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Spiritual Writings

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L.435 - (TO SISTER BARBE ANGIBOUST AT FONTAINEBLEAU)

(c.1646)

My dear Sister,

Well, here you are once again serving the Court, employed by order of our very good and very devout Queen. May her holy example make you most humble, and may Divine Providence's choice of you fill you with confusion. However be on guard, my dear Sisters, so that the enemy does not sow weeds among this good seed. You will know that this is happening if, during your stay in the Court, your contact with these ladies alters your devotion even the slightest bit. You will know it also if you are less careful in the observance of your Rule, and less gentle and humble. However, with regard to humility, are you on your guard so that the deference the world shows you does not make you too bold when speaking to the ladies, both those of the Court and of their entourage? Likewise in speaking to the doctor? Be vigilant so that your experience in treating the sick and your knowledge gained from the doctors do not make you too bold and cause you to jump to conclusions, which prevent you from listening to their prescriptions and obeying any order they might give you. When someone does you the honor of asking your advice, answer with great humility, saying quite simply that you have been taught thus. Truthfully, my dear Sisters, if we acted otherwise, we would be most ungrateful for the grace of God. What do we have except what has been given to us? What do we know except what has been taught us?

1647

*Establishment of the Daughters of Charity at Montreuil-sur-Mer, Chantilly, Chars and Fréneville.*

*June: Visits to Angers and Nantes by Jeanne Lepintre and Monsieur Lambert.*

*July: Transfer of the foundlings to Bicêtre.*

*September: Monsieur Vincent's Conference on Perseverance in our Vocation.*

**L.168 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER TURGIS**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Poor at Richelieu*

January 4, 1647

My very dear Sister,

You must be wondering what is wrong with me since it is well past the period of a month during which I promised to write to you. However, my dear Sister, you must excuse me for I have not forgotten you or lost affection for you; I have only lacked time. I was ill for quite a long time,<sup>1</sup> and from what they were saying, even in danger of dying. I have recovered, through the mercy of God. Please pray to His divine goodness that this be for His glory, and that I may be able to serve Him with more fidelity than I ever have. I praise God, my very dear Sisters, for all that He does through you and for the graces He grants you. You must be most thankful for and faithful to them. At the start of this new year, rededicate yourselves to His service with the fervor that you had at the beginning when you first knew what He desired of you. Sister Anne, truly look at the particular virtues that He asks of you. Here are the holy cards which Holy Providence has selected for you. Gather much fruit from the instructions they give you.

I am informing Monsieur Gauthier<sup>2</sup> that it is common for our sisters to take remedies given the patients. However, if something prevents this, the regional customs must be followed. That is why you shall do as Monsieur Gauthier instructs you, in keeping with what Monsieur Portail<sup>3</sup> has already told you.

Did you know that our poor Sister Mathurine<sup>4</sup> from Angers died? Through the mercy of God we have had a great number of sick sisters, but they have almost all recovered. There are still two sisters in danger of death, both named Mathurine, both having come from Angers at the same time. One has an ailment of the lung; while the other, an ailment of the spleen. Pray, Sisters, that in living or dying His holy name may be glorified in us. It is in His holy love that I am with all my heart, my very dear Sisters, your very humble sister and servant.

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1. Louise de Marillac was ill when she returned from Nantes. The letter was written by Élisabeth Hellot.
  2. Monsieur Denis Gauthier from Langres entered the Congregation of the Mission in 1639. From 1642 onwards, he was in Richelieu. He was successively Seminary Director, then Superior of the House.
  3. Monsieur Portail stayed in Richelieu in August 1646.
  4. Mathurine was in Saint-Denis.

L.207 - TO MY DEAR SISTER BARBE ANGIOUST

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Poor at Fontainebleau*

March 3 (1647)

My very dear Sister,

You are worrying me by seeming to be without consolation and by not letting me know of your affliction. Do you have a slight ailment? If that is it, my dear Sister, love God's most holy will, and await better health peacefully. It is a good sign that your legs are swelling.

If you grieve at seeing God offended by those who should be singing His praises and edifying the people, let it be your hope that, when the hour of the fullness of their vocation arrives, God will be able to make them great saints. For your part, do all you can to be faithful to God in your vocation and in the accomplishment of your Rule. If your infirmity prevents you from rising or from fasting and other acts of self-denial, keep in mind that it cannot prevent you from having true humility, from being most cordial and from exhibiting forbearance and gentleness toward your neighbor, even those who oppose you the most. I do not know if you were mistaken in the number of schoolgirls you reported to me. Seventy is a lot. When you have a little more strength, I think that it would be well for you to go to visit the sick once in a while, while leaving the teaching for Sister Marguerite.<sup>1</sup> I am truly astonished that she despises me so that she does not write to me. Tell her that it is wrong to trifle with her Master; I mean that it is wrong to anger God. I fear from this that all is not going well between her and Him. Perhaps, Sister, you are not warning her at the appropriate times that we witness great examples of misfortune among those who, little by little, grow lax. If I told you the state of all those we know, you would be moved to pity and greatly astonished. Pray for all of them, I beg you, and let us ask God for holy perseverance for one another. When you have regained your health, let us know the number of your pupils. However let us console ourselves with the thought that God knows it, and let us avoid, as much as we can, the desire to make known what God is doing through us. I most certainly sent your letters to Monsieur Vincent. I do not know if you received the letters we wrote to you two weeks ago, I believe. There was one for Sister Marguerite that I had wanted to write as if to a daughter, if I had one.

I think you know it was not Sister Françoise who died, but a Sister Mathurine<sup>2</sup> and Sister Perrine,<sup>3</sup> both from Angers. Sister Madeleine<sup>4</sup> is

1. Marguerite, see Letter 223.

2. Mathurine, native of Angers, deceased in Saint-Denis.

3. Perrine Fleury entered in 1646.

4. Madeleine Mongert, see Letter 57.

quite ill in Angers, as is Sister Élisabeth<sup>1</sup> in Nantes. Pray for both of them and for all our numerous infirm. Our entire community greets both of you. I do so as well, and am in the love of Jesus Crucified, my very dear Sisters, your very humble and very loving servant.

**L.172 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER TURGIS<sup>2</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Poor at Richelieu*

March 10 (1647)

My very dear Sister,

May God be blessed for all the graces His goodness bestows on your little company. However, my dear Sister, be on guard that the sweetness of the people's approval and the consolation of your frequent conferences and communications do not take root in your mind so that you construe the change as the purity of intention needed for the service of God. That could be detrimental to you in the event that Divine Providence changes you from this place to one where these satisfactions are not found. My dear Sister, do not think that I am giving this advice to you alone. I say the same thing to my dear Sister Anne,<sup>3</sup> and as I would to all our other sisters.

My dear Sister, the little trials you mention in your last letter indicate that you are experiencing a weakness of spirit. Do not be troubled. It is nothing since you hold on to God so tightly by your will.

My dear Sister, I remember that you spoke to me about drugs for medications. If there is not a small well-stocked shop for the poor, and if it becomes necessary to buy drugs in small amounts, then I advise you not to do so because I do not believe that the Confraternity of Charity has much money. Even when you obtain them from other places, it should only be for the needs of the sick. Since Monsieur Portail did not advise you on this, I think you should take my advice. Once again, I must give you news about your widowed sister. She was remarried during carnival season to a young man of about 25 who is a shoemaker's apprentice. However, she said she did so to help him with his schooling. Your other sister is well, thank God. We recommend ourselves to your holy prayers, and I am, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. All our sisters greet you. We have many who are ill. Remember

1. Élisabeth Martin, see Letter 22.
2. Élisabeth Turgis, see Letter 38.
3. Anne from Richelieu, see Letter 163.

us to Sister Anne, and my most humble greetings to Monsieur Gauthier,<sup>1</sup> of whom I am a most humble servant.

L.170 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

March 10 [1647]

Monsieur,

I hesitate to send you Monsieur des Jonchères<sup>2</sup> letter because you are burdened by the presence of your important guests. I also have a few other letters on which I need advice to communicate to your Charity.

I do not think that what my son said was bad because, in my opinion, it did not deviate from the respect he owes. However, I find it absolutely impossible for this matter to be carried out without the consent of your Charity, and I foresee that the delay will be very prejudicial for my son, for several reasons that I cannot write. I must resign myself to all these terrible happenings which I dread. I related to you what had been told me in order to prevent the continuation of the abuse and slander against the morals of those whose doctrine is suspect. Someone remarked that those involved had protested from the pulpit that they had entered into it only in a spirit of union and charity, and that they were speaking only in these terms.

The Countess de Maure<sup>3</sup> told me to take care to send back to her a book which she sent you, *The Apology of Jansenius*.<sup>4</sup> She is also sending you this one for your perusal, as she promised. If I thought I could speak to you sometime tomorrow, I would beg you most humbly to allow me to do so. Besides the rather important matter of Nantes, I must speak to you on a need of our Company. Our Sister Madeleine<sup>5</sup> is much better, thank God, and all is going quite well in Angers. I cause so much disorder everywhere. I fear that your Charity forgets my needs, which causes me to wish more than ever for your Charity to believe that I am by the will of God, Monsieur, your most obedient and most grateful servant.

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1. Monsieur Gauthier, Superior of Richelieu, see Letter 168.

2. Monsieur des Jonchères, the sisters' confessor at Nantes.

3. The Countess de Maure, Louise de Marillac's cousin.

4. Book written in 1644 by Antoine Arnauld (1612-1694), the leader of the Jansenist Party in France. His sister, Mère Angélique, was Abbess of Port Royal.

5. Madeleine Mongert, see Letter 57.

L.173 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

Easter Sunday [April 21, 1647]

Monsieur,

I thought it necessary for your Charity to take the trouble to see this letter from Monsieur d'Annemont<sup>1</sup> before our sisters leave for Nantes. There are also two things that it seems we need to know from you: should we communicate to Messieurs des Jonchères<sup>2</sup> and d'Annemont,<sup>3</sup> and even to Mademoiselle de la Carisière, our thought of changing Sister Catherine?<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, if things remain this calm, would it not be appropriate to inform Sister Elisabeth,<sup>5</sup> who is still ill as you will see? Perhaps the negotiations for this change should be left to Sister Jeanne,<sup>6</sup> according to the order to be given her on it by your Charity. Another thing I find most necessary, and of great use, is that your Charity, if you think it appropriate, take the trouble to write a letter<sup>7</sup> to all our sisters, which shows a bit of dissatisfaction with them, and which encourages them. Just as true, my Most Honored Father, is the fact that this poor little Company is truly suffering under my wretched guidance! I also think that God will soon deliver it from this captivity, which is such a great obstacle to the perfection of His work. I myself have great reason to fear dying in my hardheartedness if your Charity does not help me. Could we hope for the kindness of a conference during this holy season, which would complete your conference<sup>8</sup> on the duties of the Sister Servants towards their companions and those of the sister companions towards the Sister Servants; and of the guidance and forbearance to be exercised by the Sister Servant in her relations with her companions? It seems to me that if this were well understood and practiced, it would prevent all the little disorders which exist in the Company as would having

1. Before Monsieur d'Annemont's letter, Louise de Marillac had received letters from Monsieur des Jonchères, Monsieur Fuset, a priest of the hospital, and from three sisters: Claude Brigide, Marguerite Noret and Elisabeth Martin. All of these letters pointed out community difficulties and the formation of factions, one of them being supported by the hospital chaplain.
2. Monsieur des Jonchères, the sisters' confessor.
3. Monsieur d'Annemont, priest from Nantes who had advised the hospital administrators to send for the Daughters of Charity.
4. Catherine Bagard, a very close friend of the hospital chaplain.
5. Elisabeth Martin, who was very upset, had asked Claude Brigide to write to Mademoiselle to explain the situation to her. A few days latter, she, in turn, wrote.
6. Jeanne Lepintre was going to make a visitation at Nantes.
7. Monsieur Vincent wrote a seven-page letter (Coste IX, 229).
8. Conference given on February 2, 1647 (Coste IX, 229). The next one would not take place until May 30.

some of our little Rules read from time to time in the Company.

A lady asked me to find out if there were 50 acres of land for sale near the house where the foundlings of La Chapelle are located. I suggested to them your house near the Récollets, hoping the land and the house she was looking for were around there. I beg you most humbly, Monsieur, to take the trouble to send Brother Ducourneau<sup>1</sup> to let me know if you think this is feasible, because this lady must send a man to visit the location after this holy season. I ask your Charity to please remember the Countess de Maure<sup>2</sup> concerning my son because the other matter is so out in the open it seems to me that it is the only thing of which you hear spoken. My God, how my pride is making me suffer in this, and what a great relief it would have been to be spared it. The most holy will of God did not permit this. May He be forever blessed for it! Through His will, I have the honor to be, Monsieur, your most obedient and most grateful daughter and servant.

**L.166 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER TURGIS<sup>3</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Poor at Richelieu*

(c. April 1647)

My very dear Sisters,

It has been a long time since I have had the consolation of receiving letters from you, and just as long since I have written to you. My heart has truly scolded me for it many times. However, I had not yet recovered from my illness of this past winter when I suffered a relapse which was more dangerous still, and I am just beginning to recover from it. My dear Sisters, will you not excuse me in light of this? Oh, how I truly look forward to this from the goodness of your hearts. But why does Sister Anne<sup>4</sup> not write to me? I would be so glad if she did! No matter how bad her handwriting may be, I beg you, Sister Turgis, to have her write to me. Here is a letter from Sister Louise Proust<sup>5</sup> that you will deliver to Parthenay. I believe you knew of our poor Sister Michelle's<sup>6</sup> death. If you see any of her relatives, you can assure them that her end would have been a great consolation to them. If I can, I will write to her father. We

1. Brother Ducourneau, Monsieur Vincent's secretary.

2. The Countess de Maure, Louise de Marillac's cousin. See preceding letter, Letter 170.

3. Letter written by Élisabeth Hellot.

4. Anne from Richelieu, see Letter 163.

5. Louise Proust, from Parthenay, had a brother in the Congregation of the Mission.

6. Michelle, a native of Richelieu, sent by Monsieur Portail in 1646.



grieved greatly at losing her because she truly was a fine girl. Our Sister Jeanne Roux<sup>1</sup> is doing very well. Are there not any fine girls asking to join our numbers? We greatly need them, but they must truly be good. Pray that God sends some. We had so many ill for six months that our infirmary was always full.

And my dear Sisters, there is a portion of the news I had to tell you while awaiting yours. I greet both of you and remain in the love of Jesus Crucified, my very dear Sisters, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. A few days before her death, our Sister Michelle expressed the wish to have tangible signs that she was dying as a true Daughter of Charity. Monsieur Vincent granted this and it gave her inexpressible consolation. Her illness lasted two weeks and during this little martyrdom she practiced admirable patience.

**L.174 - (TO OUR DEAR SISTERS, THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY**

*Serving the Poor of the Hospital of Nantes)*

May 8 (1647)

My very dear Sisters,

Sister Jeanne Lepintre<sup>2</sup> is coming to visit you on behalf of Monsieur Vincent. I believe his Charity would have sent me if I had recovered sufficiently from my serious illness. Do you know why, my dear Sisters? In order to learn from your very mouths your frame of mind, the source of the little troubles showing up in your Company, and how weeds<sup>3</sup> were sown which seem ready to choke out the good seed. O my dear sisters, what great reason I have to fear that it was my bad example which placed unfortunate impressions in your minds. If that is the case, do me the charity of asking God's forgiveness for me; and I ask you to forgive me as well by doing better than you have seen me do. Act thus so that God will no longer be saddened by your giving to His enemy that part of you which belongs to Him. Do this also in order not to lose the rewards that His goodness promises to those who carry out works of mercy while in His grace. He refuses the greatest gifts to those He sees filled with their own will.

Thus you may speak with great trust to our sister who, on her return, will faithfully report what you have communicated to her. After all, my

1. Jeanne Roux, a young sister, also a native of Richelieu.
2. Jeanne Lapintre sent to make a visitation of the house in Nantes.
3. The letters received from Nantes explained the dissension in the community, see Letter 173.

dear Sisters, we must be entirely God's; and in order to be truly His, we must rid ourselves of self-seeking. Let us try to discover our faults without deluding ourselves, and believe me, we will find that it is only this self-love which is our greatest enemy, and which causes us to find fault with others and to desire to be so satisfied in everything.

Here is a letter<sup>1</sup> from Monsieur Vincent which you should truly take to heart since God gave him the needed time to write it although he is busy with so many serious and important matters.

My dear Sisters, I must relate to you most simply the thoughts given me by this dear letter as I read it. O my dear Sisters, the gentleness of the style, the remarks about God's graces to you and to us, and the instructions his Charity gave you so delicately filled me with such dismay that I do not know what to say. I remember how many times God has warned us of our obligations through him; how many times he knew and wished to forget our faults and shortcomings while never tiring of moving and encouraging us or of having a father's care for us. He goes to all this trouble for us as if we were worthy of merit. And what have we given him, barren earth that we are? Nothing but discontent, barren earth that we are, through our infidelities to God, for whom he wishes to win us. At one time, some member of the Company leaves or commits great faults against her vocation; at another, the entire body has degenerated. How stupid we all are!

It seems that all the warnings God has had given to us have had no other effect than beating the air. What is worse, I am afraid, is that because they<sup>2</sup> were spoken before God and the angels, they will lead to great embarrassment at our judgment.

My Sisters, is it not with reason that my heart was touched with fear and just apprehensions? Do not think that I am telling you this to intimidate you, nor that I am speaking to you alone. It is to myself that I say it, as to all others who, like me, have made poor use of our holy vocation. I beg all of them, for the love of the death of our dear Master, to renew themselves in His Resurrection, receiving the peace that He gave us so many times in the person of His Apostles. However, let us be on guard. He did not grant this peace to them in idleness, but in work and in the remembrance of the wounds He suffered for us. We are taught through this that we can have no peace with God, with our neighbor or with ourselves unless Jesus Christ gives it to us, and that He will only give it to us through the merits of His wounds and sufferings, which will only be applied to us through our mortification of self, which we acquire by imitating Him in accomplishing the most holy will of God.

How happy you are when compared to so many others of your station,

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1. Monnsieur Vincent sent a seven-page letter (Coste III, 174).

2. Louise de Marillac had written: "All these dear admonitions"-words that she crossed out.

not just poor girls, but even people of rank who seek to be employed in the service of God and of the poor, and who greatly desire to do the will of God. They want so much to be helped to do this, but they remain unable to experience this consolation. As for you, you lack nothing yet you seem discontent. Instead of using the means given you by God to perfect yourselves, you scorn them.

Forgive me, my dear Sisters, if my affection for you leads me to speak to you like this. Oh, how often I have committed the same faults of which I suspect you! However, I honestly want to be faithful to God, and for that I often ask Him for His grace. Act thus: esteem and read with affection your Rule and instructions with the desire to put them into practice and to work at them conscientiously for the love of God. Especially make use of the advice God gives you, perhaps as a last recourse, in anything He asks of you.

My dear Sisters, it is not that I wanted to threaten you with God's punishment. However, let us fear, you and I, His indignation if we neglect the accomplishment of His holy will, in which and through which I am entirely yours, my dear Sisters, and where I hope from His goodness to be eternally. Ask Him to show mercy to me since I am in His most holy love, my dear Sisters, your very humble and most wretched sister and servant.

### L.312 - TO OUR VERY DEAR SISTERS

*Daughters of Charity Serving the Sick Poor at the Hospital at Nantes*

(June 1647)

My very dear Sisters,

I am not able to write to each of you individually, as I had promised myself I would. I decided that that was not necessary, and with everything our sister<sup>1</sup> is going to say to you it would, in so many words, make for quite a long letter. I beg you, my dear Sisters, to receive our good sister as God ordains, that is, to receive her as you would our Most Honored Father, since it is he who is sending her. A few days later Monsieur Lambert<sup>2</sup> will be there. Speak to him about everything of which you have informed me, and he will give you complete satisfaction.

Sister Claude,<sup>3</sup> the Lord of your mother's village sent someone to visit her in Saint-Germain, and had her taken back to her village so that she

1. Jeanne Lepintre, see Letter 64. was sent to Nantes.

2. Monsieur Lambert, see Letter 18, would be there in July.

3. Claude Carré, see Letter 505.

might be helped. She was better when she left, thank God, and I hope her native climate will restore her health. All the other relatives of our sisters, at least the ones I know, are well, thank God.

In the name of God, my very dear Sisters, be most submissive in everything Monsieur Lambert demands of you, assuring yourselves that it is the will of God and of Monsieur Vincent. I hope from God's goodness that all the little differences which have surfaced will help us to perfect ourselves and will show the Daughters of Charity how humble, submissive and attached to the exact practice of their Rule they must be. Without these virtues we are like an unstrung rosary. Take heart, my very dear Sisters. If your enemy had the upper hand for a while, let us do violence to ourselves in order to crush him.

Time does not permit me to speak to you any longer. Good evening, my very dear Sisters. I beg you to pray for us. Believe me in the love of Jesus Crucified, my very dear Sisters, your very humble sister and very loving servant.

#### L.101 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

(June 1647)

Monsieur,

The house near Saint-Laurent would serve the little children well if your Charity considers it appropriate to suggest to its owner that he live in the apartment he gave to the beer brewer, provided the Ladies are willing to compensate him.

I cannot help but tell you that I was greatly troubled today by a fear of predestination. Several thoughts on it came to me during meditation, and it weighed on my mind so that it led me to make an act of acquiescence to God's plans for me and for my son, that we may be forever objects of His justice.

I forgot to ask your permission to receive Communion throughout the novena of Masses to the Holy Spirit. It started Friday, and using the permission your Charity gave me to communicate when my health permitted, I have been receiving Communion since then. I do not dare continue without your very special permission, for which I ask for the love of God whose help we need. I am, Monsieur, your most grateful daughter and very humble servant.

**L.83 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER MADELEINE, DAUGHTER  
OF CHARITY**

*Servant of the Sick Poor at the Hospital of Saint-Jean at Angers*

June 5 (1647)

My very dear Sister,

Monsieur Vincent ordered me to find out from you if it was the Fathers of the Poor who had you write to him about some of our sisters, and to inquire by whose order you are sending them back. I urge you to let me know as soon as possible because this is important. Taking into consideration the trials you may experience because of your small number, his Charity cannot wait this time to be assured of this action, and so he wants two other sisters to leave for Angers next Friday.<sup>1</sup> I am apprehensive about suspicions and rash judgments. They often cause little troubles. In the name of God, my dear Sister, I beg you to show support and cordiality among you, and to practice holy cheerfulness. We most cordially greet our other dear sisters, whom we beg to give themselves once again to God for the accomplishment of His most holy will, with no exception of person or place. It is in this most holy will that I am, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

**L.178B - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX**

June 12 (1647)

Monsieur,

I believe Divine Providence permitted our two sisters<sup>2</sup> to arrive just in time to show those who were vacillating that Monsieur Vincent was sending them. I beg His goodness to guide the rest of this matter successfully. I would be greatly distressed, Monsieur, by the trouble our poor sisters give you, and by the slight satisfaction that you receive from all the goodness you have continuously practiced for their advancement in virtue, if it did not seem so evident to me that it is God who gave you this work, for which I do not dare to apologize. What would we do if God's Providence had not caused you to arrive at such an opportune time? May His holy name be forever blessed for it, and for having given

1. See the following letter.

2. Probably the arrival of Marguerite Moreau, see Letter 278, and of Nicole.

you His Spirit in the decision to delay the departure and dismissal of our two sisters,<sup>1</sup> who, I hope, will arrive soon. I hope that God's goodness will make known to all the others the fault they committed in their resistance to your orders, for which I ask your forgiveness. They have great need of being truly humbled. Is it not to be feared, Monsieur, that greater evil would be caused if they were easily offended or defiant, and tactless in revealing these feelings to those who are suspicious of them? I do not want to believe Sister Perrette<sup>2</sup> exempt from the faults of which she is accused; nonetheless, I would have great difficulty in persuading myself that she wanted to mar her reputation even a little. It is truly unfortunate that there are persons to be feared in the house.

I thank you most humbly, Monsieur, for the information your Charity gave us on the delay of the departure of our sisters. This had greatly distressed me because Sister Madeleine had informed us that they had left. I suspected that her severity contributed to this hasty return. It is a great relief and consolation for me to hope that God will settle everything through the mediation of your Charity. I am in His most holy love, Monsieur, your most obedient and very humble servant.

**L.308 - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX**

*at Angers*

June 15 (1647)

Monsieur,

Wednesday I had the honor of responding to the letter which you took the trouble of sending me advising us about the dismissal of our two sisters.<sup>3</sup> They have not yet arrived, and I am a bit distressed. I believe, Monsieur, that the ones<sup>4</sup> we sent will serve to encourage the little community through their spirit of submission and gentleness, which they truly lack there.

I spoke to those responsible for the clerical fund charity, thinking it a better way to serve the relative of Mademoiselle Gonain in his plan to finish his studies in Paris. Enclosed, Monsieur, is what was related to me by Madame Traversay,<sup>5</sup> who has great influence in this group. I beg you

1. Departure of Perrette of Sedan and Marie-Marthe Trumeau.
2. Perrette of Sedan arrived in Angers in July 1646. She returned to Paris in June 1647. She left the Company in July (Coste III, 212).
3. Perrette of Sedan, see Letter 178b, and Marie-Marthe Trumeau, see Letter 102.
4. Marguerite Moreau, see Letter 278, and Nicole.
5. Madame de Traversay, see Letter 48.

most humbly, Monsieur, to take the trouble to let his sister know. If you think he should come, a letter from you to this lady would be most useful to him.

I hope that Monsieur Lambert<sup>1</sup> will be in Angers in a short while. I begged him to find out before he left what Monsieur Vincent had decided concerning Mademoiselle Gonain.<sup>2</sup> With God's help I will speak to him again about it at the first opportunity. He praised God for the decision your Charity made to serve the public in a manner which, he believes, will be most useful. In praising God for all that His goodness will do through you, I would hope to be able to participate in it. I am in His most holy love, Monsieur, your most obedient and very humble servant.

### L.179 - TO MONSIEUR PORTAIL

*at Rome*

June 21, 1647

Monsieur,

For a long time I have desired the honor of writing to you, but I dared not importune you. However, the present state of your health causes me to overcome this fear so that I may present to you the need which your poor Daughters of Charity have of your return and so that, in your illness, you do not mistake *Paradise* for *Paris*. What would we do, Monsieur, since it seems that the perfection that God asks of the entire Company depends on your charitable advice and guidance? It is true that your very lengthy absence has been painful for us. However, personally, I have felt consolation in knowing that you are at the source of the holy Church and near its Head, the Holy Father of all Christians. I have so often wished to be there in order to receive, as a child—though an unworthy one—his holy blessing. However, as my age and my infirmities, which increase every day, begin to make me lose hope of this benefit I have so desired, and in the knowledge of the great happiness I have had, through God's grace, to live and to desire to die in the faith of Jesus Christ, the thought came to me, Monsieur, to beg you most humbly, for the love of God, to obtain for me this grace, which would be conferred upon me at the moment of my death.

However, Monsieur, I wish to go even further and to ask you, if it is possible, to obtain this same happiness for all those to whom God will

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1. Monsieur Lambert is going to make a visitation at Nantes.

2. Marie Gonain, see Letter 325. Her readmission into the Company is being considered.

give the grace to die in the Company of the Daughters of Charity, since it seems that it is the spirit of Jesus Christ that inspired those whom He chose to honor His human life on earth to desire this manner of life.

Monsieur, does this not indicate strongly to us that we have the double happiness of being Daughters of the holy Church and, being admitted in this manner, will this not be a new obligation for us to live and to act as children of such a Mother, something which requires great perfection? Return quickly, Monsieur, to help us acquire this perfection, and in the meantime, continue your charitable care for us at the altar, in your prayers and, right now, in your suffering. Permit me, Monsieur, to greet most humbly Monsieur Dehorgny<sup>1</sup> and Monsieur Alméras,<sup>2</sup> of whom I ask the same charity as I do of you.

Our Sister Carcireux<sup>3</sup> is well, thank God! Our Sisters Florence, Françoise from Montargis, Mathurine from Angers, and Perrine Fleury, one of the three your Charity sent us from Angers, are dead. Several others you do not know have died as well. The tall Sister Michelle whom you sent from Richelieu is dead, and several others have left. So we are in dire need of girls because of the numerous requests we are receiving for them from all over. See for yourself, Monsieur, if we do not need great help from God.

Please remember all of us to your entire holy family, and me even more than the others because I fear for and must question my salvation, although I hope for God's mercy through the merits of His Son in whose love I am, Monsieur, your most obedient and very humble servant.

### L.181 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

*Superior General of the Priests of the Mission*

June 24 [1647]

My Most Honored Father,

I was truly surprised that you left before giving us the orders necessary for the departure of our sisters for Montreuil.<sup>4</sup> Were it not for the fact

1. Monsieur Dehorgny, see Letter 5.
2. Monsieur René Alméras (1613-1672) entered the Congregation of the Mission in 1637. From 1641 to 1646, he was Director of the Seminary of Paris and Assistant of Saint-Lazare. He was sent to Rome in 1646. He returned in 1651 to assume the direction of the Collège des Bons-Enfants. After making visitations in the houses of the West of France (1653) and of the devastated regions of Picardy and Champagne (1654), he returned to Saint-Lazare as Assistant. He was named Superior General after the death of Monsieur Vincent.
3. Françoise Carcireux, see Letter 254.
4. The sending of Anne Hardemont and Marie Lullen to Montreuil-sur-Mer: decision made



that the seats on the coach have already been reserved, we would postpone it. However, they should leave Wednesday. What will they do without the blessing and instruction of your Charity which they so greatly need? If our good God does not inspire you to send us their instructions, we will be most upset. I assure you, Monsieur, that my mind is so overwhelmed that I admit to being the cause of this distress which our poor sisters are suffering. As for the departure of our sisters for Nantes,<sup>1</sup> we cannot send them since we still await the advice of your Charity on the word we received advising us not to change Sister Cath . . . Ba . . .,<sup>2</sup> who began the trouble in the hospital. It is considered absolutely necessary to recall Sister Élisabeth<sup>3</sup> and send a Sister Servant.<sup>4</sup>

I believe you know of the arrival of the sisters returning from Angers.<sup>5</sup> The accused seems the most innocent in the world. I did not dare write to her father without finding out from your Charity what we should do about her. I believe he will come before long. I pray to God that your Charity will be back, in good health, before that time.

My Father, please give your holy blessing to us and to our sisters. Sister Marguerite Tourneton<sup>6</sup> left Sunday without saying a word, and the Mother Prioress wrote to me that she had gone to the Hôtel-Dieu this morning and that she had received her. She is asking for another habit so that she can return ours. I have not answered her and will do nothing about it until your return. God alone knows the state of my poor mind in all these disorders. It seems that our good God wants to destroy us completely. I deserve it, and I am surprised that He has delayed so long in carrying out His justice. Provided His mercy saves my soul, I am satisfied. Obtain this grace for me through your charity since I am, Monsieur, your most obedient daughter and very humble servant.

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at the Council of June 19, 1647 (Coste XII, 631), also see A.85.

1. The sending of two sisters to Nantes (Jeanne de Saint-Albin and Jacqueline) and a sister to Angers (Madeleine Bécu) was decided at the Council of June 20 (Coste XIII, 645).
2. Catherine Bagard, see Letter 112.
3. Élisabeth Martin, the Sister Servant, see Letter 22.
4. Jeanne Lepintre, who made the visitation and stayed there as Sister Servant.
5. Perrette from Sedan, see Letter 178b, and Marie-Marthe Trumeau, see Letter 102.
6. Marguerite Tourneton, see Letter 149.

**L.213 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT**

*Superior General of the Priests of the Mission*

June 26 (1647)

Monsieur,

Our poor sisters<sup>1</sup> left this morning greatly distressed that they did not receive your blessing. Nonetheless, they departed with submission to the guidance of Divine Providence. Through His goodness may our good God permit you to return soon and in good health. Our entire poor Company is in a state of great sorrow, astonishment and fear at the loss of our sister.<sup>2</sup> Each one is murmuring secretly for no one dares speak about it. I await the return of your Charity so that you will let them know how they should regard this change.

It seems to me, Monsieur, that I am beginning to get a bit stronger, barring anything unexpected. However, I am taking excessive care of myself, and my most serious occupation is my personal welfare. It is not the same case for the interests of my soul although, by the grace of God, I am a bit calmer than when I had the honor of writing to you to reveal to your Charity the state of the one whose only consolation is the happiness of being, Monsieur, your most obedient and most grateful daughter and servant.

P.S. I think there is something to be said again about the freedom of our sisters in Serqueux.<sup>3</sup>

**L.182 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER TURGIS**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Poor at Richelieu*

June 27 (1647)

My very dear (Sister),

Although I believe Monsieur l'abbé de Vaux has given you, or sent you, a letter I had written to you a while ago, I had to give myself the consolation of writing to you as soon as our good God gave me the means to do so. I did so in order to rejoice with you on account of the graces that His goodness has bestowed on both of you. You have no idea of the

1. Anne Hardemont and Marie Lullen left for Montreuil-sur-Mer.
2. Marguerite Tourneton, see Letter 149, who had just left the Company of the Daughters of Charity.
3. The establishment of the Daughters of Charity at Serqueux took place in 1645.

consolation that Monsieur Vincent and I had in reading your letter. I hope that you are experiencing the same thing in your hearts, my very dear Sisters.

However, how is it that you do not write to me, Sister Anne? Oh, I beg you to write to me yourself and to tell me all your secrets. You know that Sister Turgis will send your letters to me safely, without reading them, if you do not want her to do so. However, I believe you to be of but one heart, since Daughters of Charity must become so on account of the union which exists among them. How fortunate you are, my very dear Sisters, to have the guidance<sup>1</sup> you do! Store up a provision for when Divine Providence calls you elsewhere. Do not think about when this will happen, but live in detachment. Remember, my Sisters, to pray for our entire Company, for each sister in particular and for the tasks God asks of us. We need prayers often.

Sister Anne Hardemont<sup>2</sup> and Sister Marie Lullen<sup>3</sup> from Le Mans left yesterday for Montreuil, the place for which the Count de Lannoy<sup>4</sup> has been requesting us for so long. I assure you, Sisters, that if we were not powerfully helped by our good God, and if good people did not do their best for us, we would have great reason to be concerned about our infidelities. All our sisters are in fairly good health, thank God, and they greet you cordially as I do, and I am in the love of Jesus Crucified, my dear Sisters, your most humble sister and servant.

P.S. I beg you to greet Monsieur Gauthier<sup>5</sup> most humbly, and to recommend us to the prayers of their entire community.

### L.182B - TO MONSIEUR L'ABBÉ DE VAUX

*at Angers*

Feast of St. Peter (1647)

Monsieur,

I really did not think that Sister Perrette<sup>6</sup> was as they wanted to make

1. The spiritual direction given by the Priests of the Mission of Richelieu.
2. Anne Hardemont, see Letter 110.
3. Marie Lullen, from a well-off Le Mans family, was in Nanterre before being sent to Montreuil in June 1647. After her death occurred in 1649 or 1650, a conference on her virtues was held (Cost IX, 537).
4. The Count de Lannoy had been asking for the Daughters of Charity since 1642, see Letter 128.
5. Monsieur Gauthier, Superior of the Priests of the Mission at Richelieu.
6. Perrette from Sedan, see Letter 178b.

it appear. She is an extremely free spirit, and she does not seem very upset by the accusation against her because she does not feel she willingly committed any evil. Oh my God, Monsieur! How this matter has distressed me! How could it be that the service we wish to render God in the hospital is so displeasing to Him that He has abandoned His care for the daughters in this place only, permitting them to commit such grave faults? Certainly, Monsieur, it is a case of a misunderstanding, and some of these scandalmongers are taking it upon themselves to put us in a bad light before the Fathers<sup>1</sup> and the city itself.

It would be one thing if our service were no longer satisfactory and we were warned of it early on, but to suffer these suspicions and calumnies, and to hear them from these same mouths who wanted also to assure the administrators that they had seen three of our sisters preparing packages and throwing them out the window during the night, I beg you, Monsieur, to consider whether that is bearable. They say they do not want to believe this, but they believe worse things which possibly are told to them by the same people. I know it is easy to let oneself be taken up with suspicion of evil and to give credence to it, but this matter seems to me to be of too great importance.

You will see, Monsieur, that I am being carried away by this point of honor. I beg you, for the love of God, to remedy in some way the beginning of this great evil. The experience of the poor Huitmill<sup>2</sup> girl had to show that, although she only wished to leave because of weakness and little affection for her vocation, the same thing could easily happen to another sister. She would probably not have had the desire to leave the Company if our sisters had supported her a bit more, and warned her about vicious persons who think only of destroying the reputations of those of whom they cannot really say anything bad. Monsieur, I do not mean to say that our sister is without fault, nor that she herself was not the cause of the start of the slander simply because of her inexplicable charm and free and easy spirit. However, I believe her to be far removed from the evil attributed to her. Her lack of fear at going to her father and asking to return home is an indication of this. And thus, we lose her.

Monsieur, I would truly like people to know that our sisters are not as some believe: a collection of unknowns. I can assure you that we receive none until we have been well and properly informed about them. I address myself to you, Monsieur, as to the true Father God has given us. I am so pressed for time that I cannot afford myself the honor of writing to Monsieur Ratier, who has gone to so much trouble to extricate us from this unpleasant matter. I am truly ashamed when I think of what a burden

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

2. In June 1646, Catherine Huitmill had left the Company of Charity. Her quick departure had upset the sisters and their entourage (letter from Monsieur Ratier to Louise de Marillac).

we are to you and to him, and how you receive no consolation for all your trouble, unless God lets you know that He wishes it thus. I beg Him earnestly to do so, and I am in His most holy love, Monsieur, your most obedient and very humble servant.

**L.183 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER ANNE-ÉLISABETH  
(HARDEMONT)<sup>1</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Poor of the City of Montreuil-sur-Mer  
in the Hospital of Montreuil*

(July 1647)

My very dear Sisters,

I praise God for your safe arrival at Montreuil.<sup>2</sup> I think Sister Marie's<sup>3</sup> discomfort came from the motion of the coach, and that by now she has recovered her health for the service of the poor. We eagerly await the full report you promise us, begging God that it may be in total conformity with His most holy will.

I beg you, Sister Anne, not to be lazy in writing to and answering Sister Guillemine.<sup>4</sup> Also, let us know any news about the relatives of Sister Antoinette,<sup>5</sup> who is at Nantes, so that we can relay it to her. She is well, thank God. If you do not know who her relatives are, you can ask the Count.<sup>6</sup>

Remember always, my dear Sisters, that it is the most holy will of God which put you where you are, and that it is for the accomplishment of His will that you must work there as would an ambassador for a King, that is to say, you must work most faithfully, observe your Rule and follow the advice of your Superiors. All must be done with gentleness of heart and humility, as we consider the interests of those with whom we are working rather than our own or even those of the Company. We were taught thus by our Most Honored Father after he learned it from the Son of God, Jesus Crucified, in whose love I am, my very dear Sisters, your very humble sister and very loving servant.

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1. Anne Hardemont, see Letter 110.

2. The sisters left Paris on June 26.

3. Marie Lullen, see Letter 182.

4. Guillemine Chesneau was at the parish of Saint-Paul with Anne Hardemont.

5. Antoinette Larcher, a native of Montreuil-sur-Mer, left for Nantes with Louise de Marillac in July 1646. She returned to Paris in 1647 and left the Company to return to her region.

6. The Count de Lannoy, see Letter 128.

**L.188 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT**

[July 1647]

Monsieur,

Experience finally will show us that I was correct in my apprehensions about the facilities at Bicêtre.<sup>1</sup> These Ladies want to get the impossible from our sisters. For lodging they are choosing small rooms, where the air will most certainly be foul, and they are leaving the large. However, our poor sisters do not dare to say a thing. The Ladies do not want Mass said there but want our sisters to go to Gentilly for Mass. And what will the children do in the meantime? Who will do the work? I am sending Sister Geneviève.<sup>2</sup> I beg you to take the trouble to speak to her. She will let you know how distressed the sisters are, and how pretentious the Ladies are. I truly fear that we will have to end our service to these poor little children. May the will of God be done. In His will I am, Monsieur, your most obedient and most grateful daughter and servant.

P.S. I ask your Charity to remember the two Ladies who will be ready to make their confessions tomorrow morning, if that is possible.

**L.200B - (TO SISTER ANNE HARDEMONT  
at Montreuil-sur-Mer)<sup>3</sup>**

(1647)

For the love of God, my dear Sister, practice great gentleness toward the poor and toward everyone. Try to satisfy as much by words as by actions. That will be very easy for you if you maintain great esteem for your neighbor: the rich because they are above you, the poor because they are your masters.

As for the livestock you have, if it is true that they take up the time you should be using in working with the sick and the schoolgirls, you must get rid of them. Do not enlist anyone to help you with your work. Let me tell you that you must put your hand to everything without thinking that you are there only temporarily. Even if we were to be in a place for only a week, we should work there as if it were to be for our entire lives. There must be such harmony between you that what one does

1. Bicêtre, see Letter 86. The transfer of the foundlings to Bicêtre had just taken place.
2. Geneviève Poisson, see Letter 28.
3. Letter recopied into Marguerite Chétif's notebook.

will be pleasing to the other. Do not say, "I am supposed to do this or that." Both of you must be willing to put your hand to everything.

I beg you, my dear Sister, to be most exact in giving instructions in catechism and morality and in offering other advice. Do not say that you are going to "teach catechism." Do not say, "come to catechism." It is not for us to speak or teach like that. Rather say, "Let us read." From the text, with the book in hand, you can give simple explanations; however, never anything pretentious. You well know that one can be mistaken, and that would be most serious if you had a great number of pupils and patients, and if you had a lot of help from the older girls with feast-day readings.

**L.184 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER ÉLISABETH MARTIN<sup>1</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity at Angers*

July 10 (1647)

My very dear Sister,

I was truly astonished to learn that you were in Angers. It must be something extremely urgent for you to go ahead of obedience. Outside of that, I could not imagine Sister Élisabeth exhibiting such infidelity. For that reason, my dear Sister, Monsieur Vincent has given me the responsibility of asking you to inform us fully of the reason for this journey and of giving you the order not to leave Angers until you have sent us some news and received an answer from us. Do not fail in this, my dear Sister, and do not forget to greet humbly Monsieur l'abbé<sup>2</sup> and Messieurs Ratier<sup>3</sup> and Fellet,<sup>4</sup> if you see them.

Remember me to all our sisters, and tell them to send us news of themselves as soon as possible. I greet them all in the love of Jesus Crucified, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

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1. Élisabeth Martin, Sister Servant at Nantes, left for Angers. What provoked this departure? The great weariness that had overcome her? The arrival of Jeanne Lepintre?

2. Monsieur l'abbé de Vaux, see Letter 12.

3. Monsieur Ratier, see Letter 71.

4. Monsieur Fellet, priest of Angers.

**L.186 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER TURGIS**  
*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Poor at Richelieu*

Paris, July 10 (1647)

My very dear Sister,

I have written to you twice recently, and I urge you to let me know if you have received the letter I gave to Monsieur l'abbé de Vaux for you. Also send us news of your little family.

This letter is to inform you that Monsieur Vincent told me to ask you to go to Nantes if you are told to do so by Monsieur Lambert<sup>1</sup> or by Sister Jeanne Lepintre,<sup>2</sup> and to do this as soon as you are so ordered. Ask Monsieur Gauthier<sup>3</sup> to lend you money for the trip, and we will repay it here when you tell us to do so. When in Nantes, Sister, please do as obedience would have you do. Remember us always in your prayers, especially the four sisters who just arrived from Saintonge. Also remember several very young sisters who will eventually be taking over the House, since there are few older sisters left there. Provided God is Master of all, we will be only too happy. It is in His most holy love that I am, my very dear Sister, your very humble and very loving servant.

P.S. Please tell Sister Anne<sup>4</sup> that we will not be good friends unless she writes to me. My greetings to her.<sup>5</sup>

**L.185 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE**  
*Servant of the Sick Poor at Nantes*

(July 10 1647)

My very dear Sister,

Yesterday we received word that Sister Élisabeth<sup>6</sup> went to Angers, and Monsieur Vincent ordered me to tell her to stay there until she hears from us. That is why, Sister, you will have to finish up the other matter<sup>7</sup>

1. Monsieur Lambert visited Nantes.
2. Jeanne Lepintre was also in Nantes; see the following letter.
3. Monsieur Gauthier, Superior of the Priests of the Mission at Richelieu.
4. Anne from Richelieu, see Letter 163.
5. This letter, written by Élisabeth Hellot, was not signed.
6. Élisabeth Martin, see Letter 22.
7. It was a question of Catherine Bagard's departure; she was one of those responsible for the formation of cliques in the community.



promptly when Monsieur Lambert arrives in Nantes. You can suggest to him that Sister Henriette<sup>1</sup> or Sister Claude<sup>2</sup> accompany the other one,<sup>3</sup> and if he thinks neither one appropriate, please suggest to him that it would be expedient to send Sister Turgis to Nantes for this purpose. Ask him to send her promptly, telling him that this was Monsieur Vincent's suggestion. However, ask him please not to speak about Nantes until this girl<sup>4</sup> has preceded him out of town by at least two days, and not to allow her to pass through Angers.

My God, my dear Sister, how in need you are of grace in order to carry out the task God has entrusted to you. However, do nothing without the advice of Monsieur Lambert and Monsieur des Jonchères.<sup>5</sup> Outside of that, express your opinions to no one, except perhaps to Mademoiselle de la Carisière<sup>6</sup> in order to make her understand that you and Monsieur Lambert will do nothing without an order from Monsieur Vincent, which you would not dare go against in any way. Assure her that if she helps secure the administrators' approval for the change you must make, you hope that God will once again bless this holy work and her undertakings.

Enclosed are some pills I am sending her, along with instructions for making them. You can keep some for yourself in case you think you need any. However, you know that remedies are most effective when used infrequently. Tell this fine young lady the good they do, and how they relieve the more debilitating effects to which she is daily reduced by her great infirmities.

Please assure all our sisters, in general and individually, of my affection, and tell them that all these little troubles and murmurs cause me to hope for great good from God once it is pleasing to His goodness to end them. It is the practice of the devil always to set himself against our best actions. I recommend the service of the sick to the sisters and I beg them to care for them. I was told that a girl died a short while ago without help,<sup>7</sup> and that this occurred because several of the sisters were in town. I am extremely surprised if that is true because they should not go out. My God, Sisters, what reason have we not to humble ourselves when we see that we have become the subject of gossip and scorn for all the people of Nantes, who had summoned us to prevent petty disorders in the house of God. Now we profane it to such an extent in popular opinion by attachment to our self-love and personal satisfaction. I would like to be able to do penance, and I assure you that every time I hear of

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1. Henriette Gesseaume, see Letter 76.

2. Claude Carré, see Letter 505.

3. Catherine Bagard, see Letter 112.

4. Catherine Bagard, see Letter 112.

5. Monsieur des Jonchères, the sisters' advisor, see Letter 147.

6. A Lady of Nantes.

7. Marguerite Noret wrote about it to Louise de Marillac on March 18.

the good done by our Company I blush with embarrassment thinking of the disorder in Nantes. I beg the goodness of God to provide the remedy which His goodness knows is needed there, and I am in His most holy love, my very dear Sister, your very humble servant and very loving sister.

P.S. Do not mention that I told Sister Élisabeth not to return immediately. Tell our sisters that the people of Nantes are clamoring against them more than they know, and in important matters. However, it is the evil one playing these games that he will not win provided they gather together and unite near the Cross, like chicks under their mother's wing when the owl lies in wait.

Greet Monsieur Lambert for us.

**L.187 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Nantes*

July 22 (1647)

My very dear Sister,

You have caused us much worry by not sending us any news of yourself. May God be blessed for your safe arrival. I still have your letters for Monsieur Vincent, which should relieve your anxiety for not having written to him. You know how busy he constantly is, although that should not prevent you from adding to his workload if you are in need. You know his charity.

My dear Sister, I truly suspected that you would encounter many problems. However, I am only half sorry for you since you have Monsieur Lambert, who should take care of everything. You have but to notify him about what you noticed. It seems to me that Sister Henriette<sup>1</sup> was only mentioned in order to accompany the other one,<sup>2</sup> who perhaps would not come otherwise. Everything you are telling me about our sisters' actions is contrary to the contract which we agreed upon with the administrators. Going outside to the market, for example, should only be done to obtain fish and poultry, and that should be accomplished within an hour.

As for herbs, fruit, eggs, etc., they should be brought to the house by women vendors. The administrators promised to have butter provided for the house, as they did all wood, wine, vinegar, oil and other necessities. Point that out to Monsieur Lambert.

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1. Henriette Gesseume, see Letter 76.

2. Catherine Bagard, see Letter 185.

Your letters all arrived together, making it hard for us to know the actual state of affairs of the sister about whom you say you asked. As for Sister Élisabeth's<sup>1</sup> trips outside and the communications she makes to find comfort, speak to Monsieur Lambert about them. I hope that he will also put a stop to our sisters going out to gather herbs in the countryside; such high-quality herbs are not needed in the pharmacy. It is enough to have the common and the most needed ones. Otherwise, we would be spending a lot of money needlessly.

In the matter of this good servant, I do not believe it appropriate for you to speak to him. However, be sure to let Monsieur Lambert know everything you have learned about the situation. He will be able to have the matter settled by the administrators who, I know, are greatly inclined to do anything necessary for the peace of our sisters and the good of the hospital. As for getting assistance from this servant, I believe I told him that our sisters would direct him charitably and gently as to what he would have to do, and that it was necessary to live in great peace and forbearance with the faults of one another. My dear Sister, how could I have said anything else to a person I did not know? I told him only that he must take care to furnish the hospital with water and to carry out the most lowly duties.

We must not think of eliminating all slander and calumny, but must endure them since our Master lived and died in such great peace among His calumniators.

Send us word in the next mail about your threatened inflammation. My dear Sister, I beg you to greet most humbly Monsieur Lambert and all the other administrators. I am too busy to write to them or to Mademoiselle de la Carisière, to whom I will send the recipe she requested and instructions on its use by the next mail.

All our sisters greet you most cordially. I send greetings to all there. I wish for each of them a love and a desire for the accomplishment of God's most holy will, in which I am, my dear sister, your very humble and very loving sister and servant.

P.S. If Monsieur Lambert judges it appropriate he may grant what Sister Brigide<sup>2</sup> has desired for so long.

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1. Élisabeth Martin, the Sister Servant.

2. Claude Brigide asked to make vows. Monsieur Lambert granted her his permission (see his letter to Monsieur Vincent and Louise de Marillac of July 26, 1647).

**L.189 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE**

*Daughter of charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Nantes*

July 30 (1647)

My very dear Sister,

It seems to me that it is taking Monsieur Lambert a long time to get to Nantes.<sup>1</sup> I pray to our good God that he is now there and that his charity will take care of our business promptly but not too hastily. I urge you to read your recommendations often and especially to be careful not to allow your mind to be prejudiced about things reported to you, or to form judgments about what you think you see and hear. If you act thus, I hope from God's goodness that all will go well. I beg you to express my apologies to all our sisters for not writing to them, especially to Sister Catherine<sup>2</sup> who wrote to me. Please assure her that I am still the same friend to her as before, and that the friendship given me by God for her has not diminished.

Our sisters in Montreuil<sup>3</sup> are doing marvelously well, by the grace of God. The Count<sup>4</sup> is most pleased with them. They informed me that Sister Antoinette's<sup>5</sup> mother is well and that she never had greater consolation than in knowing that her daughter was a member of our Company. Perhaps if I told her everything that our sister asked me to tell her, she would think I was making it up. From what I see, she is not very exact in the practice of her Rule since she wrote letters without my knowledge and did not send them through us. Please tell her, Sister, that I cannot help but fear for her.

Greet all our other dear sisters and tell them that I hope that God will give me the strength to write to them once I learn that they are all in the state that His goodness wishes of them. Greet all your administrators as well, and apologize to them for the matter which I fear is an importunity to them, but I have learned nothing new.

It is true that I took the liberty of having a few meals at the convent of the Daughters of Sainte-Marie when I passed by there. However, my dear Sister, this must not turn into a custom. My weakness and difficulties in walking lead me to commit faults which, please, my dear Sister, neither you nor our dear sisters should commit. Also, it would be good if, during your recreation and conversations, you would advise all our sisters on this matter. I was advised on it by Monsieur Vincent when his Charity

1. Monsieur Lambert had been in Nantes for several days.
2. Catherine Bagard, see Letter 112.
3. Anne Hardemont and Marie Lullen left for Montreuil on June 26.
4. The Count de Lannoy of Montreuil, see Letter 128.
5. Antoinette Larcher, see Letter 183.

was sending a sister to Fontainebleau,<sup>1</sup> and I told him of the liberty our other sisters had taken in passing by Melun where a similar thing occurred.

My dear Sister, how are you? What is the state of the inflammation? We are very worried about it. I urge you to send us word on it. I believe you received one of my letters in which I inquired about it.

Greet Mademoiselle de la Carisière and Mademoiselle de Belestre,<sup>2</sup> and assure them of my affection and service. I spoke of the state of Mademoiselle de Belestre's affairs to Monsieur Vincent. However, you will have to tell her how overburdened his Charity is and that he has decided not to become involved in matters outside of the Church. Also, present our most humble greetings to Monsieur Lambert and to the chaplains. You can tell the little patient that I sent his letter but that I have not received a response. If he wants to write again, perhaps we will finally get one. Recommend me to the prayers of all our good women of the hospital and greet them for me. It would be a great consolation for me if I could have the pleasure of seeing them once again. Now then, my dear Sister, I only have enough time to assure you that all is well, thank God, and that I am in the love of Jesus Crucified, my very dear Sister, your most obedient sister and very loving servant.

P.S. I do not have time to complete the recipe for Mademoiselle de La Carisière. It will be in the next mail.

### L.192 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

[August 22, 1647]

Monsieur,

Provided your Charity considers it good, unless something pressing calls me to the House, I do not think it would be appropriate for me to return right now and leave one schoolmistress alone to teach sewing and reading to the children.<sup>3</sup> In light of this, Monsieur, I have a most humble request to make of your Charity. For the love of God, please be so good as to visit our five sisters whom I left in retreat without having helped them much. I had led them to believe that I would return either this evening or tomorrow morning. There is a sister from Saint-Germain-en-Laye, one from Nanteuil, one from the village of Issy, and one whom I

1. Barbe Angiboust, sent to Fontainebleau in August 1646.

2. Ladies of Nantes who took care of the establishment of the Daughters of Charity in this city.

3. Louise de Marillac went to Bicêtre where she supervised the transfer of the foundlings.

believe we must send back to Saint-Denis because I do not think she is right for us. The others are very anxious to return home, and they should do so, at the latest, by next Saturday. The fifth sister is the one I am planning on as one of the teachers for our children.

I thought it essential, Monsieur, that your Charity send us a priest promptly for two reasons. Firstly, so that he can instruct the boys. Secondly, it seems to me that the first one we have as chaplain is the one who will stay.

A child died here this morning, and I took the liberty of asking the good priest who is to bury him that, if he cannot come by to do so this evening, he be so charitable as to come tomorrow and to say holy Mass for us at the same time.

If you feel it necessary for our sisters to come to your house to speak with you, rather than telling them that you cannot speak to them at all, I beg you most humbly to let them know this; nonetheless, it would be a great consolation for the entire family if you saw them at the House.

If your Charity is of the opinion that our sisters should go to speak to the Procurator General in order to remind him of the necessities they pointed out to him, I believe it should be Sister Geneviève<sup>1</sup> who does so. The others are not as well-suited. He must be informed that he must provide the entire supply of wood.

Our Ladies have not thought about arranging for a location for the school. We saw one place which would be good for the boys, who must be separated from the girls; it is downstairs and it only appears to need a door hung and the windows closed up. The girls' classroom would be upstairs. I would really like to have those alphabet cards which we would put upon the walls. The Ursulines use this method in some places. I am not saying that these be used in teaching writing, because I do not think it advisable for the girls to learn to write.

It is true, my Most Honored Father, that there is reason to hope for great good from this work, if it pleases our good God to continue His holy blessings upon it. For His holy love I earnestly ask for your blessing, that His holy will in this matter may be accomplished through me. And I am, Monsieur, your most obedient and most grateful daughter and servant.

P.S. I forgot to ask your permission to fast and abstain tomorrow, Friday. I think I can do so and will if your Charity does not forbid it.

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1. Geneviève Poisson, see Letter 28.

L.193 - (TO SISTER HELLOT<sup>1</sup>)  
*at Paris*

(August 1647)

My very dear Sister,

I praise God for the graces He bestows on our little family and I beg His goodness to give it His peace and blessing. Please see to it that our letters are taken to Liancourt.<sup>2</sup>

I am asking Monsieur Vincent to speak to our sisters. Please be sure that they are ready to go home on Saturday, except Sister Carcireux<sup>3</sup> who will remain at the House for a while.

Please buy 100 needles, 25 or 30 thimbles, and 100 little books like the Du Pons one. The needles must all be the same kind. Also send some sheets, about a half-dozen suitable for making diapers. Would Sister Julienne<sup>4</sup> send some thread if she has any? It is used in teaching the little children to sew.

Please find out from Monsieur Vincent if there are any printed alphabet charts which can be sent to us. If our sisters from Nantes<sup>5</sup> arrive before I return, I would ask that none of them come here without first informing us. However, remember us affectionately to them.

I would ask you to be certain that Monsieur Vacherot is told of the delivery of the wood, and that we do not fail to get some.

You must find out from the wife of either the woodcutter or the firewoodcutter whether there is a wood-measurer in our area. Have him look at what remains for the children so that from it we can gauge how much we will have to obtain elsewhere. Also, do not forget the firewood, but you should not take any that is not good. I would ask, my dear Sister, that someone be at the wood-measuring at Saint-Denis directing it. You must verify the arrival time of Sister Marguerite from Vienne, and find out if the bill found by Sister Françoise<sup>6</sup> has been paid.

All my dear Sisters, I greet you affectionately and beg you, for the love of our dear Master, Jesus Crucified, to work well toward your perfection through the observance of your Rules, through the cordiality and respect you owe one another, and through the edification you must give one another in all your words and actions. Finally, my dear Sisters,

1. Élisabeth Hellot, Louise de Marillac's secretary.
2. The Daughters of Charity had been established in Liancourt since 1649, see Letter 64b.
3. Françoise Carcireux, see Letter 254.
4. Julienne Loret, see Letter 220. The transfer of the foundlings to Bicêtre was in the process of being carried out.
5. Catherine Bagard and Antoinette Larcher; both were going to leave the community.
6. Françoise Le Roseau, see Letter 258.

if you place yourselves often in the presence of God, His goodness will not fail to advise you on all that He asks of you, whether it be the mortification of your senses and passions or the practice of the virtues which He desires so that you may be pleasing to Him. I truly fear that I will not keep my word regarding my return. However, I thought it would be better to remain here a bit longer and not return so soon. You know, my dear Sisters, that you are continually in my heart, and that I am with my deepest affection, my dear Sisters, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. I urge you, my dear Sister, to see to it that tomorrow the little children begin to spend enough time at the fair. How is Sister Louise?<sup>1</sup> Please answer Sister Jeanne.<sup>2</sup> I do not know what she is asking of me. In the meantime, she should neither be worried by the young woman nor speak to the gentleman.

**L.194 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE<sup>3</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor (at Nantes)*

(August 1647)

My very dear Sister,

You have done well in this work. May God be blessed for it, eternally blessed. May He also be blessed for the guidance His goodness has given to Monsieur Lambert in the entire matter. I would be very happy if you would send us all the particulars. I will wait for that before thanking the fine gentlemen who have helped you so much, and I will beg them to continue to assist you.

However, in the name of God, my dear Sister, be sure that none of our sisters have reason to believe that you suspect them of attachment or some other fault. You should be able to warn them skillfully as a group of the evil you fear in them individually. Then, the example of the others will help you greatly, as will the remedy which God has brought about.

Now then, my dear Sister, Divine Providence has attached you to Nantes for some time. I hope that His goodness will draw glory from it. I believe the good Sister Catherine<sup>4</sup> was truly surprised. Although she appeared to be glad to come back here, she really could not be persuaded that people who had shown her such good will could consent to her

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1. Louise-Christine Rideau, see Letter 149.

2. Jeanne Lepintre in Nantes.

3. Jeanne Lepintre, see Letter 64, stayed in Nantes as Sister Servant.

4. Catherine Bagard, see Letter 112.



dismissal. We truly are greatly obliged to them. I will write to all our sisters individually, at different times, once I have again received news from you. I beg you, my dear Sister, to let us know if it is true that certain people are offended that there are so many sisters<sup>1</sup> serving the sick, saying that three or four servants were enough before we were there. If you feel, in conscience, that there could be fewer, please let us know.

Since you tell me nothing about your inflammation, I am led to believe that it will amount to nothing more than a bother. Be mindful of your health in the midst of your work so that the desire to consume yourself entirely for God, and the example which you must feel obliged to give our sisters, does not prevent the reasonable care which you should have for yourself. Do this for the same love of God in which I am, my very dear Sister, your very humble and very loving sister and servant.

P.S. My most humble greetings to all your administrators and Ladies. I have written to you twice in the last week or ten days. I most cordially embrace you in spirit, having more tenderness for our sisters than ever, in light of the difficulty I know they have had. Tell them, my dear Sister, I beg you, that provided they are faithful to God in the practice of their Rule, I hope that His goodness will give them more consolation than the pain they have had. However, their desire to do good must prompt them often to ask God for the grace they need to accomplish this.

### L.191 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

[August 1647]

Monsieur,

Yesterday I declined giving you a message on Monsieur Leroy's<sup>2</sup> behalf. Nonetheless, I think I should tell you all that he told me and how I answered him, which would be quite hard for me to relate to you. However, the main point is that he is setting himself up as director and administrator of the Foundling Hospital. As such, he maintains that he can go there and teach whenever he wants to, place a priest there, and have complete spiritual care for the establishment. He wishes us to find and introduce to him a priest whom he will teach. He is more desirous of this than of a bishopric or cardinalate. He asserts that he will file complaints with the Procurator General and will resign the administrative post he has been given if he is denied in this matter.

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1. After these changes, eight sisters stayed at the hospital in Nantes.
  2. Monsieur Leroy, administrator of the work with the foundlings.

I showed my astonishment that he had not spoken of this earlier. I told him that, until now, these Ladies had always provided equal care in spiritual and temporal need as can be seen by the baptisms, Easter confessions and instruction for First Communion. They also have holy Mass said for the wet-nurses as well as for the children. I told him that I thought that the Priests of the Chapter had turned over full responsibility for this work to these Ladies with the exception of the 1000 pounds for which they remained accountable to the Priests and that for the more than 50 years that the Priests of the Chapter had been charged with this work, there appeared to be no other administrative task than the one involving this sum. I told him that, nevertheless, I was speaking without having heard anything about it from the Ladies, whom I see infrequently, and that what I was saying to him on the matter was common sense. He complained of not having been informed about Bicêtre.<sup>1</sup> I pointed out to him that I was sure that telling him of it had not been the Ladies' only thought, and that the matter had been carried out quite hastily. He told me many other things—and I him—which I cannot relate. He did not fail to bring up Sister Geneviève's<sup>2</sup> response to these gentlemen about their request and I gave him to understand that she had said just that.

If some good person could obtain from the Queen authorization for the establishment of the Mission in this place, much contradiction would be prevented and great good would be done. I forgot to tell you that upon my refusal to speak to you, Monsieur Leroy decided to go to these Ladies and speak strongly to them. I would ask your Charity to take the trouble to read Madame de Romilly's<sup>3</sup> letter; I will send it if you think I should.

Please bless us and believe me, Monsieur, your most obedient servant and most grateful daughter.

P.S. When I thought about the urgent needs, I told him that I believed that the Ladies would soon be constrained to turn the work over to someone capable of managing it. We still remained good friends because I always spoke to him as a neutral party.

I think we will have to consider the wine as soon as possible.

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1. Of the foundlings' transfer to Bicêtre.

2. Geneviève Poisson, see Letter 28.

3. Madame de Romilly, born Louise Goulas, Lady of Charity who, in particular, took care of the work of the foundlings.

**L.186B - (TO SISTER ANNE HARDEMONT,  
at Montreuil-sur-Mer)<sup>1</sup>**

(1647)

My very dear Sister,

I am a bit fearful about the acclaim you are receiving from all sides. Perhaps God is permitting it as means to fortify your weakness and to encourage you. Or it may be the devil leading you to assume personal credit for what God wishes to accomplish in you. If it is the latter, at the least fault the world sees or the discontent it experiences, it will blame you as much or more than it now encourages you. If you believe that this is coming from God, how obliged you are, my Sisters, to humble yourselves! If it is from the devil, how fearful you must be! Ask God for the grace to make good use of it either way. Remember, my dear Sister, the advice that Monsieur Vincent gave you: proceed only very slowly. Remember, my dear Sisters, to be always the least and the last in the hospital. Endure as much as you can before notifying the Count.<sup>2</sup> I am very glad that the administrators decided to elect a Superioress of the hospital. Obey her faithfully in all you can, and do not think that she scorns you in order to humiliate you.

I reduced somewhat the quantity of the drugs you asked for because we must never be excessive. Remember, my dear Sisters, that it is the poor that you serve, that it is their money you are using, and that you must save every sou as a matter of conscience. Such a great quantity of drugs can spoil. Moreover, only common remedies must be used. I do not even advise you to prepare your catholicon all at once, because it is more effective when freshly made.

**L.60 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT**

(c. 1647)

Monsieur,

Madame de Verthamont<sup>3</sup> did not fail to come to see the Ladies. After she had again revealed even more clearly the gentlemen's plan to set

1. Letter recopied into Marguerite Chétif's notebook.
2. The Count de Lannoy, see Letter 128.
3. Madame de Verthamont, born Marie Boucher d'Orsay, Lady of Charity whose husband was a judicial civil servant.

themselves up as absolute masters of the entire work,<sup>1</sup> she said that she believed that they would be pleased to be given the opportunity to announce this plan. Nevertheless, she accompanied these Ladies in the manner decided upon, and the aforementioned gentlemen did not hesitate to make their intentions known. The Ladies were told that they would be granted everything they wished, even that they would have but to present an unsigned receipt for the money they set aside and the merchants' bills would be settled. It seems that the wet-nurses' bills were included in this.

The Ladies replied that they could not undertake or continue this work unless the original conditions were met. This entire negotiation was held with the Chancellor,<sup>2</sup> who, in the end, said that he would have the High Justices' intentions drawn up in written form and given to the Ladies. When the Ladies saw the good Monsieur Leroy<sup>3</sup> and told him of these proposals, he said that he would withdraw from the matter entirely if it stopped there. If there is anything else, these Ladies will speak to you about it tomorrow at the time your Charity indicated, three o'clock in the afternoon. I am, Monsieur, your daughter and servant.

P.S. I beg you most humbly, Monsieur, to take the trouble to let me know if you think it advisable to inform Madame de Verthamont that you and the Ladies will be here tomorrow. I am afraid she will be angry because she asked the Ladies when they would be here.

#### L.190 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

[August 1647]

Monsieur,

A fine lady, moved by Mademoiselle de Lamoignon<sup>4</sup> and the guidance of Divine Providence, sent us 100 écus for these poor little children. Please thank her for us, Monsieur, and permit me to remind your Charity of our Sister Jeanne Lepintre.<sup>5</sup>

If you think it appropriate, I beg you to leave us the three reports that we sent to you for the Assembly of the Ladies so that they will not be tampered with in your absence.

My poor health continues. It occurred to me that our good God wishes

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1. The work with the foundlings.
  2. Pierre Séguier (1588-1672) was named Chancellor in 1635.
  3. Monsieur Leroy, see Letter 193.
  4. Mademoiselle de Lamoignon, see Letter 143.
  5. Jeanne Lepintre, who was in Nantes, see Letter 64.

me to make use of these ups and downs in order to tell your Charity of the inconstancy of my passions. I am so dependent on them that no matter what resolutions I make, I am not given the freedom to subject them to reason. Some days I am a little better, and then almost immediately I have a relapse.

If you have any pictures resembling the one of the Lord of Charity<sup>1</sup> in any of your books, I would beg you most humbly to do me the kindness of giving me one. I ask your forgiveness for taking this liberty. It is only that I am unable to recover as I would like, and I hope that this picture, along with your Charity's prayers, will help me greatly. I am, my Most Honored Father, your very obedient servant and most unworthy daughter.

P.S. Please do me the charity of giving me our good God's and your own blessing at holy Mass.

**L.217B - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTERS ANNE AND MARIE<sup>2</sup>**

*Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor*

August 30 (1647)

My very dear Sisters,

May God be blessed for the health that His goodness gives you, which I cannot believe until I see the handwriting of Sister Marie Lullen. I do not understand why she does not write to me after I told her that I will be able to read her handwriting easily. I cannot tell you anything more about the older girls of the hospital except what you have already told the Count,<sup>3</sup> namely, that we can allow no singularity among us; and I believe I let him know this when he first did me the charity of speaking to me about his holy plans.

My God, my dear Sister, there must have been great need for you to be away all night. In the name of God, be on guard against this, and let me know something of what happened so that I can pass it on to Monsieur Vincent to find out if it is allowable. I believe we are receiving your letters, but I fear you are not receiving ours because we had told you of Sister Antoinette's<sup>4</sup> return from Nantes so that you might inform the Count. I believe she is in Montreuil now. I beg you, my dear Sister Anne, to point

1. The paintings of the Lord of Charity, painted by an unknown artist, were widely used by Louise de Marillac and Monsieur Vincent (Coste II, 10).

2. Anne Hardemont and Marie Lullen at Montreuil-sur-Mer.

3. The Count de Lannoy of Montreuil-sur-Mer.

4. Antoinette Larcher, see Letter 183.

out to the Count with utter respect and gentleness that girls leaving our Company are not to be on visiting terms with us, so that his Charity may find it appropriate to deny her access to the hospital. I truly fear this would only prevent his plans for this house from being carried out as he wishes.

I believe Sister Hellot told you that all the pottery you wanted has been bought. However, no one wants to charge less than 100 sous for its delivery. Please do not send us any more butter. We obtain good quality here for six sous.

I beg the divine goodness to continue His graces to you, and I am in the love of Jesus Crucified, my very dear Sisters, your very humble servant and very loving sister.

**L.201 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE**

*Daughter of Charity at Nantes*

(August-September 1647)

My very dear Sister,

Two days ago we received the letters that you addressed to Monsieur Vacherot. I think it would be wise for you to have someone in authority speak severely to the postman about the mail carrier. I hope that the patience you practice in bearing with all these little repugnances will draw down from our good God the blessing you need to be at peace. However, you must await it tranquilly.

Last week I wrote to Monsieur des Jonchères,<sup>1</sup> Mademoiselle de La Carisière, Sister Claude<sup>2</sup> and you. I would ask you to let me know if you received all these letters. Several times I saw that Monsieur Vincent wanted to write to you. If he has not already, I hope that he will do so next week. I cannot remember having anything new to tell you since my last letter. Please greet all our sisters for me. I urge them to arise each morning with new courage to serve God and the poor well.

To Sister Marguerite Noret:<sup>3</sup> everyone is well; her sister Françoise<sup>4</sup> received her letter. To Sister Jeanne:<sup>5</sup> her brother is well also, thank God.

1. Monsieur des Jonchères, see Letter 147.

2. Claude Carré, see Letter 505.

3. Marguerite Noret arrived in Nantes in July 1646. In 1648, Monsieur Lambert requested her departure.

4. Françoise Noret, see Letter 64b, the sister of Marguerite.

5. Jeanne de Saint-Albin, a widow, arrived in Nantes in June 1647. She returned to Paris at the end of the year 1650. She was tempted to leave the Company of the Daughters

I know of no relatives of our sisters who are ill.

You will have no reason to worry when Catherine Bagard<sup>1</sup> returns to Nantes. I do not think she has enough self-assurance to go to the hospital. It would have been impossible for me to prevent her from doing so since she is no longer with us. I did what I could for her, finding a fine mistress for her once she was absolutely determined to leave us.

Let us always adore and love the guidance of Divine Providence, the true and only security of the Daughters of Charity. Pray for us. All our sisters greet you, and I am in the love of Jesus Crucified, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

**L.197 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE ÉTIENNE**  
*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Chantilly<sup>2</sup>*

October 7 (1647)

My very dear Sister,

I was waiting until we had a sister to send to you before writing to you. Until now, Divine Providence had not allowed us to find a suitable one. I hope she will depart before the week is over. Please let us know if you are aware of the availability of a horse or cart for tomorrow or the day after. It is troublesome to travel by coach, and they do not go as far as Chantilly.

May God be blessed for the continuation of His graces! Hope always that His goodness will not abandon you and that your desire for perseverance will be fulfilled. Let me know if Madame de Saint-Simon<sup>3</sup> is in Chantilly, and believe me in the love of Our Lord, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

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of Charity in 1655, but she remained.

1. Catherine Bagard, see Letter 112.
2. The Daughters of Charity were established in Chantilly in 1647. Financial difficulties, see A.79, brought about their brief recall in 1654. The work seems to have been re-established in 1655.
3. Madame de Saint-Simon, born Louise de Crussol. Her husband was the overseer of the Château of Chantilly.

**L.195B - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER ANNE HARDEMONT**

*Daughter of Charity at Montreuil*

October 11 (1647)

My very dear Sister,

I am really astonished to hear that you are not receiving our letters. I had the honor of writing to the Count de Lannoy<sup>1</sup> following the news he was good enough to send me about your reception, and I also wrote a very long letter to you on the subject. These letters were delivered to the Count's house in the city. In the hope that you have received them, I will not repeat what I wrote to you.

We received the paper about which you are worried. Sister Marie<sup>2</sup> never tells us anything; what is her main duty? When you can, let us know how you are employed.

I would ask you to greet, on my behalf, all the fine girls,<sup>3</sup> your predecessors, and to continue to deal with them with constant respect, forbearance and gracious condescension.

One of our sisters in Saintonge died. All the rest of the Company is well, thanks be to God. Pray for us, and believe me in the love of His Son, Jesus Crucified, my dear Sister, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. All our sisters, and I as well, greet our dear Sister Marie. Our sisters in Le Mans are well, thank God, except Sister Jeanne Pangoy.<sup>4</sup>

**L.126 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER TURGIS<sup>5</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity, Serving the Poor at Chars*

(October 18, 1647)

My very dear Sister,

I believe we received all the letters you wrote to us, as well as news

1. The Count de Lannoy who requested the establishment of the Daughters of Charity in Montreuil-sur-Mer.
2. Marie Lullen, see Letter 182.
3. The girls who were in charge of the hospital before the arrival of the Daughters of Charity.
4. Jeanne Pangoy, native of Le Mans, who entered in approximately 1646, would be at Liancourt in 1650.
5. Élisabeth Turgis, see Letter 89, was sent to Chars from Richelieu. Next to the address of this letter, written by Élisabeth Hellot, was marked: "The messenger from Forges



from you, by way of a lengthy letter from you which Mademoiselle Violle<sup>1</sup> showed us. I praise God for the work His goodness gives you. Writing to you on the feast of St. Luke, I ask you to meditate once again on the subject of this feast. It seems to me, my dear Sisters, that we will find there all the advice we need.

If your only patients are in town, they should not be very far away. All our other sisters in the country often have to travel to a good number of places a league or more away.

Enclosed is a petticoat we are sending along that you will start to wear when you go out. I think that the best yeast here could very well cost 12 francs. However, when we cook, we do not use the best unless it is going to be mixed half with rye. Eggs are expensive everywhere this time of year. Although we have a great number of chickens, they are giving us practically none. However, you have other comforts in the country which will get you by during this period of high prices.

I believe you received a long letter that I wrote to you a week ago. Once we are certain of your address, you will not fail to receive our replies to all your letters. I beg Our Lord to give you His Spirit, and I am in His holy love, my very dear Sisters, your humble sister and loving servant.

P.S. At the end of your letters, you need only put "Sister of Charity and Servant of the Poor." "Of the Hospital of Chars"<sup>2</sup> is unnecessary.

#### L.196 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

*Superior General of the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission*

(October 19, 1647)

Monsieur,

I was quite upset that someone had gone to see you, without my knowledge, to inform you that through God's grace my health was no worse than when your Charity left me. It continues still to improve, and for that reason I went to Mass on the feast of Saint Luke.

Without my knowing they had planned it, nor the reason for it, until

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lodges on rue Montorgueil at the inn Saint-Claude."

1. Mademoiselle Violle, Lady of Charity who worked with the foundlings. Élisabeth Turgis was in the service of the children from 1634 to 1644.
2. Chars: The Daughters of Charity were established there about September 1647, at Madame de Herse's request. The Pastor, Monsieur Garson, was replaced in 1648 by Monsieur Pouvet, who had Jansenist leanings. In view of Monsieur Pouvet's excessive demands, the Founders judged it necessary to withdraw the Daughters of Charity from Chars.

about an hour beforehand, Mesdames de Herse,<sup>1</sup> de Traversay,<sup>2</sup> de Saint-Mandé<sup>3</sup> and Viole<sup>4</sup> held a meeting here again yesterday. I believe they wished to rejoice that Providence had revealed the care It wished to take of the poor little children. Several small donations came in, and the best aid is the 5000 pounds they are supposed to receive today. I believe it is part of the 8000 pounds because it is the Treasurer of the Hôtel-Dieu who must receive the receipt.

These women anxiously await the Conference that your Charity decided upon before your departure.

Their hearts are completely renewed in light of this aid, and they are resolved to continue their work at Bicêtre.<sup>5</sup> In order to do so, Madame Traversay and Mademoiselle Viole must go there Monday and spend the day. They charged me with petitioning Monsieur Drouart<sup>6</sup> for 500 pounds from one source, and 200 from another — all on the order of the Duchess d'Aiguillon.<sup>7</sup>

I hope your return will bring about an end to the great needs of this work of Our Lord, in whose love I am, Monsieur, your most obedient daughter and most grateful servant.

**L.171 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER BARBE ANGIBOUST<sup>8</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor (at Fontainebleau)*

(November 1647)

My very dear Sister,

Many thanks for all of your kindness. As you wished, we made sure to send your present to Monsieur Lambert. However, I cannot tell you at this time how he received it since I have not yet seen him. You are not boasting of all the good his charity has done for you, are you?

With all my heart I ask forgiveness from Sister Anne<sup>9</sup> for not being able to write to her once again at this time. I believe you have done me

1. Madame de Herse, born Charlotte de Ligny, widowed in 1634. A Lady of Charity who took an active part in the work of the foundlings and was in favor of the establishment of the Daughters of Charity in Chars. She died in 1662.
2. Madame de Traversay, see Letter 48.
3. Madame de Saint-Mandé, born Marie de Fortia, Lady of Charity of the Confraternity of the Foundlings.
4. Mademoiselle Viole, see Letter 91.
5. Bicêtre, see Letter 86.
6. Monsieur Drouart was the Duchess d'Aiguillon's steward.
7. The Duchess d'Aiguillon, see Letter 89.
8. Barbe Angiboust, see Letter 43.
9. Anne Scolière, see Letter 175.

the charity of assuring her of my good will. However, because I wish to open my heart to her, I am waiting until I truly have enough time, and also until she tells me all about herself, especially her method of instructing the little girls.

I urge you, Sister, to accept the poor whenever possible. Some time ago Monsieur Vincent spoke to me about our sisters involved in teaching, and he expressed the desire for them to employ a common method. As soon as I am completely familiar with it, I will be sure to inform you of it. He let me know that he was sorry that he had not seen you before your return,<sup>1</sup> but I believe he wanted to spare you the sorrow you would have felt. I believe Monsieur Lambert has told him all about you.

I would ask you not to forget your good pens at your first opportunity.

I am very glad that you received news from your relatives before your departure. Sister Cécile,<sup>2</sup> too, is well, thank God. Pray for us, I beg of you. We still have a sister at Saint-Méen<sup>3</sup> who is near to death. We all really need to think of our conversion. We will be helped greatly in this if we ask our good God for holy simplicity.

Greet our dear Sister Anne, and accept the most affectionate greetings of all our sisters, and mine in particular. I am in the love of Jesus and His holy Mother, my very dear Sisters, your very humble sister and very loving servant.

### L.200 - TO SISTER TURGIS

*Daughter of Charity, Serving the Sick Poor at Chars*

Paris, November 28, 1647

My very dear Sister,

May God be blessed for the true harmony and holy peace which exist among you. This is necessary in order to live as Christians. As Daughters of Charity we have an even stronger reason to live in this way.

You do not tell us the number of your schoolgirls. You also do not tell us whether you assist the sick outside the hospital. How many of them are there? It is all right to inform Madame d'O,<sup>4</sup> but I think I advised

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1. Barbe Angiboust came to the Motherhouse either for retreat or upon returning from a visit to the foundlings placed with wet-nurses.
  2. Cécile Angiboust, her sister, see Letter 108.
  3. Jeanne, a native of Saint-Méen.
  4. Madame la Marquise d'O (1626-1650), born Louise-Marie Séguier, the Chancellor's daughter and Lady of Charity in Chars.

you, as we do all the others, that all the letters written by the sisters are to be addressed to us.

How splendid you are, my dear Sisters, to have wooden shoes. Who will take the best care of them, and whose will last the longest? Let us know. Enclosed is material cut for pants. Please do the sewing because we are so busy here that there is no one available to do so.

Our little Sister Jeanne from Saint-Méen died. Since then, my poor Sister Salomé<sup>1</sup> has also died, and she is quite a loss. We still have our Sister Michelle who is extremely ill, as well as many others at the House and in the city. Such is the situation that we now need more than ever for our good God to send us girls. See if you can encourage any in your village to join us. Sister Jeanne<sup>2</sup> from Richelieu is among the sick, although she is not seriously ill, thank God. Pray that His goodness will provide for our needs, and believe me in His most holy love, my very dear Sisters, your very humble sister and loving servant.

**L.227 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER JEANNE LEPINTRE<sup>3</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor*

Feast of Saint Andrew (1647)

My very dear Sister,

It seems to me that it has been some time since I have received news from you. I am anxious to know whether you received letters for Sister Henriette,<sup>4</sup> Sister Claude<sup>5</sup> and, I believe, for you. I urge you to send me word on this as soon as you can. I addressed my letters to Monsieur de Beaulieu.

I will end here; this note is only to inform you of the above. I would ask you to recommend me to the prayers of our sisters, and to greet most cordially all the good Ladies and administrators. Greet also Monsieur de Grenville and Monsieur de la Pinsonnière,<sup>6</sup> of whom I am the humble servant. Good evening, my dear Sisters. I am in the love of Jesus Crucified, your very humble sister and servant.

P.S. After writing this letter, I received your last dear letter and was greatly consoled by it. Greet and embrace all our dear sisters most lovingly

1. Salomé, see Letter 141.

2. Jeanne Roux, see Letter 166.

3. Jeanne Lepintre in Nantes, see Letter 64.

4. Henriette Gessemaume, see Letter 76.

5. Claude Carré, see Letter 505.

6. Monsieur de Beaulieu, Monsieur de Grenville, Monsieur de la Pinsonnière, hospital administrators in Nantes.

for me. I recommend to your prayers our deceased Sister Salomé and Sister Jeanne from Saint-Méen. I also recommend to you Sister Michelle from Saint-Méen who received Extreme Unction this morning.

**L.204 - TO MY VERY DEAR SISTER ÉLISABETH MARTIN<sup>1</sup>**

*Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Sick Poor at Richelieu*

(c. November 1647)

My very dear Sister,

It is true that you have very good reason to complain about me, and I most humbly beg your pardon for not having written more often. I think, my dear Sister, that if you had been in another location I would have been more careful to write. However, I must admit that I am very much at peace when I know that our sisters have the happiness of the direction of our most honored Fathers.<sup>2</sup> I beg you, Sister, to revere their guidance, and not to let their goodness diminish the respect and submission you owe them.

I imagine that you have found great peace of mind in being away from the great difficulties and troubles you left behind. It is not a matter of my believing you have nothing to do; I cannot imagine your being content in that. However, it is a good thing to know that while practicing charity you take time to think of your perfection. This you can do by observing your little Rule. Interior acts can also accomplish this to the same or to a greater extent than exterior ones. Among such interior acts are forbearance, cordiality, gentleness and the mortification of our passions, one of the most dangerous of which is melancholy. In light of this, we must truly conform ourselves to the will of God, accepting from His Providence anything that happens to us that is contrary to our desires. If we walk in the presence of God in this way, we will be rid of the trials we bring upon ourselves when we seek and inordinately love our self-satisfaction. I would like to believe that you practice this since I know that you truly want to love God and to serve Him your entire life, and I ask His goodness to give you this grace.

Please excuse my poor memory if I have failed to respond to some point in your letters. However, I believe I have covered everything in the few I have previously written to you.

I would ask you to greet Monsieur Gauthier<sup>3</sup> most humbly, and to recommend me to his holy prayers.

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1. Élisabeth Martin returned to Richelieu about August, after a stay full of difficulties in Nantes.
  2. The Priests of the Mission in Richelieu.
  3. Monsieur Gauthier, the Superior.

Be assured, my dear Sister, that I am as much as ever in the love of our dear Jesus Crucified, my very dear Sister, your very humble sister and very loving servant.

P.S. I do not know if we informed you of the death of our dear Sister Salomé<sup>1</sup>, and of that of Marguerite de Tourneton.<sup>2</sup> Several others have also died, among them a few from Angers. All our sisters greet you cordially and often ask for news of you.

### L.196B - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

(c. 1647)

Remember to advise the Ladies to be careful, while giving instructions, not to talk a lot to the seriously ill, even if they have not made a general confession. They should advise the patients to confess only sins they may have previously forgotten or held back, if they remember any. They should do this with the will to confess all sins they have committed against God and their neighbor. If the Ladies can, they should have them recite the Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity necessary for salvation. The Ladies should spend a lot of time in preparing those who are recovering to make resolutions to live as good Christians and should teach them how to go about living such a life.

Enclosed, Monsieur, is the notice from the so-called Mother of the Sacraments<sup>3</sup> that was given to Mademoiselle de Villenant. However, I just received this letter from Mademoiselle de Lamoignon<sup>4</sup> which says that Mademoiselle de Saint-Mandé proposes to say nothing about it at the General Assembly.

Monsieur, I would ask your Charity to remember to make known to the Ladies the good to be found in assisting in the continuation of a good work not only during one's life, but after one's death as well when such a work is undertaken for the love of God, as is the case of the foundlings. If persons make bequests in a spirit of perfect love, through their will and testament, do they not have the same merit as those who have

1. Salomé, see Letter 141.

2. Marguerite Tourneton, see Letter 149.

3. The Agustinian religious of the Hôtel-Dieu, responsible for letting the chaplain know when an ill person requested the sacraments (Coste III, 261).

4. Madame de Lamoignon, President of the Confraternity of Charity of the Hôtel-Dieu, see Letter 77.

supported the work during their lifetime, provided they truly would have done so had they been able? I think that that will serve to point out the danger for all who delay.

Also, if it pleases your Charity, let me know the address of the President, Madame du Sault,<sup>1</sup> so I can send her a note to inform her of tomorrow's Assembly. Please do not forget it yourself.

The Ladies are quite slack in being at the collation, although some of them deserve praise for being there faithfully.

Pardon, Monsieur, your most insignificant daughter and servant.

### L.199 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT

[November 1647]

Monsieur,

It seems that God gave my soul great peace and simplicity during my imperfect meditation on the need for the Company of the Daughters of Charity to remain continuously under the guidance given it by Divine Providence *in spiritual as well as temporal matters*. At that time, I believe that I came to understand that it would be more advantageous for His glory for the Company to fail completely than to be under another's guidance, since that would seem to be contrary to the will of God. The indications of this are that there is reason to believe that when God inspires and makes known His will for the perfection of the works His goodness wishes to accomplish, He makes His plans known at the beginning. You know, Monsieur, that at the beginning of this work it was proposed that the temporal goods of the said Company would return to the Mission if it came to fail through malfeasance. These goods would then be used in instructing the country people.

If your Charity heard Our Lord say what He seems to me to have said to you, in the person of Saint Peter, I hope it was that He wanted to build this Company on your Charity, so that it would persevere in the service asked of it for the instruction of children and the relief of the sick.

As for the parlor,<sup>2</sup> I have not made up my mind. However, with regard to the election of the Ladies, oh, how essential I continue to find the choice about which I spoke to your Charity, of whom I am, Monsieur, your most obedient daughter and most grateful servant.

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1. Madame du Sault, Lady of Charity at the Hôtel-Dieu.

2. See Letter 214b.

P.S. I beg your Charity most humbly to give us a conference tomorrow, if it is at all possible, and to let us know about it beforehand.

1648

*Establishment of the Daughters of Charity at Valpuiseaux.  
June-July: Visit of Monsieur Lambert to Angers and Nantes.  
August 27-28: Insurrection in Paris of the people against the Queen.  
October: Death of Élisabeth Turgis.*

**L.202 - TO MONSIEUR VINCENT, SUPERIOR GENERAL  
OF THE MISSION**

Wednesday morning [January 17, 1648]

Monsieur,

We arrived at Bicêtre<sup>1</sup> in good health, thank God. However, we are not going to stay here long. I beg your Charity most humbly to send us tomorrow the brother baker, to whom I have already spoken, so that he can advise us, help us to have a good oven built, and find someone for us who is suitable for the job.

I also find it essential to start selling the wine. There is a large market here for it in casks and large bottles because of the soldiers billeted in the area. I fear if we wait much longer our sales will not be as good. Sister Geneviève<sup>2</sup> says she believes that the Ladies want to wait until cheaper wine is available so that it can be mixed in with it. I do not think that would be a saving because we would need a boy to do the mixing, and he quite possibly could make off with all the profits. Besides that, it would be a great burden for our sisters who would have to watch so that nearly unavoidable mistakes would not be made.

I beg your Charity most humbly to remember that you promised us a conference for a week from today. Yesterday I saw Monsieur Vacherot's<sup>3</sup> sister. She is quite ill and asked me to recommend her to your holy prayers. If she dared do so, she would beg you to show her the charity of coming to see her. If she gets worse, I will certainly beg you do so; I am asking Sister Julienne<sup>4</sup> to keep you informed, if you do not mind.

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1. Bicêtre, residence of the foundlings, see Letter 86.
  2. Geneviève Poisson, see Letter 28.
  3. Monsieur Vacherot, the community's doctor.
  4. Julienne Loret, see Letter 220.