of Savoy—that, by keeping the peace with both of them, he succeeded in uniting tranquillity in temporal affairs with that of the spiritual.

(3) By the erection and foundation of a holy Order of nuns under the title of the Visitation Sainte-Marie. With wonderful foresight, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and very holy Constitutions prescribed by him and approved by the Holy See, he gave them an admirable way of life. In this, he directed his intention and all his efforts toward God as to his ultimate end, seeking salvation not only for himself and his religious followers but also for his servants and subjects, for whom he was always very solicitous and concerned.

(4) In settling disputes and calming the movements of spirits and passions; for the prudence of the Servant of God distinguished itself very strongly on these occasions, clearing up all kinds of difficulties, despite many complications, and reestablishing everything so intelligibly that he was admired by all who, unable to resist him, yielded to him by acquiescing.
(5) In transforming the consciences of those entrusted to his direction. Experience has shown that, in a short time, the souls who obeyed the Servant of God made such great progress in spiritual matters that, changed for the better, they despised those things they had formerly loved and lovingly embraced those that were formerly odious to them.

(6) From the fact that, when everything had been settled favorably by him, as in a body already formed by his beneficial advice, with which he was marvelously endowed, he inspired them with the incentive of love—a breath of the Spirit of life, so to speak.

These things are true, public, and well known.

II. On justice:—He himself observed it zealously toward the neighbor, doing everything to maintain it very peacefully according to the Will of the Most High God, becoming all things to all people. In his diocese he exhibited a faithful personal presence, vigilance in his duties, obedience to the Supreme Pontiff and to the Church, reverence to God concerning the benefices conferred upon him, and the utmost respect. In addition, so that God might be further glorified, he outshone everyone by his good example, to such a degree that the Servant of God was admired by all who observed him.

Next, he conferred benefices according to merit, and placed persons in the benefices in keeping with the Holy Council of Trent; he gave no one an ecclesiastical office without a testimony that had been obtained beforehand regarding uprightness of life and morals, and without examining them carefully.

These things are true, public, and well known.

III. On fortitude:—It is obvious, from the arduous labors assumed and endured by him throughout the whole course of his life, that he was endowed with very great fortitude, as I learned from persons worthy of credence, especially in those things which, during the space of three years, he undertook in converting heretics in the Duchy of Chablais, as well as in Geneva, where, by mandate of the Pope, he went several times, though with great risk to his own life, sparing no difficulties, especially to restore to the bosom of the
Church (as the Supreme Pontiff had ordered him) the heresiarch Theodore de Besze. Finally, by humbling himself, he promoted only the glory of God, applying himself to the salvation of souls by administering to them the Most Holy Eucharist and the sacrament of Penance.

IV. On temperance:—I am an eyewitness to his moderation in calming the passions of the soul and the pleasures of the mind, abstaining from anything that seemed superfluous to him for the body but which others considered as necessities. In this way, he had so subjected the passions and movements of the mind to the command of reason, that not only did he always maintain the same manner of living, but even his appearance remained unchanged in both adversity and prosperity.

On the twenty-ninth article, on chastity:—The Servant of God held chastity in such great esteem that everyone, including me, considered him a virgin.

I learned from those worthy of credence—and those who have written his biography refer to this—that certain women tried to tempt the Servant of God in an enticing way to attract him to themselves, but he himself admonished them and, remorseful, they departed in tears.

On the thirtieth article, on humility:—To summarize many things in a few words, I can say that this blessed Servant of God was respectful to everyone, always disposed and ready to listen to advice; he had less confidence in his own judgment than in that of others. He never avoided the company of common persons, if he had any hope of helping them to advance spiritually. Lastly, the Servant of God always seemed to me to be a perfect, most genuine model of humility.

On the thirty-first article, on patience:—I discerned an admirable patience in him. He was not shaken by insults, nor weakened by hardships, nor upset by infirmities, and courageously endured annoyances and persecutions. He joyfully accepted for Christ reproaches and various temptations, as if they were an immense gain.

*John Calvin's chief assistant and successor as leader of Reformed Protestantism (known in France as the Huguenots).*
Following Christ, he desired to suffer; in a word, always the same within himself, he put his soul in His hands.

On the thirty-second article, on gentleness.—That there was an admirable gentleness in the Servant of God is apparent in the fact that he never allowed anger to dominate him; he always forced it to be subject to reason to such an extent that people said he had no gall, although the doctors asserted the contrary and said that he repressed his anger by strength of virtue. They proved this later on, when they examined his body and found his gall changed into little stones. I have seen some of these, which are preserved as relics.

These things are true, public, and well known.

On the thirty-third article, on prayer:—I know that among his spiritual exercises he devoted himself zealously to prayer—vocal as well as mental—with such great recollection, tranquillity of mind, and peace that, when he was in choir, which he attended with the Canons for the recitation of the divine praises, he drew the eyes of all to himself, moving them to piety and devotion, so greatly did he unite modesty with dignity in composure of body and soul. I add that, when he was about to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (which he never omitted, despite his very weighty business affairs), recollecting himself with the greatest sweetness, he entered into himself, doing so even the day before he died. He used to recite the rosary daily in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary with special devotion, meditating on it with such sweetness that it is impossible to put it into words.

These things are true, public, and well known.

On the thirty-fourth article, on the love of enemies:—The Servant of God always regarded this virtue as a companion; he never seemed to lack it on any occasion. A great many examples attest to this. I will only give one, which I learned from a person most worthy of credence and virtuous to an eminent degree. A nobleman, falsely suspecting that a certain person making his will had been persuaded by blessed Francis de Sales to leave something to the Visitation monastery in his city, entered his bedroom with a threatening expression, intending even to inflict serious injuries on him, by punching him in the mouth. Afterwards, however, on seeing that
the Servant of God remained peaceful and unperturbed, he was extremely remorseful and filled with confusion. Returning to him, he knelt down and asked his forgiveness. The latter received him very kindly, saying to him: "I have already forgiven you," and he spoke to him very affectionately.

On the thirty-fifth article, on zeal for the faith and preaching the Word of God:—This faithful servant of the family over which he had been placed by the Lord gave the appropriate spiritual nourishment to everyone, according to the capacity of each, preaching to adults and catechizing children (which he never ceased to do) with such zeal and ardent piety, that he himself wrote in his own hand little notes for the children so that they might be prepared for the things he was about to explain to them. The little ones obeyed him diligently, captivated by the charming gentleness with which he took his time to listen to everything. Abundant fruits resulted from this, for he converted to the faith many heretics who were attracted by his manner; he also drew many sinners back to a better life.

These things are true, well known, and public.

On the thirty-sixth article, on works of mercy:—With no distinction of persons, he did whatever he could to console all the sick, visiting them personally; he distributed his own goods very freely to them in private homes and in prisons, as well as in hospitals. No one lacked necessities, for he helped poor persons through almsgiving, comforted the faint-hearted, raised the spirits of the afflicted with an abundance of the sweetness with which he was filled, refreshed the sad with spiritual delights, and comforted with words of divine wisdom those condemned to death, exhorting them to endure bravely, sharing their sufferings very tenderly in the meantime; when requested by them, he administered the sacraments to them.

These things are true, and are common knowledge.

On the thirty-seventh article, on settling disputes and disagreements:—I touched on this article in article twenty-eight. Here I will relate one of many examples: the reputation of the Servant of God concerning his zeal for obtaining peace and reconciliation also attracted heretics to such a degree that he was able to reconcile persons, once disputes had been settled favorably. Asked by a
nobleman of Geneva, a heretic, to act as judge in resolving a difficulty between himself and the noble Comte de Saint-Alban, he did this so effectively and successfully that both the Catholic and the heretic went away satisfied with the decision—which is something rare.

On the thirty-eighth article, on religion:—The Servant of God possessed the virtue of religion in his heart to an eminent degree. He showed this in all his actions, especially those pertaining to divine worship, the sacred mysteries, and anything related to his own office, in private as well as in public, with such gentle recollection, deep humility, devout attention, and humble majesty that those who observed him could easily see that all his actions seemed to be immersed in the divine mysteries. By this example, he so shone before others that the eyes of all were filled with admiration and it inspired them to devotion.

And lest before God and the angels I seem to have said less than is fitting about his zeal for divine worship, born from the contemplation of divine love, I shall recall here that his abundant, gentle goodness overflowed on those who enjoyed his conversation because of the example of his devotion. I myself shared in those delights, and I recall that, when I was sick in bed about six years ago, I often reflected and mused to myself on God's great goodness! "How good you are, O God, my God, how good you are, since indeed in my Lord Francis de Sales, your creature, there is such great gentleness!"

Everyone has experienced this, and it is common knowledge.

On the thirty-ninth article, on resignation to God:—I know for certain that this Servant of God was endowed with sublime prudence—not so much natural as supernatural—granted by God to discern the interior movements of the soul and the hidden recesses of the mind. He was invited now and then by the Superior of a religious Order, whose name I refrain from mentioning out of respect, to be kind enough to listen to a novice preaching, the first time in a private home. His opinion was asked three times; finally, he replied with a sigh: "I am afraid that this young man needs our sympathy." Within the year, the unfortunate young man apostatized and denied
his religion. When this was announced to the Servant of God, he groaned and, after reflecting for a time, added: "I hope that, in the end, he will obtain the mercy of God." His hope was not in vain, for the young man, prompted by penance, returned shortly afterward to the house he had left, where, after shedding copious tears he was received once again.

These things are true as reported by those who have written his life.

*On the fortieth article, on discernment of spirits:*—Reverend Father Vincent de Paul had no reply.

*On the forty-first article, on magnanimity of spirit:*—It is evident that the Servant of God was distinguished by magnanimity of spirit in the heroic, arduous things he did, in prosperity as well as in adversity, because his spirit seemed neither elated nor depressed; for he acted both gently and firmly with the powerful as well as with heretics and those plotting against his life, always proceeding in the same way, directing all things, far from any worldly spirit, to the honor of God and the good of the Church, mindful of his own salvation and that of the neighbor. In all this, he manifested great tranquillity and a humble heart, courageous in prosperous times, and generous in adversity.

These things are true and public.

*On the forty-second article, on zeal for the souls entrusted to him:*—Zeal for the souls entrusted to him had not only enkindled the heart of the Servant of God but consumed it to such a degree that, in working unceasingly for their salvation, there was nothing he left untried, nothing he did not set in motion. Without sparing himself, he devoted himself entirely to everything conducive to this, especially to hearing their confessions, even at the risk of his health, without distinction of persons or sex, to the admiration of friends and serious persons. Indeed, though he was overwhelmed by inconveniences and hardships, which are necessarily allied in this context, he embraced them both, always taking the time for confessions, since delightful fruits are gathered from them for God.

These things are true and public.
On the forty-third article, on zeal for the perfection of nuns:—This faithful Servant of God was deeply grieved that some spouses of Christ were shamefully possessed by His adversary. He applied himself most zealously to the work of bringing them back from that very wicked tyranny to the freedom of the children of God. He succeeded very well in this. In fact, he reformed many religious houses. But not all were living according to their vows, and, since this man would leave nothing in the possession of the enemy of the human race, especially with regard to religious among whom many scandals arose, he found it difficult to restore them to their proper observance. He founded the Order of the Visitation Nuns of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which, inspired by divine influence, he established with holy Constitutions approved by the Supreme Pontiff Urban VIII, and by which, as the sweetest perfumes emanate from a very pleasant garden, it has gently attracted souls to their twenty-eight monasteries.

These things are true and public.

On the forty-fourth article, on zeal for souls in general:—The Servant of God could not conceal the fire in his own soul without its breaking out at times. To a person of note, Mother de Chantal, 7 Foundress and Superior of several communities of the Visitation Nuns of the Blessed Virgin Mary, he wrote in these words: "How sweet it is for me and how delightful a work I have undertaken for the salvation of souls!" It is no wonder, then, that so many souls from several provinces, attracted by this spiritual sweetness, entrusted themselves to his direction. But, seeing that he could not provide for so many laypersons and religious scattered over various, distant places, this fervent lover of the salvation of souls, impelled by divine counsel proceeded, despite his involvement in many affairs, to compose the book Introduction to the Devout Life to assist them and all those desiring to live the spiritual life. When it was published, everyone found it so pleasing, useful, and necessary that, filled with admiration, they publicly pointed out the Servant of God wherever he went, even in distant regions, exclaiming, "This is

7Saint Jane Frances Frémiet de Chantal (cf. VIII, 542, n. 2).
the great Francis from Geneva, who wrote the book *Introduction to the Devout Life*!"

These things are true and public.

*On the forty-fifth article, on contempt of the world:*—This Servant of God, having tasted the divine honeycomb, totally despised the earthly things which people consider of great value; for this reason he refused many benefices and appointments offered to him. Five times the King of France asked him to come to France and leave behind the duty he had undertaken, but he could not be influenced, even with great promises from the King himself. He willingly disdained honors and dignities in order to be able, as he said, to spend his time with greater freedom as he desired, in spreading the greater glory of God and promoting the salvation of souls. This, I believe, was the reason why he wrote in a certain letter, "I have chosen to be a lowly person in the house of my God rather than to dwell in the tents of sinners." 8

These things are true and well known.

*On the forty-seventh to the fifty-second article inclusive, M. Vincent de Paul replied upon being questioned:*—As to those things contained in these articles, I have nothing to say, partly because many things contained in them are not to my knowledge, and partly because what I do know I have already stated in other articles.

*On the fifty-third and fifty-fourth articles, on honor and relics:*—I know that as soon as the soul of the blessed Servant of God was separated from his body, many people gathered at the place where he was. They invoked him very devoutly on bended knee, as if he were a saint. They took whatever they could as relics: some of his blood, and relics from the body itself when it was dissected, and his clothing as well. Many miracles have taken place through these, some of which are reported by the pious men who have written his life.

*Asked about the remaining articles he replied:*—I know that in many provinces there was great devotion to the Servant of God because of his reputation for sanctity and the large number of mira-

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8Cf. Ps 84:11. (NAB)
cles. Besides what occurred publicly, I have noted one thing which happened in the Congregation of the Visitation Nuns of the Blessed Virgin Mary in this city. A nun, attacked by an unknown illness, spewed out blasphemies against the Saints, the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist, and God Himself, as often as she was wont to sing His praises; I mean uttering blasphemies and abominable curses while attending Mass, so distinctly and loudly that she was easily heard by those present. When her Superior begged her to perform some act whereby she might offer herself to God, she replied that she had no God other than the devil. Finally, her body and mind were racked with such great violence and raging fury against the Divine Majesty that often she seemed to be prompted to take her own life in order to arrive more quickly in hell, where (horrible to relate!) she could carry out her desire to curse God; this, she said, would be her greatest delight. The Reverend Superior, filled with compassion and sorrow, tried everything: she consulted Prelates and priests belonging to religious Orders, who were all persons renowned in spiritual matters, and doctors recommended by them; she tried their remedies, but to no avail. Finally, the Superior had recourse to the intercession of the Servant of God. She applied a piece of his rochet to the arm of the one who was suffering, and behold! in that moment, the nun was freed. Her soul was filled with great tranquillity, and her appetite and the sleep she had lost gradually returned. In a short time her health was completely restored, and she continues to this day to enjoy good health and sound, keen judgment; so much so, that she has carried out the principal offices of her Congregation, as if she had never experienced anything. Now she has the novices under her direction. I heard from the nun herself the truth of these things to the letter, as well as from her own aforesaid Superior when I went to the house to make the visitation.

For greater assurance of the truth, I, the notary, by mandate of the aforesaid judges, have reviewed the above-mentioned deposition and have reread clearly and distinctly, word for word, what pertains to the witness M. Vincent de Paul, to which he listened in the presence of the judges. He has stated and affirmed anew that the aforesaid matters have been and are true, public, and well known
and that the report of these things is true, public, well known, and common opinion. In faith of which the witness has signed this deposition in his own hand in the presence of the aforesaid judges, who also have signed it in their own hand. I, the notary delegated for this cause, have signed below in my own hand, and to legitimize it have affixed to it my customary notarial seal.

These Acts were executed in Paris in the above place, year, days, month, indiction, and pontificate.

Signed thus in the original draft of these proceedings.

I, Vincent de Paul, Priest of the diocese of Dax in Gascony, have so set down and borne witness to this in all truth.

VINCENTIUS DE PAULO

30. - APPOINTMENT AS SUPERIOR OF THE VISITATION NUNS OF PARIS

(May 9, 1628)¹

Jean-François de Gondi, by the grace of God and of the Holy Apostolic See Archbishop of Paris, to our dearly beloved in the Lord, Maître Vincent de Paul, priest and Bachelor of Theology, greetings in Our Lord.

Be it known to you that, being favorably inclined toward the petition and request presented to us by our dearly beloved sisters and daughters, the Superior and nuns of the Visitation Sainte-Marie of this city of Paris, asking that, in conformity with our authority and their Rules and Constitutions, we might be pleased to entrust some person of known competence and integrity whom we would judge appropriate to be their Spiritual Father and Superior under our direction, we, fully confident in your judgment, experience, piety, and integrity of life, have entrusted to you and have delegated you,


¹Saint Vincent had been Superior of the Visitation nuns in Paris since 1622 (cf. Abelly, op. cit., bk. II, chap. VII, p. 314). The first act of nomination, no longer extant, very likely limited his functions to a six-year term.
and do entrust to you and delegate you by this document, to be, for these reasons, the Spiritual Father of the monastery of the Visitation nuns, to govern and guide them in our name, following and in conformity with the powers attributed to the Spiritual Fathers of their monasteries by the Rules and Constitutions, to the extent and for as long as we so choose.

In witness whereof we have had this document signed by our undersigned secretary and sealed with the seal of our Chamber.

Given in Paris May 9, 1628.

For My Lord the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Archbishop of Paris.

BAUDOUYN

31. - RECEIPT FOR A SUM OF MONEY

(July 27, 1630)

Present was the admirable priest Reverend Messire Vincent de Paul, Principal of the Collège des Bons-Enfants, founded in the University of Paris, living there, near the Porte Saint-Victor, former Pastor of the parish in Clichy-la-Garenne, who acknowledges by this letter having received from the priest Messire Jean Souillard, present Pastor of the parish church in Clichy, by the resignation made to him by the said M. de Paul, the sum of four hundred livres tournois, from which M. de Paul has forgiven and released him, canceling the annuity of one hundred livres tournois that M. de Paul had reserved to himself and had retained on the parish. The sum of four hundred livres tournois in cash has been paid, counted, reckoned, and delivered by the said Souillard in écus, sous parisis, demi-sous, and common currency, all in good gold and silver; and

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1This shows that Abelly (op. cit., bk. 1, chap. VI, p. 27) was wrong in writing that Saint Vincent “resigned his parish unconditionally” to Jean Souillard “without retaining any annuity from it.” These four hundred livres tournois represent the arrears for four years, the length of time since the Saint had been Pastor in Clichy.
M. de Paul considered himself satisfied and does consider himself satisfied and well paid with the present sum, and has released and does release Souillard and all others from it, promising, obliging, renouncing, etc.

Drawn up and signed in the presence of the undersigned notaries before noon of Saturday, July 27, 1630, at the Collège des Bons-Enfants, in the room of M. de Paul.

VINCENT DEPAUL  SOUILLARD
CAPITAIN  CHARLES

31a. LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF SAINT VINCENT
(September 7, 1630)

Maître Vincent de Paul, priest, Licentiate in Canon Law, and Principal of the Collège des Bons-Enfants, founded in the University of Paris, on rue Saint-Victor, near the Porte Saint-Victor, being in good health, by the grace of God, coming and going in the city for his business affairs, even to the office of the said Charles, one of the undersigned notaries, was present to draw up and sign what follows.

Considering that nothing here is as certain as death, nor anything more uncertain than the day and the hour of death, he does not wish to leave this world intestate. Therefore, while his judgment and reason rule and govern his thoughts, memory, and intelligence, as is apparent to the notary by his deeds and bearing, he has willed, for the salvation of his soul, to dispose of the few possessions God in His Divine Providence has been pleased to grant him in this lowly, mortal world. For these and other reasons prompting him, he has drawn up and does draw up his last will and testament in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in the following form and manner.

2Messieurs Capitain and Charles were notaries in Paris.

First, as a faithful Catholic, he has commended and does commend his soul to God, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to Saint Vincent his patron, and to all the saints of the heavenly court of paradise, so that, through their prayers and intercession, and through the merits of the Passion and death of Our Savior and Redeemer Jesus Christ, God may be pleased to forgive his faults and offenses. He likewise wishes that his debts be paid off and, if any wrongs have been done, that they be redressed by the executor of his will named below.

Likewise, with regard to the funeral procession with his body and the burial, lights, services, prayers, obsequies, alms, and his place of burial, this is left to the will and discretion of the Priests of the Mission in Paris. He likewise gives and bequeaths to his brothers Bernard and Menion de Paul, residing in the parish of Pouy, near Dax, each and every one of his paternal and maternal possessions and the sums the testator gave them previously and paid for each of them without one claiming anything of what the testator has given and paid in a greater amount to the other. Nevertheless, the testator wills that the said sums be recognized as the property of their children his nephews, and for this purpose that their immovable goods be mortgaged for payment of these for the benefit of those children, whom, to this end, he has substituted and does substitute for his brothers the donees.

He likewise gives, leaves, and bequeaths to Marie de Paul, sister of the testator, the house, woods, and land of Missergent, located in Saint-Paul parish, also near the town of Dax, which had been sold by her husband Grégoire Delartigue to the late Jean de la Cour and his wife Charlotte Dupin, residents of the town of Dax, and which the testator bought back from their heirs, as is stated in the contract

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1Saint Vincent of Saintes; the diocese of Dax had great devotion to this martyr. Vincent de Paul considered Saint Vincent Ferrer his secondary patron.

2The Priests of the Mission apparently knew nothing of this will at the time it was drawn up. The witnesses who signed it were neighbors of the notary, "all living on the Place Maubert," and Saint Vincent designated as its executor "the esquire Louis de Saint-Martin, or, in his place, in case of death, his son Maître César de Saint-Martin."

3There is no record of when Saint Vincent's mother died. In Doc. 27 he bequeaths to his brothers all his "movable and immovable paternal goods"; in the present document he bequeaths "his paternal and maternal possessions." Might not this addition indicate that his mother had died some time between 1626 and 1630?
signed before de Blois, the royal notary of the town and dated January 21, 1627, and by the act of guardianship by which he was constituted guardian of the minor children of de Paul and Dupin, drawn up by the Seneschal of the Landes or his Lieutenant at the town seat of Dax and stated in the contract. The testator wills and intends that Marie de Paul should give and relinquish in favor of the above-named Bernard and Menion de Paul, his nephew Thomas Daigrand, and their heirs and beneficiaries in the future, half of the lands belonging to and dependent on the house and farm of Missergent. Three-quarters of the half will belong to Bernard and Menion de Paul, and the other quarter to Thomas, unless she prefers to give them a one-time payment of 250 livres for the repurchase of the half of the above-mentioned land bequeathed to Bernard, Menion, and Thomas, which money will be distributed equally to them.

And, as executor of his will, he has chosen and does choose the equerry Maitre Louis de Saint-Martin, *sieur* d'Ages, First Counselor of the King in the Court and Seneschalsy of the Landes and presidial seat of the town of Dax, or, in his place, in case of death, his son Maitre César de Saint-Martin, to whom and to each of the two and for everything he has given and does give power and authority to execute and carry it out point by point according to its form and terms, increasing and not diminishing, and to do so, has relinquished all his property into the hands of the executors, or to one of them if the other is missing, wishing that they be and remain committed to this until it is carried out in full, submitting the examination and compilation of the account of the testamentary execution to the law, jurisdiction, and constraint of the Seneschalsy of the Landes. The testator himself revokes all other testaments and codicils he may have made before this one, which he adopts as his last will.

This was done, stated, and appointed by the testator before the said notaries. He also had it read and reread to him by one of them in presence of the other and of the clerk Antoine Champineau [sic], Pierre Neruet, Nicolas Baudelot, Étienne Porchon, the clerk Louis Poullain [sic], the merchant Étienne Benier [sic], master shoemaker
in Paris, and Grégoire Espinette, master pastrycook and citizen of Paris, all living on the Place Maubert.

Saturday afternoon, September 7, 1630, and signed by them.

VINCENT DEPAUL

CHAMPIGNAN
NERUET Baudelot
PORCHON Poulain
ESPINETTE Estienne Benyer
CAPITAIN Charles

31b. - CANONICAL VISITATION OF THE CONVENT
OF THE MADELONNETTES

(Febuary 12, 1635)

On February 12, 1635, M. Vincent de Paul made the visitation of this monastery according to the prescribed order.

For this purpose, the Community brought him to the General Chapter, where all the Sisters were assembled both from the house of the Professed Sisters and from the Congregation. He began his exhortation with the main points concerning regularity and the good order of the house. After highly praising the uprightness he had noted in the hearts of the Sisters of this house in their accusations, he recommended principally: prompt and punctual obedience to Superiors; mutual support and charity for the neighbor, both with regard to faults as also to weaknesses; the practice of mortification, particularly regarding silence and refraining from behavior different from others; and avoiding particular friendships as being the plague and total ruination of religious life. In conclusion, he endeavored to inculcate in them, especially the Sisters of the Congregation, a high regard for their vows.

SISTER M. M. ALORGE, Prioress

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Document 31b. - Arch. Nat., I.I. 1689, fol. 19v-20r, taken from the register of the Chapter proceedings of La Madeleine Convent. This document was printed in Annales C. M. (1934), p. 650.
On the day and year indicated, before us the undersigned, Fabien Hervé and Claude Moussinot, apostolic notaries of the archdiocesan Court of Paris, there appeared Étienne Binet, Provincial of the Jesuits of the Province of France; Antoine Vigier, Rector of the Priests of Christian Doctrine of Paris; and Vincent de Saint-Paul [sic], Superior of the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission, who stated and declared to us that they had been requested by the Prioress of the Hospitaler Nuns of the Charity of Our Lady of the Place Royale to read the Brief previously written by His Holiness, and to examine what had to be done to enjoy the favor His Holiness is granting to the said nuns. When they had read the Brief and the Constitutions stipulated by the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Archbishop of Paris, and saw that they respected the ordinance of His Holiness and contained nothing that had not been mandated wisely and in accord with the Council of Trent and the canons and decrees of the Church, they judged that everything was such as is required for the approval of His Holiness and established by apostolic authority, without having to change anything. For all of the above, they have requested the present document of us, granted to them to serve and to be valid in the time and place that are reasonable, and have signed it together with us the aforementioned and undersigned.

ÉTIENNE BINET, and all the others, with paraphs. ¹
ANTOINE VIGIER VINCENT DE PAUL

¹A paraph is a personalized flourish added to one's signature on certain legal documents as an identifying sign; it engenders legal consequences if what the person states in the document is not true.
Jacques, by the grace of God and of the Holy Apostolic See Bishop of Saintes, greetings to all those who will read these present letters!

We hereby make it known that, having seen the booklet entitled *Constitutions of the Hospitaler Nuns of the Charity of Our Lady of the Order of Saint Augustine*, established in Paris in the year 1635, by ordinance of November 12, 1634, of the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Archbishop of Paris, with the approval of the said Constitutions within the limits of his diocese, the Brief of Our Holy Father the Pope, of November 14, 1633, for the implementation of the Constitutions, with the attestation of Reverend Fathers Étienne Binet, Provincial of the Jesuits in the Province of France, Antoine Vigier, Rector of the Fathers of Christian Doctrine established in Paris, and Vincent de Saint-Paul [sic], priest of the Congregation of the Mission, who, by order of the Archbishop of Paris, had read and carefully examined the Constitutions, which were likewise read and examined at our meeting, we have approved and authorized them. We advise our very dearly beloved daughters in Jesus Christ, the Hospitaler Nuns of the Charity of Our Lady, Order of Saint Augustine, established by our authority in the town of La Rochelle, to keep and observe them on every point, declaring nonetheless that they are not obliged to this under any punishment of mortal or venial sin in themselves, but only to the temporal punishments the Superiors or Mother Superiors might impose. We revoke, if necessary, all other Constitutions we may have approved previously at the time of the establishment of the nuns and declare them null and void in anything that might be contrary to or different from the present ones. Furthermore, we urge them to have an authentic

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1Jacques-Raoul de la Guibourgère (cf. VIII, 241, n. 7).
copy of our present approval printed in the books of the Constitutions, which they will keep in their convent and house in La Rochelle.

Executed in our episcopal palace in Saintes, at the meeting held this December 10, 1636.

JACQUES OF SAINTES

By order of His Excellency

JUILLIOT

32. - TESTIMONY CONCERNING ABBÉ DE SAINT-CYRAN

(March 31, April 1 and 2, 1639)

I, Vincent de Paul, Superior of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, about fifty-nine years of age, having sworn to tell the truth upon my Holy Orders, acknowledge that these are the facts and replies I then made before M. Lescot, Doctor of Theology and Royal Professor of Theology, delegated by His Eminence the Cardinal, Duc de Richelieu, by virtue of the commission given to His

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Document 32. - Bibliothèque Mazarin, Ms. 2481, fol. 287-91. Collet (vol. I, p. 266) states that this document is the work of eighteenth-century Jansenists, but its authenticity is supported by the words “about fifty-nine years of age.” In the eighteenth century the Jansenists believed, as did everyone, that Saint Vincent had been born in 1576; consequently, the forger would have written “about 63 years of age.” (Cf. Pierre Coste, “La vraie date de la naissance de saint Vincent de Paul,” in Bulletin de la Société de Borda [Dax, 1922]; and by the same author, Rapports de saint Vincent de Paul avec l’abbé de Saint-Cyran [Toulouse: A. Nauze, 1914], p. 30 ff.)

1Jean du Verger de Hauranne, Abbé de Saint-Cyran, was born in Bayonne in 1581. He had met Saint Vincent in Paris around 1622 and soon struck up a friendship with him. According to his nephew, Martin de Barcos (cf. Défense de feu M. Vincent de Paul), he had supposedly rendered important services to the Saint, and the Congregation of the Mission was in some measure indebted to him for the possession of the Collège des Bons-Enfants and for Saint-Lazare, as well as for the Bull of approbation obtained from the Roman Court. What is certain is that their meetings, rather frequent while Saint Vincent was living at the Bons-Enfants, became more rare after 1632 and almost ceased from 1634 on. In 1638 Saint-Cyran was arrested by order of Cardinal Richelieu and imprisoned at the Château de Vincennes. Shortly after the Cardinal died in 1642, Louis XIII allowed the prisoner to communicate with people outside. This measure of clemency was soon followed by a second: on February 16, 1643, Saint-Cyran was set free. He did not, however, enjoy the royal favor for long, dying of a cerebral hemorrhage on October 11 of the same year.

2Jacques Lescot, future Bishop of Chartres (cf. IV, 159, n. 1).

3Armand du Plessis, Cardinal Richelieu (cf. VIII, 405, n. 6).
Eminence by the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Jean-François de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris, concerning the case brought against Abbé de Saint-Cyr, detained as a prisoner in the château of the Bois de Vincennes because of some private opinions contrary to the Church, which he is accused of holding.

I acknowledge that the letter shown me by M. Lescot, which I signed with my paraph in my own hand, is the very one written and sent to me by M. de Saint-Cyr, dated Paris, November 20, 1637, and signed with the name of Abbé de Saint-Cyr, and composed of four and a half pages. 4

In addition, I state that I have known M. de Saint-Cyr for about fifteen years and that, during that fifteen-year period, I had rather frequent contacts with him and considered him one of the finest men I ever saw.

Toward the end of the year 1637, around October, I went to see M. de Saint-Cyr at his home in Paris, opposite the Carthusians, and I informed him of the rumors circulating concerning him, namely, regarding certain opinions or practices contrary to Church practice, which people were saying he held. I do not recall the number, but I do remember one of them, which is that he was making some persons do penance for three or four months before giving them absolution, and a few others that are given below.

He received this advice very calmly, and I do not recall clearly the answer he gave me at the time. This took place between M. de Saint-Cyr and me alone; no one else was present.

I think Abbé Olier, 5 Abbé Caulet, 6 and Abbé de Prières 7 had told me that M. de Saint-Cyr held to the above-mentioned practice and had told me many other things about him, which I do not remember.

Abbé Caulet told me he had spoken with Abbé de Saint-Cyr, and it had seemed to him that he had some opinions peculiar to him. I think that, when he asked me if I thought he should go to him for

4Cf. I, 392-96.
5Jean-Jacques Olier (cf. VIII, 400, n. 1).
6François-Étienne de Caulet (cf. VIII, 162, n. 3).
7Jean Jouhand, secretary of the Abbot of Cheaux.
spiritual direction, I told M. Caulet that, since he was having difficulty with those opinions, he should not follow his direction, and I am not sure whether I told him not to go to see him.

I do not know when I received the letter in question, nor who sent it to me, nor brought it to me.

He never told me what he had against our Congregation, nor what were the failures he mentioned in his letter.

I do not recall ever having forbidden the members of our Congregation to go to see M. de Saint-Cyran.

I do not know what he means in his letter about having criticized the beginnings whereby our Congregation was established in the places where it is, nor the public objection he mentions having made in his letter, and for giving reasons that changed the mind concerning it of the person to whom we are totally obliged for our establishment, unless he means the lawsuit we had against the monks of Saint-Victor and the help he gave us with that.

Neither do I know to what persecution he is referring in the same letter as having suffered, and in which he states that I abandoned him, nor what that upheaval is, nor the triple conspiracy he says was plotted against him.

Neither do I know what good turn he says he wanted to do for our Congregation but was prevented from doing by me, unless by that he means what he says about my being unwilling to follow his advice regarding our Congregation. Now, he never gave me any advice regarding the direction of the Company.

Since his return I have seen M. de Saint-Cyran once at his residence in Paris, and we said nothing there about the contents of the letter, except that I told him first of all that I thanked him for confiding in me, unburdening himself in the said letter of what he had suffered.

I do not remember having told anyone that I had received that letter and that I kept it, unless it was M. Dauzenat, who at the time was chaplain of the Duchesse d'Aiguillon 8 and is now the Cardinal's Superintendent of Finance.

8Marie de Vignerod (cf. VIII, 8, n. 5).
I kept the letter to show that I did not share the practice of M. de Saint-Cyran, nor the opinions for which he was being criticized, in the event that someone should inquire about that.

As soon as M. de Laubardemont had spoken to me on behalf of the Cardinal concerning the letter—or two days later—I brought the letter to His Eminence, and that same day I told M. Lescot that I had it.

Neither M. Barcos ⁹ nor M. Singlin ¹⁰ came to see me to ask me not to say anything against M. de Saint-Cyran.

I have never called M. de Saint-Cyran my teacher.

I do not know why the letter was not closed; I do remember that it was in a sealed paper envelope and there was no other letter with it.

Three days ago I learned from a man named M. Tardif that a copy of the letter was found among M. de Saint-Cyran’s papers, which were seized at the time of M. de Saint-Cyran’s imprisonment and that the copy was in the handwriting of the Superior of the Visitation Monastery of Poitiers. ¹¹ I think he added that the original had been sent to me by that Superior, but I know nothing about that.

I never received any letter from that Superior concerning the opinions and practices imputed to M. de Saint-Cyran, not even anything about the letter or any other topic, except one or two that I received about four years ago concerning the establishment of the Visitation Monastery in Poitiers, for which I used my influence with M. de Saint-Cyran to get him to write the Bishop of Poitiers ¹² about it.

And that is all I know about that letter.

As for what concerns the other articles on which I was also questioned by M. Lescot, I say that, with regard to the one about whether or not I heard M. de Saint-Cyran say that God has been destroying His Church for five or six hundred years, citing those words of Solomon, tempus destruendi, ¹³ and that corruption had seeped into it,

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⁹Martin de Barcos, nephew of Abbé de Saint-Cyran and a major apologist for Jansenism.
¹⁰Nicolas Singlin (cf. IV, 593, n. 4).
¹¹Mother Anne de Lage.
¹²Henri-Louis Chastaignier de La Rocheposay.
¹³The time for destroying. Cf. Eccl 3:3. (NAB)
even into doctrine, I reply that I did hear him say those words just one time, about God destroying His Church and also that it seems therefore that those who defend it are acting contrary to His intention. And I think he said that as a follow-up to some discourses on the judgments of God and the corruption of morals. At first this declaration upset me, but I have since thought that he was saying it in the sense I have been told that Pope Clement VIII 14 said he wept when he saw that, while the Church was spreading in the Indies, it seemed to him that it was being destroyed here. As for what he says about thinking that those who defend it are acting contrary to the intention of God, I think this should be explained by the actions in the life of M. de Saint-Cyran, who was, for the most part, in favor of defending the Church. Witness his writings and what he was having done for the salvation of souls. As for the rest of the article, I never heard him speak of that.

On the request as to whether I heard M. de Saint-Cyran say that the Pope and most Bishops, Pastors, etc. do not constitute the true Church, lacking a vocation and the spirit of grace, I reply that I never heard him say what is contained in the said request, except for one time, when he said that many Bishops were children of the Court and had no vocation. Yet, I never saw anyone show greater respect for the episcopate, nor for some Bishops, such as the late Bishop of Comminges, 15 as he did. He also had great esteem for the late Bishop of Geneva, Francis de Sales, and he used to call him blessed.

Asked whether I heard him say that the Council of Trent 16 changed and altered the teaching of the Church and was not a legitimate Council, I reply that I never heard him say that, nor that there had been any intrigues in the Council.

Questioned as to whether I heard him say that it is an abuse to give absolution immediately after confession, as is the usual practice, and that satisfaction had to be made beforehand, I reply that I never heard him say that it was an abuse to act in the way mentioned

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14Pope Clement VIII (1592-1605).
15Barthélemy de Donnadieu de Griet.
16Council of Trent (1545-63).
in the question. I did hear him speak of penance before absolution, but I do not recall in what terms. Experience shows, however, how he understood what is contained in the request because he had us give the mission in the parishes that depend on his abbey of Saint-Cyran and offered us many times a priory he had near Poitiers in order to do the same in the Poitiers diocese. And everyone knows that we do what is contained in the article.

Asked whether I heard him say that the just person should have no other law than the interior inspirations of grace to live in the freedom of the children of God, and that vows are imperfect, being opposed to that freedom of the Spirit of God, I reply that I never heard him utter those words that the just should have no other laws than the interior inspirations of grace, nor cite these words of Saint Paul Justo lex non est posita. 17 But I do not recall in what terms he spoke advantageously of the interior inspirations of grace, nor why he cited the words of Saint Paul. As for the vows, I am not sure I heard him say the words in the question. I do know, however, that he helped one of his nephews to become a Capuchin in the province of Toulouse, and he himself took the son of one of his friends to the reformed Carmelites.

Asked whether he said that the Jesuits and other new religious who get involved in clerical functions should be ruined, I reply that I heard him criticize some opinions of the Jesuits, especially concerning grace, and I think I heard him say that, if he had the power to ruin the Jesuits—or one of them—he would do so, although I heard him say many wonderful words of praise about the first members of their Order. I think, in addition, that I heard him say that he wished no harm to the Company of Jesuits and would give his life for it and for each of its members. This makes me think that by ruining the Jesuits he meant that, if it depended on him, he would withdraw from them the permission to teach theology. As for what is in the rest of the article, however, I know nothing.

Concerning several articles—such as whether perfect contrition is absolutely necessary for the sacrament of Penance; whether sac-

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17 The law is not aimed at the just. Cf. 1 Tim 1:9. (NAB)
ramental absolution may be given only to those who are truly contrite; that absolution does not pardon the sin but declares only that it is already pardoned, that is, in virtue of the contrition that preceded it and must precede absolution; that venial sins are not sufficient matter for sacramental absolution; that it is not necessary to confess the number of mortal sins nor the circumstances which change the kind of sin; that true faith is not distinguished from charity; that the Church has not been the true Church for six hundred years,—for these articles, I say, and for many others on which I was questioned by M. Lescot, I reply that I never heard M. de Saint-Cyran say those things. And that is all I know about M. de Saint-Cyran.

I have written everything above with my own hand and, after having reread it, I have maintained it and signed it.

VINCENT DEPAUL

33. - INTERROGATION OF ABBÉ DE SAINT-CYRAN

(May 14-31, 1639)

(1) When asked whether or not he had had any communication and was on familiar terms with M. Vincent, Superior of the Priests of the Mission:

He stated that, when M. Vincent was living at the Collège des Bons-Enfants, they saw each other more often than they had since he has been living at Saint-Lazare, but since then he had seen him only in passing; that he sometimes came to dinner at his house, even since he has been at Saint-Lazare; and that, for a few years now, there has not been much contact or communication between them—for three or four years.

Document 33. - Recueil de plusieurs pièces pour servir à l'histoire de Port-Royal, ou Supplément aux Mémoires de Messieurs Fontaine, Lancelot, et du Fossé (Utrecht: n.p., 1740), pp. 22ff. The text published in this work is the same as the copy conserved in the Bibl. Nat. (f. fr. 17.804). From this interrogation we give only what concerns the relationship between Saint-Cyran and Saint Vincent.
(5) When asked whether or not M. Vincent made some reproofs to him or gave him some charitable advice regarding matters that concerned him, M. Saint-Cyran:

He stated that, when M. Vincent came to say good-bye to him as he was about to leave for his abbey, 1 he mentioned four things to him. The first thing M. Vincent said to Saint-Cyran was that in the past the latter had told him that repentance postponed until the end of life when one was sick was not very certain. Another is that he had also told M. Vincent that he wanted to give him some advice concerning the direction of the Company of which he is Superior. He states that the other two are even less important and says he does not remember them.

(6) When asked whether or not M. Vincent has written to him since then concerning the things mentioned above:

He stated that M. Vincent did not write to him, but he had written to M. Vincent.

(7) When asked whether or not, in the letter he wrote to M. Vincent, he spoke to him of other matters:

He said “No.”

(8) We showed M. Saint-Cyran a five-page letter addressed to “M. Vincent, Superior of the Mission,” beginning with the words “Monsieur, since the last time I had the honor,” and closing “to take that of Monsieur, your, etc.,” and dated Paris, November 20, 1637, 2 in M. de Saint-Cyran’s handwriting, as he told us. Asked whether or not he had written the letter to M. Vincent:

He acknowledged that he had written the letter, signing it and adding his paraph before our registrar, and this is what he mentioned previously.

(9) When questioned about what dying person M. de Saint-Cyran was speaking at the beginning of the letter when he said he had been “sick for a month because of a bad effect he felt that a dying person, whom he had attended throughout one night, had left on him”:

1It is stated in a note that “this was the previous October.”

2Cf. 1, 392-96. This part of the interrogation is based on the contents of that letter, from which the examiner is quoting.
He stated that it was Mme. d'Andilly, who died of a hemorrhage.

(10) When asked what he meant by the words "bad effect":
He stated that he meant the infection in the room where the lady died, which caused him to have a similar hemorrhage.

(11) When asked what he meant by "the last conversations" he said "M. Vincent had with him":
He stated that they were those four things he mentioned above.

(12) When asked what he meant by the words in the letter, "I had others in my soul, of which you are unaware, and for which I have reason to fear the judgments of God":
He stated that he meant the memory of his sins, which he had in mind, in his uncertainty about the outcome of his very serious illness.

(13) When asked what he meant by the words "of the Catholic truths that were considered lies and falsehoods by those who preferred glitter and flash to the light of truth and virtue":
He stated that, by the words "Catholic truths" he meant the four things mentioned above, among which the first is so true that the ancient Fathers and Doctors and the Directors of that time were all in agreement on it, that Saint Augustine said in the name of all of them, *There is no repentance in the grave*; that Granada, 3 in an entire discourse he gives on this point, cites five reasons from Joannes Scotus; 4 and that the other three points are not of greater consequence, nor even less accepted by everyone.

(14) When asked if it is true that, by those four truths he says are so well known and accepted by everyone, he means something other than what he states, how is it possible that they are "regarded as lies and falsehoods by those who prefer glitter and flash to the light of truth and virtue," since it is certain, furthermore, that those who love the light and radiance of virtue are very careful not to believe that one has to wait until a serious illness at the end of life to do penance:

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3Luis de Granada, the Spanish Dominican renowned for his holiness, sermons, and writings.
4John Duns Scotus, Franciscan philosopher and theologian, was born in Scotland about 1266, died in Cologne on November 8, 1308, and was beatified in 1993.
He stated that he had said those things very simply, and no less for the first truth than for the others, which he does not remember. And although he does not remember all the ideas he had in mind in writing the letter, and that the words quoted above may have perhaps been written for the other two points—which he has forgotten—they can be understood very well of those who are satisfied with the externals of religion, with no concern for doing true penance, trusting too much in the mercy of God. He could also have had in mind at that time these words of Saint Augustine: *They love the glittering truth; they hate the contrary,* and states that, if he recalls the other things he has forgotten, he will say them quite freely.

(15) When asked what he meant by the words “the disposition of humility that you have deep in your heart to believe what people will have you read in the sacred books causes me to be sufficiently aware that nothing was easier than for you to accept, by the very testimony of your own eyes, what you now detest as errors,” and especially, when asked what he meant by the words “what you now detest as errors”:

He stated that he meant those four things mentioned above, as is clear from what follows, and that, because he believed that M. Vincent was truly humble, he would willingly accept them, seeing them written in the sacred books and in the Fathers.

(17) When asked what he means by “that fifth correction added to the other four” which he says M. Vincent had given him:

He stated that it is the one previously placed last of the four.

(18) When asked whether the things of which he speaks in these terms, “I decided that it was not the time to defend myself and to show you by clear, genuine proofs the importance of those things you judge to be bad, even to condemning them rashly without understanding them,” are all the same things he mentioned above:

He stated that they were all the same things, and no others.

(20) When asked whether or not he considers M. Vincent to be an upright, honorable, discreet, judicious, and well-advised man:

He replied that he considers him a charitable man of good will who professes to be prudent.
(21) When asked whether he actually believed him to be prudent and an upright man:

He stated that he believes M. Vincent is prudent but may make mistakes through lack of insight and understanding concerning matters of doctrine and learning, and not through lack of good will, and he considers him an upright man.

(22) When asked whether those four points mentioned above are the cause of his suffering the persecution he underwent, as he said in the letter:

He said “No,” and that it was because people were unhappy with what had taken place in the Blessed Sacrament house.⁵

(23) When asked whether or not he remembered at least if those four points were important:

He stated that they were trivial and of no importance and such that, as far as he could remember, his worst enemies had never reproached him for them, and that it was so easy to reply to them that, when he, Saint-Cyran, had referred them to a learned man as soon as M. Vincent left, the man found it extraordinary that he had treated M. Vincent so gently.

(24) When asked how it is possible for him to have forgotten those points, since he recalls so well that they were trivial and of no consequence, and that he had even spoken to a learned man about them, and that this learned man was surprised that he had not replied forcibly enough to M. Vincent, and who was that learned man:

He replied that people often forget the gist of things but remember the circumstances, and that the learned man of whom he was speaking is a nephew of his, named M. de Barcos.

(25) When asked again how it could be that those points slipped his mind, given the fact that M. Vincent went to see him at his home, and that he wrote M. Vincent a long letter, mentioned above, with regard to the points in question, and that he could have written the

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⁵The Institute of the Blessed Sacrament had been founded in Paris, on rue Coquillière, by Sébastien Zamet, Bishop of Langres (cf.I, 277, n. 9), with the collaboration of Mère Marie-Angelique Arnauld, Abbess of Maubuisson. The nuns there honored Jesus in the Eucharist in a very special way by perpetual adoration. (Concerning this Institute see Louis N. Prunel, Sébastien Zamet, évêque-duc de Langres, pair de France (1588-1655) [Paris: Picard, 1912], pp. 208ff.)
letter only “after letting the time pass that was necessary to let the heat escape which had risen to his [Saint-Cyran’s] head,” as he says in the letter, so he could reflect and meditate a long time on what M. Saint-Cyran had told him, and whether it is believable that he forgot those points that are so detailed, but also some points that he calls in the letter “Catholic truths” and which he affirms are “detested” by M. Vincent as errors:

He stated that he did, in fact, forget and that he delayed writing the letter to M. Vincent only to manifest his friendship for him. For, instead of saying anything to others, or speaking about the others who had persecuted him so much, he wanted to register his complaint with him so he would not think he harbored any resentment concerning what he had come to tell him at his own home, but also to let M. Vincent know that he was wrong in believing that M. de Saint-Cyran was mistaken, since the first thing with which he had reproached him, as M. Saint-Cyran had told him in the past, is a Catholic truth, held as such by the Ancients and Doctors of that time.

(26) When asked how it is possible that M. Vincent, whom M. Saint-Cyran has said is an upright, honorable, well- advised, and very discreet man, and who, as he stated in the letter, “professes to be so gentle and reserved,” dared to come to the home of M. Saint-Cyran to reproach him for the proposition that repentance, put off to a time of serious illness at the end of life, was not a very sure thing; which proposition, he stated above, is so true that it is held by the Ancient Fathers and all the Doctors of the time, and a few other propositions which he stated above were no less certain, and which do not bother him any more than the proposition above:

He stated that, although he did use the term “reproach” in his letter, he did not think M. Vincent had come to say those things to him with that intention, but had come, in his opinion, to say farewell to him because he was about to go to his abbey, so he said them by chance, more to protect himself from the reproach of M. Saint-Cyran of having abandoned him than to accuse him of any error; and what followed makes it clear that M. Vincent wanted to remove from him any cause of complaint and to be reconciled with
him because, as he was leaving, he offered him a horse as a gift for his journey, which he accepted and would give back to him on his return, as a sign to him that he wanted to remain on friendly terms with him, as usual. As for the other two forgotten propositions, he said they were trivial and of no consequence because they were similar to the first one mentioned above and it was easy to consider them as being either Catholic truths or as errors falsely attributed to M. Saint-Cyran.

(27) When asked how M. Saint-Cyran could believe that a discreet man like M. Vincent could condemn such propositions in order to be totally reconciled with M. Saint-Cyran, and that Saint-Cyran said he considered the contrary propositions to be lies and falsehoods and detested them as errors as Saint-Cyran told him, and that M. Vincent was at peace with that and left him in that state:

He stated that, if it is true that M. Vincent objected to him that the above-mentioned proposition was erroneous, and was led to infer something bad from the advice he tried to give to his Company—and which might put the teaching of M. Saint-Cyran in an unfavorable light—he could likewise have been mistaken in the other two; nevertheless, since he was doing that innocently and with all good will as regarded M. Saint-Cyran, he stopped short after hearing the first reply of M. Saint-Cyran, who did not go into the particular points about which M. Vincent had spoken to him. That was why, when M. Vincent saw that he was a little upset, he tried to calm him down and, for this purpose, offered him a horse for his journey to his abbey.

(28) When asked if he could tell at the time that M. Vincent had changed his mind and renounced the propositions he had previously believed:

He stated that the offer M. Vincent made him of his horse caused him to think that perhaps M. Vincent regretted having put them forward and upsetting him.

(29) When asked how M. Saint-Cyran, when writing to M. Vincent, spoke to him in the following terms, as to a man who still held the same errors, "There is nothing easier than for you to accept, by the very testimony of your own eyes, what you now detest as er-
rors”; and further on, “I decided that it was not the moment to de­
 fend myself but to show you, by clear, genuine proofs, the
importance of those things you judge to be bad, even condemning
them rashly without understanding them”:

He stated that, after the propositions made by M. Vincent to
M. Saint-Cyran and his rejection of them in general—with some
mild emotion on the part of M. Saint-Cyran, since he was somewhat
surprised—nothing in particular was said to clarify these proposi­
tions, and M. Vincent, after an outburst of temper exceptional for
him, returned to his composure and customary silence; that is why
Saint-Cyran wrote him the letter to explain calmly to him his opin­
ions regarding the propositions. It is likely that there was some
other proposition similar to the first one; for, otherwise, he would
have been careful not to speak like that, even though it sufficed that
the first should be so, to make authentic the words of his letter, in
which he used the word “detest” ironically; for he knows full well
that the reactions of M. Vincent are not that vehement, nor his
words so extreme.

(30) When asked what irony he could find in the last words by
which he states that M. Vincent considered his propositions “bad,
going so far as to condemn them rashly without understanding
them”:

He stated that, since they were truths and not errors, it is a mock­
ery to detest them; nevertheless, he wrote to M. Vincent in those
terms because the latter had not overtly renounced those proposi­
tions he had made to him, since he brought forward nothing on ei­
ther side to clarify the truth or the falsehood of the propositions.

(31) When asked whether he knew that M. Vincent thought the
advice he wanted to give the Company of M. Vincent was bad and
to the disadvantage of the teaching of the Church, as
M. Saint-Cyran seems to insinuate in a reply he gave above:

He stated that one of the things that offended M. Saint-Cyran
more was that, after M. Vincent had spoken to him about the propo­
sition concerning repentance of the dying, he also added that in the
past he had told M. Vincent that he wanted to give him some advice
regarding his Company. That made him think that M. Vincent felt
there might be something bad in the advice. He said to leave that for M. Vincent to explain.

(32) When asked whether or not he recalled—at least vaguely—that among the points he mentioned above there might be something contrary to the teaching or common practice of the Church:

He said “No.”

(33) M. Saint-Cyran, being warned to tell the truth and to declare frankly and sincerely what he meant by those four points about which he said M. Vincent had spoken to him, it not being at all likely from all the above that those points could be understood in the way he said:

He stated that he told the truth as he would before God and had spoken as far as possible as he was inspired by God, having always in his heart the words of the Apostle, *We speak before God in Christ.* 6 He declared that he prayed beforehand, trying to remember those propositions, and that he was very sorry to have forgotten them, since he was sure there was nothing in them contrary to Catholic truth and the practice of the Church.

(34) When asked whether or not M. Vincent had spoken to him since that time about those four points and the letter written by him to M. Vincent:

He stated that M. Vincent, on his return, had come to see him, and he told him he had never received a greater sign of friendship from M. Saint-Cyran than when the latter had written him the said letter, and M. Vincent asked M. Saint-Cyran if he had shown the letter to any other persons. When he said “No,” M. Vincent thanked him, stating he was much obliged to him; and he thinks that M. Vincent had dinner with him that day.

(35) When asked whether or not they spoke about those points in that interview:

He stated that, as far as he could recall, they did not mention them at all.

6Cf. 2 Cor 12:19. (D-RB)
(36) When questioned on the identity of those who he said "preferred glitter and flash to the light of truth and virtue":
He replied that he was speaking in general, with no one particular in mind, and that this occurred to him from reading chapter 23 of Saint Matthew's Gospel and chapter 11 of Saint Luke, where the Son of God reproaches the Jews for taking more care to embellish the exterior than the interior and compares them to whitened sepulchers, and elsewhere, speaking of the foolish and wise virgins, who represent the whole Church, He teaches us that both the good ones and bad ones all had their lamps, but some had no oil in theirs. 8

(37) When questioned as to "the good service" he said he wanted to render M. Vincent and his whole house:
He stated that by the term "good service" he meant the advice mentioned above; he felt obliged to do this because of his inclination to help all the Communities he knew, and also because he felt obliged to be of service to M. Vincent and his Company, since he himself came in the first place to seek his friendship shortly after the death of M. de Monthelon, a friend of M. Vincent, and also because of the happiness he had of helping him with his establishment of Saint-Lazare, which he never would have done since it was only a temporal matter, in which he never became involved, and he would not have become so involved if he had not thought he was helping him also in a spiritual matter, as he had been encouraged by the reports M. Vincent sent to Rome on his advice, but he did not now wish to speak of what he wanted to give M. Vincent.

(38) When asked about what he wanted to give M. Vincent:
He stated that he wanted to give him a priory and that it was M. Vincent's fault that he did not get it. 9

(39) When asked about the advice he wanted to give M. Vincent and his Company, and whether he had given it:
He stated that he has not given M. Vincent any advice since he was established at Saint-Lazare and took over the direction of the

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7Cf. Mt 23:27, Lk 11:44. (NAB)
9A note states that this was "Bonneville Priory, which belonged to M. de Saint-Cyran before he possessed his abbey."
ordinands, which occurred one year after the Company of M. Vincent had been approved by the Court and established at the Collège des Bons-Enfants.

(40) When asked whether or not, before the said time, he had given some advice to M. Vincent and his Company:

He said “No,” and that M. Vincent was in no way influenced by his advice, and it seemed that, since his establishment at Saint-Lazare, M. Vincent had avoided asking his advice, not so much because he thought he was not well informed as perhaps because of his fear that he might give him advice that was too strong and disproportionate to the intention M. Vincent had of establishing and guiding his Company gradually. This has become more apparent to him ever since unfavorable rumors have been circulated against him, satisfying himself with seeing him only occasionally.

(41) When asked what advice he wanted to give him:

He stated that he knew nothing in particular about that, and that people know he is as slow to give advice as he sometimes seems ardent in wanting to give it, and that he only takes it from the source, after pondering the rules and directions God has left us in His Church.

(42) When asked what he means by this source:

He stated that it was God, who has Counselor as one of His titles.

(43) When asked whether he thinks he never gives any advice that does not come from God:

He stated that he means only that he prays for a long time before giving any advice.

(44) When asked if he disapproved of the establishment of M. Vincent and his Company and M. Vincent’s care of the ordinands:

He stated that he was very careful not to disapprove of it, since he helped him with the lawsuit he had for the Saint-Lazare house, well aware that the Archbishop of Paris \(^{10}\) gave his consent only on that condition. He did find it strange, however, that he added that to his original plan one year after having been approved, and he thinks he

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\(^{10}\)Jean-François de Gondi.
could have had good reasons for doing so, which M. Saint-Cyran
respects, although he is ignorant of them.

(45) When asked how he could state above that he did not recall
any specific advice he wanted to give M. Vincent, considering that
he just said that M. Vincent did not ask his advice, perhaps because
M. Vincent was afraid that he might give him disproportionate ad-
vice, too strong for his Institute:

He said that this had nothing to do with it and that it sprang per-
haps from M. Vincent’s thinking wrongly that he was much too se-
vere, and whom he perhaps judged lacking in condescension; he
respects M. Vincent’s thinking on this.

(46) When asked about the persecution he mentions in his letter,
which he says he had to endure:

He stated that it has nothing to do with the present affair.

(48) When asked again to tell us the identity of those persecutors
and the nature of that persecution:

He stated that the leader of that persecution is the person who
presented a report against him to His Eminence, and that others
were involved in it because of interests of their own.

(49) When asked what leader presented the report, the nature of
that report, and how he knows that the report was presented by the
leader to His Eminence:

He stated that, before he was detained, the report was presented
by the Bishop of Langres, 11 whose name he had not wanted to give.

(55) When questioned about the persecution against him, of
which the Bishop of Langres was the leader:

He stated that the persecution consisted in spreading false ru-
mors against him.

(56) When asked what false rumors were spread against him:

He stated that he was accused of teaching false doctrine, such as
rejecting the Council of Trent, condemning the whole Church and
its practices and sacraments, especially the sacraments of Penance
and the Eucharist; and that he maintained that the priest did not ab-
solve, but he declared that absolution had already been given; that

11Sébastien Zamet.
the sacrament of Confirmation did everything and that sacrament removed guilt and punishment; and that, in addition to all these things, of which the rumors are public, the Bishop of Langres, in ways unknown to him, was secretly behind several bad reports against him, using all sorts of persons whom he felt were the right people for that.

(57) When questioned regarding those reports:

He stated that the Bishop of Langres had bought his bishopric, or his father had bought it for him. 12

(77) When asked whether or not he found a place to live near the Carthusians in order to visit the nuns of Port-Royal more often:

He stated that he left the house in the Clôtre-Notre-Dame only when he had to do so, and did his best to find another house in the Clôtre. Not finding any, he asked M. Vincent to let him use a room in the Collège des Bons-Enfants for the winter, but M. Vincent could not do this so he had to be satisfied, when approached by M. de Marcheville, with taking half of his apartment, located near the Carthusians, left vacant by M. d’Igou.

(80) When questioned about how he knew Mother Anne de Lage, Superior of the Visitation convent in Poitiers:

He stated that Mlle. d’Abain, foundress of that house, had asked him in Paris to negotiate with the Visitation nuns in Paris for the foundation they intended to make in Poitiers of one of their houses. Unable to refuse them this service because of his obligations toward the Archbishop of Poitiers, 13 he asked M. Vincent to do it, which he did.

(90) When questioned about how and why M. Vincent abandoned him, as he states in the letter written by him to M. Vincent, in the midst of the “persecution” he claims to have endured:

12A note states that “this reply is confusing, and Saint-Cyran deliberately made it so. The reason will be seen in the letter used in this interrogation (cf. I, 392-96.). Furthermore, there is every reason to believe that one of the four warnings Saint-Cyran gave the Bishop of Langres when he was sick concerned the manner by which he had entered the episcopate. The Prelate received them very well, and, when he recovered from his illness, he wrote to Saint-Cyran about resigning his diocese. Not wishing to get involved in this business, Saint-Cyran did not reply to him; this vexed the Bishop, who wrote to him a second time, informing him that he wanted to discuss it with M. Olier. Saint-Cyran had M. Vincent intervene in this affair.”

13Henri-Louis Chastaignier de La Rochepeousy.
He stated that he thinks M. Vincent did so through timidity, fearing to offend many persons of quality, his [Saint-Cyran's] enemies.

(91) When asked about "the triple cabal movement" he says was formed against him:

He stated that he meant the cabal of Abbé de Prieres, who enlisted several religious and others on his side; the second one—the one of the Bishop of Langres—with Mme. de Pont-Carré, who was living at Port-Royal; and the third one, that of the Jesuits and certain members of the Oratory who had some part in the rumors that were spread against him concerning his above-mentioned maxims. He also stated, regarding this question, that the Bishop of Langres and Abbé de Prieres first had their cabals separately, but since then have joined together and, although the Jesuits acted more secretly, they did more harm to him than the others, even though he had not given them any cause for this. On the contrary, without citing the other services he rendered them, he has always refused to give to several persons the title of the grand priory dependent on the abbey of Saint-Cyran, because the Jesuits had the use of it for about twenty years.

(92) He was asked whether or not it is true that M. Vincent went to him to talk about those maxims and practices contrary to the Church that are mentioned above, given the fact that, in the letter in question, he complained to M. Vincent that he had taken advantage of the movement formed against him and had joined the others to crush him, adding that to the excesses of the others, and that he undertook to come to tell him in his own house what none of the others had dared to say. And when he was again challenged to tell us if that is not what is meant by those maxims and practices:

He stated that it seems that way, but it is something else, and he means that M. Vincent told him the same things, and that is why he subscribes to nothing else, other than that he learned them from the rumor about the cabal and those who were carrying on that persecution against him.

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14Jean Jouhaud.
(94) When questioned about the identity of "that excellent Bishop of the house" about whom he says he wrote to M. Vincent:

He stated that it was the Archbishop of Poitiers, and that he wrote the said letter at Dissay, his country house, which is three leagues from Poitiers.

(95) When asked why the letter is dated from Paris:

He said that this was a mistake and that he wrote it in Dissay.

(96) When asked why the letter was not sealed nor seems to have been sealed:

He stated that it was enclosed in an envelope.

(97) When asked by whom he had the letter delivered to M. Vincent:

He stated that he sent it in care of Mother Anne de Lage, Superior of the Visitation Monastery of Poitiers, to have her deliver it to M. Vincent, whom she knows very well because he is Visitor of the Paris house.

(98) When asked what he meant by the "generous amends" he says were "made to him by Mme. de Longueville one month before her death, before a famous person who governed many others" and who he says was "not unknown" to M. Vincent:

He stated that for a long time Mme. de Longueville felt offended by him because Mlle. de Chamesson, who was a close friend of hers, had left the Blessed Sacrament house, and she, along with the Bishop of Langres, believed that Saint-Cyran was responsible for this departure. This made it easy for her to believe the unfavorable reports the Bishop of Langres gave her about Saint-Cyran's teaching, and she went to inform M. Desclaux at the home of M. de Laubardemont that there was great disorder in the Blessed Sacrament house, caused by Saint-Cyran, who left the nuns six months without hearing their confession or allowing them to confess to others. M. Desclaux replied that he himself had heard their confessions almost every week. The Lady told this to M. Desclaux so he would inform His Eminence about it, and Saint-Cyran says that he went to

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15Louise de Bourbon (cf. I, 285, n. 4).
16Pierre Desclaux, confessor of Cardinal Richelieu and brother of Jacques Desclaux, Bishop of Dax.
hear the nuns' confession every week. Shortly before her death, Mme. de Longueville told the Abbess of Maubuisson 17 that many false rumors had been spread about Saint-Cyran, but she acknowledged that they were not true.

(99) When asked whether or not a long time had ever passed without his hearing or having someone else hear the confessions of the nuns at the Blessed Sacrament as well as those at Port-Royal:

He said "No," and that he heard their confessions weekly; as for those who wanted to make a general review of their whole life and to spend a time of penance in order to make greater satisfaction to God, he was very careful to see them several times a week, within the period of the time limit for absolution, which is mentioned above, in order to see what progress they were making or how they were using that time.

(101) When asked how long at the most he put off absolution:

He stated, as before, that he was always ready to give absolution, and he recalled that certain nuns, like Sister Marie-Angélique and others, sometimes went three or four months without receiving it and without receiving Holy Communion, although he made many journeys to urge them to do so.

(103) When questioned about those "opinions," which he said in the letter should "be examined and authorized with the approval of the Prelates who are always around M. Vincent, whenever he chooses to speak to them about them at leisure":

He stated that he had spoken a little rashly because he claims to have no other opinions than those found in the teachings of the Apostles and their successors, and that he said previously to M. Vincent that he should recognize this by the witness of his own eyes, with no need to use artificial proofs because those opinions or truths are all contained in the official texts of the Church; namely, Scripture, the Church Fathers, and the Councils.

(104) When asked if some of his opinions are different from the opinions commonly accepted in the Church:

He said "No."

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17Mère Marie-Angélique Arnauld.
(105) When asked if he believed that, among the opinions and practices commonly accepted now in the Church, there were some that may not conform to Scripture, the holy Councils, or the holy Fathers, with the result that those who follow them incur the reproach stated above; namely, that they have *pondus et pondus*: \(^{18}\)

He said “No,” and that there were two sorts of opinions and practices: some that the Church tolerates and others that it approves; and, having said this, that he tolerated everything it tolerates and approved everything it approves.

(106) When asked why, if those opinions are no different from the ones commonly held, he wrote to M. Vincent to have all his opinions examined and authorized by the approval of the Prelates, whenever he chooses to speak to them about them at leisure, and why M. Vincent went to see him to warn him about those opinions, if they were the common ones:

He stated that M. Vincent spoke to him in all innocence about those things, and more to give him some reasons for the complaint he was making to him of having abandoned him than for any ill treatment he had received from him, and that perhaps M. Vincent did indeed reproach him for his opinions, but the only thing it proved was that M. Vincent had learned them from his enemies.

(107) When asked about the “good service” he stated he had “wanted to render M. Vincent’s house,” and which M. Vincent was unwilling to accept, and even believed that not accepting what M. Saint-Cyran wanted to do for his house was rendering a good service to it:

He stated that he did not know what advice in particular and what service he might have rendered to it, but at the time he would have prayed to God and would have done nothing without consulting him, as he did for his temporal affairs.

(108) When asked why he had “not wanted for anything in the world to play any part” in the establishment of M. Vincent in the places where he is:

\(^{18}\) *Weights and weights.* Cf. Prv 20:10. (NAB) The meaning here is probably that the opinions of some authorities lend to a discussion greater weight than others; not all sources and interpretations have the same weight of authority and/or influence.
He stated that he had said that because he wanted spiritual affairs—as are those of holy Communities, especially those of priests—to be handled in a spiritual way and without making contracts that might give rise to lawsuits, which divert the blessings of God.

(109) When asked how the establishment of M. Vincent, in the places where he is, prevents spiritual affairs from being treated in a spiritual manner:

He stated that, in order to become established in the Saint-Lazare house, M. Vincent signed several contracts, which resulted in many lawsuits.

(110) When asked why he acted “against the judgment of his conscience,” as he says in his letter, since it is never permissible to act in that way:

He stated that his conscience would never have allowed him to undertake such a lawsuit for himself, which would be the cause of such a contract, and that he thought, nevertheless, that he could do, through condescension for others, what he could never have done for himself.

And on our pointing out to him that it is never allowed to uphold or pursue a bad affair, much less to undertake one, he stated that he had done that dispensatorie, 19 as Saint Bernard stated in a similar case; then, too, since conscience is dependent on knowledge, he would like to think that M. Vincent had good intentions, based on good authority and reasons, and Saint-Cyran wanted to show him that he was not so rigid or unaccommodating as M. Vincent sometimes thought.

(111) When asked about the things he said he had “supported in a public dispute, even to getting the person toward whom M. Vincent had the greatest commitments to change his mind, by force of reasoning and pressure”:

He stated that those things were all incidents from the lawsuit M. Vincent had for the Saint-Lazare house, and that it is toward the

19By way of exception; giving himself the benefit of the doubt.
Advocate General M. Bignon\textsuperscript{20} that M. Vincent is entirely obligated for that. M. Bignon had so many objections in that business of M. Vincent that he had a very hard time winning him over with contrary reasons, which would have been of no use if M. Bignon had not found some ingenious solution to make a success of the affair.

(112) When asked about the identity of the "colleague of the Advocate General," mentioned by Saint-Cyran in his letter:

He stated that it was the Attorney General.\textsuperscript{21}

(113) When asked about "the words that the Son of God said to those who mistreated Him," and which he stated could be said by him in answer to M. Vincent:

He stated that he did not know what made him write those words.

(114) When asked what he meant by the words "I persist in maintaining and in adoring in my heart what the succession of the apostolic doctrine, by which we destroy heretics and without which the Church could not have survived, taught me through the voice of the same universal Catholic Church for twenty-five or thirty years," and what that doctrine is and whether he means that M. Vincent did not adhere to it:

He stated that he said that only to defend himself against those who published abroad that he had private opinions, whereas he has only those that are publicly held, claiming to be (as Saint Gregory the Great says of Job), as every Bishop should be, a disciple of the universal Church, in which resides the apostolic succession, and he does not mean that M. Vincent did not believe this doctrine, but spoke to him that way for fear that the common rumors being spread about him might alter the good opinion he had of him.

He further stated that there was nothing he hated more than speaking from his personal opinion on matters of faith and of what concerns religion and Catholic devotion; that he would be very sorry to have put forth anything outside of faith and tradition; all else, regardless of any beauty and radiance of truth it may seem to have, is suspect to him; at least he refrains as far as possible from ap-

\textsuperscript{20}Jérôme Bignon (cf. I, 242, n. 1).

\textsuperscript{21}Mathieu Molé (cf. VIII, 195, n. 1).
proving it and, just as often, from condemning it, out of respect for the persons who say it, to such a degree that, in the space of ten years, he put up with people speaking with him about frivolous things that were uncertain and not very solid, which he nevertheless endured in order not to offend anyone and to avoid any disputes.

(115) When asked for what “things he finds fault with in the Institute” of M. Vincent:

He said he had forgotten all but two: one, that when he asked M. Vincent to give a mission in his abbey, he learned that the Priests of the Mission spoke too freely in the pulpit—to his way of thinking—about matters referring to purity, in order to turn the country folk away from the sins that are contrary to it; the other is that people said that in confession they asked for too many details on these same matters. He also feels that those priests seemed to be satisfied that the peasants who could not go to confession on their own might tell their sins to the confessors, after having questioned them on them one by one, without being too concerned about their interior disposition, which the peasants who presented themselves for confession were most often lacking, believing that it sufficed to tell their sins, after having been questioned about them.

(116) When asked what he meant by the words “I wanted to rid you of certain practices that I have always tolerated in your teaching, when I saw how attached to them you were and even more firmly resolved to maintain them, since they were sanctioned by the advice of the important persons you consulted”:

He stated that, by the above words he meant the things mentioned in his last reply and that, if any others came to his mind, he would say them. Then he said that he recalled that M. Vincent used to take priests who were too young, lacking either the knowledge or the virtue that should be practiced for a long enough time in order to hear confessions, especially since he sent them to far off places to carry out, either alone or with a companion, the functions of the Mission.

(117) When asked to identify the “important persons” on whose advice those practices of M. Vincent were sanctioned:
He stated that he meant none other than the late M. Duval,\textsuperscript{22} Doctor of Theology and Royal Professor of Theology, from whom it was quite obvious that M. Vincent was seeking advice, because he refused the priory he offered him, saying that he was doing so on the advice of M. Duval.

(118) When asked how he could think that M. Duval had approved or recommended the above-mentioned practices, especially the one whereby the priests of M. Vincent’s Congregation saw to it that the peasants tell their sins to the confessors, after they had asked them one by one, and were not sufficiently concerned about their interior disposition, and also that M. Duval had recommended or approved of M. Vincent’s taking priests who were too young:

He stated that he had nothing against M. Duval, but he said things the way he thought them.

(119) When asked about “the blessed man of our time who had said of directors of souls of our era that, of ten thousand who make profession of being so, it is very difficult to choose a single one of them”:

He stated that it was the Bishop of Geneva,\textsuperscript{23} who expressed it in the following way in his book, \textit{Introduction to the Devout Life}, “Avila, a Spanish priest, stated that we should choose one director out of a thousand; and I say out of ten thousand, for there are fewer of them than people think.”

(120) When asked why, in concluding his letter he stated that he “is setting aside the position of teacher to take that of a very humble and very obedient servant” of M. Vincent:

He stated that it was said lightly and by way of a simple excuse, while accepting that M. Vincent seemed to be trying to instruct him by speaking to him as he did of the tradition of the Church and all the rest.

(121) When asked whether or not M. Vincent had called him his teacher:

He said “No.”

\textsuperscript{22}André Duval (cf. IV, 322, n. 1).

\textsuperscript{23}St. Francis de Sales (cf. VIII, 39, n. 10).
(122) When asked whether or not he sent the letter unsealed to Sister Anne-Marie de Lage, Superior of the Visitation Monastery of Poitiers:

He said he did send it unsealed to the Superior.

(123) When asked about his intention in sending it open like that:

He stated that it was getting late and the mail coach was about to leave; besides, he was sure that the Superior did nothing except what he instructed her to do, and he had complete confidence in her.

(138) When asked whether he said or believed that actions performed by vow are more perfect than those done without a vow:

He stated that actions performed by vow are more perfect than those done without a vow.

(139) When asked whether he distinguished the counsels from the precepts:

He said "Yes."

(140) When asked whether he approved the voluntary poverty vowed in religious Orders:

He said that he approved.

(141) When asked whether he still maintained the opinions mentioned above concerning absolution, attrition, vows, poverty, the counsels, and the other aforementioned things, and whether or not he ever defended the contrary or induced others to defend or approve it, if they held it:

He stated that he never had any contrary opinions, nor even the slightest temptation regarding this, and never induced others to contrary opinions, which he always disapproved in those who held them, as will attest the Fathers of Christian Doctrine, 24 whom he helped to become established in Paris; the Carmelite Fathers of Les Billettes; the Abbot of Saint-Nicolas in Angers (at whose request he went to Angers to establish the Reform in that abbey, where, during a meeting of several diocesan priests and religious he was the only one to consent to bringing in the Reformed Fathers); the Discalced Carmelites; the Bernardines; the Carthusians; the Benedictines, and others, to whose houses he brought some religious, most of

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24Priests of Christian Doctrine (Doctrinaires) Cf. VIII, 172. n. 2.
whom were fed in his house, not to mention the Sisters of Calvary, whom he saved from the violence of those who were trying to get their house in Poitiers; the Sisters of the Annunciation in Boulogne, whose Rules he drew up; and several others.

(143) When asked whether or not he said or believed that what is usually said, that in confession a penitent is *converted from attrition to contrition*, is inadmissible:

He stated that he never condemned this maxim but that, on the contrary, if attrition sufficed with absolution—as he said above that it did suffice and never said or believed the contrary—it follows as a necessary consequence that this maxim is true.

(144) When asked whether or not he put off giving absolution, as he said above, so that those who lacked contrition, might obtain it:

He said that it was not for that reason that he put off giving absolution but for the reasons he stated above, which are the same ones for which the Church did so in the past.

(145) When asked whether or not he believed that, when a penitent has confessed his faults and expressed his regret for having committed them, with a firm purpose of amendment, a confessor should believe him and give him absolution, without waiting for the penitent to have contrition:

He said “Yes, unless the penitent himself wishes to wait.”

(146) When asked whether or not he said or believed that venial sins are not sufficient matter for sacramental absolution:

He stated that he never said nor believed that.

(147) When asked whether or not he said or believed that it was unnecessary to confess the number of mortal sins or the circumstances that change the kind of sin:

He stated that the idea never entered his mind.

(175) When asked whether or not he kept the original or the rough draft of the letter he sent to M. Vincent, considering that the letter, which completely fills five large pages, has no erasures and is very well written in comparison with the way he usually writes on his own and for himself alone:
He stated that he wrote a sort of rough draft of the letter, which he expanded in the copy, and that he tore up the rough draft because it had mistakes, and that he rarely did a rough draft of his letters.

(176) We pointed out to him that, since he wished nothing else of the nun in question than to have a copy of the letter written by him, he should not have torn up the rough draft—even though it had some mistakes, as he says—but rather, in view of the fact that he was under great pressure from the mail coach from Poitiers, he should have kept it and expanded it, for he might have done that rather than have it copied completely by a nun:

He stated that he was in a hurry to go to dinner at the residence of the Archbishop of Poitiers and was pressured by the mail coach, and that is why he did not expand the rough draft. Furthermore, it is obvious that he wanted the nun to see it and to make a copy of it.

(177) When asked how it is that he just said he did not want to keep the rough draft of his letters, given the fact that he was so concerned about getting a copy of that one, even to the point of instructing the nun to make and send him a copy of it:

He stated that he had wanted a copy of the letter because he did not trust his memory very much and did not want to forget the points concerning M. Vincent. He also wanted to declare that no one in the world had seen the letter since his arrival in Paris.

(178) When asked how he could have lost it so soon, as he stated in his responses on this topic, since he was so careful to keep in mind the points that concerned M. Vincent:

He stated that he kept in mind the points concerning M. Vincent's house, and for everything else he referred to what he said previously.

(179) When asked how he could have said above that the four points for which M. Vincent went to see him at his Paris residence, and concerning which he wrote the letter to M. Vincent from Dissay, are points on which the ancient Fathers, Doctors, and Directors of that time were so much in agreement and which were accepted by each of them, considering that Sister Anne de Lage, in her letter to M. Saint-Cyran, speaks very differently of them in these words, "To be honest with you, Father, these upsets serve only to af-
firm me more in the belief that your opinions are from God, since they are so harshly persecuted by the world, or, to put it better, by certain worldly interests found in persons dedicated to God," and that even M. Saint-Cyran said in his replies yesterday that these are things that are not accepted by the Doctors and Directors of the time and which have failed to be observed since the mendicant religious became involved in administering the sacraments and shortly before that:

He stated that he could not prevent the Sister from saying and writing what she wished, especially since she had such great facility in writing. As for the mendicants—for whom, he might add, he has the greatest respect—he denies having said that they had introduced this novelty, but only that he had heard it said.

(180) When asked to identify those persons dedicated to God, who, says Sister Anne, persecuted his opinions so harshly:

He stated that it was the Bishop of Langres and Abbé de Prières.

(188) When asked whether or not he said or believed that the Jesuits do a great deal of harm to the Church and that it would be good for the welfare of the Church to get rid of them, or something similar:

He stated that he never said that; on the contrary, he often told his friends that some occasion might arise where he could be of service to the Jesuits, when they were being abandoned by those who called themselves their friends, to say nothing of the services he has already rendered to the Jesuits and for which he was thanked by Father Jacquinot the Provincial.

(189) When asked whether he did not at least say that it would be a good idea to prevent the Jesuits from teaching theology and that, if it were up to him, he would prevent them:

He stated that he did not say that, but, to be honest, he sometimes complained to his friends that the Jesuits were allowing certain books, written by someone in their Society, to be published, without being willing to vouch for them, and they deliberately did not put in them the approval it had been customary to put in books.

(190) When asked his opinion of the Council of Trent and whether he considered it a true, ecumenical Council:
He stated that he considered it a true, ecumenical Council and never had any doubt about it, and that he had expressed this and made it public in a sermon he gave in the church of the Fathers of Christian Doctrine on the feast of Saint Charles Borromeo. In addition, he taught the catechism of the Council to three persons. Besides that, he stated that he had a public document signed before a notary, which contains the profession of a religious, on condition that the religious would live with the others in the way prescribed by the Council of Trent.

(191) When asked if he believed that he and all the faithful were obliged to accept all the canons of the Council as decisions and articles of faith:

He stated that he accepted the canons of faith as faith and those of discipline as discipline, without ever getting involved with distinguishing the chapters of the Council from the canons of the Council.

(193) When asked whether or not it is true that he said that the Church is not, as is usually believed, the assembly of the faithful, composed of the Holy Father, Prelates, and Pastors, and such as we see it at present; and that the Church is other than it was before the last six hundred years, or at least before the last few centuries; and that, since that time, corruption has not only crept into morals but also into several points of doctrine, so that such a body cannot be considered Church in another sense nor for another reason except that it has followed after the true Church, in the same way as a muddy, contaminated stream, occupying the place and bed of a river whose water used to be clear, fresh, and healthful, to which the name of that same river has been given, even though it is changed by the contamination put into it:

He stated that he had said nothing about all that.

(194) When asked if, by this Church, which he says should last forever and be infallible, he means the assembly of the faithful, composed of the Pope, Prelates, etc., as we have it now:

He stated that he did not mean anything else.

25November 4.
(195) When asked whether or not he said that there was some corruption in the Church, not only with regard to morals but also on certain points of the doctrine of faith:

He stated that he never said that.

(196) When asked if he always held what he just said about the Council of Trent and about the Church, and never put forward or believed the contrary:

He stated that he always maintained it and never changed his opinion on it.

(199) When asked whether or not he said that God Himself is destroying the Church or allowing it to be destroyed, that the time of building has passed and that of destroying has come, often quoting on this topic the passage, *a time for building, a time for tearing down.*

He stated that he did not remember to whom he might have said that, and that, if he did say it, it was in a different sense from the one reported above.

33a. - APPOINTMENT AS A VISITOR OF THE PRINCIPAL CONVENT OF THE JACOBINS IN PARIS

(January 13, 1641)

Wishing to take steps in the disputes that have arisen between the Superiors and religious of the principal convent of the Jacobins in this city of Paris, His Majesty the King and his Council have appointed and do appoint the Bishop of Meaux his Councillor in his Councils and head Chaplain of His Majesty, and M. de Verthamon, who is also a Councillor of His Majesty in his Councils and Ordinary Master of Requests of his royal household, together with M. Vincent, Superior General of the Fathers of the Mission; Father D. Maurice, Provincial of the Barnabites; Father Dom Joyeux, Prior

[26Cf. Eccl 3:3. (NAB)]


1Dominicans.
of the Carthusians; Father Julian [de] Hayneufve, Rector of the Jesuit College; and Father [Mathieu], Prior of the Reformed Jacobins of St-Honoré Convent in this city of Paris; or three of the priests of the Order in the absence of the others, in order that the disputes may be regulated and terminated by them, and he ordains by provisional judgment whatever they will judge appropriate for the good order and discipline of the said house, notwithstanding any oppositions or appeals. Should any of these arise, His Majesty has reserved cognizance to himself and his Council and has prohibited it to all other judges.

SEGUIER VERTHAMON

Saint-Germain-en-Laye, January 13, 1641

34. - VISION OF THE THREE GLOBES

[1641]

We, Vincent de Paul, most unworthy Superior General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, attest that, about twenty years ago God granted us the grace of becoming acquainted with the deceased, our most worthy Mother de Chantal, Foundress of the holy Order of the Visitation Sainte-Marie, through frequent communications with her by word and writing, which God was pleased to give me, not only at the time of the first journey she made to this city about twenty years ago but also during others she made here since that time. In all of them she honored me with her confidence by communicating to me her interior life, in which it always seemed to me that she practiced all sorts of virtue, and, in particular, that she

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2The [de] is crossed out.
3The name left blank here is given in the following document (pièce 109).
4On January 28, 1641, the following order was issued by the King's Council: "The visitation of the principal convent of the Jacobins is prescribed and will be made by three of the above-mentioned commission members [the Vicar-General of the Gallican Congregation of the Dominicans, Father de Hayneufve, and Father Mathieu, O. P.]" (cf. pièce 109).

Document 34. - Archives of the Visitation, Annecy. original autograph document.
was filled with faith, although she had been tempted with contrary thoughts throughout her entire life.

She also had a confidence in God unlike any other and a sovereign love of His Divine Goodness, along with a sound, prudent, temperate spirit, steadfast to an outstanding degree. She possessed humility, mortification, obedience, and zeal for the sanctification of her holy Order and for the salvation of the souls of the poor people to a sovereign degree. In a word, I never noticed any imperfection in her, but rather the constant practice of all sorts of virtue, and, although she apparently enjoyed the peace and tranquility of mind experienced by souls who have attained such a high degree of virtue, she still suffered such great interior trials that she told and wrote me many times that her mind was so filled with all kinds of temptations and abominations that she made herself constantly refrain from examining her interior life, since she could not bear the sight of her own soul, so full of horror that it seemed to her to be the image of hell. Although she suffered in that way, she never lost her serene expression nor slackened in the fidelity God was asking of her in the practice of Christian and religious virtues, and in the extraordinary concern she had for her holy Order.

This makes me believe that she was one of the holiest souls I have ever known on this earth and that she is now happy in heaven. I have no doubt that one day God will make known her sanctity, as I hear He is already doing in several places in this kingdom in several ways, one of which was experienced by a trustworthy person, ¹ who I am sure would rather die than lie.

This person told me that, on hearing of the critical illness of our deceased, he went on his knees to pray for her, and the first thought that came to his mind was to make an act of contrition for the sins she committed and usually commits. Immediately afterward, a small globe of fire appeared to him; it rose from the earth and proceeded to join another globe, larger and more radiant, in the upper region of the air; then the two became one and rose higher, and en-

¹Saint Vincent himself (cf. II, 241, n. 3).
tered and expanded into another globe, infinitely larger and more brilliant than the others. He was told inwardly that the first globe was the soul of our worthy Mother; the second, that of our blessed Father; and the other the Divine Essence. The soul of our worthy Mother was reunited with that of our blessed Father, and both with God, their Sovereign Principle.

In addition, he said that, while celebrating Holy Mass for our worthy Mother immediately after hearing the news of her happy death, and when he was at the second Memento, where the dead are prayed for, he felt that it would be well to pray for her because perhaps she was in purgatory for certain words she had said some time ago, which seemed to suggest venial sin. At the same time, he saw again the same vision, the same globes, and their union, and felt interiorly that this soul was happy and had no need of prayers. This has made such an impression on that man that, whenever he thinks of her, he sees her in that state.

What may cause doubts concerning this vision is that the person esteems the sanctity of that blessed soul so highly that he never reads her Responses without weeping, believing that it is God who inspired that blessed soul with what they contain and that, consequently, this vision is a product of his imagination. What makes one think that it is a true vision, however, is that he is not prone to visions and has never had any except this one.

In witness whereof I have signed this document with my own hand and sealed it with our seal.

VINCENT DEPAUL

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2Coste mistakenly read resplendirent [shone] for répandirent [expanded].
3Saint Francis de Sales.
4Réponses de notre très honorée et digne Mère Jeanne Françoise Frémion, Paris, MDCXXXII.
Statement of how the Company of the clergy of Paris proposes to live, with the help of God and according to the will of the Archbishop, in order to remain in the dispositions God was pleased to give them during the retreat they made to prepare themselves for the reception of Holy Orders.

(1) The purpose of the Company of the clergy who meet every Tuesday at Saint-Lazare or at the seminary of the Congregation of the Mission ¹ is to honor Our Lord Jesus Christ, His eternal priesthood, His Holy Family, and His love for those who are poor. Thus, each member must strive to conform his life to His, to procure the glory of God in the priestly state, in his family, and among the poor—even among those in the countryside—according to the duty and talents God has given them.

(2) It will be composed only of clergy promoted to Holy Orders, who will not be admitted until after sufficient examination of their conduct.

(3) Those desiring to be admitted into the said Company will make a retreat at Saint-Lazare as soon as possible and a general confession of their past lives. If they have done so in the past, they will make one only from the time of their last one.

(4) Members of the Company will go to confession at least once a week and, as far as possible, always to the same confessor.

(5) The priests will celebrate Holy Mass every day, if they can do so conveniently; the others will receive Communion every Sunday and on the principal feasts of the year. Both groups will strive to make a retreat every year.

(6) And in order to bind themselves closer to God, to our Prelate, and to the body of the Company, each will make an annual offering on Holy Thursday, by way of a firm intention, whereby each will renew the promises made to God at the time of holy Baptism, the promise of obedience made to his Prelate when taking Holy Orders.

¹Collège des Bons Enfants.
and the firm intention that was made to die as a member of the Com-
pány and to observe its regulations.

The following is approximately how this offering may be made:

Live Jesus! Live Mary! O Savior of the World Jesus Christ,
I, . . . choose You today as the only model for my life and offer you
the firm and irrevocable intention to live in accordance with the
promises I made at my holy Baptism and upon taking Holy Orders. I
further promise to observe the regulations of the Company of the
clergy and to live and die in it, with the help of your holy grace,
which I ask of you through the intercession of your holy Mother and
of Saint Peter.

(7) They will recall that O[ur] L[ord] has bound them together
with a new bond of His love and unites them very perfectly. Thus,
they will cherish, visit, and console one another in their trials and
illnesses, and will be present at the burial of those who die. If possi-
ble, each of the priests will say three Masses for the soul of the de-
ceased, and the others will receive Communion one time for that
intention.

(8) They will rise early and, after dressing, will make mental
prayer for at least half an hour. They will say Prime, Terce, Sext,
and None, then celebrate Mass or hear it at a time most convenient
for them.

(9) Every morning they will read a chapter of the New Testa-
ment, on their knees and with heads uncovered. Before or after, they
will make the following three acts: (1) to adore the truths contained
in the reading; (2) to enter into the sentiments of these truths; (3) to
resolve to practice what they teach. They will then do some reading
appropriate to their situation. They will also read some spiritual
book that suits their needs.

(10) Before dinner and supper they will make the particular ex-
amination of conscience on one of their principal faults or on the
virtue they need the most. This examination will last for about the
length of two Misereres. Then they will take their meal with moder-
ation and temperance, remembering to say the usual prayers before
and after.
(11) Every evening they will make the general examination of conscience and, before going to bed, will read the points of meditation for the next day.

(12) All will meet on Tuesdays at Saint-Lazare or at the above-mentioned seminary, at three o’clock from All Saints’ Day until Easter, and at three-thirty from Easter until All Saints’ Day, unless they have a legitimate reason preventing them from doing so, of which they will notify the prefect or some other member of the Company, or will give their excuses at the next meeting.

They will begin the conference with an invocation to the Holy Spirit, reciting the hymn *Veni Creator* with its versicle and prayer. Then they will discuss some virtue proper to the clergy, the topic having been given at the previous meeting. Each one will share humbly and simply, by word or in writing, the thoughts God has given him on the motives for practicing that virtue, its nature, and the means to practice it well. The meeting will conclude with one of the antiphons to the Blessed Virgin. All this will take place modestly, with Christian and priestly simplicity. Care will be taken in speaking to say nothing that might offend anyone, being content with disapproving of vice and encouraging one another in the practice of virtue.

(13) Every three months the officers will meet with the Director to see if all the regulations are being observed, who is failing in them, and in what they are failing. They will also discuss means of finding a remedy for these faults and how to preserve the primitive spirit of the Company and its progress in virtue. They will delegate those who are best suited for the functions for which the Company will be responsible, such as hearing the confessions of the patients at the Hôtel-Dieu, etc., giving exhortations to prisoners, or giving some missions either in the city or in the rural areas. What they decide will be read publicly at the following conference, and each is encouraged to accept it.

(14) Those who want to go to the rural areas will inform the Company of this, if time allows; otherwise, they will notify the Director or the Prefect. From time to time they will write to the Company about how they are, what they have done and endured for God,
and the outcome of their journey. They will also strive to live in such an exemplary way that they will be an edification to their neighbor. They will avoid bad companions and choose good ones, and act in such a way as to show that they are very worthy members of the Company.

(15) The Company will be attached to Saint-Lazare and will meet there every Tuesday, as stated above, led by a Director, a Prefect, and two assistants. The Superior of the priests of the Congregation of the Mission will be the permanent Director or, in his absence, a priest of the Congregation whom he will delegate for this. They will preside at the meetings, in the absence of one or the other, have a deliberative voice in it, collect the votes, and close the meeting. Nothing will be proposed, settled, or carried out without the opinion of the Director or of the person he delegates.

(16) The Prefect, as all the other officers, will be a member of the Company, and will be present at all its meetings. He will be one of the first to arrive so as to discuss with the Director any matters that will have to be proposed. He will take care to observe the regulations and to have others do the same. He will take notice of the conduct of all the clergy in the Company and remind them of their faults, visit them, and have someone go to see them when they are sick. He will also administer the sacraments, go to the funerals of those who die, and have the members of the Company do the same, all of this on the advice of the Director.

(17) The assistants will aid the Prefect by their advice and deeds, keep a watchful eye on the whole Company, inform him of the faults they have noticed, prepare those who come to seek admission into the Company, and be present at all the meetings. In the absence of the Prefect, the first assistant will take his place, and the second will do likewise in the absence of both of them.

(18) In addition, there will be a secretary, who will record in a register all the resolutions that have been taken, having previously shown them on a sheet of loose-leaf to the Director, or, in his absence, to the Prefect, in order to ensure that he has drafted correctly what has been decided. He will also write the letters from the Company.
To the Bailiff of Sainte-Geneviève or his Lieutenant

The priest Messire Clément Deheuze came from his village two hundred leagues away with a cavalry Captain to be his chaplain. When the Captain abandoned him in this city, bereft of all conveniences, he turned to the Mission of Saint-Lazare, asking to be taken in, which was granted him by M. Vincent, Prior of Saint-Lazare, on condition that he procure a cassock to wear. For this purpose, he went to M. Enar, a priest at Saint-Nicolas du Chardonnet, to try to get one. After M. Enar kept him waiting for three weeks, he told him that, if the Principal of the Collège des Grassins returned from the country, he could use one of his, so the petitioner went to see if the principal had returned to the collège. He found something at his feet, not knowing exactly what it was, but he thinks it was a little robe that some schoolboy had left in the courtyard. The petitioner picked it up, and at that point two boys appeared, saying that he was trying to steal it. He denied it, but they still detained him, mistreated him, and had him put in your jail for no other reason. In consideration of all this, Messieurs, may it please you to order that I be released, given my wretched state, and you will do well.

DEHEUZE, priest

To be communicated to the Procureur Fiscal, done this September 18, 1642.

E. CHAUVELIN

I do not object because the petitioner has no funds.

Drawn up, etc.

J. BOURDIN

Be it done as the Procureur Fiscal demands, drawn up on the same day and year as indicated above.

E. CHAUVELIN

35b. - DEPOSITION CONCERNING FRANÇOIS PERROCHEL,¹
BISHOP-ELECT OF BOULOGNE

(July 4, 1643)

In the presence of the same Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Archbishop of Seleucia, Apostolic Nuncio (Gerolamo Grimaldi), on the same day (Saturday, July 4, 1643).²

Reverend Vincent de Paul, priest of the Dax diocese, Bachelor of Theology of the University of Toulouse, thirty-six [sic]³ years of age, General of the Congregation of the Mission, residing in Paris at Saint-Lazare Monastery in the faubourg Saint-Denis, convoked and sworn in as a witness at the current process of investigation, and put under oath to answer the questions the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Apostolic Nuncio ⁴ believed appropriate to ask him, replied and attested as follows:

To number 1 he replied that he had known the candidate for twelve years and had contacts with him as a missionary, that he was neither a relative nor a close friend, nor envious nor antagonistic.

To number 2 he replied that he had heard that the candidate was born in Paris.

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¹Cf. VII, 41, n. 2.
³Clearly, the recorder transposed the numbers of Saint Vincent’s age (36 for 63). This document substantiates the belief that the Saint was born in 1581.
⁴Gerolamo Grimaldi.
To number 3 he replied that he knew that he was born of a legitimate marriage of upright, Catholic parents, whom he has known for many years.

To number 4 he replied that he believed the said candidate was about thirty-eight years of age.

To number 5 he replied that he knew for certain that the candidate had been a priest for ten years and had dedicated himself very successfully to the work of missions during that time.

To number 6 he replied that the candidate was very experienced in priestly functions and in retreats for those about to receive Orders. Likewise, he saw that he received the sacraments frequently, in a pious, devout, and religious manner, and was outstanding in the practice of charity toward the neighbor.

To number 7 he replied that he had always lived as a Catholic and there was, in no way, any doubt concerning his constancy in purity of faith.

To number 8 he replied that the candidate was endowed with innocence of life and good morals, and was renowned for his excellent reputation and manner of living, and that he knew this from having conversed with him personally, as stated above.

To number 9 he replied that in all circumstances he found the candidate to be a serious man, very prudent, and outstanding in the use of things.

To number 10 he replied that he knew he had been a Bachelor of Theology from the faculty of the Sorbonne for about fifteen years, and he believed without a doubt that he had the knowledge required by a Bishop for teaching others, for very often he had heard the candidate debate brilliantly and preach eloquently.

To number 11 he replied that he did not think he had any care of souls, except, to a certain extent, of the religious of his Abbey of Saint-Crispin le Grand, whom he brought back to the original discipline of the Rule, although the candidate had first found it lax in that monastery.

To number 12 he replied that it had never come to his attention, nor did he believe, that the candidate had given scandal of any kind.
or had any physical defect or other canonical impediment that might prevent him from being promoted to a cathedral church.

To number 13 he replied that he considered him suitable to govern well a cathedral church, in particular the one to which he was about to be promoted; therefore, he thought he was worthy to be promoted to it and affirmed that his promotion would be useful and very advantageous in the future. He added the reason that he knew he was learned, experienced, upright, and virtuous. 5

VINCENTIUS A PAULO

35c. - CASE IN THE COUNCIL OF CONSCIENCE

(December 6, 1644)

To the King

Sire,

Anne de Muriel, Bishop of Montauban, most humbly points out to Your Majesty that, by a decree of November 3, 1639, and letters patent on the same dated September 19, 1640, confirmed by another decree, dated January 6, 1641, the late King, of glorious memory, 1 having ordained that Messire Pierre de Bertier, 2 Bishop of Utica and Coadjutor of the petitioner, reside in the bishopric and diocese of Montauban, assigned to him for that purpose the annual pension of 4000 livres on the revenues of the bishopric and, because the petitioner played no part in the said decrees and agrees nevertheless that the Bishop of Utica may receive an annual pension of 2000 livres on the revenues in order to be able to maintain suitably his po-

5Perrochel's appointment was sanctioned at the consistory of February 6, 1645. The following June 11, at Saint-Lazare, Archbishop Jean-François-Paul de Gandi, assisted by François Fouquet and Félix Vialat, consecrated him Bishop of Boulogne.


1Louis XIII (1610-43).

2Cf. VIII, 257, n. 4.
sition of Coadjutor and carry out his responsibilities in the bishopric and diocese.

For these reasons, may it please Your Majesty to release the petitioner from the pension of 4000 livres stated in the decrees, and the petitioner will continue to pray to God for the health and prosperity of Your Majesty.

I, the undersigned, unworthy Superior of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, certify that the Bishop of Montauban entrusted to me last year, around the month of October, the above-mentioned request, and that I have the original, signed in his own hand, to be presented to the Council for Ecclesiastical Affairs.

In witness whereof I have written and signed this document with my own hand. Signed:

VINCENT DEPAUL

Paris, December 6, 1644.

Compared with the original by me, Secretary-Counselor of the King

TREMOLLIÈRES

36. - DEDICATION OF TEN MEDITATIONS BY LOUIS MACHON

(April 15, 1645)

To M. Vincent, General of the Priests of the Mission

Monsieur,

Here is part of the spoils I am carrying off from your house to enrich myself without impoverishing anyone. My conduct would be blameworthy and ungrateful if, after having received so many salu-
tary consolations, I should leave quite satisfied, without expressing how obligated I am to you for them. Your virtue is held in great esteem; but all those who speak of it only stutter and will never be able to describe it until they have seen and admired it. Your fervor at the altar, your charity toward everyone, your constant modesty, your tranquility of spirit at all times, and your humility in all your actions have won me over more than all the books I have read and all the preachers I have ever heard.

Were angels to become men, they would assuredly live as you do; and if there are any saintly mortals, they are surely like you. I am not flattering you, Monsieur; I am speaking of what I have seen, and if I were not an eyewitness of the things I am setting forth, I would be the first to challenge them. God was reserving you, not to reform His Church, but to make known to His priests the grandeur of their state and the purity with which they must live it. You are wonderful at changing people without making any innovations. A retreat of ten days transforms into an example of holiness the very person who used to give scandal everywhere. Near you, vice is forsaken with greater joy and contentment than it is embraced in those places where its charms and attractions are strongest; and I think it is easier for you to make an upright man of the person willing to listen to you than it is for all the debauched of the world to keep him as their companion.

Virtue is so attractive in you that it seems to have chosen you to manifest itself to bodily eyes. When someone sees you, he can only love what makes you so worthy of respect and esteem. I would prefer to be deprived of the few possessions I have than of the fruits I have garnered during your retreat. If God does me the favor of preserving me in the innocence I think I have regained during it, you will have placed in the ranks of the most fortunate, Monsieur, your most humble and very obedient servant.

MACHON

From your house of Saint-Lazare, April 15, 1645
. . . . As for the tera 3 you proposed for the Solsona diocese, I really wish you had chosen to defer sending it until you had seen the opinion of M. de Marca. 4 I thought you would have conformed yours to it without becoming further involved in that affair. Your second letter, however, which mentions it, confirms your original viewpoint. When I saw in the copy of the letter M. de Marca wrote you about it, which he sent me, the weighty reasons he puts forward, and the importance of the matter, I felt happily obliged to show everything to the Queen. 5

What I was expecting, happened; namely, that she did not approve the legal copies from that diocese, sent against the advice of M. de Marca because of a point of conscience on which Her Majesty is more scrupulous than I could express to you. In addition, she is handling the matter in such a way that she wants to place the same confidence in M. de Marca for benefices and ecclesiastical matters in Catalonia as she does for those of France in M. Vincent or one of the others of that rank who are part of her Council of Conscience. Since M. de Marca has been named to a bishopric and is capable of examining and knowing the qualities of the persons suitable for high positions in the Church, and has been responsible for that from the time he has been in the province, she feels obliged to follow his advice. In

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Document 36a. - Bibl. Nat., Ms. fr. 4200, fol. 141. This excerpt from Le Tellier's correspondence of July 8, 1645, was published in Annales C. M. (1953), 118, pp. 508-09. This edition uses the latter text. A valuable, authentic testimony of the Secretary of State, it remained unknown and was lost among the papers of his correspondence until it was brought to light by Josep Sanabra, diocesan archivist of Barcelona. Le Tellier's confidential note highlights the behavior of the Queen Regent and her great respect for Monsieur Vincent, whose wisdom and disinterestedness are once again revealed to us here.

1Michel Le Tellier (cf. V, 96, n. 6).
2Henri de Lorraine, Comte d'Harcourt (1610-66) and third Viceroy of Catalonia, distinguished himself in military and diplomatic affairs in Piedmont, Spain, and Flanders.
3The list of three names forwarded to Rome.
4Pierre de Marca (cf. VII, 547, n. 4).
5Anne of Austria (1601-66), daughter of Felipe III, King of Spain, became Queen of France in 1615 by her marriage with Louis XIII. After his death she was Regent of France (1643-61) and is usually referred to by this title.
the case of M. Vincent, she does this in such a way that, if the Cardinal had proposed to her for a benefice a person whom Father Vincent did not judge to be qualified for it, she would uphold absolutely what he decided, and neither the recommendation of His Eminence nor of anyone else would be capable of influencing her to go against the decision of M. Vincent. So, My Lord, when you have three persons to propose for promotion to some ecclesiastical dignity, you must be content with the vote of a man on whom the Queen relies, and who has the ability and all the proper qualifications to be specially responsible for it.

Besides that, in this circumstance we must take into account the interest of Dom Josep Margarit regarding his brother. We see clearly that we could not, without great insult to him, choose someone else in his place for the Solsona diocese. He has all the suitable qualities to fill it and had been named by the King for the Lérida diocese but was deprived of it by the letter of provision sent to Rome on the nomination made by the King of Spain of the person who is Bishop of Solsona, at the expense of the one the King made. It is, therefore, quite reasonable that he be preferred to anyone else for this diocese. We also think that the reputation of the King is very much at stake in this matter. ...

36b. - TESTIMONY OF CARDINAL MAZARIN TO THE COMTE D'HARCOURT

(July 19, 1645)

... As for the office of Bishop of Solsona, M. le Tellier has written to you at length about that, and he told you only the truth when he wrote that, in this matter, M. Vincent has greater influence with the Queen than I do. I would simply remark to you that a worse affront could not be made to Dom Josep Margarit than, his brother

5Jules Cardinal Mazarin (cf. VIII, 265, n. 2).
6Letter confirming an appointment to a benefice.


The letter corroborates what Michel Le Tellier wrote to the Comte d'Harcourt and gives an indication of why Mazarin wanted Saint Vincent dismissed from the Council of Conscience.
having been named to the office of Bishop of Lérida and prevented from taking possession of it because it had fallen into the hands of the enemy again, Her Majesty should give to someone else the office of Bishop of Solsona, which has become vacant by the promotion of its Bishop to the Church of Lérida. I am very displeased that you are so deeply involved in that affair, and allow me to tell you that you should proceed a little more cautiously, since I myself, who see the Queen’s intentions at closer range, would not have dared to do so until after it had been brought up by M. Vincent, and he had studied it as closely as he wished.

37. - DEDICATION TO SAINT VINCENT OF HORTUS PASTORUM ¹

(October 23, 1646)

To Reverend M. Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission.

As soon as the flowers of this most outstanding Garden began to diffuse its perfume, it was sought out and coveted immediately on all sides, as is the case with the works of this same author (a most distinguished and learned man), which have been published successively. I do not know, however, the motive of certain persons in their eagerness to add them to this Garden, piling them up with no order or logical connection with it, adding to a very large Garden several other small Gardens with separate walls and divisions, which anyone desirous of seeing and enjoying its beauty first had to cross. I have destroyed those walls; I have gathered the small Gardens into one and divided it into sections, or rather, I have restored the entire work to its proper order and correct method, so that anyone, almost upon entering, can easily find what he wants without searching for it.

Document 37. - Jacques Marchant, Hortus pastorum et concionatorum Paris: M. Soly, 1644. In 1651 Michel Alix edited and published a tenth edition of this work, which he dedicated to Saint Vincent. The Saint did not express much enthusiasm about this (cf. III, 121, n. 6). The original is in Latin.

¹Garden of Pastors.
I did not spend much time looking for someone to be the guardian and patron of this Garden. I immediately thought of you as being most worthy of this guardianship and patronage, not only because of the title of this work, which is so appropriate for those giving missions, but equally suitable for shepherds of souls. Just as those who tend their flocks can easily draw from it the nourishment Christ ordered to be provided for His healthy sheep and the remedies He ordered to be applied to the sick ones, so also all those who dedicate themselves to the salvation of souls wherever they are called can draw from it all that they need. Indeed, is there anything you may desire that is lacking in it? For, nothing is missing from the doctrine regarding the principal and most necessary questions of Faith, the sacraments, virtues and vices, duties, clerical and pastoral justice, which are all explained clearly. To these are added, like a corollary, solutions to pastoral problems and catechetical teaching.

Now, this “Garden” should be entrusted to you because, by nature and will, you have been made goodness, and by practice you are thus ready for works of charity so that, if any Pastors are struggling under the weight of their office, you immediately fly in as a prompt helper; and, possibly by alternative works for bowed shoulders, you do not let them collapse. Or, if any should falter, their reason obscured by the darkness of this weary world, you joyfully and readily extend to them the torch of your wise direction.

Someone else may praise the compassion, piety, prudence, sincerity, concern, and indefatigable effort with which you serve the Church; I cannot omit speaking of your charity, which enkindles in you the fervor to seek out sheep who go astray and are lost, even though they are not yours, and whom you find, place on your shoulders, and return to their own shepherds. Thus, you seem admirable in this new way of feeding and healing the flock.

I dedicate to you this work, due to you under so many of these titles; and what I have already done previously in thought and intention, I now do again in fact. I feel certain that I will be blessed by your acceptance with your customary benevolence, encouraged by your zeal, and approved by your good judgment and attestation.
Given in Saint-Ouen, October 23, 1646.
Most sincerely yours,

MICHEL ALIX,
Past[or] of S[aint]-Ou[en] Ch[urch],
Diocese of Paris

38. - EXCERPTS FROM MAZARIN'S NOTEBOOKS

M. Vincent wants to advance the career of Father Gondi. ¹

They seek out M. Vincent and, under pretext of loyalty to the
Queen, they tell him that her reputation is being ruined by her co­
quetry. They say that the Bishop of Beauvais ² had M. . . . speak to
her about coquetry. ³

Father Gondi had spoken of me in a prejudicial way, as did Fa­
ther Lambert ⁴ and M. Vincent. ⁵

Postpone the Council of Conscience for a time. ⁶

That M. de Noyers ⁷ comes along with great plans and, under
pretext of giving H[er] M[ajesty] an account of some construction,
discussed matters that could influence her to take major decisions.
He claims to have under his control the whole household of H[er] M[ajesty], the Jesuits, the monasteries, the Dévots, ⁸ and particularly M. Vincent. ⁹

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²Augustín Potier (cf. II, 51, n. 4).
³Second notebook, p. 62.
⁴Lambert aux Couteaux (cf. V, 167, n. 1).
⁵Third notebook, August-September 1643, p. 33. This sentence is written in Spanish.
⁶Third notebook, p. 72.
⁷François Sublet (cf. II, 150, n. 2).
⁸The Dévots were a group of zealous Catholics anxious for religious reform throughout
France.
⁹Fourth notebook, p. 1. The fourth and fifth notebooks cover the last months of 1643 and the
first months of 1644.
Father Lambert told Mme. de Brienne\textsuperscript{10} that he had learned from a sure source that H[er] M[ajesty] could no longer put up with him.\textsuperscript{11}

Mesdames de Brienne and Liancourt\textsuperscript{12} are launching a great campaign with H[er] M[ajesty] for piety.\textsuperscript{13}

M. Vincent, in the camp of Maignelay,\textsuperscript{14} Dans, Lambert, and others, is the channel through which everything reaches H[er]M[ajesty's] ears.\textsuperscript{15}

Father Lambert, completely won over to Arnauld,\textsuperscript{16} is a defender of Jansenius. Warn H[er] M[ajesty] not to be surprised.\textsuperscript{17}

Two different persons have come to tell me that the monasteries, friars, priests, and devout women and men have planned, under pretext of inciting the fervor of the Queen to piety, to have her spend all her time in it so as not to apply it to her business affairs and to speaking with me. For this purpose, they hope, when all is said and done, to give the final blow to Maignelay, Dans, the Prioress of Val-de-Grâce,\textsuperscript{18} and Father Vincent.\textsuperscript{19}

All the ladies are banded together, and Maignelay often meets with Hautefort\textsuperscript{20} and Senecey.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{10}Louise de Béon (cf. VII, 640, n. 3).
\textsuperscript{11}Fourth notebook.
\textsuperscript{12}Jeanne de Schomberg (cf. VI, 549, n. 1).
\textsuperscript{13}Fourth notebook, p. 59.
\textsuperscript{14}Claude-Marguerite de Gondi (cf. VI, 550, n. 7).
\textsuperscript{15}Fourth notebook, p. 77.
\textsuperscript{16}Antoine Arnauld (cf. VI, 101, n. 9).
\textsuperscript{17}Fifth notebook, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{18}The former Hôtel du Petit-Bourbon. Queen Anne of Austria had established the Benedictines of Bôvye there; she used to visit them often and lavished gifts on them. At her request, her son Louis XIV laid the first stone of their church on April 1, 1645. She willed them her heart and the relics from her oratory.
\textsuperscript{19}Fifth notebook, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{20}Marie de Hautefort, daughter of Charles, Marquis de Hautefort, and Renée du Bellay, was born on February 5, 1616, married Charles, Maréchal de Schomberg, on September 24, 1646, and died on August 1, 1691. She was intelligent and virtuous but was never willing to humor Cardinal Mazarin, which brought on her disgrace in 1644. She took her disfavor bravely, and, after her marriage, she and her husband attended to their domestic affairs without fanfare or complaint, living at home that Christian life which alone can give peace of soul.
\textsuperscript{21}Marie-Catherine de la Rochefoucauld, Baronne de Senecay (cf. VI, 550, n. 6).
To M. Vincent, General of the Congregation of the Mission

Monsieur,

Virtue honors birth and matches humility with greatness, submission with domination, and poverty with wealth. When a man has placed himself beyond the reach of envy through eminent perfection, there is no one who does not admire him. True holiness is respected by worldly persons. Devotion without pomp compels even irreligious persons to reverence it. In the burning desire most people have to possess wealth and greatness, the person who knows how to spurn them and turns his affections only to heavenly things must be considered extraordinary. To want to be only what God makes us, to desire only what God wants, to have no other will but God's Will, and no other purpose but God's greater glory is to find the sweetness of paradise here on earth and, in a certain sense, to make our mortal condition happy.

I do not doubt that God has many servants who are hidden from the eyes of the world to protect themselves from the impulses of vanity that it inspires. But you, Monsieur, seem to be the only person of our time endowed with the qualities and prerogatives that can exempt you from this danger. Your uprightness is not subject to change. Your goodness is constant and sure. You are at court as if you were far from it. You are humble among the elite, simple with the common people, and poor among the rich; and, what is a continual miracle in the minds of those who know you is that you please everyone, even though they come from different paths and have contrary intentions.

The late King wanted to breathe his last sigh in your bosom; the Queen, following his example, reveals to you the most honest sentiments of her soul. The Ministers of the State have perfect confi-
dence in your integrity, which can be neither compromised nor taken unaware regarding the distribution of the Church's possessions or in the choice of its Prelates.

An upright man recognizes immediately those who resemble him. To whom, then, can administration be better entrusted than to one who seeks no other reward than the pains he takes in it? You have restored to the Order of the priesthood the glory it was due, founding Communities that follow the example of the Apostles and disciples through their missions and preaching everywhere. If this is not miraculous, it is at least accomplished with great zeal and devotion, since it is as difficult to teach the science of salvation to the unlearned faithful as it is to lay down the first foundations of the Christian religion.

In this propitious situation, I would be doing harm to my work by not giving you a place among the Prelates. Choose the place you please, and believe that I am, Monsieur, your, etc.

40. - AUTHORIZATION FOR A VISITATION NUN TO LEAVE HER CONVENT

(July 20, 1650)

Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission and spiritual father of the nuns of the Visitation Sainte-Marie of Paris, to our very dear and beloved daughter in Our Lord Jesus Christ, Sister Catherine-Agnès Lionne, professed nun of the Visitation Sainte-Marie Monastery in the faubourg Saint-Jacques, requested as Superior for the new establishment being made by the Visitation nuns of Amiens in the town of Abbeville.

We approve the request made by the Sisters of your Amiens monastery to have you as Superior of the new foundation in Abbeville and, with this in view, grant you the required leave of absence for this purpose. In addition, in order that the merit of holy

Document 40. - Visitation Monastery, Amiens (France), signed document, copy; a tracing is in the Archives of the Mission, Paris.
obedience may contribute to all you will do for the advancement of the glory of God and the good of souls, we order that you make your way there as soon as possible and live in the perfect observance of your Rules, under obedience to the Bishop of Amiens or to those who will command you on his behalf, until you are recalled either by us or by our successors, if it is thought fit to do so.

We give you our blessing, asking God to guide you and keep you under the protection of His mercy.

Given in Paris, July 20, 1650.

VINCENT DEPAUL

41. - OUTLINE OF A CONFERENCE TO THE ORDINANDS

Before Holy Orders.

(1) Discern whether one has a priestly vocation.
(2) Pray and have others pray to discern this vocation.
(3) Consult one's confessor or some distinguished person for that purpose.
(4) Once the vocation is acknowledged, embrace it with purity of intention for the glory of God and one's own salvation.
(5) Possess a title that is neither false nor spurious.
(6) Have the bans published one month before ordination; bring a certificate of the integrity of one's life and morals.
(7) Present oneself for the examination with the spirit of indifference regarding either admission or exclusion.
(8) As the time of retreat approaches, perform many acts of renunciation of the world and of the desire to give oneself to God.

During the retreat.

(1) Begin the retreat with a great desire to learn the functions and virtues proper to each Order and those that are appropriate and common to the entire priestly state.
(2) They will ask God each day to give them a docile heart in order to learn well what will be taught.
(3) They will make notes each day of the most important things they have learned.
(4) They will be faithful to using all the time needed to carry out faithfully all the exercises.
(5) They will ask the retreat director for some convenient time to reflect on and write out their general confession.
(6) They will ask his permission to perform some humbling acts, such as serving at table or sweeping the floor.
(7) When they receive Holy Orders, they will offer and consecrate themselves to God without reserve and with no exception, in the way they will have been taught.

After the retreat.

(1) Thank God for the Order they have received and the instructions they have been given for it, unlike a thousand priests who have received Holy Orders in various parts of the world without this preparation.
(2) Set out to practice well the instructions they have received.
(3) Say or attend Mass daily.
(4) Confess twice a week to the same confessor.
(5) Have a daily schedule and abide by it.
(6) Arrange matters so as to be able to preach or teach catechism every Sunday.
(7) Have a director to whom they make known their interior dispositions.
(8) Accept the responsibilities and conditions laid down by the Prelate, and be faithful to them until another duty which the Prelate chooses to assign is given.

(9) Do their utmost to participate in the conferences that will be given to maintain the devotion they have received from God during the retreat.

42. - ADVICE TO A DISTINGUISHED PERSON

On rising, I shall adore the majesty of God and thank Him for His glory, the glory He has given to His Son, to the Blessed Virgin, to the Holy Angels, to my Guardian Angel, to Saint John the Baptist, to the Apostles, to Saint Joseph, and to all the saints in paradise. I will thank them also for the graces He has given to the holy Church, and especially for those I have received from Him, particularly for having preserved me during the night. I will offer Him my thoughts, words, and actions in union with those of Jesus Christ; I will also ask Him to keep me from offending Him and to grant me the grace of carrying out faithfully whatever will be most pleasing to Him.

43. - REFLECTIONS ON THE BEAUTY OF GOD

What can compare to the beauty of God, who is the source of all the beauty and perfection of creatures? Is it not from God that the flowers, the birds, the stars, the moon, and the sun derive their luster and beauty?

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44. - REFLECTIONS ON A SPIRITUAL RETREAT

By the expression “spiritual retreat” or “spiritual exercises” we should understand a withdrawal from all business affairs and temporal pursuits to apply ourselves seriously to understanding well our interior life, examining carefully the state of our conscience, meditating, contemplating, praying, and preparing our soul in this way so as to be purified from all our sins and all our bad attachments and habits in order to be filled with the desire for virtue. We should also desire to seek and know the Will of God, and, once we know it, to submit to it, unite ourselves to it, and, in this way, to strive for, advance toward, and finally attain our own perfection.

45. - REFLECTIONS ON COMMUNITY LIFE

Anyone wishing to live in Community must be determined to live like a pilgrim on earth, to become foolish for the sake of Jesus Christ, to change his standards of behavior, to mortify all his passions, to seek God alone, to subject himself to others as the least of all, to be convinced that he has come to serve and not to rule others, to suffer and work and not to live in luxury and idleness. He must know that a person is tried in it as gold in the furnace, that he cannot persevere in it if he is unwilling to humble himself for God, and be convinced that in so doing he will have true happiness in this world and eternal life in the next. ¹

¹These thoughts are from The Imitation of Christ by Thomas à Kempis (bk. I, chap. XVII), whose words Saint Vincent is interpreting here.
46. - OUTLINE OF A CONFERENCE TO THE VISITATION NUNS

[Around May 1655]

The conference is divided into three points: in the first, M. Vincent indicates the reasons why it is important to choose a good nun; in the second point, he gives the qualities that must be found in a nun for her to be able to be elected Superior and to carry out this responsibility well; and in the third, he gives the means to make a good choice.

First point. — The first reason is that what the heart and soul are to the body, the Superior is to the community. Therefore, as the soul is found in all parts of the body and gives them their movement and action, in like manner the Superior must be in all parts of the community, by vigilance on her part, by respect and affection on the part of the Sisters, and by action through the observance of community practices. In the second place, what the pilot is to the ship and to those who navigate it, the Superior is to her community; and what the general of the army is to his troops, the Superior is to her community, etc.

The second reason is that it is an article of faith that one must be called by God to the direction of souls and that the Son of God was unwilling to perform His work until He was called to it. The Council of Trent, etc.

Second point. — The qualities required of a nun in order to be a good Superior are: (1) that she have common sense; (2) be a good Christian; (3) be a good nun; (4) be a good Officer; (5) be zealous for the glory of God and the sanctification of her community; (6) be vigilant; (7) be effective; and be the first everywhere.

The means. — The first means is prayer; (2) steadfast determination to vote for the best person; (3) renounce aversion, etc.; (4) renounce personal inclination; (5) vote for the one for whom she would wish to have voted at the hour of death.

Document 46. - Repetitions of Prayer, Conferences, and Talks to the Missionaries, MS, fol. 13. The copyist affirmed that the conference had been given “around May 1655” and said he had seen the original in the Saint’s handwriting.
47. - THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD
AND THAT OF JESUS CHRIST

From Pope Saint Gregory's work on morality, bk. 10, chap. 16, commenting on Job, chap. 12.

The wisdom of this world consists in hiding one's feelings through deviousness, concealing true meaning in words; representing falsehood as truth and truth as falsehood.¹

It is learned from the time one is a child, and one is instructed in it from one's youth.

Those who have this spirit are proud of it and do not care about others.

This spirit is disguised under the name of politeness.

They aspire to the highest positions and assume them with joy.

If they have received some provocation, they take vengeance openly when they have the power, and do so on the sly when they do not; lastly, they cover up the insults when they have no means of taking vengeance.

The Christian spirit, on the contrary, consists in not pretending anything, but rather in being very sincere, making one's words and works correspond to one's thoughts, loving the truth, avoiding lies, doing good without expecting any reward, preferring to endure evil than to do it, considering it a blessing to be despised and hated for having done good.

Indeed, does anything seem more foolish to the worldly than to express one's true feelings in words; never to make false pretences by tricky deviousness; never to render insults for injuries; to pray for our detractors; to seek poverty; to relinquish possessions; not to resist if we are being despoiled; to offer the other cheek to the one who strikes us?²
(1) The importance of being well instructed on the difference of opinion in the Church today regarding grace.

(2) In what this difference of opinion consists, which is the ancient opinion of the Church that God gives all persons—both faithful and unbelievers—sufficient grace to be saved, and that a person may accept or refuse this grace. Those who hold the new opinions maintain that sufficient grace is not given to all persons but that there is only efficacious grace, given to a few, and that those to whom it is given cannot resist it.

(3) The reasons why we believe, as the Church has done until now, that sufficient grace is given to all and that one can resist it.

(4) The reasons given by opponents.

(5) The means of being strengthened and of persevering in the ancient belief of the Church.

I. —What motives do we have for improving our knowledge regarding the subject proposed?

(1) That we are in danger of being misled, in the case of the new opinions, and of following error instead of truth; in this sense the Holy Spirit states that the person who ignores it shall be ignored and shall die in his ignorance. That is why many people, for want of having the opinions of Luther and Calvin explained clearly to them in the first place, have fallen into error.

(2) That what is at stake is our salvation, which consists in believing all that the Church teaches, and that, in a certain sense, those who are unwilling to improve their knowledge of matters regarding their salvation are headed for their own damnation.

(3) That, in the case of division in religion, there is wisdom in being enlightened, and rashness and great danger in acting otherwise.

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Document 48. - Original autograph document, which in 1913 belonged to M. Lacaille (50 boulevard Malesherbes, Paris), at whose office Coste made a copy. The document was recovered in 1982 and was photocopied; it disappeared from the Berceau around 1987. The expansion of the fifth part is missing. Everything written in italics is in Latin in the original.

1 Cf. 1 Cor 14:38. (NAB)
In what does this difference of opinion consist?

We have stated it: to know that God gives people—I mean all people, the faithful as well as unbelievers—the help to be saved, which we call grace, and that people can fail to take advantage of this grace and reject it. Also, that the proponents of the new opinions hold the contrary: that there is no sufficient grace, given to everyone, but rather efficacious grace, given only to a few, and that those to whom it is given can fail to take advantage of it by refusing it.

To better understand this question, note that about twelve hundred years ago Pelagius maintained that man could perform the works necessary for salvation through his own poor human means, with no other help from God than sermons, reading good books, and similar external means that lead us to God.

That Saint Augustine, a contemporary of Pelagius, was opposed to these opinions of his and maintained that man, on his own strength, aided by the external means of preaching, etc., could not do the things required for salvation, and that actual and supernatural grace from God through Jesus Christ was necessary, causing us to embrace the good necessary for salvation and to avoid evil. Saint Augustine was followed in this by the Sovereign Pontiffs and the Church, with the exception of a few persons who followed the opinion of Pelagius.

From this dispute between Saint Augustine and Pelagius, others derived from it have arisen from time to time, like certain malignant illnesses which are never cured, so that every now and then they spawn others, such as a certain disease we dare not mention, and quartan fever in some.

That of the Semipelagians appeared soon after the death of Saint Augustine. They promulgated an intermediary opinion, which was in agreement with Saint Augustine, in that it held that men could do nothing without the grace of God, and with Pelagius, in that they

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2 An heresiarch who lived from about 354 to at least 418. His doctrine was condemned by the Council of Ephesus in 431.
3 Bishop of Hippo (354-430).
said that men had within them a principle of good works, which left to God the possibility of giving them these graces. That is why they were called Semipelagians and were condemned by the Church.  

Four hundred years later, this error gave rise to another, which was that Our Lord had not died for everyone. So, when the Bishop of Troyes was unable to be present for the election of a Bishop for Paris, he sent his proxy to cast his vote for a person he named, provided he believed that Our Lord Jesus Christ had not died for all, and not otherwise. And that opinion—that Our Lord had not died for all—was incontestably to exclude the sufficient grace given to all.

In the year 1560, Baius, a Doctor and Dean of Louvain, put forward many opinions, among which were some against freedom of indifference, saying that willingness, although necessary, was in keeping with the freedom that is always understood as freedom of indifference. He did this to show that a person cannot resist grace. These opinions were condemned by Pius V, and when they cropped up again during the pontificate of Gregory XIII, he condemned those same opinions once more.

They began to reappear in 1640 with Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres, and were promoted by Abbé de Saint-Cyran and many persons who espoused them. But, as what remains of the bad disease we mentioned is rather another—often a different kind—in the same way, the errors of Jansenius are not the ones that were circulating in the time of Saint Augustine but rather are different ones.

The opinions of Pelagius went against the need of interior grace for salvation; those of these times are that God does not give graces

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4At the Second Council of Orange (529).
5Prudentius of Troyes was born in Spain and died Bishop of Troyes in 861. He limited God's salvific Will to believers in Christ. The episode mentioned here by Saint Vincent took place in 858.
6Text of the original: "And that opinion was contradicted that Our Lord had not died for all, to exclude the..."
7Baius (Michel de Bay) was born in Belgium in 1513 and died in Louvain on September 19, 1589.
8Pope Saint Pius V (1566-72).
9Pope Gregory XIII (1572-85).
10The year the Augustinus was published.
to all to be saved, and that, of necessity, the graces God gives to
some take effect in such a way that a person cannot resist them.

In accordance with that, we have to prove that God gives suffi-
cient graces to all persons in order to be saved and that, in giving us
these graces, He does not force our free will but leaves it the free-
dom to make good use of these graces or to abuse them.

The proof of what I am setting forth is drawn from Sacred Scrip-
ture, the Councils, the Fathers, and reason.

Here are the proofs which reveal that God's goodness is so great
that it offers everyone the means to be saved: Saint Paul says of God
that He wills that all persons be saved. And the argument is given
that, if He does will that all persons be saved, He must, of necessity,
give all persons some means to be saved, knowing well that they
cannot do so on their own strength, since, as He inspired Saint Paul
to say, We cannot say Abba, Father, except through the Holy
Spirit. Furthermore, the same Scripture says of God that He wants
no one to perish. Assuming this to be the case, then, He must give
them help to prevent them from doing so.

In the third place, we see that God has given a universal means
for saving the whole world, namely, the passion and death of Our
Lord: If one man died for all. And elsewhere, Saint John says: He
died as an offering for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for
those of the whole world.

And the Church, to show that it understands it in this way, dem-
onstrates it by the words of the offering of the chalice: We offer you,
O Lord, the chalice of salvation, praying earnestly for your mercy
so that it may ascend in the sight of your Divine Majesty for our sal-
vation and that of the whole world.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Cf. 1 Tim 2:4. (NAB)}
\item \textit{Cf. Rom 8:15-16. (NAB)}
\item \textit{Cf. 2 Pt 3:9. (NAB)}
\item \textit{Cf. 2 Cor 5:14. (NAB)}
\item \textit{Cf. 1 Jn 2:2. (NAB)}
\end{itemize}

\footnote{Prayer said at the Offertory of the Mass before the liturgical revisions of Vatican II.}
The Council of Orange states: All those baptized with the prevenient and cooperative grace of Christ can and should do what is necessary for salvation.

Saint Augustine uses these words: He enlightens everyone coming into this world. How is it, then, that all are not enlightened? He replies, It is not because they lack the light, but because they fail to be enlightened.

And to the same person, asking how it is that, if God always gives His grace and good will to all persons, why are not all saved, he replies: Because they are unwilling; note that He gives this grace to all.

And, speaking of grace, his disciple Saint Prosper says that this assistance is offered to all. And Paul Orosius states that he firmly believes that grace is given to all persons to be saved: It is given not only to the faithful but to all people as well; not only to all in general, but to each individual; and not only for one day but every day, at all times, hours, moments—even the most minute fractions of time. Then he concludes: No one lacks help.

Indeed, I do not know how God, being Infinite Goodness, who [opens wide] His arms every day to embrace sinners as it is said, Each day I have held out my hands to an unbelieving and recalcitrant people, etc., could have the heart to refuse grace to all those who would ask Him for it, and would allow Himself to be surpassed by the kindness of David, who took the trouble to seek out a member of his household who was his enemy, to grant him clemency.

Add to this the fact that, if God refused His grace to some, there would be no reason for him to order them to observe the Commandments of God, which He knows they cannot observe without His

17Saint Prosper of Aquitaine, a lay theologian born around 390 and thought to have died in Rome about 465. He had an excellent classical education and was well read in theology; his writings, both in verse and in prose, are mainly concerned with the controversy about grace and free will in defense of Saint Augustine's doctrine. After 440, Saint Prosper was associated with Pope Saint Leo I and aided this Doctor of the Church with his correspondence and theological writings.

18Paul Orosius (c. 390-c. 418), a historian associated with Saint Augustine. At the latter's request, as a supplement to his City of God, he wrote a history of the world, the first to be produced by a Christian writer.

19Cf. Is 65:2. (NAB)
help; and it would be accusing God of injustice if He condemned them for that—which is unlikely. It would follow that there would be no hell for people.

In line with that, it follows that God is so good that, just as it is not the sun's fault that everyone cannot see, but it is because they lack sight or close the window or their eyes, in the same way God sends graces to everyone, and it does not depend on God that everyone be saved.

The blessed Bishop of Geneva demonstrates this by a comparison of some pilgrims, etc. who, having fallen asleep, are all awakened [by the sun]. Some get up and walk on, arriving safely at the place where they are going; the others go back to sleep and get up late. Becoming lost in the dark, they are captured and mistreated by thieves. Now, all of them were awakened, but it is not the fault of the sun that all did not get up and arrive safely at the place where they were heading. 20

Here are the objections:

It is said that Saint Augustine stated that *God does not will that all be saved*. What he said is true for those who were unwilling to observe His Commandments but not for those who observed them. God wants all persons to be saved and gives everyone the means for that. If, however, they do not use them, it is not God's fault, but theirs.

A further objection:

We have said that the second difficulty lies with the opinion held by those adherents of the new opinions; namely, that God's grace works in such a way that our free will cannot resist it.

Here are the reasons against that:

The Council of Trent states the contrary at Session 6 (*On Justification*) and fulminates anathema against those who believe that our wills cannot resist the inspiration of grace, 21 using as a basis Holy Scripture, which states *How long will you resist the Holy Spirit? I called you and you refused. Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how often have*  

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20Saint Francis de Sales, in his *Treatise on the Love of God* (cf. bk. IV, chap. 5).
21Canon IV.
I wished to gather your children, as the hen gathers her young, and you refused, and Saint Augustine, who says (as is stated above) that people do not observe the Commandments of God because they do not want to do so. And the same is said of Esau: Esau did not want to run and did not do so, but if he had been willing, he would have run and would have attained paradise, except that he spurned this call and became a reprobate. Again, speaking of Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar, Saint Augustine says: “Both were Kings, both were persecutors of God, and God afflicted them [both] through His infinite clemency.” One of them repented; the other, by his own free will, fought against the truth of the most merciful God.

To express how that happens, the blessed Bishop of Geneva uses the comparison of the apodes who are able to lift themselves up to fly only when the wind is favorable and they extend their wings. So, if they like the place where they are, they can leave their wings unextended, and the wind will blow in vain because it will not lift them up if they do not wish it and refuse to spread their wings. This is also seen in the comparison with the pilgrims cited above, and in that of our eyes, which can refuse the rays of the sun, and of ships at sea, which can refuse the action of the wind by not spreading their sails.

These are some of the arguments why God has left us the freedom to refuse His grace.

Otherwise, man would have done everything through necessity, and consequently would have had no merit. What merit does a convict have in greeting the General of the Galleys? A free gentleman from the province will do him greater honor by greeting him than ten thousand convicts will.

In line with all that, it would follow that a person has no merit for the good he does or for the evil he avoids and, consequently, no reward or paradise; and since there would be no hell either, as has been said, we work in vain, do good, and avoid evil with no hope of reward or fear of punishment.

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22Cf. Mt 23:37. (NAB)
23A word meaning “footless”; reference to the rudimentary feet of the sea swallow (Saint Francis de Sales, op. cit., bk. II, chap. 9, n. 10).
In a word, it follows, as Saint Thomas says in the book *On the Law of the Gospel*, that our religion means nothing and is pure folly, and perhaps that is why one of the authors of those fine opinions, as soon as he became involved in them, gave up fasting and abstinence and celebrating Holy Mass, which he formerly celebrated every day, and why his other self never performed any external act of virtue in the eyes of those who associated with him.

Here are their objections:

According to Saint Augustine, *God directs the soul inflexibly, invincibly, and with no hope of our avoiding His action*; therefore, our free will cannot defend itself from this action of God.

—I reply that, *as far as grace is concerned*, it acts in that way, but, *as far as the will is concerned*, it is not the same, since the sun *orders the faculty of sight invincibly*, etc., but operates that way in vain when man, by closing his eyes, hinders the effect of the sun’s brilliance.

Saint Augustine states that God does not give us at present the grace of willing and not willing, as he once did to Adam, because of his sin and the loss of the virtue of free will.

—But I reply that, even though we may not have this grace inherent in us, for the reason put forward, God gives it to us when we need it. For, otherwise, how could the Council of Trent state that we contribute to the action of grace and may refuse it if we wish, and fulminates anathema against those who say the contrary?

Saint Augustine bases freedom on the delight in doing good and avoiding evil, but not in indifference.

—I reply that the above-mentioned authorities of Esau and the two Kings that he cites show that they can do good and avoid evil.

They say that the necessary willingness is the freedom that is always understood as indifference.

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24Probably Saint-Cyran.
25Might Saint Vincent have had in mind here Antoine Arnauld or Saint-Cyran’s nephew Barros?
26Saint Vincent originally wrote *O[ur] Lord gives it to all*, but crossed it out and wrote *God gives it to us*.
27Text of the original: *They say that the willingness necessary and...*
—I reply that this opinion is condemned, as is that other one which tells us that this sort of freedom is not found in Scripture. *He that could have transgressed, and did not transgress: and could do evil things and has not done them.* 

28 *I have set before you fire and water: stretch forth your hand to which one you will.* 

29 Saint Augustine is absolutely opposed to the ancient opinions of the Church regarding grace.

—It may seem so to those on that side, but the passages cited above demonstrate the contrary.

*Who confers any distinction on you?* 

30 That is another objection.

—I reply not I, but the grace of God with me. 

31 Justification is the work of God and not of men: *It is not a question of one who wills,* etc.

32 —I reply that this is true of our own strength, but not with the grace of God, by which we participate in our own justification.

The modern-day opinion is more humble, and the old one savors of glory.

—I reply what Saint Paul states: *Let the one who glories, glory in the Lord,* and that we can do nothing whatsoever without grace; thus, all the glory from anything is due to Him, as to the master writer who holds and guides the hand of the child to teach him how to write.

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28 Cf. Ecc 31:10. (D-RB)
29 Cf. Ecc 15:17. (D-RB)
30 Cf. 1 Cor 4:7. (D-RB)
31 Cf. 1 Cor 15:10 (D-RB)
32 Cf. Rom 9:16. (D-RB)
33 Cf. 1 Cor 1:31. (D-RB)
48a. - SAINT VINCENT'S PARTICIPATION IN HOLY THURSDAY LITURGY

In the year 1652, while on retreat at Saint-Lazare during Holy Week to prepare for the priesthood he had the honor of receiving the following Saturday, he [Masson] was chosen to serve as deacon on Holy Thursday at the Mass celebrated by the Servant of God Vincent de Paul. When the Mass had ended, the Servant of God performed the ceremony of the Last Supper, washing the feet of twelve poor persons. He did this so devoutly that the witness and the sub-deacon were obliged to hold him up by the arms and to lift him from the feet of the poor persons before whom he remained prostrate. The witness noted with what remarkable devotion the Servant of God, after having washed the feet of each poor man, embraced them and kissed them with as much tenderness and respect as if he had kissed relics.

49. - INSTRUCTION TO THE RESIDENTS OF THE NOM-DE-JESUS

[Summer 1653]

Sunday . . ., M. Vincent went to the Nom-de-Jésus to begin to teach Christian doctrine to the poor workers of the family of Jesus. When he arrived, he said to them: "We will say the Rosary now, and then we will have an instruction." After praying the Rosary, he began by saying:

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Document 48a. - Annales C. M. 103 (1938), p. 476. The Archives of the Mission, Paris, possess this deposition of Paul Masson at the Parisian Diocesan Information Process for the canonization of Vincent de Paul (Testimony 158). It was given on June 23, 1705, at the Louyé Priory of the Order of Grandmont, Chartres diocese, where he had been Pastor in Val-Saint-Germain.

Born in Pons, Amiens diocese, Masson was a Doctor of Arts of the University of Paris. At the time of his deposition he was eighty years old.

Document 49. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, 140 rue du Bac, Paris, original document, in the handwriting of one of the Sisters.

1The Nom-de-Jésus was a hospice for the elderly poor of Paris (cf. VIII, 73, n. 6).

2This instruction is undated, but the content indicates that it was given during the summer of the same year as the foundation of the Nom-de-Jésus.
"Children, I think we will be doing something pleasing to God by discussing Christian doctrine, and for that purpose I will question you on the principal mysteries of faith and on the Sign of the Cross. You should not be surprised, however, if you do not know how to do this very well. Oh, no, children! But you must do your best to learn well; the reason for this is that your founder, your foster father, \(^3\) has placed you here with this in view and is concerned especially about the salvation of your souls. So then, that is the reason obliging you to do all you can to learn well what you will be taught.

"That is the intention of your founder, and here is what he said to me: 'Monsieur, I am not concerned about the body, but I am concerned about the soul. It is not only to withdraw them from their wretchedness that I am giving my money to maintain them; but my intention is that they be instructed and that someone will teach them the things necessary for their salvation'.

"Tell me, children, is it not beautiful to say that God gave those thoughts to a man—and a man of high society? Do we not have to acknowledge how good God is to give His servants such sentiments for you?

"That, then, is the first reason you have to learn well. Another is that there is no salvation otherwise. So, if you want to be saved, you are obliged to learn the principal mysteries of faith. You can see that this is a powerful motive for learning well and appreciate the great benefit that God, in His goodness, has given you in putting you in a place where you have so many means to do this—and will have even more, I hope.

"So, children, you must do all you can to retain carefully the instructions that will be given you, convinced that you are obliged to do so as Christians and children of God. The Angelic Doctor Saint Thomas says that no one can be saved without knowing and believing that there is one God in three Persons. Theologians give the reason for this: because these are means necessary for salvation. Now, the person who neglects the means that help him to be saved cannot be saved.

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\(^3\)The wealthy Parisian who had founded the hospice.
"Those, then, are the two main reasons you have to learn well. I am going to begin by asking you some questions, but even if you may not know how to answer very well, do not let that worry you. I will ask you if you know how to make the Sign of the Cross correctly; and even if you do not know how, that should not worry you. You are not the only ones. How many persons there are at the Court—perhaps even magistrates—who do not know how to make it! That should encourage you to overcome the shame we usually feel when we do not know how to reply to what we are asked. It is pride that causes us this shame because we always want to appear to be something. You should act like those good country people who show such a strong desire to learn that they come to us and say, 'Monsieur, I am afraid I do not know what I should know. I have had no instruction. Please question me to see what I know.' See, children, how those good people are not ashamed to appear ignorant. That is the way to act."

After M. Vincent had said all this, he began by questioning those good people, one after the other, on the Sign of the Holy Cross, showing them how to make it, and making it himself several times to teach as much by example as by word. He then said:

"The Sign of the Cross, which is the sign of Christians, has always been commonly used from the time of the Apostles and disciples of Our Lord, who exchanged this sign in order to recognize one another. Consequently, when two Christians would meet somewhere, they would make the Sign of the Cross so they would know whether they were disciples of Our Lord, and by this sign would recognize one another without saying a word because they dared not reveal themselves openly. Since, however, they had exchanged this sign in order to recognize one another, no one noticed it except themselves, and they could see immediately that they were Christians. Then they would embrace, treat one another in a friendly way, and say some consoling words to one another. That is how the Christians of the early Church behaved."

After M. Vincent had taught them how to make the Sign of the Cross correctly, he asked whether they knew about the mystery of
the Holy Trinity, questioned all of them one after the other, and, in order to help them to understand better, said to them:

"Children, I am going to give you a comparison that Saint Augustine taught; it is about the sun. Just as there are three elements in the sun but these three elements do not make three suns, so in the Holy Trinity there are three Persons, but all three make only one God. So then, there are three elements in the sun; namely, the substance of the sun, light, and heat.

"The substance of the sun is that beautiful star we see in the heavens. The light is what shines down on us and on all those on earth, dispelling the darkness of the night and, in a word, what delights everyone; for, if we were in darkness, what joy would we have? The third element in the sun is heat, a great heat proceeding from the substance of the sun and from the light. It is this great heat that ripens fruits and other things on the earth. When you experience stifling heat, as it was when we came in here, it is from the sun that it comes.

"From this comparison you see how there is only one God and three Persons in God who are inseparable from one another, just as the sun is inseparable from the light, and the light from the heat. These three elements are never apart from one another; you know this from experience. Why will it not be so hot this evening as it is right now? Because the sun will have gone down; and, as the heat is inseparable from the sun, we will not feel it any more because the sun will have gone down."

He began to question the men; then, turning to a little boy, he asked:

"Who is God, my child?"

"Monsieur, God is the Creator of heaven and earth and the Lord of all things."

"Fine! he has answered very well. God is the Creator of heaven and earth. What do you mean by the words 'Creator of heaven and earth'?"

"I mean the one who has made everything."

"Yes, when we say: 'Creator of heaven and earth,' that means the one who has made everything. Remember that carefully, chil-
When you hear it said, you will recall that Creator means the same as the one who made everything. But you may say: ‘How is that? Has God made everything that is on this earth?’ Yes, God has made everything. ‘But, Monsieur, has God made the many different creatures that we see?’ He made all that and did so for the service of mankind—even the tiniest creature that God has made, even a mite, God has created that. ‘But, Monsieur, is it possible that God created all that?’ Yes, it is true that he created the mite that scurries between the flesh and the skin, and those little ants you see running around; God created all that.

“When the men who went to instruct those poor uncivilized people who did not know what God is, taught them that there was one God in three Persons, they could not understand or respond to that. When they were asked: ‘What is God?’ they did not know what to say nor to understand, until they were told that God is the Creator of heaven and earth, the one who has made everything. Now when they are asked what God is, they say: ‘The one who has made everything.’ So you see, children, how fortunate you are to have been born in a Christian country, where we know God to the extent that the dimness of our intellect allows.

“My child, how many gods are there?”
“There is only one, Father.”
“And how many Persons are there in God?”
“There are three, but all three form only one God.”
“Could you give me an example to make that clear?”
“Monsieur, I will use a candle for that because there are three elements in it: the wax, the wick, and the flame, but all three of them make only one candle.”

“God bless you, son! The boy gives the example of a candle in which there are three elements that form only one lighted candle. Still, even though there are three Persons in the Holy Trinity, there are not three gods, but only one. Remember that; there are not three gods, not six, not ten or twenty, as the pagans hold—because they believe that there are many gods—no, there is only one God in three Persons.”

Then, turning to a woman, he asked her: “What is God?”
“God is the Creator of heaven and earth.”
"What does 'Creator' mean? What does it mean to create something?"

"It means to make something out of nothing."

"Oh, you are very intelligent, my friend! You are trying to say that to create means to make something out of nothing, and that it belongs to God alone to make something without using any matter. People can certainly make some piece of work, but it is understood that this means to make one thing from another. To build this house, for example, is to make something; but, because this requires stones, cement, and other materials, it is not called creating, but making, something. And here is the difference between creating and making: to make something, material is required, but to create something from nothing the only thing required is the omnipotence of God, who can make whatever He pleases.

"These are the reasons, children, that oblige you to learn well the intention of your founder; otherwise, there is no salvation. See whether that does not merit your working at it to acknowledge the graces God has given you in having provided you with the things necessary for both body and soul. What more could you wish for? You are given your food—not like what is given to magistrates, but enough to meet your needs. How many poor persons there are in Paris and elsewhere who do not have the good fortune you have! How many poor nobles who would consider themselves very lucky if they had the food you had! How many poor farmers there are who work from morning until night, who are not so well fed as you are! All that should oblige you to do as much manual labor as you can, according to your strength, far from thinking: 'I do not have to take the trouble to do anything, since I am sure that I will lack nothing.' Ah, children! Be very careful to avoid that; say rather that we have to work for the love of God, since He Himself gives us the example of this by working constantly for us.

"This, then, is the fruit you should gather from this instruction: to love work, after the example of Our Lord, who worked so hard for us, to learn the things necessary for salvation, and to do it soon for fear that death may surprise you. There are many persons who want to learn, but it is when they are on their deathbed, and then they say:
Teach us, tell us what acts we should make.' Very often, however, it is too late for them. Let us act in such a way that this misfortune does not befall us, and let us try to do all we can to benefit from the graces God has given us. I ask Him in His goodness to be merciful to us and to help us to do what He asks of us. I ask Him to help me to do my duty by giving you the necessary instructions, since He has chosen me, although a wretched sinner, to serve you.”

Holy Mary, help the wretched . . .

50. - REQUEST MADE TO A PRIEST TO ACCEPT THE DUTY OF CHAPLAIN AT THE HOTEL-DIEU

(May 20, 1655)

On Thursday, May 20, 1655, a priest came to see M. Vincent and left after he had spoken with him. M. Vincent, who was about to go into the city, asked where the priest was. When he had been told that he had gone, he himself left right away and had his carriage speed up in order to overtake that good priest. Catching up with him in the faubourg Saint-Denis, he invited him to get into the carriage. When that good man tried to excuse himself, M. Vincent said to him: “Monsieur, please get in; I have something to propose to you.” The man accepted, and M. Vincent began by saying to him:

“Monsieur, I have been thinking of asking if you would be willing to accept a modest position in a place where a good priest is needed. Here is the situation: there are usually six priests at the Hôtel-Dieu in this city; they are maintained there to hear the confessions of all the poor persons who go to the Hôtel-Dieu and to have them make a general confession. It is a place where there is great good to be done and many services to be rendered to God. The Ladies of Charity give one hundred fifty livres to each of them for this purpose; and right now they eat with the community. Following are the pros and cons that should either prompt you to accept this position or to refuse it:

Document 50. - Repetitions of Prayer, Conferences, and Talks to the Missionaries, MS, fol. 17v.
"First, the great good to be done; for all the poor persons who go there either die there or are cured. If they die, there is reason to hope that they are saved, after having made a general confession when they arrived; so, you will have cooperated in the salvation of souls, who will pray for you. If they are healed, there is reason to hope that they will take greater care not to fall into their sins again and will profit from the good advice you will have given them. So you see, Monsieur, that the benefit in both cases is very great and most pleasing to God.

"The argument against that, and the one that might hinder your giving yourself to God to become involved in that good work, is perhaps some anxiety concerning the tainted air circulating among the patients there, and the fact that you would not have time to go here and there in the city to take care of your business affairs. Now, in response to this first objection, Monsieur, let me tell you that I know of no more than one or two priests who have died there during the past seven or eight years. The biggest difficulty occurs when people are starting out. After that, however, they get used to that atmosphere, and there is no problem. Then, too, God provides special assistance to those who have given themselves to Him to serve Him in the best way. After all, do not our lives belong to Him? Could we do anything better than to use them for His service?

"As for the other matter, it is true that you would have to dispose of all those business affairs you might have in the city because, once you are there, it is not easy to get out since there is always work to do with the large number of poor persons there.

"So, that is what I had to say to you. I have given you the pros and the cons: on the one hand, the great good to be done and the excellence of this ministry, which is so pleasing to Our Lord that He Himself came, as He said, to evangelize persons who were poor; and on the other hand, the things that might hinder you from accepting this holy ministry. So then, Monsieur, please reflect on it between now and next Saturday and come to tell me what you have decided because the matter is somewhat urgent. Meanwhile, go im-
mediately to see M. Ladvocat on my behalf, and tell him why I am sending you to him so that he will not appoint someone else for it.”¹

50a. - DEPOSITION CONCERNING NICOLAS SEVIN,
COADJUTOR BISHOP-ELECT OF CAHORS

(June 8, 1656)

The respected and knowledgeable man Vincent de Paul, priest and Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, about seventy-six years of age,¹ residing in his house of Saint-Lazare, near Paris, previously sworn in with his hand on his heart, replied as follows:

To the first point he replied that he had been well acquainted with the Most Illustrious Coadjutor-elect for fourteen years because he often had contact with him; he declared also that he was not related to him by blood or marriage, nor was his competitor, nor his close associate, nor his enemy.

To the second and third he said that eight years ago the Coadjutor-elect was consecrated Bishop of Sarlat and since that time has continued to be head of that same church.

To the fourth he replied affirmatively.²

To the fifth he said that he knows that the Coadjutor-elect (he knows him well [this is crossed out]) has made a solemn visitation of his church of Sarlat and his entire diocese every year, to the great

¹The priest accepted the ministry that Saint Vincent was proposing to him.
²This document provides another indication of the age of Saint Vincent; he is “about seventy-six years of age” or, in canonical terminology, in his seventy-seventh year.
³The fourth question asked whether Sevin had a known residence, and did he maintain a residence.