

FOR CHARITY: FOR GOD

“What’s done out of charity is done for God. It’s a great happiness for us if we’re found worthy to use what we have for charity’s sake, that is, for God who has given it to us. We should thank and bless His infinite goodness to us.” (III, 108)

PEACEFUL DEATH OF THE FRIENDS OF THE POOR

At another meeting, speaking with two priests from noble families,¹³ he said something very remarkable to them, which is worth being remembered: “All those who love the poor in life will have nothing to fear from death, as I’ve seen on many occasions.” Because of this he was accustomed to instill this teaching in the minds of those whom he saw tormented by the fear of death, and he used the opportunity to spur them on to love of poor persons. (III, 117)

DUTY OF MAKING GOOD ACTIONS KNOWN

Anne of Austria, having made a gift to M. Vincent of a diamond worth 7,000 livres and of a very beautiful pendant, which was sold for 18,000 livres by the Assembly of the Ladies of Charity, asked M. Vincent “through a sentiment of Christian humility,” not to speak of it to anyone. He, however, did not feel obliged to obey her on this point, but said to her, “Madame, Your Majesty will please pardon me if I no longer keep secret such a marvelous example of charity. It is good, Madame, that all of Paris and even all of France should know of it. I feel obliged to speak of it wherever I go.” (III, 122)

COMPASSION FOR THE IRISH REFUGEES

One day, having learned that there was in Paris at that time a large number of Irish Catholics, who had been exiled for their faith

¹³Louis de Chandénier and Louis de Blampignon. This account was given by Brother Robineau (cf. XI, 86, cit.), the saint’s secretary.

and reduced to great misery, he called in one of the priests of his Congregation, a native of Ireland, and asked what might possibly be done to help those poor Irish refugees. "Is there no way we can bring them together to console them in their suffering and instruct them? They don't understand our language, and they seem so forsaken. My heart is stricken for I have great compassion for them." This good priest responded that he would do what he could. "God bless you," replied M. Vincent, "here are ten pistoles. Go in the name of God, to give them whatever consolation you can." (III, 128)

CHARITY AS A MATCH FOR TEMPTATION

M. Vincent persisted in remaining on his knees before a Missioner who was being tempted. "No," he said, "I won't get off my knees until you agree to what I'm asking. On this point I want to be at least as insistent as your tempter, the devil." (III, 151)

FULFILLING THE DUTY OF OUR STATE IS NOT A BURDEN

To a Brother who had been treated rudely by an officer of the Saint-Lazare house he said, "You were right to come to tell me this; I'll handle it. Come to see me any time you have a complaint, for you know how fond I am of you."

To a Brother who feared disturbing him by putting forward his doubts, he replied, "No, Brother, have no fear that you're bothering me. You should realize that someone appointed by God to serve others is no more put out by the demands made on him than a father would be in regard to his children." (III, 151)

EXPRESSION OF CHARITY IN FACE OF AN ADMISSION OF A FEELING OF AVERSION

*To a priest who acknowledged having an aversion to him:
"If I hadn't already given you my heart, I'd give it totally to you now." (III, 152)*

A SMILING CORRECTION

A Missioner went to see M. Vincent in his room and stated his intention to leave the Company and return to his own region. M. Vincent began to smile and, looking at him with great kindness and tenderness said, "When do you plan to leave? Are you going on foot, or will you take a horse?" The priest, who was speaking seriously and expected to be reprimanded, was completely surprised and. . . was also delivered from his temptation. (III, 152)

BEWARE OF THE TEMPTATIONS OF SICKNESS

M. Vincent encouraged those patients who were able to make their spiritual exercises, not to omit them, "lest," he said, "the sickness of the body may extend to the soul and cause it to become lax and unmortified." (III, 155)

PROMPTNESS IN GIVING

A Missioner working in Champagne asked for a cap. A Brother¹⁴ offered to go to buy him one. M. Vincent asked that his own be sent off immediately.

"No, Brother, don't make him wait, for he may be in a hurry for it. Please send it to him right now, together with the other things he's requesting." (III, 155)

FRANCIS DE SALES, EPITOME OF OUR LORD'S GENTLENESS

He recalled on this topic (gentleness) the example of Blessed Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva, who he said "was the gentlest, kindest person I've ever known. The very first time I met him, I saw from the outset that his expression and his way of speaking and conversing with others was an expression of the gentleness of our Lord Jesus Christ, who had taken possession of his heart." (III, 165)

¹⁴The Brother was Louis Robineau.

AFFABILITY MUST BE WITHOUT FLATTERY

“Be affable, but never a flatterer. Nothing is worse or more unworthy of a Christian than flattery. A truly virtuous man holds nothing in such horror as this particular vice.” (III, 166)

A PRAYER FOR HUMILITY

“I’m not a man but a poor worm¹⁵ crawling along the earth, not knowing where I’m going, but seeking only to hide myself in You, O my God, who are all I desire. I’m a poor blind man unable to take a single step in the way of goodness unless You extend Your merciful hand to guide me.” (III, 180)

A HUMBLE RESPONSE TO PRAISE

M. Vincent replied to a Bishop who had said he was a “perfect Christian,” “Oh, Bishop, what are you saying? Me, a perfect Christian? I should be considered a reprobate and the greatest sinner of the universe.” (III, 185)

MONSIEUR VINCENT DESCRIBES HIMSELF AS A STUDENT OF THE FOURTH FORM

M. Vincent, having responded to some difficulties that a student had against hope added, “If the devil returns with this same evil suggestion, respond in the way I just explained to you. Say to that wretched tempter that it was Vincent, an ignoramus, a student of the fourth form, who taught you that.” (III, 186)

MONSIEUR VINCENT RECALLS HIS HUMBLE ORIGINS

To a poor woman who said to him, “My Lord, give me some alms!” M. Vincent replied, “My poor woman, you don’t know me

¹⁵Cf. Ps 22:7. (NAB)

very well. I'm a poor pig farmer, the son of a poor villager." . . . *A poor woman who met him at the door as he was saying good-bye to some visitors of rank begged him for alms, saying she had been the servant of "Madame, his mother."* "My good woman," *M. Vincent replied,* "you mistake me for someone else. My mother never had a servant; she was a servant herself, and was the wife, and I the son, of a peasant." . . . *When a young man, who was a relative of a priest of the Company, declined to sit beside M. Vincent and kept his head covered out of respect for him, M. Vincent said to him,* "Why, Monsieur, do you find it hard to sit next to a swineherd and the son of a peasant?" . . . *When a person of rank tried to accompany M. Vincent to the door, the latter dissuaded him with these words,* "You should be well aware, Monsieur, that I'm only the son of a poor villager, and in my youth I tended the flocks in the fields." *The nobleman, who was witty, replied that one of the world's greatest Kings was David, who had also been taken from driving the flocks he was tending. M. Vincent seemed confused and humbled by this response.* (III, 186-87)

MONSIEUR VINCENT IS HAPPY THAT GOD TAKES CARE OF HIS AFFAIRS "WITHOUT HIM"

When a Lady of Charity reproached M. Vincent for not being firm enough in holding to his own opinion, and of following rather the opinions of others, he replied, "God forbid, Madame, that my wretched thoughts should prevail over those of others. I'm delighted that God works his marvels without me, who am only a wretched man." (III, 187)

MONSIEUR VINCENT DENIGRATES THE COMPANY TO ONE WHO WISHES TO ENTER IT

"*Quoi, Monsieur, you want to be a Missioner? What makes you look to our Little Company, for we're nothing but poor folk?*" (III, 187)

MONSIEUR VINCENT ASKS PARDON OF ALEXANDRE VÉRONNE ¹⁶ IN FRONT OF HIS ASSISTANT (1649)

“You should know, Monsieur, that this good Brother came all the way to Richelieu to help me, and I was not as welcoming as I had usually been. I most humbly ask his pardon in your presence, and I ask you to pray that God may grant me the grace of no longer committing similar faults.” (III, 189)

MONSIEUR VINCENT WANTS TO JUSTIFY HIMSELF ONLY BY WORKS

One of the chief Magistrates of the Parlement said in the Grand'Chambre that the Missioners of Saint-Lazare hardly gave missions any more. M. Vincent replied to a Missioner who suggested that he justify himself, “Let him be. I'll never justify myself except by works.” (III, 190)

THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION WILL SUBSIST BY HUMILITY

*For several years, M. Vincent proposed as the subject of prayer for the community a meditation on pride once a month: “The Company can't subsist without the virtue of humility. When this virtue is lacking in a Company, each one thinks about his own particular ministry, and this leads to partiality, schism, and destruction. If Missioners should ask for one thing from God, it's humility. They should be sad and weep when they receive applause, for Our Lord has said: *Vae cum benedixerint vobis homines*. Cursed shall you be, when men shall praise you.”*¹⁷ (III, 190)

¹⁶Bro. Alexandre Véronne (cf. XI, 152, n.1).

¹⁷Cf. XI, 104.

MONSIEUR VINCENT WISHES TO WITHDRAW FROM THE COUNCIL OF CONSCIENCE

Speaking one day of his position at the Court, he said, "I ask God that I may be regarded as a simpleton, which I am, so as not to have to continue in this type of commission, and that I may have greater leisure to do penance, and give less bad example to our Little Company." (III, 191)

MONSIEUR VINCENT REFUSES TO DEFEND HIMSELF AGAINST A CALUMNY

*A priest, who died soon after, spread the rumor that M. Vincent had had a benefice bestowed on someone in return for a library and a large sum of money. M. Vincent took up his pen to justify himself, but after reflecting on it he said, "O you wretched man! What are you thinking? *Quoi*, you want to justify yourself, and here we've just heard of a Christian falsely accused in Tunis, who suffered torments for three days and finally died without uttering a word of complaint, although he was innocent of the crime of which he was accused. And you want to excuse yourself? Oh no, it shall not be so!" (III, 191-92)*

THROUGH HUMILITY, MONSIEUR VINCENT REFUSES SPECIAL COURTESIES

M. Vincent complained that the Missioners stopped or made a sign of reverence to him when he passed. When it was pointed out that this was a common usage in other Communities, he responded, "I'm well aware of that, and we have to respect their reasons for doing so, but I have much stronger ones for not allowing it in my regard, I, who ought not to be compared to the least of men, since I'm the worst of all." (III, 192-93)

MONSIEUR VINCENT RECALLS OBEDIENCE TO THE KING

After setting free the pheasants that a Brother had obtained by having a hen hatch the pheasant eggs found in the enclosure of Saint-Lazare, he said, “You know, Brother, we have to obey the King, who has forbidden hunting, and this applies to taking the eggs as well as hunting the birds themselves. We cannot disobey the ruler in these temporal matters without displeasing God.” (III, 209-10)

THE RULE OF CONDESCENSION

His great maxim on condescension was: “Be as polite as you can, provided God is not offended in this.” (III, 211)

THE RULE OF SIMPLICITY

“Making things look good exteriorly while being otherwise interiorly is to be like the hypocritical Pharisees, and to imitate Satan, who disguises himself as an angel of light. Since prudence of the flesh¹⁸ and hypocrisy are so prevalent in this corrupt age, to the great prejudice of the spirit of Christianity, the best way to combat and overcome them is by a true and sincere simplicity.” (III, 217-18)

THE SPIRIT OF UPRIGHTNESS AND SIMPLICITY IN THE MIDST OF CUNNING PEOPLE

M. Vincent gave this excellent advice to a Missioner sent to a province where rumor had it that the people used cunning: “You’re going to a region where the people are for the most part crafty and devious. If that’s the case, the best way to help them is to act toward them with great simplicity. The teachings of the Gospel are totally opposed to worldly behavior. Since you’re going there to serve Our

¹⁸Cf. Rom 8:6. (NAB)

Lord, you must also act according to His spirit, which is a spirit of uprightness and simplicity.” (III, 218)

HUMAN PRUDENCE AND DIVINE WISDOM

“Where human prudence fails, the light of divine wisdom begins to dawn.” (III, 225)

MONSIEUR VINCENT REFERS TO THE GOSPEL IN REPLYING WITH DISCRETION

When M. Vincent said that he did not know a priest who had left the Company after many years, a Missioner was surprised and remarked that he couldn't not know him. He replied, “I see that, but could I improve on what Our Lord said in rebuking those who had prophesied in his name, that he didn't know them? This means, of course, that he didn't approve of what they had done.¹⁹ Allow me, then, to follow His example and way of speaking.” (III, 227)

THE TIME OF THANKSGIVING MUST EQUAL THAT OF PETITION

“We should spend as much time thanking God for His favors as we did in asking Him for them.” (III, 236)

THE CONGREGATION WILL NOT PERISH BY POVERTY

When one of the leading Magistrates of the kingdom, a man of great authority, told M. Vincent that he should not lose the opportunity to have the Company served as he wished while he was in favor, since the means were presenting themselves, and that other Communities, which he named, were doing this, M. Vincent replied, “Not for anything in the world would I do something against God or

¹⁹Cf. Mt 25:12. (NAB)

my conscience. The Company won't fail because of poverty; whereas, if poverty is lacking, I fear that it will perish." (III, 247)

WORK IS THE FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S WILL

When a Missioner who had visited the relatives of M. Vincent, returned, he related how praiseworthy their simplicity, piety, and charity were, but that they had nothing to live on except what they earned by their own labor. To this, M. Vincent replied, "Alas, aren't they happy, and could they be any better off than in a situation where they're carrying out God's ruling that we should earn our bread in the sweat of our brow?" (III, 258)

ALLOW FOR GOD'S JUSTICE

When the relatives of M. Vincent had been defamed to the highest degree before a noted Parlement, some of his friends wanted to divert the proceedings. He opposed this, saying, "Isn't it reasonable, Messieurs, that justice be done to satisfy the justice of God? The merciful punishments of offenders in this life will save them from His applying to them the rigors of His justice in the next." (III, 258-29)

EVEN WITH ONE FOOT IN HEAVEN, DO NOT GIVE UP MORTIFICATION

"If a person already had one foot in heaven, so to speak, but gave up the practice of mortification for the time it would take to get the other foot in, he'd be in danger of being lost." (III, 263)

WAYS OF MORTIFYING OURSELVES

"We can practice mortification in every situation, even holding our bodies in a position that might be uncomfortable, without, however, failing in moderation. We can deprive our senses of things that might give them a certain satisfaction, and accept willingly good weather as well as bad." (III, 264)

IMPOSING A PENANCE ON OURSELVES FOR THOSE WHO SUFFER

During the extreme misery in Lorraine, he often used to say, "This is the time of penance, since God is afflicting His people. Shouldn't we priests be at the foot of the altar, weeping for their sins? That's an obligation for us, but beyond that, shouldn't we deprive ourselves of some of our food to come to their aid?"

During the siege of Corbie (1636), he cut out one of the first courses at meals and never reestablished it later, saying, "Isn't it only right that we should cut back in some way to sympathize with and participate in the sufferings of the people?"

M. Vincent rescued a young woman from the danger of losing her virtue but she, seduced by some evil spirit, was miserably lost. "It seems," he said, "that we've done all we could to prevent this misfortune. It remains only to pray and to do penance for her! Oh, this has to cost me something!" (III, 264)

MONSIEUR VINCENT REFUSES EXTRA FOOD

When a Missioner presented some broth to M. Vincent one day, the latter responded:

"You're tempting me, Monsieur; isn't it the devil who's prompting you to persuade me to feed this miserable body and puny carcass in this way? Is that being just? May God forgive you for it." (III, 266)

IN PRAISE OF PURITY

Mlle Pollalion²⁰ came to see M. Vincent one day, accompanied by a girl of fourteen or fifteen years of age, whom she had taken in, and who was very beautiful. M. Vincent told the girl that she should be most obliged to God for having placed her in a devout home and under the care of a charitable person, who looked out for her honor and her salvation; that she should be very grateful for this and

²⁰Mademoiselle de Pollalion (cf. XI, 341, n. 8)

*should appreciate having such a shelter; that she should make good use of this favor, that Our Lord would do the same for others because He loved virgins and always wanted them to accompany Him wherever He went;*²¹ *and that she should rejoice in that.* (III, 272)

CALM RESPONSES TO IRATE REMARKS

M. Vincent responded to a Magistrate of a sovereign court who challenged him angrily because he did not pay enough attention to his own interests, “I think, Monsieur, that you’re trying to do your duty as you should, and I have to try to do the same in mine.” (III, 280-81)

To a noble lady who was trying to involve him in a matter that he felt was unjust M. Vincent declared, “Madame, our Rules and my conscience do not allow me to obey you in this; that’s why I ask you most humbly to excuse me from doing so.” (III, 281)

PATIENCE IN TRIALS

At the death of a Missioner who was especially dear to him, M. Vincent said, “By the grace of God, my heart is at peace in the thought that what’s happening is God’s good pleasure. True, I sometimes fear that my sins may be the cause of these losses, but recognizing in that the same Will of God, I accept it with all my heart.” . . . And to a priest who suffered unjustly, “Isn’t your heart consoled to see that it’s been found worthy before God to suffer in serving Him?”²² Certainly you owe him special thanks and are obliged to ask Him to make good use of this.” (III, 285-86)

PATIENCE IN PHYSICAL SUFFERINGS

To a priest who said to him, “Monsieur, how terrible your sufferings are!” he replied, “Quoi? Are you calling God’s work terrible, and what He sends to make a miserable sinner like me suffer?

²¹Cf. Rv 14:4. (NAB)

²²Cf. Acts 5:41. (NAB)

God forgive you for what you've just said, Monsieur, for that's not the language of Jesus Christ. Isn't it right that the guilty should suffer, and don't we belong more to God than to ourselves?" *And because this same priest told him that it seemed like those sufferings were increasing from one day to the next, he added, "It's true that I feel them getting worse from the soles of my feet to the top of my head. But alas, if I didn't make good use of them, what account would I have to render at the tribunal of God before whom I'm soon to appear?"* (III, 290)

APPENDIXES

1. - MEMO OF BROTHER BERTRAND DUCOURNAU

(Now Vol. XI, Introduction, pp. xxvii-xxxii)

2. - TOPICS TREATED IN THE CONFERENCES AT SAINT-LAZARE (1650-60)

September 23, 1650 - *Informing the Superior of the faults of individuals in the Company.*

1. Reasons obliging us to inform the Superior of the faults we have noticed in individuals in the Company.
2. How this Rule is to be understood; faults that may be committed against it.
3. Means of making this known properly.

September 30, 1650 - *Willingness to have our faults made known to Superiors.*

1. Reasons for accepting that all our faults be made known to the Superior.
2. How this Rule is to be understood; faults we may commit against it.
3. Means of keeping this Rule well; dispositions required to benefit from it.

October 7, 1650 - *Repetition of Prayer*

1. Reasons for placing a high value on the Company's practice of Repetition of Prayer.
2. Signs that indicate those who do not esteem it very highly.
3. Means of making it well and benefitting from it.

Appendix 2. - The Archives of the Mission possess two lists of conferences given at Saint-Lazare: one, in the handwriting of René Alméras, Assistant of the Motherhouse, covers 1656-60; the other, in the handwriting of Jean Gicquel, sub-Assistant, encompasses the last ten years of the Holy Founder's life. Neither one lists all the conferences explaining the Rules. The topics in brackets are those not mentioned by either M. Alméras or M. Gicquel.

October 14, 1650 - *Attachments.*

1. Reasons for breaking our attachments.
2. What they are and which ones are the most dangerous.
3. Means of breaking our attachments.

October 21, 1650 - *Being admonished at Chapter.*

1. Reasons for appreciating this holy practice.
2. Faults that may be committed against it.
3. Means of benefitting well from it.

October 28, 1650 - *Spending the All Saints' feasts well.*

1. Reasons obliging us to spend these feast days well.
2. Practices each man proposes for himself to spend them well.

November 1650 - *Gracious Condescension*

1. Reasons obliging us to practice the virtue of condescension well.

2. What it is and the difference between good and bad condescension.

3. Means of grounding ourselves solidly in the practice of this virtue.

November 1650 - *Curiosity*

1. Great harm that results from curiosity.
2. The many ways we sin by curiosity.
3. Remedies for this vice.

December 1650 - *Silence.*

1. Each man's responsibility to do his part to see that silence is well kept in the Company.

2. How the Rule prescribing silence is to be understood and the principal way we break it.

3. Means we should take to ensure observance of this virtue of silence.

December 24, 1650 - *Spending the Christmas feasts well.*

1. Reasons obliging us to spend the Christmas feasts well.
2. Practices each man proposes for himself for that purpose.

January 7, 1651 - *Spending this year well.*

1. Reasons we have to spend this year well.
2. What prevented us from spending last year well.

3. Means we propose to practice in order to spend this new year well.

January 1651 - Modesty.

1. Reasons obliging Missioners to be very modest.

2. In what this virtue consists and the faults committed against it.

3. Means of acquiring and practicing this virtue well.

1651 - The good use of admonitions.

1. Reasons for making good use of the admonitions given us for our faults.

2. Faults we may commit with regard to these admonitions.

3. Means of accepting admonitions well and of making good use of them.

1651 - Excuses for covering up our faults.

1. Reasons for never passing off pretexts as good reasons in order to hide the faults in our actions or to exempt ourselves from doing some good.

2. What pretexts are and how many kinds there are; difference between pretexts and real reasons.

3. Means of giving up and avoiding these false excuses.

1651 - Inspirations.

1. Reasons for obliging us to respond to good inspirations.

2. What an inspiration is; signs for distinguishing the good from the bad.

3. Means of responding to them and making good use of them.

1651 - Recreation.

1. Importance of spending recreation as we should.

2. Common faults we commit during recreation.

3. Means of spending recreation as we should.

1651 - Simplicity.

1. Obligation of Missioners to be simple.

2. In what simplicity consists; faults committed against it.

3. Means of having and practicing simplicity.

1651 - Never to listen to malicious gossip.

1. Reasons never to listen to malicious gossip.

2. Means of grounding ourselves in this practice.

1651 - *Neither asking nor refusing anything.*

1. Reasons for adopting this practice.
2. In what it consists and how it is to be understood.
3. Means of putting this practice into effect.

1651 - *Spiritual dryness.*

1. Importance of making good use of it.
2. What it is and how it differs from lukewarmness.
3. Means of making good use of spiritual dryness.

1651 - *Doing one's actions with the proper spirit.*

1. Reasons for acting with the proper spirit.
2. How to act with the proper spirit.
3. Means for acting with the proper spirit.

1651 - *Meditation.*

1. Reasons for making our meditation well.
2. Faults and obstacles.
3. Measures and means for making it well.

1651 - *Fear of losing our vocation.*

1. Reasons to fear failing in our vocation.
2. Things that can make us fail.
3. Means of preventing this misfortune.

1651 - *Lowly occupations.*

1. Reasons obliging us to do the least and lowliest occupations well.
2. Common faults we commit in this.
3. Means of rectifying them.

May 26, 1651 - *Dispositions for Pentecost.*

1. Reasons for preparing ourselves well to receive the Holy Spirit.
2. Things that prevent the Holy Spirit from coming into our souls.
3. Means for preparing ourselves well to receive the Spirit.

1651 - *Punctuality.*

1. Reasons to be devoted to punctuality.
2. What this punctuality must be; occasions when we must especially practice it.
3. Means of being very punctual.

1651 - Individuality.

1. Reasons obliging us to avoid individuality.
2. Principal oddities we must avoid.
3. Means of avoiding all individuality.

1651 - Not discussing the failings of others.

1. Great evils of guilt and trouble caused by this vice.
2. Failings we discuss most often.
3. Means of redressing this wrong.

1651 - Respect.

1. Reasons for respecting one another.
2. Faults we commit against respect.
3. Means of correcting ourselves and of practicing this respect.

1651 - Placing high value on the orders given by Superiors.

1. Importance of having a high regard for the orders and advice of Superiors.

2. Faults we commonly commit with regard to these orders and advice.

3. Means of correcting those faults and of abiding faithfully by the orders and advice given.

1651 - Uniformity.

1. Reasons for being uniform in every way we can.
2. In what we must be principally uniform.
3. Means of putting this uniformity into practice.

1651 - Silence.

1. The good that proceeds from it and the harm that recurs when we neglect it.

2. Occasions on which we most commonly fail in it.

3. Means of correcting this disorder.

1651 - Complaining.

1. The great harm complaining causes in a Community.
2. The most common complaints in the Company.
3. General and particular remedies for this vice.

December 22, 1651 - Christmas.

1. Benefits of celebrating Christmas well.

2. Faults we ordinarily commit contrary to the reverence due to this feast.

3. Practices we propose in order to celebrate it well.

January 5, 1652 - *Spending the new year well.*

1. Reasons for spending this year better than the preceding one.
2. Things that may hinder us from spending it well.
3. Means each individual proposes for himself to spend it well.

1652 - *The troubles of the time.*

1. Our responsibility to do what we can to appease God's wrath in such a deplorable time.

2. What each man thinks it good to do in order to appease God's anger.

1652 - *Modesty.*

1. Reasons we have to be modest.
2. Faults we commit against this virtue.
3. Means of being modest.

February 9, 1652 - *Spending the time of Carnival well.*

1. Reasons for intensifying our devotions and mortifications during these three days of Carnival.

2. Practices each of us proposes for this.

February 1652 - *Spending this Lent well.*

1. Our responsibility to spend this Lent more devoutly and more strictly than the others.

2. What each man thinks it good to do in order to spend it well.

1652 - *Gospel teachings.*

1. Reasons for acting always in accordance with Gospel teachings.
2. Gospel teachings to be practiced most particularly.
3. Means of acting well in accordance with Gospel teachings.

1652 - *Valuing little things.*

1. Reasons we have to set a high value on little things.
2. What these little things are.
3. Means of being faithful in little things.

March 22, 1652 - *Spending Holy Week well.*

1. Reasons for intensifying our devotion to the Passion of Our Lord during this Holy Week.

2. Practices each one proposes to himself for that.

April 5, 1652 - *Spiritual resurrection.*

1. Reasons for rising again spiritually on this feast of Easter, not only from sin to grace, but also from imperfections to holiness.

2. Signs to know if we will be resurrected in both these ways.

3. Means to be restored to life in this way.

1652 - Lukewarmness.

1. Our great reason for fearing lukewarmness.

2. In what it consists and the difference between lukewarmness and dryness.

3. Means of giving up and getting away from lukewarmness.

1652 - Public misfortunes.

1. Reasons for sharing the suffering of public misfortunes.

2. What these misfortunes are, both of body and soul.

3. Means of sharing the suffering of them as we should.

1652 - Modesty.

In three points, as above. (Repeated because of the need we have of it.)

May 17, 1652 - Pentecost.

1. Reasons obliging us to desire the operations of the Holy Spirit in our souls.

2. Operations of the Holy Spirit.

3. Means of preparing ourselves well to receive them and to correspond to them.

May 24, 1652 - Feast of the Holy Trinity.

1. Responsibility to honor the Holy Trinity in a particular way.

2. Practices each man proposes to himself to honor the Trinity properly.

May 31, 1652 - Corpus Christi.

1. Reasons to revive our devotion to honoring the Blessed Sacrament.

2. What each one thinks it well to do in order to honor the Blessed Sacrament properly.

June 7, 1652 - Informing the Superior of the neighbor's failings and accepting that he be told ours.

1. Reasons for informing Superiors of the neighbor's failings and accepting that he be told ours.

2. Faults we commit in the practice of this Rule.

3. Means of practicing it well.

June 10, 1652 - *Honoring St. Genevieve's reliquary to pray for peace.*

1. Reasons for sharing the public devotion to pray for peace.
2. Means each man proposes to himself for this. (Two priests or seminarians and two lay persons [Brothers] will fast; this lasted nine years and ended only when peace was achieved.)

June 14, 1652 - *Directing retreatants.*

1. Reasons for taking particular care in the direction of the retreatants we are given.
2. Faults we may commit in this direction.
3. Means of carrying out this ministry well.

June 21, 1652 - *Zeal.*

1. Reasons for being very zealous for our own perfection and for the salvation of souls.
2. Acts of this zeal and faults against it.
3. Means of preserving and increasing zeal.

June 28, 1652 - *Celebration of Holy Mass and Communion.*

1. Reasons for examining ourselves often to see if we are benefitting from Communion and the celebration of Holy Mass.
2. Signs to know if we are benefitting from them or not.
3. Means of benefitting from them.

July 5, 1652 - *Insensitivity.*

1. Reasons to fear falling into this insensitivity.
2. Signs to recognize whether we have fallen into it.
3. Means of not falling into it, or of getting out of it if we are already there.

July 12, 1652 - *Good use of God's scourges.*

1. Benefits reverting to us by making good use of God's scourges; drawbacks of making poor use of them.
2. Faults and other things preventing our making good use of God's scourges.
3. Means of removing those obstacles and of making good use of God's scourges.

July 19 and 26, August 2 and 9, 1652 - Deaths of Brother Patrocle and M. David.¹

1. Reasons for discussing the virtues of the deceased.
2. Virtues we noted in them.
3. How each of us proposes to imitate them.

August 16 and 23, 1652 - Doing nothing without permission.

1. Benefits of this practice and drawbacks of the contrary.
2. Faults observed in the Company against this practice.
3. Means of putting this practice into effect in the Company.

August 30 and September 6, 1652 - Death of the late M. Gilles.²

1. Reasons for discussing his virtues.
2. Virtues we noted in him.
3. How each of us proposes to imitate him.

September 13, 1652 - Assistance to the sick.

1. Reasons for being zealous in assisting the sick.
2. Faults we may commit in assisting the sick.
3. Means of correcting them and of assisting the sick properly.

¹There is some confusion about Brother Patrocle. Coste states that he is Guillaume-Seguïn Patrocle, seminarian of the Mission, who was born in Paris and entered the Congregation of the Mission at the age of thirty-four. *Notices*, vol. I, p. 477, lists him under this name with the priests and seminarians (the seminarians were often called Brothers) who entered the Congregation of the Mission in 1650. However, in *Notices*, vol. V (Supplement), p. 562, he is listed as Patrocle-Guillaume Seguin, a coadjutor Brother, born in Paris in 1616, entered the Internal Seminary in Paris on October 9, 1650, and died in Étampes in 1652.

Jean David, born in Mégières (Ardennes), entered the Congregation of the Mission on August 26, 1645, at the age of eighteen, took his vows on October 29, 1647, was ordained a priest in February 1651, and died on July 15, 1652. David had asked to go to Madagascar, and Saint Vincent was planning to send him there.

²Jean-Baptiste Gilles, from the Avranches diocese, had been headmaster and professor of philosophy at the Collège de Lisieux, situated on rue de Beauvais in Paris. He entered the Congregation of the Mission on November 28, 1642, and took his vows on October 11, 1645. After Gilles had served at the Cahors Seminary for some time, Saint Vincent entrusted to him the chair of moral theology at Saint-Lazare. When the Nuncio asked the saint to propose a candidate for Coadjutor Bishop of Babylon, he thought of Gilles. Gilles participated in the second General Assembly (1651), and took part in the debate on the vows, which he insisted on maintaining. His ardent opposition to the Jansenists was manifested mainly in his lectures and conferences to seminarians preparing for ordination. However, his insistence on attacking Jansenism ran the danger of producing the opposite effect. The saint understood this and transferred him from Saint-Lazare in 1651. For a short time, Gilles was Superior of the Crécy house, where he died on August 22, 1652. He received a well-deserved place in *Notices*, vol. III, pp. 110-14. His will, drawn up on April 30, 1643, showed the high esteem in which he held Saint Vincent. (Cf. Arch. Nat. MS. 211, f° 1.)

1652 - *The good use of illness.*

1. Reasons for making good use of illness and for behaving well when sick.
2. Faults into which we usually fall when we are ill.
3. Means of making good use of illness and of acting appropriately when we are ill.

1652 - *Retreat.*

1. Reasons for giving ourselves to God so that our retreats will be helpful to us.
2. Faults that may hinder us from benefitting from them.
3. Means of correcting our faults and of making retreats beneficial.

October 25, 1652 - *All Saints' Day.*

1. Reasons for giving ourselves to God to obtain the graces He is accustomed to give, especially on important solemnities like that of All Saints' Day.
2. What these graces are.
3. Requisite dispositions for obtaining them.

November 2, 1652 - *Assistance to the deceased.*

1. Reasons for assisting the deceased, particularly on their feast day.
2. Means of assisting them.

November 8, 15, and 22, 1652 - *Deaths of M. Watebled, M. Deschamps, and Brother Hervy.*³

The usual points, as above, not stopping long on the first point, because we are familiar with them from recent conferences.

³Pierre Watebled, born in Tully (Somme) in 1622, entered the Congregation of the Mission on January 19, 1641, at nineteen years of age, and took his vows on June 14, 1643. He was Superior of the Saintes Seminary (1650-51) and died a victim of his dedication in Villeneuve-Saint-George (Val-de-Marne) in October 1652.

Edme Deschamps, born in Saint-Dié (Vosges) in 1617, entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 5, 1643, took his vows on September 24, 1646, and was ordained a priest in 1650 or 1651. Saint Vincent sent him to assist the people in the provinces of Champagne and Ile-de-France, which were being devastated by the civil war. Exhausted by his devoted labors, Deschamps died in Bâville, near Étampes, in October 1652.

Antoine Hervy, a seminarian, born in Longjumeau (Essonne), entered the Congregation of the Mission on September 21, 1649, at nineteen years of age, and took his vows on October 9, 1651. As noted here, Saint Vincent gave a conference in November 1652 on his recent death at Saint-Lazare.

November 29, 1652 - *Advent time.*

1. Reasons obliging us to increase our devotions and mortifications during the entire time of Advent.
2. Devotions and mortifications each man resolved to practice every day of Advent.
3. Obstacles to carrying out these resolutions; means of removing the obstacles.

December 6, 1652 - *Benefitting from the last conference.*

1. Reasons obliging us to see whether we have been faithful to the resolutions made in the preceding conference.
2. Resolutions we made at that time; how we have failed in them or benefitted from them.
3. Means of being faithful to them during Advent.

December 13, 20, and 27, 1652 - *Punctuality.*

1. Reasons for giving ourselves to God to be punctual in all our exercises.
2. Faults we commit against punctuality.
3. Means of correcting them.

January 3, 1653 - *Spending this year better than the preceding one.*

1. Motives obliging us to spend this year better than the last.
2. Principal faults of the past year.
3. Means of avoiding them.

1653 - *Moderation at table.*

1. Reasons for observing moderation at table.
2. Faults noted against it.
3. Means of correcting them and of properly observing moderation at table.

February 1653 - *Communication.*

1. Reasons for making our communication well every month.
2. Faults we may commit against this practice.
3. Means of making our communication well.

February 23, 1653 - *Lukewarmness.*

1. Reasons to fear falling into the state of lukewarmness and for seeing whether we are in it or not.
2. What it is and the signs for recognizing it.

February 29, 1653⁴ - Spending Lent well.

1. Reasons for giving ourselves to God to spend Lent well.
2. What each one thinks should be done in order to spend it well.

1653 - Death of M. Gurlet.⁵

Divided as above.

1653 - Temptations against our vocation.

1. Reasons for acting well in temptations against our vocation.
2. Faults we may commit when being tempted.
3. Means of acting well during temptations.

1653 - Death of M. Lambert,⁶ who died in Poland assisting the plague victims.

May 16, 1653 - Obligation of those who remain at home to contribute to the missions.

1. Reasons obliging those who remain at home to cooperate in the missions.
2. Practices each one proposes for this.

June 1653 - Benefitting from Holy Communion.

1. Reasons for examining ourselves often to see if we are benefitting from Holy Communion.
2. Reasons why several who receive Communion often do not benefit from it.

3. Means of benefitting from it.

1653 - Devotion to hearing and serving Holy Mass.

1. Reasons for devotion to hearing and serving Mass.
2. Faults we commit either in saying Holy Mass or attending it.
3. Means of correcting the faults and of acquiring this devotion.

July 1653 - Giving information to individuals.

1. Reasons we have to put an end to reports from the Company.
2. What kinds of reporting should be stopped.
3. Means of putting an end to them.

July 18, 1653 - Curiosity.

1. Reasons for avoiding curiosity.

⁴This date is incorrect; 1653 was not a leap year, so February had only 28 days.

⁵Claude Gurlet, born in Lyons, entered the Congregation of the Mission on June 12, 1646, at twenty-four years of age, and died on February 2, 1653.

⁶Lambert aux Couteaux (cf. XI, xx-xxi, n. 16).

2. Acts of this vice; when we must refrain from them.

3. Measures and means of avoiding them.

1653 - *The spirit of obedience.*

1. Benefits of doing everything in a spirit of obedience; drawbacks of the contrary.

2. In what the spirit of obedience consists; faults we may commit against it.

3. Means of adopting this practice.

1658⁷ - *Zeal for our own perfection.*

1. Motives for giving ourselves to God to acquire this zeal.

2. In what this zeal and the holiness of a Missioner consist.

3. Means of acquiring this zeal.

September 27, 1653 - *Retreat.*

1. Benefits we derive from a well-made retreat; the harm in making it badly.

2. Faults that impede these benefits and cause this harm.

3. Means for making the retreat well and for benefitting from it.

October 1653 - *Studying or working with God.*

1. Reasons for studying or working with God.

2. In what this practice consists; faults we may commit against it.

3. The means of entering into it and advancing in it.

The coadjutor Brothers spoke of working and the seminarians of studying.

October 1653 - *Observance of the Rules.*

1. Reasons for putting into effect the practice of our Rules.

2. Principal faults individuals have noticed against the Rules.

3. Means of remedying them and implementing the observance of our Rules.

October 31, 1653 - *All Saints' Day.*

1. Reasons for spending this feast well.

2. Practices each man proposes to himself to do so.

November 1653 - *First beatitude: Poverty of spirit*

1. Reasons for giving ourselves to God to love poverty of spirit.

⁷This is probably a typographical error, since the dates before and after it are from the year 1653.

2. In what poverty of spirit consists; its acts.
3. Means of putting ourselves in this state and of acquiring the virtue of poverty.

November 1653 - *Second beatitude: Gentleness.*

1. Reasons for acquiring this virtue.
2. In what it consists; its acts.
3. Means of acquiring this virtue.

1653 - *Third beatitude: Love of tears - Blessed are those who mourn.*

1. What Our Lord meant by these words.
2. Acts and signs of this beatitude, which consists in accepting and welcoming gladly tears and crosses.
3. Reasons for accepting and adopting these states.

1653 - *Fourth beatitude: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, etc.*

1. What Our Lord means by these words.
2. Acts and signs of this beatitude.
3. Reasons obliging us to assume it.

1653 - *Fifth beatitude: Blessed are the merciful.*

1. What Our Lord meant by these words.
2. Acts and signs of this beatitude.
3. Reasons obliging us to assume it.

Note: No conferences were given at Christmastime because St. Stephen's Day, a second-class feast, fell on Friday.

January 2, 1654 - *Sixth beatitude: Blessed are the pure of heart.*

1. What Our Lord meant by these words.
2. Acts and signs of this beatitude.
3. Reasons obliging us to assume it and to derive fruits from it, each one according to his need.

January 9, 1654 - *Seventh beatitude: Blessed are the peace-makers.*

Divided as above.

January 16, 1654 - *Eighth beatitude: Blessed are those who endure persecution, etc.*

Points as above.

January 23, 1654 - *Conferences.*

1. Reasons for giving conferences well.
2. Faults we commit at them.
3. Remedies for these faults.

January 30, 1654 - *The journey and the Mission of Madagascar.*

1. Reasons for discussing this journey and mission.
2. Dispositions required for those who are to be sent there.

February 6, 1654 - *How to conduct good missions.*

1. Reasons for discussing, from time to time, the means of conducting good missions.
2. Faults we commit during them.
3. Means of correcting those faults.

February 13, 1654 - *The same subject.*

1. Reasons for giving ourselves to God to conduct good missions; benefits or drawbacks from conducting them well or poorly.
2. Principal faults each one committed or noted in this.
3. General and particular means for correcting these faults; ways to help us to act appropriately during missions and to conduct them well.

February 20, 1654 - *Spending Lent well.*

Divided as above.

February 27 and March 6, 1654 - *Silence.*

1. Reasons for keeping it.
2. Faults and major places.
3. Remedies for these faults.

March 13, 1654 - *Not speaking about outside affairs or of those of the house.*

1. Motives for never speaking of them.
2. Faults against this practice.
3. Means of correcting them.

March 20, 1654 - *Spending Lent well.*

1. Motives.
2. Practices.

March 27, 1654 - *Spending Holy Week well.*

1. Reasons.
2. Practices.

April 10, 1654 - *Spiritual Communion.*

1. Reasons for making it well.
2. Faults.
3. Means.

April 17, 1654 - *Obedience.*

1. Reasons for practicing this virtue exactly.
2. Faults noticed against it.
3. Means of practicing it exactly.

May 1654 - *Chapter.*

1. Reasons for giving ourselves to God to share in the graces God pours out at Chapter.
2. Dispositions with which we should go to it.
3. Faults we commit there; remedies.

October 2, 1654 - *Retreats.*

October 16, 1654 - *Poverty.*

October 23, 1654 - *Poverty.*

November 13, 1654 - *Chastity.*

November 20, 1654 - *Obedience.*

November 27, 1654 - *Interior Communication.*

December 4, 1654 - *Advent.*

December 11, 1654 - *Interior Communication.*

December 18, 1654 - *Feasts of Christmastide.*

1655 - *Chapter.*

1655 - *Particular Examen.*

1655 - *How we should conduct ourselves in the refectory.*

1655 - *Laziness.*

June 11, 1655 - *Pride.*

1655 - *Envy.*

1655 - *Gluttony.*

July 30, 1655 - *Chastity.*

August 6, 1655 - *Poverty.*

August 13, 1655 - *Poverty.*

August 20 and 22, 1655 - *Preaching.*

1655 - *Faith.*

1655 - *Hope.*

1655 - *Love of God.*

1655 - *Charity toward the neighbor.*

1655 - *Retreats.*

1655 - *All Saints' Day.*

1655 - *Prudence.*

1655 - *Justice.*

1655 - *Fortitude.*

1655 - *Temperance.*

1655 - *Always speaking well of the neighbor.*

In addition to these conferences, there were others on Lent, the Passion, Pentecost, and a few deceased members of the Company, with the division of the usual points.

December 31, 1655 - *Faults of the past year.*

1. Reasons for mortifying ourselves before God for the faults, committed during the past year; reasons for correcting ourselves and for making amends for them.

2. General faults of the Company and in what it was negligent.

3. Means of correcting these.

January 7, 14, and 21, 1656 - *Good example.*

1. Motives for giving good example to our neighbor, especially to members of the Company.

2. Things that do not edify, or common faults contrary to the edification we should give.

3. Means of giving good example to our neighbor, especially to the Company.

January 27, 1656 - *Spirit of conferences.*

1. Motives for giving conferences in the spirit of the Company.

2. What we must do interiorly and exteriorly to give them in this spirit.

3. Means we can use to give them in this spirit and to observe in them the things necessary.

February 11 and 18, 1656 - *Esteeming and practicing little things.*

1. Reasons we have to esteem and practice the slightest little things that concern our state and progress in virtue.
2. What these little things are; faults we may commit against them.
3. Means of acquiring this esteem and practice.

February 25, 1656 - *Ordination (Retreats).*

1. Reasons for renewing in ourselves the spirit which God, in His mercy, has given the Company to minister attentively during the ordination retreats.
2. What part each of us must play so that they are given well for God's glory and the benefit of the ordinands.

March 3, 1656 - *The holy time of Lent.*

1. Reasons we have for spending the holy time of Lent well.
2. What each man resolved to do to accomplish this.

March 10, 1656 - *Humility.*

1. Motives for the Company to work at acquiring true humility.
2. In what true humility consists; acts of humility most appropriate for a Missioner.
3. Means of acquiring it and of growing in it.

March 17, 1656 - *The Jubilee.*

1. Reasons for doing everything possible to gain the Jubilee properly.
2. What the Jubilee is; Church teaching regarding it.
3. Means of gaining it well.

March 24 and 31, 1656 - *Humility.*

Divided as above.

April 21 and 28, 1656 - *Journeys*

1. Reasons for conducting ourselves properly on our journeys.
2. What we should do, on the road or in the inns, with regard to our neighbor and among ourselves to glorify God, edify the people, and keep ourselves in the spirit of true Missioners.

May 5 and 12, 1656 - *Shunning important posts and loving the hidden life.*

1. Motives for being detached from the love of important posts and ministries.
2. Benefits that come from the hidden life.

3. Means of divesting ourselves of the former and of applying ourselves to the practice of the latter.

May 19, 1656 - *Ministries that serve the destitute.*

1. Reasons the Company should give itself to God to minister in the service of the poorest and abandoned, even in foreign countries.

2. Signs by which we can recognize if we are called to this by God.

3. Means of obtaining this grace from God's goodness.

June 2, 1656 - *Feast of Pentecost.*

1. Reasons for preparing ourselves well for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

2. Signs by which a Missioner can recognize if he has the Spirit of God.

3. Means to prepare ourselves to receive the Spirit of God.

June 9, 1656 - *Admonitions.*

1. Motives for accepting well the admonitions we are given, in public or in private, by the Superior, the Officers, individuals, or in Chapter, and to make good use of them.

2. Means of accepting them well and of benefitting from them after having received them.

June 17 and 23, 1656 - *Sensuality.*

1. Motives for fleeing sensuality.

2. In what sensuality consists; acts that Missioners must avoid.

3. Means of overcoming this vice.

June 30 and July 7, 1656 - *Purity of intention.*

1. Motives for acting in all things with purity of intention.

2. What is meant by acting with purity of intention; signs for recognizing if we are acting in that way or not.

3. Means of assuming this practice.

July 14 and 21, 1656 - *How to conduct ourselves in the refectory.*

1. Motives the Company has to conduct itself well there, both regarding moderation and food and drink.

2. Faults we commit there.

3. Means of behaving properly there.

July 28, 1656 - *The distress we should experience in seeing that the Company is not in the state to which God calls it.*

1. Motives for being distressed about this state.
2. What each man thinks he contributes to keeping the Company from making good progress.
3. Means of putting ourselves in the state to which God calls us and making good progress.

August 4 and 11, 1656 - *Uniformity.*

1. Reasons for being uniform in our practices and duties.
2. In what it seems that the Company is not uniform.
3. Means of attaining this uniformity.

August 19 and 26, 1656 - *Accepting the states in which God places us.*

1. Motives for accepting the states in which God places us.
2. In what this consists; how to put it into practice.
3. Means for benefitting from and accepting all the states in which God places us.

September 15, 1656 - *Silence and not making noise.*

1. Motives we have for observing silence faithfully, speaking softly, and not making noise.
2. Faults we may commit against this, particularly in the sacristy, refectory, and dormitory.
3. Means of observing silence faithfully and not making noise.

September 22, 1656 - *Retreats.*

1. Reasons for the Company to give itself to God to make a good retreat.
2. Things from past retreats that individuals found beneficial, or that were, on the contrary, harmful to them.
3. Dispositions necessary for making a good retreat.

October 6, 1656 - *Illness and convalescence.*

1. Motives for conducting ourselves properly during our illnesses and times of convalescence.
2. What we must do and avoid in these two situations.

October 13 and 20, 1656 - *Trips into town.*

1. Reasons for behaving appropriately when we go into town.
2. Faults we can commit in this.

3. Means of correcting them.

October 27, 1656 - *Ministry to retreatants.*

1. Reasons for seeing whether the Company has grown cold and slack in the zeal it had in the past for retreat ministry.

2. In what ways it has grown slack, if that be the case.

3. Means of reviving our first fervor in that regard and of fulfilling our ministry.

November 17, 1656 - *Catechizing poor persons when the occasions arise.*

1. Reasons for seeing whether the Company keeps to the practice of catechizing poor persons when we meet them, either the good people when we are walking in the country, the poor persons who come to the door, or our domestics, etc.

2. The good that comes from acting in this way.

3. Means of reviving this practice, if it has fallen off, and of retaining it.

November 24 and December 1, 1656 - *Not eating outside the house.*

1. Reasons for not eating outside without necessity and without permission.

2. Occasions that may lead us more easily to break this Rule.

3. Means of remedying it.

December 16, 1656 - *Particular examen.*

1. Reasons we have to make our particular examen well.

2. What each man thinks he should do to make it well.

3. Means of making it well.

December 22, 1656 - *Spending Christmas well.*

1. Motives.

2. Means.

December 29, 1656 - *Ending the present year well and beginning the next one well.*

1. Motives.

2. Means.

January 5 and 12, 1657 - *Chapter.*

1. Motives, etc.

2. Things to be observed there.

January 19, 1657 - *Love of persons who are poor; zeal in devoting ourselves to their service.*

1. Motives for assisting them and getting assistance for them.
2. Acts and practices that are appropriate for us.

January 26, 1657 - *Our ministry with the clergy.*

1. Motives for giving ourselves to God to work zealously at this.
2. Virtues needed for Missioners to serve the clergy well in our ministry.

3. Faults we may commit in this.

February 9, 1657 - *Spending the time of Carnival well.*

1. Motives.
2. Means and practices.

February 16, 1657 - *Repetition on the next-to-the-last conference on ministry to the clergy.*

February 23 and March 2, 1657 - *Holy Mass.*

1. Reasons obliging priests to celebrate it well.
2. Faults committed in this.
3. Means and remedies for these faults.

For the seminarians and coadjutor Brothers: motives for hearing it well; faults; means.

March 9, 1657 - *Moderation in the refectory.*

1. Motives obliging the Company to examine how it is negligent in the refectory.

2. Faults committed there.
3. Remedies for these faults.

March 16, 1657 - *Complaining and malicious gossip.*

1. Motives for avoiding them.
2. What they are and their acts.
3. Means of protecting ourselves from these things.

March 23, 1657 - *Holy Week.*

1. Motives for spending it well.
2. How to spend it well; practices.

April 6, 1657 - *Resurrection.*

1. Motives for rising again.
2. Signs of a genuine resurrection.
3. Means for having a genuine resurrection.

April 20, 1657 - Silence.

1. Reasons for keeping silence faithfully.
2. Most common faults and occasions.
3. Means of getting back on our feet if we have fallen, or to continue to observe silence and move forward.

April 27, 1657 - Our late coadjutor Brother Jourdain,⁸ who died on April 25.

1. Reasons for discussing the virtues of those who die in the Company.
2. Virtues we noticed in our late Brother Jourdain.
3. Benefits we each propose to draw from this.

May 12, 1657 - Detachment from earthly things.

1. Reasons for detaching ourselves from earthly things in order to be united with God.
2. In what this detachment consists.
3. What we must do to become detached.

This conference was continued on one of the following days.

May 18, 1657 - The Holy Spirit.

1. Reasons for asking God to give us the fullness of His Spirit.
2. Signs by which we can know if it is the Holy Spirit who is acting in us.
3. Means of obtaining a share in the Holy Spirit's gifts and workings.

May 25, 1657 - Feast of the Holy Trinity.

1. Reasons why the Company should honor the Mystery of the Holy Trinity.
2. In what this Mystery consists.
3. Practices we want to observe to honor it well.

June 1, 1657 - Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

1. Reasons for giving ourselves to God that He may be pleased to grant His Company the grace of a very special devotion to the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.
2. In what this devotion consists; its acts.
3. Practices we want to adopt to be strengthened in this devotion.

⁸Jean Jourdain (XI, 351, n.1).

June 8, 15, and 22, 1657 - *Mental prayer.*

1. Reasons for making our meditation well.
2. In what meditation consists.
3. How to make it well.

July 6, 1657 - *Particular Examen.*

1. Motives for making it well.
2. What it is; its acts.
3. Means.

July 13 and 20, 1657 - *The presence of God.*

1. Motives for grounding ourselves firmly in the practice of the presence of God.
2. In what it consists; its acts.
3. Means of being well grounded in this practice.

July 27, 1657 - *Respect.*

1. Motives for showing great respect.
2. What respect is; its acts.
3. Means of maintaining great respect.

August 3 and 17, 1657 - *Conversation.*

1. Motives for talking about good things during our recreations.
2. Topics for discussion.
3. Means of adopting this practice.

August 31, 1657 - *The late M. Ennery,⁹ priest, who died in Genoa.*

1. Reasons for discussing the virtues of the deceased.
2. Virtues noticed in the late M. Ennery.
3. Virtues each man proposes to imitate.

September 7 and 14, 1657 - *Death of the late M. Belleville,¹⁰ who died on the trip to Madagascar.*

Same points as in the preceding conference.

On the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, a second-class feast, M. Vincent, after giving much thought to this for a long time, declared that, from now on, there would be no Chapter or conference

⁹John McEnery (cf. XI, 381, n. 8).

¹⁰Mathurin de Belleville (cf. XI, 371, n. 5).

on Fridays on which a second-class feast falls, even if it is not a holiday.

Because the feast of St. Matthew fell on Friday, there was no conference.

September 28, 1657 - *Death of the late M. Dufour,¹¹ who died in Madagascar.*

Same division as above.

October 6 and 13, 1657 - *Retreats.*

1. Reasons for discussing how to make a good retreat.
2. Signs of a good retreat.
3. Means each man intends to use to make a good retreat.

October 19, 1657 - *Death of the late M. Dufour.*

Same division as above.

October 27, 1657 - *Death of the late M. Prévost,¹² who died in Madagascar.*

Same division as above.

November 2, 1657, All Souls' Day - There was no conference.

November 9, 1657 - *Death of the late M. Tratebas,¹³ who died in Genoa.*

November 16, 1657 - *Death of the late M. François Vincent¹⁴ in Genoa.*

November 23, 1657 - *Death of the late M. Duport,¹⁵ who died in Genoa.*

November 30, 1657 - A second-class feast day; there was no conference.

December 7, 1657 - *Missions.*

1. Reasons for discussing, from time to time, the great good that is done in missions carried out well and the harm done by the ones that are conducted poorly.

2. Faults that have slipped into them.

¹¹Claude Dufour (cf. **XI**, *ibid.*, n. 6).

¹²Nicolas Prévost (cf. **XI**, *ibid.*, n. 7).

¹³Antoine Tratebas (cf. **XI**, 153, n. 3).

¹⁴François Vincent, born in 1611 in Gandelu, Meaux diocese (Seine-et-Marne), entered the Congregation of the Mission on April 2, 1649, and died of the plague in Genoa on July 13, 1657.

¹⁵Nicolas Duport (cf. **XI**, 379, n. 2).

3. Means of correcting these failings and of conducting the missions well.

December 14, 1657 - Ordination (retreat).

1. Reasons for giving ourselves to God to be zealous regarding the ordination retreat.

2. Failures we have noticed in this.

3. Means of making the ordination retreat in such a way that God may be glorified by it and the Church more and more sanctified.

January 4, 1658 - Death of the late M. Blatiron,¹⁶ who died as Superior in Genoa.

Same division as above.

January 11, 1658 - Death of Brother Alméras,¹⁷ cleric, who died on January 4, in his 83rd year.

Same division as above.

January 18, 1658 - Death of our Coadjutor Brother Hemet.¹⁸

Same division as above.

January 25, 1658 - Because of the devotion on this feast of St. Paul, anniversary of the birth of the Mission, M. Vincent declared that there would be neither Chapter nor conference.

February 1 and 8, 1658 - Contradictions.

1. Reasons for giving ourselves to God to make good use of the contradictions encountered in our ministries.

2. Those that commonly present themselves.

3. Means of making good use of them.

February 15, 1658 - Support.

1. Reasons for supporting one another in our infirmities.

2. Common situations in which we must support one another.

¹⁶Étienne Blatiron (cf. XI, 193, n. 8).

¹⁷René Alméras the elder was born in Paris on November 12, 1575. After the death of his first wife, Marguerite Fayet, he married Marie Leclerc, the future mother of his six children. He was Secretary to the King, became Treasurer of France in Paris on January 19, 1608, Secretary to Marie de Médicis, Comptroller (1622-56), Postmaster General (1629-32), and Secretary for the execution of the orders of Marie de Médicis, filling all these positions in a worthy manner. After he had given his son to the Congregation of the Mission, he himself entered it on March 2, 1657, at the age of eighty-one, and died at Saint-Lazare on January 4, 1658. (Cf. *Notices*, vol. II, pp. 453-61.)

¹⁸François Hémet, born in Camprémy, in the Beauvais diocese (Oise), entered the Congregation of the Mission as a coadjutor Brother on January 27, 1650.

3. Means for grounding ourselves well in this practice.

February 22 and March 1, 1658 - *Temptations.*

1. Reasons obliging us to discuss temptations in general.
2. What a temptation is.
3. Means of firmly resisting temptations.

March 8, 1658 - *Fasting.*

1. Reasons obliging us to give ourselves to God to try to keep the fast in the way Our Lord observed it.
2. How Our Lord observed fasting.
3. What we can do to imitate Him.

March 15, 1658 - *Rising.*

1. Reasons for being punctual in rising at four o'clock at the first sound of the bell, and being with the Company to make meditation.
2. What we have to do to be well grounded in this practice and never to grow lax.

March 22, 1658 - *The spirit of penance.*

1. Reasons for asking God to give us the spirit of penance.
2. In what the spirit of penance consists.
3. Acts of penance most in conformity with a Missioner.

April 5, 1658 - *Doing our actions well.*

1. Reasons for giving ourselves to God to do all our ordinary actions well.
2. Conditions and circumstances that must accompany them in order for them to be done well.
3. Means of bringing to them all the requisite conditions.

April 12, 1658 - *Spending Holy Week and Easter well.*

1. Motives.
2. What we must each do to achieve this.

April 26, 1658 - *Spiritual resurrection.*

1. Motives.
2. In what it consists.
3. Means.

May 3, 1658 - *Good example.*

1. Motives.
2. Faults that may be committed against it.
3. Means for avoiding the faults.

May 10, 1658 - *Growing slack in virtue.*

1. Reasons for fearing that we may fall into this.
2. In what Missioners principally must fear growing slack.
3. Means of preventing and avoiding growing slack.

May 17, 1658 - *Observance of the Rules.*

1. Motives.
2. Means.

This is the day when M. Vincent distributed the printed Rules.

May 24, 1658 - *Virtues of the late M. Delville,¹⁹ who died as Pastor in Arras.*

The usual division.

May 31 and June 8, 1658 - *Detachment from the things of this world.*

1. Reasons for being detached.
2. Things from which the Missioner must detach himself.
3. Means of detaching ourselves well.

June 14, 1658 - *Feast of the Holy Trinity.*

1. Reasons for honoring this Mystery and celebrating the feast appropriately.

2. What we must believe and teach about this Mystery.

3. Means of honoring this Mystery and celebrating the feast appropriately.

June 21 and 28, 1658 - *Infirmities.*

1. Motives for giving ourselves to God to make good use of our infirmities.

2. Faults we may commit against this.

July 5, 1658 - *Mutual Support.*

1. Motives.

2. Things in which we must support our neighbor.

3. Means of truly supporting one another in all circumstances.

¹⁹Guillaume Delville, born in Tilloy-lez-Bapaume, today Ligny-Tilloy (Pas-de-Calais), entered the Congregation of the Mission as a priest on January 19, 1641, at thirty-three years of age. He was Superior in Crécy (1644) and Montmirail (1644-46, 1650-51). He then retired to Arras, where, with Saint Vincent's permission, he continued his missionary work until his death in 1658.

For two weeks, evening Benediction for the intention for the King's health prevented us from having the conference.

July 26, 1658 - *Not to discuss the failings of our neighbor.*

1. Motives for not discussing them.
2. Occasions and number of ways in which we usually fall into this.

3. Means of correcting ourselves.

August 2 and 9, 1658 - *Accepting the states in which God places us.*

1. Motives for accepting the various states in which His Divine Majesty is pleased to place us.

2. Various states, both of soul and body, in our diverse ministries.

3. Means for all of us to adopt this practice.

August 16 and 23, 1658 - *Moderation in eating and drinking.*

1. Motives for moderation.

2. Failings.

3. Means of avoiding these failings.

August 30 and September 6, 1658 - *Availability for any ministry assignment.*

1. Reasons for making ourselves available.

2. Cases where it is permissible to desire a certain ministry.

3. Means of acquiring this availability.

September 13 and 20, 1658 - *Silence.*

1. Motives for keeping it exactly.

2. Times and places where it should be observed more faithfully; faults committed against it.

3. Means of observing it faithfully.

September 27, 1658 - *Virtues of the late M. Ozenne, who died in Poland.*

1. Virtues noticed in him.

2. Benefits each of us intends to draw from them.

October 3, 1658 - *Retreats.*

Same division as above.

October 11, 18, 25, November 8 and 15, 1658 - *Malicious gossip.*

1. Motives and important reasons for avoiding it.

2. Effective means.

In this conference, M. Vincent asked each man for a practical means, which he had someone write down. He did this in five successive conferences; at the last one, he spoke for one hour, and someone took notes of his talk.

November 29, 1658 - *Spending Advent well.*

1. Motives for spending it well.
2. Practices.

December 6, 1658 - *M. Vincent explained the first paragraph of our Rules.*

December 13, 1658 - *Explanation of the second paragraph of the Rules.*

January 3 and 10, 1659 - *Mortification.*

1. Motives for acquiring mortification.
2. What it is; its principal acts.
3. Means.

January 17 and 24, 1659 - *Serving retreatants well.*

1. Motives for serving them zealously.
2. What this requires us to do.

February 7, 1659 - *Conversation.*

1. Motives for conversing appropriately.
2. Requisite conditions for conversations.
3. Means of providing these conditions.

February 14 and 21, 1659 - *M. Vincent explained the Rules.*

February 28, 1659 - *Good use of time.*

1. Motives for using our time well.
2. Ways time is wasted.
3. Means of using time well.

March 7, 1659 - *M. Vincent explained the Rules.*

March 14, 1659 - *Ordination retreat.*

1. Motives for making it well.
2. Means of carrying it out well.

March 21 and 28, 1659 - *M. Vincent explained the Rules.*

On March 28, at the end of the explanation of the Rules, M. Vincent announced for the following Monday, not the regular day, a conference on how to spend the holy time of the Passion well, preferring to give a conference on an exceptional day rather than let

these holy days pass by without encouraging the Company to spend them well.

April 4, 1659 - *Resolutions at meditation.*

1. Motives for always taking very specific resolutions.
2. Particular resolutions we should take.
3. Means of being faithful to practicing them.

May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 and June 6, 1659 - *M. Vincent explained the Rules.*

June 13, 1659 - *Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.*

1. Motives.
2. Practices.

June 20, 1659 - Because M. Vincent did not feel well, there was no conference that day.

June 27, 1659 - *Chapter.*

1. Motives for assisting earnestly at Chapter.
2. The spirit in which we should accuse ourselves, admonish others, be admonished, and receive the advice of the Superior.
3. Means of benefitting from all this.

July 4, 1659 - *Conferences.*

1. Reasons obliging the Company to place a high value on the conferences it gives.

2. What must be done before, during, and afterward to benefit from them.

July 11, 1659 - *Not speaking to the disadvantage of the neighbor.*

1. Motives for refraining from this evil.
2. The harm that can come from it.
3. Means of refraining from it.

July 18, 1659 - *Punctuality.*

1. Motives for being punctual.
2. Why we need punctuality.
3. Means of becoming punctual.

August 1, 1659 - *The spirit of Christianity.*

1. Motives for acquiring it.
2. What the spirit of Christianity is.
3. Means of acquiring it.

[**August 5, 1659** - Moral theology, preaching, catechism, and administration of the sacraments.]

August 8, 1659 - *Good conversation.*

1. Motives for conversing well.
2. Means of conversing well.

[**August 22 and 29, 1659** - *M. Vincent explained the Rules.*]

September 6, 1659 - *Ordinands.*

The usual points.

September 12, 1659 - *Divisions.*

1. Evils caused by those who sow division in a house.
2. The many ways this can happen.
3. Means of preventing this evil.

[**September 26, 1659** - *Praying the Divine Office.*]

October 3, 1659 - *The spiritual man.*

1. Reasons obliging us to work at becoming deeply spiritual.
2. What a prayerful man is.
3. Means of becoming spiritual persons.

[**October 17 and 24, 1659** - *M. Vincent explained the Rules.*]

October 31, 1659 - *Holiness.*

1. What obliges us to strive deeply for holiness.
2. In what our holiness consists.
3. Means of becoming holy.

[**November 7, 14, 21, and 28, December 5, 12, and 19, 1659** - *M. Vincent explained the Rules.*]

December 26, 1659 - *Faults committed during the year.*

1. Motives for recovering from our failings and negligences.
2. General and principal negligences of the Company.
3. Measures to take in order to do better next year.

January 2 and 9, 1660 - *Virtues of M. Perraud.*²⁰

1. Motives for discussing them.
2. Practices and benefits.

²⁰Hugues Perraud, born in Arguel (Doubs) on October 3, 1615, entered the Congregation of the Mission on January 5, 1640, took his vows on March 23, 1644, and was ordained a priest in 1646. He was placed in Saintes (1646) and Richelieu (1651), and died in Paris on December 26, 1659.

January 16, 1660 - *Trips into town.*

1. Motives obliging those who go out, and their companions, to behave properly in town.

2. What they must do on the way there, while in people's houses, on the way back, and when they have returned home.

January 23, 1660 - *Recollection.*

1. Motives.

2. Principal acts.

3. Means.

January 30, 1660 - *Baptism.*

1. Reasons for recalling the grace received at holy Baptism and the obligations we contracted at that time.

2. What this grace and these obligations are.

3. Means of acknowledging the one and of carrying out the other.

February 13, 1660 - *The spirit of penance.*

1. Reasons for assuming the spirit of penance.

2. In what it consists; interior and exterior acts.

3. Means of acquiring this spirit.

February 20, 1660 - *Virtues of M. Portail, first companion of M. Vincent and, later, his secretary.*

1. Reasons for discussing these, etc.

2. Practices.

April 2, 1660 - *Interior renewal.*

1. Motives.

2. What we should renew.

3. Means.

April 9, 1660 - *Consecration of the Bishop of Oloron.*²¹

1. Reasons for sharing in it.

2. What should be done.

April 16, 1660 - *Concern for retreatants.*

1. Reasons for the Company to praise God for the grace He gives it of attracting so many persons to come here to make a retreat and to correspond to this grace.

2. Failings we may commit in this and which we must avoid.

²¹Bishop Armand-François de Maytie.

3. What we should do; means of cooperating with this grace.
At that time there were 30 retreatants at Saint-Lazare: 18 of the clergy and 12-15 laymen.

April 23, 1660 - *Acting in a spirit of faith.*

1. Motives.
2. What it is.
3. Means.

April 30, 1660 - *Attachments.*

1. Motives for attaching ourselves only to God.
2. Dangerous attachments for Missioners.
3. Means of detaching ourselves from them and of being attached to God alone.

May 7, 1660 - *Silence.*

1. Reasons for keeping it exactly.
2. Where, when, and how we fail in it.
3. Means of observing it well.

May 21, 1660 - *Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.*

May 28, June 4, 18, and 25, 1660 - *Virtues of the late Abbé de Chandénier, Abbot of Tournus, who died in Savoy on his way back from Rome, where he had gone out of personal devotion.*

1. Reasons for discussing the lofty, heroic virtues apparent in the late Abbé de Chandénier, our benefactor.
2. Those we noticed; the most noble particular acts.
3. Benefit we can draw from them; how can we imitate him.

The remaining conferences up to the death of M. Vincent were on the explanation of the Rules.

INDEX

This index proposes to facilitate reference to the biographical data used in this volume and to the explanation of places and terms which recur frequently in the text and have been explained when first used. Names of persons are in **bold print**—alternate spellings are given in brackets, those of terms or places in *italics*, cross references are given in parentheses. The accompanying numbers indicate the conference or document to which the reader should refer for the desired information.

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