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Recollections of the Establishment of the Congregation of the Mission in the United States of America

By Joseph Rosati, C.M.
Translated and annotated by Stafford Poole, C.M.

Joseph Rosati, C.M., was born at Sora, in the Kingdom of Naples, in 1789. He entered the Congregation of the Mission as a young man and was ordained to the priesthood in 1811. After spending four years in parochial missions in the Papal States, he came with Felix De Andreis as part of the first mission to the United States in 1816-1818. After de Andreis’ death in 1820, he became the superior of the American Vincentians. He was also superior of the Seminary of Saint Mary’s of the Barrens, Perry County, Missouri, pastor of the parish there and president of the lay college. In 1824 he was made coadjutor bishop of New Orleans and in 1827 the first Bishop of Saint Louis. In 1842, at the request of the Pope, he concluded a concordat between the Holy See and Haiti. He died at Rome in 1843.

Rosati was the author of the following Mémoire sur l’establissement de la Congrégation de la Mission aux États-Unis d’Amérique. The manuscript was composed in French, perhaps dictated and, on the basis of internal evidence, about the year 1839. The original manuscript, which is written in different hands, is in the archive of the Roman Province at the Collegio Leoniano in Rome. There is a photostatic copy, made by Father Charles L. Souvay, C.M., in the archives of Saint Mary’s Seminary, Perryville, Missouri. The following translation, which will be
serialized in successive numbers of *Vincentian Heritage*, is based on a typewritten copy of the manuscript in the archive of the Roman province.

Rosati probably worked from documentation at his disposal, including his own diary. The literary style is that of a typical nineteenth century churchmen, though often much more vivid because of the personal memories involved. The translation that follows is not meant to be slavishly literal but rather to convey accurately the sense of what Rosati wrote. The notes are for explanatory rather than scholarly purposes.

Rosati's *Memoire* is an invaluable source for the early history of the Vincentian Community in the United States. This is the first time that this important document has been translated or published.

**PART I**

(From the beginnings to the departure for the United States, 1815-1816)

The first establishment of the Congregation of the Mission in the United States of America is due to the zeal of Msgr. Louis William Valentine DuBourg, Bishop of New Orleans. After he had been named at the recommendation of Msgr. [John] Carroll, the first Bishop and Archbishop of Baltimore, first as administrator, then as

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1DuBourg was born in Santo Domingo in 1766. He entered the seminary of St. Sulpice in Paris in 1786. During the Revolution he fled to the United States, where he entered the Sulpician community in 1795. From 1796 to 1798 he was president of Georgetown University. In 1803 he founded Saint Mary’s College in Baltimore and in 1812 was appointed administrator of the Louisiana Territory. He was consecrated bishop in 1815 and resigned the post in 1826. After that he was Bishop of Montauban in France and then very briefly Archbishop of Besançon, where he died in 1833.
Bishop of New Orleans, this prelate went to Rome in 1815 immediately after having received the apostolic letters of his nomination, with the resolution not to accept the burden of the bishopric if he could not obtain in France and Italy some priests and evangelical workers to help him carry it. Knowing the current needs of the country and the condition that religion was in, he did not think it possible to do any good without the assistance of a certain number of coworkers in the vast diocese which was devoid of them. He made contact with the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, which has special charge of foreign countries that are considered to be mission territories. After arriving in Rome, Msgr. DuBourg presented himself to Cardinal Litta who was its Prefect. He made contact with the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, which has special charge of foreign countries that are considered to be mission territories. After arriving in Rome, Msgr. DuBourg presented himself to Cardinal Litta who was its Prefect. His Eminence received him graciously and directed him to the house of the Mission at Monte Citorio, in which the students of the Propaganda were lodged at that time. Its College, devastated by the French Revolutionaries in 1798, had not yet been reestablished. Mr. Sicardi, who at that time exercised the functions of Vicar General of the Congregation, welcomed him with friendliness and lodged him in the house.

2 Lorenzo Cardinal Litta (1756-1820) came from a noble Milanese family. He had a distinguished career as a papal diplomat in eastern Europe and was exiled with Pius VII by Napoleon. He was appointed Prefect of Propaganda in 1814.

3 Carlo Domenico Sicardi was a native of Mondovi in Piedmont and at the outbreak of the Revolution was the Italian assistant to the Superior General. In 1792 he fled from Paris to Piedmont and from there to Rome. At the time of the foundation of the American mission he was ruling the Congregation of the Mission as Vicar General in virtue of some faculties granted vivavoce by the Pope. During the French Revolution and the Napoleonic period a long-standing enmity between the French and Italian sectors of the Vincentian Community had resulted in a full-scale governmental schism.

The use of "Mr." in reference to the priests merits note. The French had retained (as many still do) the ancient custom of referring to priests of the Vincentian Community as "Monsieur" rather than
One day toward evening, as this prelate was reentering the house, he stopped to listen to Mr. Deandreis who was preaching to a numerous assembly composed of individuals of all ranks. He was struck by the beauty of the discourse that he had heard and expressed his desire to know the preacher. Thinking at the same time of his poor diocese, whose good was the sole object of his journey, he mentioned how he would consider himself happy if he could procure such workers for it. He learned with pleasure that the foreign missions had been and always were the great object of this excellent priest's desires and he put to him the proposal to follow him to America. Upon the answer that Andreis [sic] gave him — that being a member of the Congregation of the Mission and having made a vow of obedience, he could not dispose of his own person, that he was at the disposition of his superiors, that it was to them that Msgr. would have to turn and that if obedience should have sent him, he would then consider himself happy to leave Rome and to follow him in order to work for the salvation of souls in his diocese in America.  

“Père.” Their attempts to impose this usage on the Italian provinces, which preferred “Padre” to “Signore,” was one of the many sources of grievances between the two. In this account, Rosati consistently uses “Mr.” and the plural from “Mrs.” It is also possible that he was following American practice for in the early nineteenth century in the United States it was customary to call Catholic priests “Mister” rather than “Father” or “Reverend.”

4Felix de Andreis was born on December 13, 1778, at Demonte, a small village in the province of Cuneo in Piedmont. In 1797 he joined the Congregation of the Mission. Because of the disturbances caused by the Napoleonic invasions of Italy, he went first to Piacenza and then to Rome, where he taught the students at Propaganda. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1801 and went to Rome in 1806. At the time of the foundation of the American mission he stayed in Saint Louis, where he was vicar general for Bishop DuBourg. He died in Saint Louis on October 15, 1820. The spelling Deandreis is that which is found consistently throughout Rosati's manuscript and so has been retained in the English translation.

5In the original French this sentence has no independent clause.
At this point we transcribe what Mr. Deandreis wrote in his own hand about what happened on this occasion and on the means employed by Providence to bring his superiors to undertake this mission. He speaks of himself in the third person.

When Msgr. DuBourg gave Mr. Deandreis to understand that he had made the request for this of the Sovereign Pontiff, Mr. Deandreis that same day informed Mr. Sicardi, then Vicar General of the Congregation, in order that in all events he might be forewarned of it. Msgr. DuBourg, supported by Cardinal Litta, Prefect of Propaganda, presented his request to the Pope who immediately gave his consent to it. When it was mentioned that the superiors were refusing it, Pius VII answered, "Never mind." The following day Mr. Sicardi presented himself to the Pope and informed him how much he was opposed to the departure of Mr. Deandreis. The latter drew up a report in which he explained his long-standing desire to consecrate himself to the foreign missions, the approval that he had obtained for it from his superiors, who had earlier destined him for those of China. He explained also the present refusal of his superiors, his resolution to remain always a member of the Congregation, and finally he left to the supreme oracle of His Holiness the decision in this matter, holding himself indifferent and disposed to submit. After the Holy Father had read this report, he answered, "We will reach an understanding with his superiors" and charged Cardinals Mattei and Doria with the matter. They spoke about it first with the superior and then with Mr. Deandreis. In the meantime two other members of the Congregation, of their own accord and without having been asked or invited by Mr. Deandreis, joined him for the mission of Louisiana. It was then that he remembered the desire that Mr. Rosati had very often expressed of devoting himself to the foreign missions. Since he was at that time
on mission, Mr. Deandreis simply let him know and in a few words, without urging him, asking him only for a very explicit answer: *un bel si o un bel no*. Mr. Rosati answered with *un bel si*, on the condition nevertheless that his superiors should give their consent. Mr. Sicardi declared that he had no will of his own in this regard but that he would do that of the Holy Father. Nevertheless, he caused some difficulty because of the poor health of Mr. Deandreis but by a disposition of Providence the physician very aptly gave an opinion favorable to his going. Thus there were no further reasons to object because of his health. Nevertheless, other very strong obstacles were raised and more than once the mission seemed completely abandoned and the bishop was determined to put off his consecration until after the conclusion of this matter. However, he was consecrated on September 24 and went immediately to Castelgandolfo in order to plead his case before the Holy Father. He knew how to speak so well, aided by the grace of God, that he succeeded in having the decision in this matter remanded prereptorily to Cardinal Consalvi, the Secretary of State. This latter, on his return to Rome two days later, sent for Mr. Sicardi and made known to him the will of the Holy Father. There was nothing further to say. It was decided that the mission would consist of the foundation of a seminary. Four

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6 There were two reasons why the pope initially sided with Sicardi. (1) Sicardi argued that it was the pope himself who was anxious to have the Vincentians conduct missions in the newly-restored Papal States and that the removal of Deandreis was undermining this work. (2) There had been some anonymous denunciations of Deandreis' doctrinal orthodoxy that had been submitted to Propaganda.

7 Ercole Cardinal Consalvi (1757-1824) was the outstanding papal diplomat of the nineteenth century. He was Secretary of State from 1800 to 1806, during which time his principal achievement was the formulation of a concordat with Napoleon's government. During his second term, 1814-1823, he attended the Congress of Vienna. He never advanced beyond the diaconate.
priests, a brother and some postulants were appointed to it. Of these one of the priests and the brother later turned back.

So it was that on September 27, 1815, the matter of our mission was concluded. Mr. Deandreis was named and appointed its superior by Mr. Sicardi with the ordinary powers of Visitor [Provincial Superior] and other extraordinary powers. Mr. Acquaroni was the first to offer to go with Mr. Deandreis. The latter had often promised Mr. Rosati, who was then on mission, not to forget him if the occasion of some foreign mission came up during his absence. He wrote to him at that time and in response he received a request to be numbered among the missionaries who were to be sent to America, if his superiors should give their permission. Some other priests and some brothers made the same request but in the end there were only Messrs. Deandreis, Acquaroni, and Rosati who were determined to leave. A young student from Propaganda, a Belgian by nationality [Leo Deys], with the permission of the Cardinal Prefect, joined the three priests of the Congregation but only as a seminarian. In addition a secular priest of the diocese of Recanati [Spezioli] and a German houseservant named Francis Boramvasky, a tailor by profession. The situation of our Congregation in Italy at that time, because of the suppression and destruction of a great part of the houses, which had reduced the number of members, of whom there was a great need for the reestablishment of the suppressed houses and the exercise of the different functions of our Institute, did not allow

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8 The various sources are in disagreement about who actually constituted the first group of Vincentians and their companions to set out for America. Some mention a Father Pereira (a Portuguese name). Rosati later adds another postulant brother, who was most probably Anthony Borboni. Rosati seemed unable to decide if Boramvasky was German or Bohemian and never settled on a consistent spelling for his name.
the superiors to permit a large number of members to follow the attraction that they felt for the mission in America.  

It was then resolved that Mr. Deandreis should again delay his departure for some time and that the others should set sail on the Tiber in order to go to Marseille and from there to Bordeaux. There they were to await the moment of departure for America. This was to take place after Msgr. DuBourg, Mr. Deandreis and the others whom Providence had sent, would all meet in that city. Mr. Rosati was charged with the functions of superior and Mr. Acquaroni with those of treasurer. On October 14, Msgr. DuBourg together with Mr. Deandreis took them to Castel Gandolfo, where the Holy Father, Pius VII, then was, in order to receive his blessing. They were received by the Venerable Pontiff with that paternal goodness that was characteristic of him and that inspired confidence in all who had the happiness of being admitted to his presence. He kept them for more then three quarters of an hour, conversing with them familiarly, asking them their names, their native lands. He blessed a very large number of medals, crosses, and rosaries, which they had brought with them in enormous boxes. He asked what language it would be necessary for them to speak on this mission. Msgr. DuBourg answered that French was absolutely indispensable for them in Louisiana but that English would also be useful for them. “Ah, well,” says the Holy Father, “with regard to French you will have no difficulty in learning it but English is very difficult.” He granted them all very

9 Napoleon’s suppression of the Congregation of the Mission in 1809 touched not only France but all countries controlled by France. The results in Italy were catastrophic, especially in the north.

10 While Deandreis remained in Italy, he helped DuBourg to solicit funds and supplies for the mission. Also, on November 17, 1815, a formal contract was signed by DuBourg, Deandreis, and Sicardi, stipulating the conditions of the mission.
many favors and privileges, that is, (1) to celebrate each year in perpetuity the feast of Saint Vincent de Paul on September 27 in memory of the fact that on that day the matter of their mission to America had been concluded; (2) a plenary indulgence for all the churches of the Congregation in America on the feast of Saint Francis Xavier; (3) the faculty to all confessors, already approved, to hear the confessions of all those in the expedition during the trip;\(^{11}\) (4) to make the Stations of the Cross with their crucifix, to erect them in all the places of their mission and to gain all the indulgences accorded for that holy exercise; (5) to celebrate Mass on shipboard on the high sea. Finally, he granted to some of them some other favors that they asked for privately and gave them his blessing.

On October 21, in the period after the main meal, Messrs. Acquaroni and Rosati, together with Messrs. Spezioli, Deys, and Francis Beranvasky [sic] and Anthony Borboni, postulant brothers, went to the port of Ripa Grande and embarked on a small Genoese schooner that was to take them as far as Marseille. Their cabin was uncomfortable. There was not room enough to stand up in it. There was disagreement with the captain over food. They had bought some provisions and one of the postulant brothers, who had never been a cook, did the cooking and prepared the meals. It was necessary to stay on deck almost all the time. They left on schedule and it was hoped that they would reach Fiumicino in the morning in order to celebrate Holy Mass, since it was a Sunday. But the Tiber was low and the small schooner was heavily loaded. They touched bottom several times. They ran aground on the sand. It was necessary to unload part of the cargo in order to refloat it, something that caused much time to be

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\(^{11}\) Since the high seas were not part of any diocese, such faculties were deemed necessary.
lost and it was evening before they arrived at Fiumicino. The next day the priests had the happiness of celebrating Holy Mass. They could not leave until the following day and the evening of that same day they arrived at Civitavecchia, where they were forced to remain until November 6, first because the captain had to finish his loading, then because of bad weather. The missionaries had the happiness of saying Holy Mass every day. Msgr. Benvenuti, delegate of Civitavecchia, invited them to his home and gave them letters of recommendation for Bordeaux. On All Saints’ Day they assisted this prelate at the High Mass that he sang in the Dominican house. The Father Prior of the house showed them a thousand signs of friendship and kept them all for dinner.

On the sixth, they finally set sail. On the evening of the eighth they dropped anchor in the port of Leghorn but without landing, and on the tenth they arrived at Genoa. Mr. Nervi, who was then the superior of our house in Genoa, received them with the greatest friendliness and kept them all in the house during the entire time that they were forced to spend in that city in order to await the recovery of the schooner’s captain, who had fallen ill. Still, this stay was not useless for the mission. A good priest of Porto Maurizio, whom the missionaries had known at Rome and who had come to make a retreat with many others in the house of Genoa, having learned the purpose of their journey, on his return to Porto Maurizio spoke of it to two excellent young priests of that same city, Messrs. Joseph Carretti, canon of the famous collegiate [church] of Porto Maurizio, and Andrew Ferrari. He was the instrument that Providence used to call them to the mission of Louisiana. They joined the company at Bordeaux and left with it for Baltimore. Mr. Carretti died in Saint Louis, assisted by Mr. Deandreis, to whom he had communicated the resolution he had made of entering the
Congregation, and Mr. Ferrari was among the first novices received in Saint Louis by Mr. Deandreis.

It may be remarked that the voyage of our missionaries, because of circumstances they could not change, was extremely slow. They were unable to leave Genoa until November 29 on board the same small schooner that had brought them there. The captain touched port at a small village called Saint-Raphael, about half a league from Fréjus in Provence, in order to unload some belongings.

Here they had a little adventure that at first caused them some pain but which later proved to them how honorable it is to belong to a group such as the Congregation of which they were members. Fatigued by the discomforts of the sea and the stay on the small schooner, the missionaries went ashore, bought some fish and commissioned the postulant brother to have it cooked at some inn and to have dinner prepared there for the entire company. The good brother, who was Bohemian by nationality, who spoke all languages without knowing any, not knowing where the inn was, asked in very bad French that was difficult to understand, where was the house "pour cures . . . ce poisson cuire?" People thought that he was asking for the house of curé [parish priest] and directed him there. He takes it for the inn, gives the fish to the housekeeper and says that several curés would be coming to dinner at noon. The curé had seen the missionaries in the church and suspecting something, ordered the housekeeper to prepare the dinner. Around noon the good brother accompanies us to the so-called inn and the curé, who was not in his cassock, received us in his house with very much politeness. No one suspected that he was the curé. Only one person of the group could speak French well. He then ordered what everyone wanted, just as one would do in an inn. But then great was the surprise
of everyone when one of the parishioners who came in addressed him whom we had taken for the master of the inn and calls him M. le Curé. Covered with confusion, we did not know what to do. The young ecclesiastic who alone among us knew how to speak French says to him, “Would you then be the curé?” Laughing, this good old man says to him, “Yes.” “Ah, is it possible! And we took you for the innkeeper.” “So much the better,” says the curé, “I am now free enough of this mistake.” As we were wearing our cassocks, according to the Italian usage, he says to us that he had recognized us as Lazarists, that he was pleased to receive in his house the confreres and compatriots of his former teachers, that he had gone to the seminary at our house in Avignon, and that he would never forget what he owed to those good missionaries. He named many of them, among others Mr. Biacolini. That house belonged to the Roman province. We left this good curé, as much touched by his signs of friendship that he gave us as edified by his hospitality and virtues.

The next day they set sail again but the mistral wind forced us to touch port in an area called Cavalaire, where there were only five or six fishermen’s homes, a customs office and a small fort. There the small schooner was secure from the wind, which intensified more and more. We were assured that for two or three weeks we could not set sail without danger to our little boat. But since our provisions were reaching their end and we could not replenish them in this poor area, where we could not even find lodging, the decision was made to continue the trip by land as far as Marseille. Some linen was put into a suitcase. One of the customs officials was engaged by means of a

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12 The dress of Vincentians at that time was distinct from that of both diocesan priests and religious. It was almost identical with the habit of a modern Redemptorist. The Italian Vincentians continued to wear this form of dress until the Superior General moved his office from Paris to Rome in 1964.
salary that we offered him to act as our guide and to carry our suitcases. Having left the postulant brother on board to take charge of our baggage, we began a journey on foot and fasting, having only a piece of biscuit in our pockets. We were wearing the cassock and cloak of missionaries, something that did not make our trip any easier. We had to climb up hills, cross woods without roads, walk on shifting sand by the seashore, having for our food only the small piece of biscuit and some wild fruit that we found delicious. At four o'clock in the afternoon we arrived at a small hamlet called Le Lavandou. Our guide could not go any further and he turned back. We had very great difficulty in finding some means of continuing our journey. After having taken a rather frugal refreshment with some bread and one egg per person, we ended up on even more modest mounts. These were some mules that had brought some flour from Hyères, rather late at night, half dead, numb, and frozen with the cold. We had to get off our mounts like children. However, here we had much care lavished on us. We received from the master of the inn, a respectable old man and full of faith, so much friendliness that we were amply compensated for all the fatigues of this painful day. He sent immediately to the office of the stagecoach to reserve us places but they were already taken. We ended up, then, on a small wagon covered with an oilcloth. Some mattresses had also been laid down in order to make it less uncomfortable. In the morning before daybreak we set out en route for Toulon, where we continued our journey by carriage to Marseille, where we arrived on the seventh, before daybreak.

Mr. Acquaroni had stayed in this city, where his parents were during the suppression. He was well known there. We went with him to the church of Saint Vincent de Paul, where we had the happiness of celebrating Holy Mass. According to the instructions of Msgr. DuBourg to
the missionaries, they were to embark at Marseille for Sète, where they were to take Languedoc canal as far as Toulouse and from Toulouse they were to continue their journey by water as far as Bordeaux. But since the schooner with the baggage had arrived only on the twentieth of the month of December, it was impossible to leave by sea in that season. We were assured that it was risky to cross the Gulf of Lyon. As a matter of fact, it was a disposition of Providence, which wished to preserve the lives of the missionaries, that they did not follow in that regard the instructions that they had received. For it was learned that there had been more than thirty vessels lost at the time of their journey. It was resolved, then, to send the baggage to Bordeaux by land by some carriers and it was suggested that the missionaries thus make the journey by land in a private carriage.

Much friendliness was shown to the missionaries and in this way heavy expenses were avoided. Mr. Acquaroni lodged with Mr. Carsamigli, his brother-in-law, a rich merchant living in Marseille, who was of great service to the missionaries and who took charge of forwarding the baggage. Mr. Spezioli was lodged with Mr. Carle, a very zealous priest and vicar of the parish of Saint Vincent de Paul, Mr. Deys with Mr. Dugaz and the postulant brother in another house. Mr. Rosati was lodged with some spinsters [named] de Glendevis de Niozelle and he had the happiness of saying Mass every day in their household chapel. These ladies, already of an advanced age, belonged to a very old noble family and one of the most respectable in Provence, of which the head, because of his devotion to just principles, had lost his life under the revolutionary blade. From earliest youth they had been devoted to every kind of good work and during the Revolution their house had been one of the household churches where the faithful at the risk of their lives assembled secretly in order to
assist in the darkness of night at the Holy Mysteries and to receive from the hands of the priests, who in order to celebrate were dedicated even to the point of death, the bread of the strong in order to prepare themselves for martyrdom. This chapel was a veritable sanctuary. One saw there again the altar, the vestments, the sacred vessels that had served divine worship in the time of the persecution of the Terror. The missionaries could not look at them without breaking into tears. They admired the holy inventions of zeal and charity for concealment from the pursuits and searches of their ferocious persecutors. At the approach of the ministers of tyranny, in the surprise of an unexpected home visit, the priest could in an instant strip himself of his vestments and hide in one of the secret retreats artfully arranged in the very area where he was celebrating. The altar was, as if by enchantment, transformed into an ordinary chest of drawers and in the drawers that were opened for the severe search by that hellish police one saw only linen for every day use and some women's clothing.

The two ladies de Niozelle were of the number of a small company of young persons of their sex who had already made the sacrifice of their lives for the love and glory of their God and the salvation of their neighbor. Often the priest who, despite a thousand different disguises, had been unable to approach the prisons where his confreres who were to mount the scaffold were shut up and who asked of him the bread of life, would send these Christian heroines to console the confessors of the faith, to bring them the Holy Eucharist hidden in a false-bottomed box that seemed to contain only tobacco. This they made known to the holy prisoners while they passed through the iron bars the bread baskets that

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13 The period of the Terror is usually dated from July, 1793, to July, 1794.
contained fruit and other refreshments. They succeeded in having the guards grant to these wretched condemned men before their deaths this meal which was the last of their lives.

Another time, when these heroic young ladies had learned that a priest had been surprised and arrested by the police while he was celebrating the Holy Mysteries and that a ciborium full of the Sacred Species had been taken by these impious people and put with other sacred vessels in a place where they could not fail to be desecrated, they had the courage to present themselves to the municipal officials, to declare to them courageously that they were Catholics, that their faith made them dread the profanation of the Holy Eucharist more than the loss of their lives and they ended by asking the favor of removing it from the ciborium. Their courage triumphed this time over impiety and he who has the hearts even of tyrants in his hands and bends their will to his own, changed the inflexible hearts of these cannibals. They allowed them to remove the Sacred Species from the pyx. They wrapped them in a corporal that they had brought and returned in triumph to their household church where the venerable priest who exercised there the dangerous functions of the holy ministry, received them weeping for joy and with all his flock gave solemn thanks to God. Ever since that day Mass has been celebrated in their chapel. The Archbishop of Aix [en Provence], of whose diocese the city of Marseille was a part after the Concordat, gave them permission for exposition of the Blessed Sacrament there and the Holy Father granted a plenary indulgence.14 It was to reward the piety and heroic zeal of the ladies de Niozelle that they were granted permission always to have a household chapel, to keep the Blessed Sacrament there and to have

14This is the same Concordat mentioned in note 7 above, negotiated by Consalvi with Napoleon.
exposition every Sunday and holyday for visit and Benediction and during the entire day once a month.

They had an ordinary chaplain who served their chapel. However, during the time that Mr. Rosati stayed in this pious house he exercised those functions and considered himself happy to be a witness to such shining piety, to the fervor and charity of those who lived there. They were the soul of all the good works that were done in the city. They visited the prisons, consoled and relieved the unfortunates who were kept there by their works and their alms and the missionary to whom they gave hospitality was sometimes invited to share with them these works of mercy. In that house which offered a faithful image of the lives and holiness of the faithful of the primitive Church, he enjoyed all the advantages of a community: Mass every day, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, spiritual reading and prayer in common, office and Vespers on feastdays. In it he also found the means for beginning to learn French and at the repeated and urgent requests of this pious family he began to preach in that language insofar as this was possible for a foreigner who was making his first attempts to speak it. All the other missionaries were overwhelmed with courtesy and friendliness in this house to which they often came. He who after a lapse of twenty-four years writes these recollections believes that he ought not to let pass this opportunity without offering a tribute of gratitude to these generous benefactresses of our mission. They are not protected from the assaults of vanity. The praises that one gives to their heroic virtues can no longer expose them to any risk. They now enjoy in the bosom of God the high reward that they merited. It is right that their memory be preserved.

We also believe that it is our duty to transmit to our successors the names of Messrs. Ricaud, curé of Saint
Vincent de Paul; Bérard, Carle, Galien, Julien, and Giraud, his vicars. These exemplary and zealous priests gave all the help they could to the missionaries. These latter went to their church every Sunday and assisted in surplice at all the offices. They were extremely edified both by the zeal of the shepherds and the piety of the sheep, who profited with eagerness from the means of sanctification that were offered them. The church was frequented on working days and filled on Sunday and other holydays and the holy table graced by a great number of the faithful of both sexes.

The missionaries were sorry to leave Marseille and to be separated from the numerous friends that they had made there during the five or six weeks that they spent there. They said goodbye to the greater part of them and having rented a private carriage, they set the date of departure for January 11. Mr. Rosati said Mass very early in the morning in that chapel which breathed of piety and fervor. The entire family wished to assist at it and, after the most touching farewells, they asked the missionaries for their blessing. At four o’clock the journey was begun. It was made in the most economical way possible. Only one meal was taken at the inns where they spent the night and where we had a private room. Since it was always the same carriage and the same horses, they stopped for the evening rest stop around three o’clock. The missionaries had time to visit the churches, to adore the Blessed Sacrament, and to say Matins and Lauds there for the following day.¹⁵ They would depart at two or three in the morning. They made their meditation, said the Itinerarium,¹⁶ and Little Hours and read a chapter of the New

¹⁵ In older language, they “anticipated” Matins and Lauds, that is, they said them after 2:00 p.m. on the day before the actual feast.

¹⁶ The Itinerarium Clericorum was a collection of prayers found in the old Roman Breviary for recitation by clerics when they set out on
Testament and had breakfast in the carriage. At about eight o’clock the driver would stop for two hours in order to rest and feed his horses. During that time the missionaries would go to the church, where almost always they had the happiness of hearing Holy Mass. At Aix they had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Verbert, a distinguished priest of the Congregation who some time later governed it as Vicar General.17

They arrived at Nîmes on Saturday...18 early enough to go ask the Vicar General for permission to say Mass on the following day, at least for one of the group. But they could not obtain it. The driver promised them that if they left at four o’clock in the morning they would be at Lunel in time to say or hear Mass there. In fact, they arrived at the moment that the principal Mass was being started and rather late that evening they arrived at Montpellier. Msgr. DuBourg had given them some letters for the Bishop of that city, Msgr. Fournier, his old friend. Unfortunately, they had gotten lost and they had to leave very early in the morning. They were not able to see him at that time. On the nineteenth they arrived at Toulouse, armed with letters from Msgr. DuBourg. They went to the Minor Seminary journeys. Rosati’s account of what travel was like in the early nineteenth century gives a good idea of why these prayers were considered necessary.

17 Charles-Emmanuel Verbert was born at Bresse, diocese of Lyon, in 1752. He entered the Vincentian Community in 1769 and after ordination taught theology at Marseille. At the outbreak of the Revolution he fled to Italy but returned to France in 1800 when several bishops of Provence asked him to administer their sees. In 1802 he was named pastor of a parish in Marseille. In 1810, he was headmaster of a high school in that city. In 1813 he was appointed to teach moral theology at the newly reorganized seminary of Aix and from there was elected Vicar General of the Congregation for France in 1816. He died in 1819.

18 The words omitted are, in the original French, onzième jour des morts, “the eleventh day of the dead.” The meaning is completely obscure.
where they were received with the greatest friendliness. There was a desire to keep them there until the arrival of their bishop. Nevertheless, in order to give them rooms, some of the directors and professors had given up those that they occupied. There was no wish, then, to abuse the goodness of these gentlemen. They wrote to Bordeaux and with the answer they received, which urged them to continue their journey, they determined to leave after some days.

On the twenty-fifth they were agreeably surprised by the arrival of Mr. Deandreis, who had in his company Mr. Mariani, a priest from Rome, Messrs. Casto Gonzales, a Spanish ecclesiastic, Francis Xavier Dahmen, a German ecclesiastic, and Brother Martin Blanka. Mr. Buzières, a young French priest who had come with them from Italy, had left them at Valence in order to go visit his parents in Clermont, with the promise to rejoin them in Bordeaux but he remained in France. Their venerable superior was transported with joy to embrace his dear confreres at Toulouse. He had mourned them for dead, since at Montpellier he had not received any news and he had learned that of the twenty-one vessels that had left from Marseille for Sète, nineteen had perished in the Gulf of Lyon. He himself, with his fellow travelers who had left Rome in the depth of winter, had run the greatest risks in crossing Mont Cenis on January 6. They had been surprised by a strong storm that had come close to burying them all in snow. They were obliged to leave the carriage on the road and after a great deal of pain and work they

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19 In the interview that the departing missionaries had with the Pope in 1815, Deandreis had secured a general permission for clerical students at the Collegio Alberoni in Piacenza to join the expedition. He reached Piacenza on December 27 but found none of the clerics interested in the proposal. Only Brother Blanka joined him and later rendered invaluable services to the small group.
were able to reach an inn, half dead and their feet frozen with cold.

On January 26, Mr. Deandreis left Toulouse with his group and also Mr. Deys and arrived at Bordeaux on the thirtieth. The venerable Archbishop of that city, Msgr. Daviau, who had been forwarned by letters from Msgr. DuBourg and had already prepared lodgings with the different communities and with some ecclesiastics, received them like a father. He wanted to keep Mr. Deandreis in his own palace and he placed Mr. Dahmen with the Sisters of Charity of Ste. Eulalie, Mr. Casto Gonzales with those of St. Michael, Messrs. Marliani and Deys with the Sisters of Nevers at the House of Correction and the brother with Mr. Martial who had a large boarding school.

Mr. Rosati and the others who had remained in Toulouse soon received letters that urged them to go to Bordeaux as soon as possible. On February 2 they assisted in surplice at a solemn procession, at which Monseigneur, the Archbishop of Toulouse, was present together with all the clergy of the city. They brought from the cathedral church to that of the seminary the body of Saint Pius the Martyr, which the missionaries had brought from Rome. On the third they left Toulouse to the regret of all the gentlemen of the seminary, who urged them to remain until the arrival of Msgr. DuBourg. It is necessary to put in the list of benefactors of the mission the names of Messrs. La Faurie and Vieuxse of the Major Seminary, of Messrs. Isaac and Combe of the Minor Seminary, and especially that of Mr. Compaing, a priest of our Congregation and professor of theology, who made a gift of a goodly number of books to his confreres, to whom he showed very much affection and interest in their mission.

Messrs. Acquaroni, Rosati, and Spezioli together with the postulant brother, arrived at Bordeaux on February 7,
1816. The Archbishop gave them a fatherly welcome and their dear superior, Mr. Deandreis, was delighted to see them and henceforth to have his entire flock reunited under his eyes and his immediate guidance. Mr. Acquaroni was lodged with the chaplain of the house called "of the incurables," directed by the Sisters of Charity. Mr. Spezioli with Mr. Martial, the postulant brother at the Minor Seminary and Mr. Rosati had the happiness of staying with Mr. Vincent Wlekman, a priest of our Congregation, who was then canon of the cathedral and who directed a community of religious women that he himself had established near the church of St. Sernin. These religious devoted themselves to the instruction of young people of their own sex and their community was known by the name of the Assembly of the Sacred Heart.

At Bordeaux the missionaries found Mme. Fournier, a widow, and sister of Msgr. DuBourg. This good lady, of great piety and a surprising activity and zeal for all that concerned the glory of God and the progress of religion, welcomed them with a very special interest and she acted as their mother. She was commissioned by her venerable brother to provide beds, linen, and everything that was necessary for them not only for the journey but also for their first establishment in America. She busied herself with their needs, she watched over their health and she considered herself happy whenever she could render them some service and she worked with pleasure with her own hands in order to make whatever they needed on her own.

On March 22, their number was increased by the arrival of two excellent recruits of whom we have spoken above, Messrs. Joseph Carretti, canon of the collegiate church of Porto-Maurizio, and Andrew Ferrari, a young priest of the same city. This was a very valuable acquisition for the mission. Their talents, their piety, their generous dedication, the pleasantness of their manners quickly
gained them the esteem of everyone and in a special way earned them the hearts of all their confreres. Mr. Carretti was lodged with Mr. Martial and Mr. Ferrari with the Sisters of Charity of the Manufacturer. During their stay in Bordeaux all the missionaries applied themselves to learning French and in general they succeeded and were on the point of exercising the ministry of the word. Mr. Deandreis already knew this language. He soon perfected himself in it and was in the position of speaking correctly and with ease, whether in public or in private.

The Archbishop, who had a high esteem for his talents and virtues, appointed him to a work that the holy missionary loved very much. He gave him the care of those held in the public prisons. Mr. Deandreis visited them frequently during the week, said Mass for them and preached to them every Sunday and holyday and he did a great deal of good among these unfortunates, of whom he led a great number to religion and virtue. Mr. Rosati gave some instructions to the Religious of the Assembly and preached a panegyric on the Holy Virgin on March 25. Mr. Ferrari also preached regularly on Sundays and holydays in the church of the Manufacture. The three ecclesiastics at first attended the classes in the Major Seminary but later Mr. Deandreis judged that it was more useful for them to review Logic and Metaphysics and appointed Mr. Rosati to give them a private lesson in them every day. During Passion Week most of the missionaries made an eight day retreat and during Holy Week they celebrated the solemn offices in the church of the House of Correction. In the Church of Our Lady on Good Friday, Mr. Deandreis led the devotion to the three hours’ agony of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which had not yet been known in Bordeaux. The

20 The precise meaning of this word, which in older French means a factory, is uncertain in this context.

21 The reference is to the Tre Ore service, which had originated in Italy. Deandreis also introduced it into the United States.
church was filled with the faithful who were extremely touched by it and it was suggested that it be continued every year in the future.

During the time that our missionaries were thus employing their time and preparing themselves to exercise the holy functions of their ministry in America, the indefatigable prelate who had chosen them as associates in his apostolic works, traversed Italy and France in order to recruit others and to procure for himself the means necessary for supporting the enormous expenses of this great enterprise. After the first expedition of missionaries that he sent from Rome to Bordeaux, Msgr. DuBourg, accompanied by Mr. Deandreis, had visited Naples, where he had been received in our house with all the consideration that was due him. By means of these gentlemen and especially of Mr. Masturzi, he had been presented to the king [Ferdinand I, King of Naples], had seen Cardinal Ruffo, the Archbishop of Naples, and had obtained some help. Very many priests and brothers of our Congregation offered themselves on this occasion to share in the works of their confreres in America. However, very many new foundations that were to be made in the Kingdom prevented their superiors from granting their requests. After the departure of Mr. Deandreis, the Bishop of New Orleans, after having been miraculously saved from death, which he would have suffered under the ruins of the steeple of a Franciscan church near Perugia which collapsed a moment after he had left it, was presented to the Grand Duke Ferdinand [III, of Tuscany], who came to the help of the mission with his generosities and he also acquired there a valuable recruit, Mr. Joseph Bigeschi, whose memory will always be held in blessing in the Bays de la Fourche [sic for Bayou la Fourche]. He then went to Milan, where he obtained an audience with the Emperor Francis II [of Austria], who was there, received from the
liberality of the nobility of that great city and especially from the Count Millari who was then Vice-Governor, proofs of the interest that there was in the mission. He met some respectable ecclesiastics who soon procured for him very many recruits and he took with him a young ecclesiastic [Tichitoli], endowed with very great piety and talent, who entered our Congregation. At Turin the holy Bishop received a very flattering welcome both at court and in the city. King Victor Emmanuel and the Queen Maria Theresa of Austria helped him liberally and promised him to continue their liberalities in the future.22 There he acquired some recruits who followed him some time later. But it was especially at Lyon that he was given extraordinary proofs of interest and generosity. At Montpellier, his old friend, Msgr. Fournier, also gave him some similar signs of zeal and liberality.

On May 22, the vigil of the Ascension, Msgr. DuBourg arrived in Bordeaux, accompanied by Mr. Tichitoli, a young ecclesiastic who had attached himself to the mission in Milan. The news of his arrival filled all the missionaries who were in Bordeaux with joy and they immediately went to his lodging and were charmed to see again their father and to receive his blessing. This prelate had already forwarned them by letter of a change that he had been obliged to make because of a report about the place where he was to have established the principal foundation of the mission. At first he had resolved to put the seminary in the parish of the Assumption at Bayou la Fourche, in order to have it somewhat close to New Orleans, where he was going to make his residence. But the strongest motives had made him choose the city of Saint Louis, some 1200 [measurement omitted] up the Mississippi, in the country that used to be called Upper Louisiana and which now

22They were the rulers of the Kingdom of Sardinia. Austria in this context probably is synonymous with Habsburg.
forms the state of Missouri, for the place of his residence. As a result he did not want the seminary and the other establishments to be so far away. Up there he could keep his eye on them and be more effectively concerned with them. He recommended to them [the missionaries] that they apply themselves seriously to learning English, which was indispensable for them in Missouri for the exercise of their ministry, whereas in Louisiana, although English would have been helpful to them, it was not absolutely necessary since the French language was spoken by the great majority of the population. Two of the priests who had come from Italy were discouraged, seeing that it was almost impossible for them to learn English. They abandoned the mission. With regard to the others Providence gave them in this regard further proof of their vocation to this mission. We believe that it will not be useless to explain it at this point. It will always be a great consolation for persons called to work in our mission in Missouri to be assured that this work has been undertaken by the command of God who has designed to make known his will in an extraordinary way. Here is how.

Several years before the arrival of Msgr. DuBourg in Rome, while Bonaparte was master of almost all of Europe, part of the houses of the Congregation had been suppressed and there was not the least possibility of sending recruits to foreign countries. Mr. Deandreis, who was staying in our house of Montecitorio, said one day to

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23 The two who left were Spezioli and Marliani. Though Rosati tactfully does not mention it, the news seems to have stunned and disheartened the group. DuBourg, who was often tactless and impulsive, also told them that he would not be accompanying them to America. The reason for the change of residence was hostility from the clergy of New Orleans, led by the notorious Capuchin Père Antoine de Sedella. At the same time two new applicants, John Flegifont and Medard de Lattre, presented themselves as postulant brothers. Both made it to the United States but both left the mission, Medard de Lattre at Perryville, Flegifont in Baltimore.
Mr. Rosati, a young priest of the Congregation who had just finished his theology courses, “To what will you now apply yourself, Monsieur?” When he answered that he would apply himself to learning Hebrew, Mr. Deandreis replied, “Leave Hebrew aside. It is not what you need. Learn English.” Surprised at this proposal, Mr. Rosati said to him, “And why?” “That language,” said Mr. Deandreis in an assured tone, “will be necessary for us, for you and me, in order to preach the word of God to the peoples who speak it.” Mr. Rosati, who respected this holy man very much, agreed and accepted an English grammar that Mr. Deandreis gave him for this purpose. But disheartened by the difficulties that one finds at first with this language, especially with the pronunciation, he returned the grammar to him some time later, saying that it was impossible for him to learn it. “Ah, well,” said Mr. Deandreis, “nevertheless you will need it.”

After the death of Mr. Deandreis a notebook was found that he wrote after his arrival in America, during his stay in Kentucky. Its title is *Ad quid venisti et cur Europam reliquisti? Considerationes.* 24 This little work is worthy of the pen and the heart burning with love of the great Saint Augustine. In chapter XIV, title *Ut praeludia non obscura adimplerentur,* he says:

> **Vocationes tuae extraordinariae, Scrutator Cordium, passim fiunt secundum quasdam precedentes prophetias et praeludia, quae manum invisibilem ostendunt illius qui attingit a fine usque ad finem fortiter et disponit omnia suaviter. Hinc est quod sensim sine sensu me longe ante inclinaverat non solum ad missiones exteras generatim sed praesertim ad desiderandam et postulandam conversionem gentis Anglicae et ad eius linguam addiscendam, quin praecise scirem qua ratione id facere, quinimo etiam D.

24 “Why have you come and why did you leave Europe? Considerations.”
Rosati hortatus fueram ut hanc linguam addisceret, subdens quia hae tibi necessaria erit in missionibus exteris ad quas simul pergemus. Et hoc pluribus annis contigit antequam ulla notio apparerit missionis huius. 25

In the meantime this holy missionary abstains on this occasion from making an allusion to what had happened in Rome and his furnishing to Mr. Rosati the books necessary for the study of English. His humility did not permit him to make mention of it.

The interests of the mission required that Msgr. DuBourg spend some of their time in Europe, both to increase the number of his collaborators and to procure the means necessary for their journey and their establishment in America. He was determined then to have the first colony of his missionaries leave as soon as possible and he had the necessary preparations made for their departure. On leaving Bordeaux it was necessary to remove their cassocks. He had prepared for them some black suits and round hats. 26 Provisions were made for linen, beds, and everything that could be necessary for them, both on the voyage and in order to begin the establishment in America. The Archbishop of Bordeaux gave a large number

25 The chapter title reads, "That clear foreshadowings may be fulfilled." The text reads, "Your extraordinary callings, O Searcher of Hearts, are made step by step according to certain preceding prophecies and forshadowings, which show the invisible hand of him who reaches from end to end mightily and disposes all things mildly. Hence it is that he had long before inclined me imperceptibly and without my being aware of it not only for the foreign missions in general but especially for desiring and seeking the conversion of the English people and for learning their language, without my knowing exactly why I was doing it. Even more I had exhorted Mr. Rosati to learn this language, adding that you will need it in the foreign missions to which we shall go together. And this happened many years before any notion of this mission had appeared."

26 In the early nineteenth century it was not customary for Catholic priests in the United States to wear either the cassock or Roman collar on the street. The dress conservative laymen was considered sufficient.
of books. The Sisters of Charity also gave some help. During the time that they were thus preparing to leave for America, Msgr. DuBourg gave them some instructions concerning their conduct after their arrival. First, he administered the tonsure to Messrs. Deys, Dahmen, and Gonzales, and then the minor orders. He made Mr. Deandreis his vicar general, giving him all his powers. In case of death, Mr. Rosati was to succeed Mr. Deandreis in this office.

Providence gave still another proof of the protection that it was bestowing on our American missionaries. The occasion was the vessel that had been reserved for their voyage. An agreement had already been concluded with the captain of a vessel that was to set sail for Baltimore within a few days. The agent who had been commissioned to do this, while discussing certain things with him about the contract, found that the captain was demanding something that he [the agent] claimed that he had not promised. They could not agree and the contract was broken. It was then necessary to wait some days more and to make other arrangements. It was a special disposition of God who wanted in this way to preserve the missionaries from shipwreck. The vessel did not arrive at Baltimore. It perished in passage. In his little work that we have quoted, Mr. Deandreis describes this miraculous preservation in this way.

*Prodigium fuit quod dum Burdigalae de navigatone nostra ageretur, quum occasio oblata esset naulum solvendi cuidam navi, quae velae datura erat et revera dedit paucis diebus ante discessum nostrum, divina tua sic disponente Providentia, ab illa abstinuimus, quia, sicut postea comperimus, navis illa naufragium fecit.*

*27* It was a portent that while the discussion of our sea voyage was going on at Bordeaux, when the opportunity was offered to book passage on a certain ship that was about to set sail and actually did
“The life of a laborer in the Gospel has for its foundation the denial of himself and the imitation of the life of Jesus Christ, and his Apostles.”

so a few days before our own departure, by the disposition of your divine Providence, we drew back from this because, as we afterwards learned, that ship suffered shipwreck.”