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Vincent de Paul

Pierre Coste C.M.

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**SAINT
VINCENT DE PAUL**

CORRESPONDENCE

VOLUME II

SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

**CORRESPONDENCE
CONFERENCES, DOCUMENTS**

II CORRESPONDENCE

VOLUME II (January 1640 - July 1646)

NEWLY TRANSLATED, EDITED, AND ANNOTATED

FROM THE 1921 EDITION

OF

PIERRE COSTE, C.M.



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November 5, 1989

TO
SISTER JACQUELINE KILAR, D. C.
(1937-1988)
FOR
HER SCHOLARSHIP AND SELFLESS DEDICATION
IN THE TRANSLATION OF THE INITIAL VOLUMES
OF THESE LETTERS
OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

On December 7, 1988, Sister Jacqueline succumbed to her final bout with cancer. Despite frequent illness, she had valiantly continued her work on this Vincentian Translation Project. May she rest in peace and may she aid by her prayers those who carry on this work.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction		xix
417.	To Saint Louise de Marillac, January 11, 16401
418.	To Louis Abelly, January 14, 1640 .....	.3
419.	To Saint Louise, January 17, 1640 .....	.8
420.	To Saint Louise, January 22, 1640 .....	.10
421.	To Saint Louise, January 28, 1640 .....	.12
422.	To Saint Louise, January 31, 1640 .....	.14
423.	To Louis Lebreton, February 1, 1640 .....	.17
424.	To Jacques Tholard, February 1, 1640 .....	.19
425.	To Saint Louise, February 4, 1640 .....	.23
426.	To Saint Louise, February 10, 1640 .....	.25
427.	A Priest of the Mission to Saint Vincent, February 1640 .....	.26
428.	To Antoine Lucas, February 21, 1640 .....	.27
429.	Jacques Roussel to Saint Vincent, February 1640 .....	.29
430.	A Priest of the Mission to Saint Vincent [Beginning of 1640] .....	.30
431.	Saint Jane Frances de Chantal to Saint Vincent [February 1640] .....	.31
431a.	Saint Jane Frances to Saint Vincent [Mid-February 1640] .....	.33
432.	To Saint Louise [February 1640] .....	.35
433.	To Louis Lebreton, February 28, 1640 .....	.35
434.	To Louis Lebreton, March 1, 1640 .....	.43
435.	A Priest of the Mission to Saint Vincent, March 1640 .....	.46
436.	To a Priest of the Mission [Before 1642] .....	.46
437.	To Saint Louise [Between 1638 and 1650] .....	.47
438.	A Priest to Saint Vincent [Between 1639 and 1643] .....	.48
439.	To Saint Louise [Between 1639 and 1642] .....	.48
440.	To Saint Louise [Between 1639 and 1651] .....	.49
441.	To Saint Louise [Between 1639 and 1641] .....	.50
442.	A Priest to Saint Vincent [Around 1640] .....	.52
443.	To Louis Abelly, April 26, 1640 .....	.52
444.	To the Duchesse d'Aiguillon [April or May 1640] .....	.54
445.	To Jean de Fontenil, May 1, 1640 .....	.56
446.	To Saint Jane Frances, May 14, 1640 .....	.57
447.	Saint Jane Frances to Saint Vincent [May 1640] .....	.61
447a.	Saint Jane Frances to Saint Vincent .....	.62
448.	To Louis Lebreton, June 1, 1640 .....	.63
449.	Juste Guérin to Saint Vincent, June 1640 .....	.66
450.	To Saint Louise [Between 1636 and 1641] .....	.67
451.	Saint Jane Frances to Saint Vincent [Between 1626 and 1641] .....	.67

452.	To François du Coudray, June 17, 1640	68
453.	To Mother Françoise-Elisabeth Phelippeaux, June 30, 1640	70
454.	Jean Dehorgny to Saint Vincent [June or July 1640]	72
455.	Jean Dehorgny to Saint Vincent, July 1640	73
456.	To François du Coudray, July 10, 1640	74
457.	To Leonard Boucher, July 10, 1640	76
458.	To Saint Louise, July 11, 1640	77
459.	To Lambert Aux Couteaux, July 22, 1640	78
460.	To Pierre Escart, July 25, 1640	83
461.	To Bernard Codoing, July 26, 1640	87
462.	To Lambert Aux Couteaux, July 29, 1640	95
463.	To Samson Le Soudier, July 29, 1640	96
464.	To. N., July 29, 1640	98
465.	To Saint Jane Frances, July 30, 1640	99
466.	To Commander de Sillery [1640]	101
467.	Charles de Montchal to Saint Vincent, 1640	103
468.	To Louis Lebreton, August 9, 1640	104
469.	To Saint Louise [1640]	106
470.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [Between 1640 and 1644]	107
471.	The Marquise de Maignelay to Saint Vincent, August 21 [1640]	109
472.	The Marquise de Maignelay to Saint Vincent, August 26 [1640]	111
473.	To Lambert Aux Couteaux, August 26, 1640	112
474.	To Saint Jane Frances, August 26, 1640	114
475.	To Bernard Codoing, August 26, 1640	117
476.	To Pierre Escart, August 26, 1640	120
477.	To Jacques Tholard, August 26, 1640	123
478.	The Marquise de Maignelay to Saint Vincent, August 29 [1640]	125
479.	To Saint Louise [August 29 or 30, 1640]	125
480.	To Saint Louise [August 30, 1640]	126
481.	To Saint Louise [Aug. or Sept. 1640]	127
482.	To Saint Louise [Aug. or Sept. 1640]	128
483.	To Saint Louise [1640]	129
484.	To Saint Louise [1640]	131
485.	To Mother de la Trinité, October 1, 1640	132
486.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [October 1 or 2, 1640]	137
487.	To Saint Louise [October 2, 1640]	139
488.	To Jacques Chiroye, October 6, 1640	140
489.	To Louis Lebreton, October 9, 1640	141
490.	To Etienne Blatiron, October 9, 1640	146
491.	To Saint Louise [October 28, 1640]	147
492.	The Town Magistrates of Metz to Saint Vincent, October 1640	149
493.	To Lambert Aux Couteaux, October 29, 1640	149

494.	To Saint Louise, November 1 [1640]	150
495.	To Jacques Tholard, November 13, 1640	152
496.	To Louis Lebreton, November 14, 1640	154
497.	To Pierre Escart, November 14, 1640	157
498.	To Bernard Codoing, November 15, 1640	159
498a.	Saint Jane Frances to Saint Vincent, November 24, 1640	161
499.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [November 28, 1640]	162
500.	To Saint Louise [November 28 or 29, 1640]	163
501.	To Saint Louise [Around 1640]	164
502.	The Town Magistrates of Pont-à-Mousson to Saint Vincent, December 1640	165
503.	To Saint Louise [1640 or 1641]	165
504.	To Saint Louise	166
505.	To Charles Ozenne, January 14 [1641]	167
506.	To Saint Louise [January 31, 1641]	169
507.	To Louis Lebreton, February 3, 1641	170
508.	To Adrien Bourdoise, February 6, 1641	174
509.	To Saint Louise [February 7, 1641]	175
510.	To Saint Louise [February 7, 1641]	177
511.	To Saint Louise [February 8, 1641]	178
512.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent, February 9, 1641	179
513.	To Saint Louise [February 9 or 10, 1641]	180
514.	To Saint Louise [February 10, 1641]	181
514a.	To Saint Louise [February 11, 1641]	182
515.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [Before 1650]	183
516.	To Saint Louise [Between 1639 and 1641]	184
517.	To Saint Louise [February or March 1641]	185
518.	To Saint Louise [February or March 1641]	186
519.	To Saint Louise [February or March 1641]	187
520.	To Saint Louise [After 1639]	189
521.	To Saint Louise [After 1637]	190
522.	A Priest of the Mission to Saint Vincent, 1641	190
523.	To Samson Le Soudier, March 24, 1641	191
524.	To Monsieur Perriquet, March 31, 1641	192
525.	To Saint Louise [Between 1641 and 1654]	194
526.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [1641]	194
527.	To Saint Louise [1641]	196
528.	To Saint Louise [1641]	197
529.	To Saint Louise [April or May 1641]	197
530.	To Saint Louise	198
530a.	To Saint Jane Frances, June 9, 1641	199
531.	To Jean des Lions, July 20, 1641	203
532.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent, August 7 [1641]	204
533.	To Saint Louise [August 7, 1641]	205
534.	To Saint Louise [1641]	206
535.	To Saint Louise [Between July and September 1641]	207

536.	To Saint Louise [Aug. or Sept. 1641]	209
537.	To Saint Louise [September 6 or 7, 1641]	210
538.	To Etienne Blatiron, September 9, 1641	211
539.	To Saint Jane Frances (Now 530a.)	212
540.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent, September 11 [1641]	212
541.	To Bernard Codoing, September 15, 1641	213
542.	To Saint Louise [Between 1639 and 1641]	215
543.	To Saint Louise [1641]	216
544.	To Saint Louise	216
545.	To Antoine Portail, October 5, 1641	217
546.	To Saint Louise [October 1641]	217
547.	To Sister Jeanne Lepeintre (Now 556a.)	219
548.	Nicolas Pavillon to Saint Vincent, October 20 [1641]	219
549.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [Oct. or Nov. 1641]	222
550.	To Saint Louise [Oct. or Nov. 1641]	224
551.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [Oct. or Nov. 1641]	225
552.	Juste Guérin to Saint Vincent, October 1641	225
553.	To N.	226
554.	To Saint Louise	226
555.	To the Superior of the Convent of the Visitation in Metz, Nov. 2 [between 1639 and 1645]	227
556.	To Mother de la Trinité, November 5, 1641	228
556a.	To Sister Jeanne Lepeintre, November 8, 1641	230
557.	To Bernard Codoing, November 19, 1641	231
558.	To Saint Louise [Between 1641 and 1654]	233
558a.	To Sylvestre de Crusy de Marcillac, December 6, 1641	234
559.	To Bernard Codoing, December 7, 1641	235
560.	To Lambert Aux Couteaux, December 14, 1641	237
561.	To Bernard Codoing, December 16, 1641	238
562.	To Bernard Codoing [December 1641]	240
562a.	To Mother Louise-Eugénie de Fontaines [Beginning of 1642]	242
563.	To Michel Dupuis, January 12, 1642	243
564.	To Saint Louise	244
565.	To Bernard Codoing, January 22, 1642	245
566.	To François Dufestel, January 22, 1642	246
567.	A Priest of the Mission to Saint Vincent [Between 1639 and 1643]	246
568.	To Saint Louise [1642]	247
569.	To Bernard Codoing, January 31, 1642	248
569a.	Madame de Villeneuve to Saint Vincent, February 4 [1642]	253
570.	To Bernard Codoing, February 9, 1642	254
571.	To Pierre du Chesne, March 2, 1642	258
572.	To Saint Louise [Between 1639 and 1647]	259
573.	To the Governor of a Large Town	260
574.	To Saint Louise [Between 1640 and 1648]	260
575.	To Bernard Codoing (first draft), March 17, 1642	261

575a.	To Bernard Codoing (second draft), March 18, 1642	268
576.	To Jacques Boudet, March 25, 1642	273
577.	Bernard Prévost to Saint Vincent, 1642	274
578.	Madame de Saint-Cyr-les-Colons to Saint Vincent, 1642	275
579.	Pierre de Nivelles to Saint Vincent, 1642	275
580.	To Bernard Codoing, April 1, 1642	276
581.	To Jacques Chiroye, April 19	279
582.	To Bernard Codoing, April 25, 1642	280
583.	To Mother Françoise-Elisabeth Phelippeaux, May 1 [1642]	282
584.	A Priest of the Pontoise Conference to Saint Vincent, May 1642	283
585.	To Mother Françoise-Elisabeth Phelippeaux, May 8, 1642	284
586.	To Monsieur N. [Between 1640 and 1648]	285
587.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [Around May 1642]	285
588.	To Saint Louise [Around May 1642]	287
589.	To Bernard Codoing, May 25, 1642	287
590.	A Pastor from the Environs of Paris to Saint Vincent, 1642	288
591.	The Town Magistrates of Lunéville to Saint Vincent, 1642	289
592.	To Saint Louise [June 8, 1642]	289
593.	Responses of Saint Vincent to questions asked by Saint Louise [June 1642]	290
593a.	Lambert Aux Couteaux to Saint Vincent, June [1642]	294
594.	To Bernard Codoing, June 20, 1642	295
595.	To a Bishop, June 22, 1642	297
596.	A Priest of the Mission to Saint Vincent, 1642	298
597.	Jacques-Raoul de la Guibourgère to Saint Vincent, 1642	298
598.	Sylvestre de Crusy de Marcillac to Saint Vincent, 1642	298
599.	Jacques-Raoul de la Guibourgère to Saint Vincent, 1642	299
599a.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [July 4, 1642]	299
599b.	To Saint Louise [July 4, 1642]	300
600.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent, July 6 [1642]	301
601.	To Saint Louise [July 6 or 7, 1642]	302
602.	To Bernard Codoing, July 11, 1642	303
603.	To Pierre du Chesne, July 24, 1642	311
604.	To François de Saint-Rémy, July 27, 1642	313
605.	To Bernard Codoing, July 28, 1642	314
606.	To Bernard Codoing [August 5, 1642]	315
607.	A Canon to Saint Vincent, 1642	316
608.	To Saint Louise [Between 1639 and 1644]	317
609.	To Bernard Codoing, August 19, 1642	318
610.	To François Dufestel, August 26, 1642	320
611.	To Saint Louise [September 1]	323
612.	To François Dufestel, September 1, 1642	324
613.	To Jacques Chiroye, September 6, 1642	325
614.	To Saint Louise [1642]	327
615.	To Saint Louise [1642]	328

616.	To Saint Louise [September 1642]	329
617.	To Saint Louise [September 1642]	329
618.	To François Dufestel, September 20, 1642	331
618a.	Madame de Villeneuve to Saint Vincent, September 21, 1642	334
619.	To Jean Guérin, September 24, 1642	335
620.	To Saint Louise, September 28, 1642	337
621.	To Saint Louise [Between 1642 and 1644]	338
622.	To Jean Brunet and Etienne Blatiron, October 8, 1642	338
623.	Nicolas Pavillon to Saint Vincent [October 1642]	340
624.	To Saint Louise [Between 1641 and 1643]	341
625.	To Bernard Codoing, October 24, 1642	342
626.	Jean-Jacques Olier to Saint Vincent [October 1642]	345
627.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [1642 or 1643]	346
628.	To Antoine Lucas, November 20, 1642	347
629.	To Bernard Codoing, November 21, 1642	349
630.	To Jacques Chiroye, November 22, 1642	353
631.	To François Dufestel, November 28, 1642	354
632.	Bernard Codoing to Saint Vincent, 1642	356
633.	To Bernard Codoing, December 25, 1642	357
634.	To Pierre du Chesne, January 1, 1643	363
635.	To Jean Guérin (Now 642a.)	389
636.	To a Priest of the Mission	389
637.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [January 17, 1643]	390
637a.	Mathieu Regnard to Saint Vincent, January 1643	391
638.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [January 25, 1643]	392
639.	To Bernard Codoing, January 30, 1643	393
640.	To Bernard Codoing, February 5, 1643	397
641.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent, February 9, 1643	399
642.	To Pierre Escart, February 11, 1643	401
642a.	To Jean Guérin, February 12, 1643	402
643.	Pierre Fournier to Saint Vincent, 1643	404
644.	To Bernard Codoing, February 20, 1643	404
645.	The Authorities of Saint-Mihiel to Saint Vincent, 1643	408
646.	To Jean Martin, February 23, 1643	409
647.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent	410
648.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent	411
649.	A Bishop to Saint Vincent, 1643	411
650.	To Bernard Codoing, February 27, 1643	412
651.	To Jean Guérin, March 10, 1643	413
652.	To François Dufestel, March 10, 1643	413
653.	To a Nun in Paris [Between 1639 and 1647]	414
654.	To Bernard Codoing, March 20, 1643	415
655.	To Pierre du Chesne, March 25, 1643	422
656.	To Saint Louise [1643, around May]	423
657.	To Saint Louise [Between 1638 and 1649]	425

658.	To Bernard Codoing, April 17, 1643	426
659.	Alain de Solminhac to Saint Vincent, May 3, 1643	428
659a.	To Bernard Codoing, May 7, 1643	430
660.	To Bernard Codoing, May 15, 1643	431
661.	François du Coudray to Saint Vincent [May 23 or 24, 1643] . .	437
662.	To Bernard Codoing, May 29, 1643	437
663.	Jacques-Raoul de la Guibourgère to Saint Vincent [May or June] 1643	439
664.	François du Coudray to Saint Vincent [June 1, 1643]	439
665.	Léonor d'Estampes de Valençay to Saint Vincent, 1643	440
666.	The Priests of the Noyon Conference to Saint Vincent, 1643 . .	440
667.	A Priest of the Noyon Conference to Saint Vincent, 1643	441
667a.	To Guillaume Gallais [Around 1643]	441
668.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent, June 8 [1643]	442
669.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent, June 12 [1643]	444
670.	Jean-Jacques Olier to Saint Vincent [June 1643]	446
671.	Sylvestre de Crusy de Marcillac to Saint Vincent, 1643	449
672.	To Bernard Codoing, June 18, 1643	449
673.	Alain de Solminhac to Saint Vincent, July 8, 1643	450
674.	To Bernard Codoing, July 10, 1643	453
675.	To Mother Marie-Euphrosine Turpin, July 23, 1643	454
676.	To Charles de Montchal [Between 1643 and 1647]	455
677.	To Bernard Codoing, August 24, 1643	456
678.	To Bernard Codoing, September 11, 1643	461
679.	To Sister Hélène-Angélique Lhuillier [Between 1641 and 1644]	463
680.	To Bernard Codoing, October 9, 1643	464
681.	Guillaume Gallais to Saint Vincent, 1643	468
682.	To Bernard Codoing, November 6, 1643	469
682a.	To Bernard Codoing, November 13, 1643	471
683.	A Bishop to Saint Vincent	473
684.	Anne de Murviel to Saint Vincent [Between 1635 and 1652] . .	473
685.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [November 19, 1643]	474
686.	Jean-Jacques Olier to Saint Vincent	474
687.	Jacques du Perron to Saint Vincent, December 1643	475
688.	To a Magistrate of Toul, December 13, 1643	476
689.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent, December 16, [1643]	478
690.	To a Bishop [Between 1643 and 1652]	479
691.	To the Same Bishop [Between 1643 and 1652]	480
692.	The Superior of a Reformed Monastery to Saint Vincent	482
693.	To Saint Louise	482
694.	To Father Faure (Nov Vol. I, 156b.)	483
694a.	The Marquis de Fabert to Saint Vincent [1643 or 1644]	483
694b.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [Between 1643 and 1649]	484
694c.	To Saint Louise [Between 1643 and 1649]	484
695.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent, January 14 [1644]	485

696.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [January 1644]	487
697.	Jacques du Perron to Saint Vincent, January 1644	488
698.	Alain de Solminihac to Saint Vincent, January 27, 1644	489
699.	A Priest of Angoulême to Saint Vincent [Jan. or Feb. 1644]	490
700.	To Jean Dehorgny, February 3, 1644	491
701.	To Guillaume Gallais, February 13, 1644	493
702.	Monsieur Le Boucher to Saint Vincent, 1644	497
703.	A Monk to Saint Vincent, 1644	497
704.	To Bernard Codoing, March 16, 1644	498
705.	To the Superior of the House in Marseilles [1643 or after]	500
706.	A Member of the Angoulême Conference to Saint Vincent, 1644	501
707.	To Bernard Codoing, April 14, 1644	502
708.	Alain de Solminihac to Saint Vincent, May 1, 1644	503
709.	To Bernard Codoing, May 13, 1644	505
710.	Jacques Lescot to Saint Vincent [May or June 1644]	507
711.	To a Monk, June 23, 1644	508
712.	To Father Charles Faure, June 26, 1644	509
712a.	Chevalier Simiane de la Coste to Saint Vincent, June 27, 1644	510
713.	Alain de Solminihac to Saint Vincent, June 29, 1644	512
714.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent, June 30 [1644]	512
715.	To Bernard Codoing, July 9, 1644	513
716.	To Bernard Codoing, July 15, 1644	514
717.	Felix Vialart to Saint Vincent, July 26, 1644	515
718.	To Bernard Codoing, July 29, 1644	517
719.	To Louis Thibault, August 3, 1644	519
720.	To Bernard Codoing, August 6, 1644	520
721.	Juste Guérin to Saint Vincent, August 1644	521
722.	To Bernard Codoing, August 12, 1644	522
723.	To Léonor d'Estampes de Valençay, September 21, 1644	524
724.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [Between Sept. 21 and Oct. 13, 1644]	526
725.	To Antoine Portail, October 5, 1644	528
726.	To Jean Dehorgny, October 14, 1644	530
727.	To Antoine Portail, October 14, 1644	532
727a.	To Antoine Portail, October 15, 1644	534
727b.	To Antoine Portail, October 19, 1644	536
728.	To Antoine Portail, October 21, 1644	537
729.	To Saint Louise [After 1638]	539
730.	To Monsieur Campion [November 10, 1644]	540
731.	To Jean Dehorgny, November 11, 1644	540
732.	Nicolas Pavillon to Saint Vincent, November 18, 1644	543
733.	To Guillaume Delville, November 20, 1644	544
734.	To Guillaume Delville, November 20, 1644	547
735.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent, December 2 [1644]	549

736.	Charles-Francois d'Abra de Raconis to Saint Vincent [Between 1643 and 1646]	550
737.	To Bernard Codoing, January 4, 1645	551
738.	To Guillaume Delville, February 7, 1645	553
739.	To Charles de Montchal, February 24, 1645	554
740.	Cardinal Antonio Barberini to Saint Vincent, February 25, 1645	556
741.	Jacques-Raoul de la Guibourgère to Saint Vincent, March 1645	557
742.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [Around 1645]	557
743.	Nicolas Pavillon to Saint Vincent	558
744.	Jean-Jacques Olier to Saint Vincent [1644 or 1646]	560
745.	Tommaso Turco to Saint Vincent, April 9, 1645	561
746.	Tommaso Turco to Saint Vincent, April 17, 1645	562
747.	To Lambert Aux Couteaux, April 18, 1645	563
748.	To Messieurs ***, April 20, 1645	566
749.	To Jacques Chiroye, May 3, 1645	567
750.	To Saint Louise	571
751.	To a Priest of the Mission	571
752.	Nicolas Pavillon to Saint Vincent, May 24, 1645	572
753.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [May 25, 1645]	573
754.	Simiane de la Coste to Saint Vincent, 1645	574
755.	To the Comte de Brienne, June 2, 1645	575
756.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [June 3, 1645]	576
757.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [Before 1650]	578
758.	To Mother Marie-Agnès Chevallier, June 25, 1645	578
758a.	Simon Martin to Saint Vincent, June 29, 1645	580
759.	To Jean Dehorgny, June 30, 1645	581
760.	To Jean Dehorgny, July 6, 1645	582
761.	Nicolas Pavillon to Saint Vincent, July 12, 1645	586
762.	To a Priest of the Mission [July 1645]	588
763.	To Guillaume Gallais, July 14, 1645	588
764.	To the Parlement [July 16, 1645]	589
765.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent, July 19 [1645]	590
766.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent, July 21 [1645]	591
767.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [July 26, 1645]	592
768.	Nicolas Pavillon to Saint Vincent, July 31, 1645	594
769.	Cardinal Durazzo to Saint Vincent, August 1645	595
770.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent, August 19 [1643, 1644, or 1645]	596
771.	To Saint Louise [Aug. or Sept. 1645]	597
772.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [Aug. or Sept. 1645]	598
773.	To Jean-François de Gondi [Aug. or Sept. 1645]	599
774.	To Guillaume Delville, September 22, 1645	604
775.	To Denis Gautier, October 15, 1645	604
776.	To Denis Gautier, 1645	605

777.	Nicolas Pavillon to Saint Vincent, December 28, 1645	605
778.	To Jean Scarron [January 1646]	606
779.	To René Sauvage, January 19, 1646	608
780.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [Before 1650]	609
781.	To a Priest of the Mission [1646 or 1649]	610
782.	Nicolas Pavillon to Saint Vincent, February 5, 1646	613
783.	Cardinal Mazarin to Saint Vincent, February 1646	615
784.	Alain de Solminihac to Saint Vincent, March 1, 1646	616
785.	Nicolas Pavillon to Saint Vincent, March 1, 1646	617
786.	To Jean Dehorgny, March 2, 1646	619
787.	To Jean Martin, March 10, 1646	620
788.	To a Priest of the Mission in Saint-Méen, March 16, 1646	621
789.	To Antoine Portail, March 20, 1646	621
790.	To a Priest of the Mission	623
791.	To Antoine Portail, March 23, 1646	623
792.	To Etienne Blatiron, March 23, 1646	625
793.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [March 24, 1646]	626
793a.	To Saint Louise, March 25, 1646	627
794.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [March 1646]	629
795.	To Antoine Portail, April 3, 1646	631
796.	To Guillaume Delattre, April 7, 1646	631
797.	To Saint Louise [Around 1646]	634
798.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [Between 1645 and 1649]	635
799.	To Guillaume Delattre, April 19, 1646	636
800.	Julien Guérin to Saint Vincent, 1646	638
801.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [May 2, 1646]	639
802.	To Saint Louise [May 2, 1646]	640
803.	To Antoine Portail [May 3, 1646]	641
804.	The Administrators of the Hospital of Nantes to Saint Vincent, May 18, 1646	644
804a.	To Guillaume Delattre, May 19, 1646	645
805.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [Before 1650]	647
806.	To Cardinal Mazarin, May 24, 1646	648
807.	To Jean Martin, May 25, 1646	649
808.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent, May 28 [1646]	650
809.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [Around 1646]	650
810.	To Jean Martin, June 8, 1646	651
811.	Julien Guérin to Saint Vincent, June 1646	653
812.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [Around 1646]	654
813.	To Saint Louise [June 1646]	654
814.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [End of June or July 1646]	655
815.	To Jean Bourdet, June 29, 1646	656
816.	To Louis Thibault, July 4, 1646	658
817.	To Claude Dufour, July 4, 1646	659
818.	To Messieurs Dehères and Bautru, July 8, 1646	661
819.	To Antoine Portail, July 11, 1646	663

820.	Etienne Blatiron to Saint Vincent, July 1646	664
821.	Etienne Blatiron to Saint Vincent [Around July 1646]	665
822.	To Antoine Portail, July 15, 1646	665
823.	Saint Louise to Saint Vincent [July 20, 1646]	667
824.	To Antoine Portail, July 22, 1646	668
825.	To Jean Bourdet [July 22, 1646]	670
826.	To Guillaume Delville, July 25, 1646	673
827.	To Antoine Portail, July 25, 1646	674
828.	Alain de Solminihac to Saint Vincent, July 31, 1646	679

Appendix

1.	Declaration by which Saint Jane Frances Chantal authorized the gift of her heart to the first monastery of the Visitation in Paris	683
2.	Petition of Saint Vincent to the Parlement, March 2, 1645	684
3.	Antoine Portail, Priest of the Mission, to another Priest of the Mission, May 23, 1645	687
4.	Petition of Saint Vincent to the Parlement, January 26, 1646	690
	Index	695

INTRODUCTION

The correspondence of Saint Vincent de Paul contains a wealth of information about the man, the Saint, and his milieu. To facilitate the informed reading of Volume II, the editors felt it would be useful to preface the work with some explanatory remarks regarding language, style, and placement. In this way, a fuller image of the multifaceted personality and influence of the Saint will emerge from these pages, giving the reader a broader understanding of his life and the world in which he lived and worked.

In placing new letters within the volume or changing the placement of letters we have relied on Coste's corrections given in volumes VIII and XIII, the listings found in the *Annales*,¹ the dates on recently discovered letters or, in the absence of a date, on internal evidence. To facilitate research in Coste's work, we have chosen to keep the letter numbers of the original volumes and to indicate material newly added or relocated within each volume by adding a, b, c, etc., to the number of the preceding item. We have also decided to adhere to the span of years assigned by Coste for each volume.

In some cases, the finding of an original has enabled us to join fragments formerly considered separate letters. Such

¹*Annales* (1937), pp. 234-237.

combined letters have been assigned a single number followed by a letter to differentiate the whole from the segments as published in the original Coste volume. Where variations of a single letter exist, only the most correct version has been included in the volume. Likewise, although Coste chose to publish letters originally written in Latin both in that language and in French, the present edition bears only the English translation of the original Latin.

Three different types of letters are presented in these volumes: letters *from* Saint Vincent, letters *to* Saint Vincent and, at times, mere summaries of letters where the existence of a letter is known but no text is available. The letters written by Saint Vincent appear in regular type, while those addressed to him are printed in italics. Smaller type has been used to differentiate the summaries.

As Coste states in his introduction, almost all the letters we now possess are either in Saint Vincent's handwriting or in that of one of his secretaries. The term *original autograph* found in the citation of a letter indicates that the manuscript was written entirely in the Saint's hand. If the citation uses the term *signed letter*, the manuscript was written by a secretary and signed by the Saint. For some letters only a facsimile, a handwritten copy, a photocopy, or a photograph is known. Such indications are given in the citation of the letters for which this information is available.

The citations usually state as well the actual location of the manuscript or copy used for the present edition. Great care has been taken to verify these locations where possible. Letters drawn from other publications and those belonging to special collections, private or museum, have not been checked due to the near impossibility of such a task. However, an attempt has been made to verify all letters belonging to private houses of the Daughters of Charity, the Priests of the Mission, other religious houses, churches, and various religious institutions. In checking these locations and in the search for unpublished letters, we have at times been fortunate enough to locate the

originals of letters for which only copies were known formerly. In these instances as well no mention has been made of the correction—the citation simply states that the manuscript is an original.

We have updated as well the department names given in the footnotes. Several departments have had name changes since the time of Coste, while two others have been subdivided.²

Although the project has undergone many delays, each has contributed in some way to the overall quality of the work. The appearance, in 1983, of the revised edition of Saint Louise de Marillac's writings³ has permitted us to check her letters to Saint Vincent and her spiritual writings for any corrections which may have come to light. We have also adjusted all the footnote references to the appropriate indication as given in the new edition.

In any work of translation the question of style invariably arises, so it was not strange that we should be faced with the problem. Should we smooth out clumsy or elliptical phrasing in the interest of producing a more "readable" translation or should we preserve the roughness and stylistic crudities of the original in order to reflect the flavor and spontaneous quality of Saint Vincent's expression, supplying explanations where needed to make the sense clear? As our response to this question, we have attempted to make our translation as "readable" as possible while adhering closely to the style of each correspondent. For that purpose we have made an effort

²*Department* is the term used to designate each of the principal divisions of French territory. It denotes a geographical area similar to that of the American *state*. In the names of several departments, the word *maritime*, indicating *near the sea*, has replaced the word *inférieure* of the same meaning: Charente-Maritime, Seine-Maritime, Alpes-Maritime. In 1964, the Department of Seine was subdivided into Hauts-de-Seine, Paris, Seine-Saint-Denis, and Val-de-Marne; Seine-et-Oise became Essonne, Val-d'Oise, and Yvelines.

³*Sainte Louise de Marillac. Ecrits Spirituels* (Tours: Mame, 1983).

to give as literal a meaning as we could to the expressions used, while still adapting them to modern terminology. We have tried to reproduce even the grammatical constructions used by each correspondent unless the true meaning of the sentence would suffer thereby. Very long sentences have been shortened and short-phrases joined together to render thoughts more readily intelligible, though still preserving the sense of the original. The vocabulary and expression has deliberately been kept simple. Saint Vincent's love for and practice of simplicity are no secret to anyone familiar with his life; therefore, it was judged fitting to follow his own simplicity in the choice of words and style unless he himself opted for more elegant forms.

To retain the French atmosphere of the work we have left certain terms and expressions in the original French. General terms of greeting such as *Monsieur, Madame, etc.*, have not been translated, nor have we attempted an English version for expressions such as *O mon Dieu!, O Jésus!* Land-holding titles which often form part of a proper name—*Comte, Duc, Marquis*—have also been left in French. Other titles have been translated by the closest English equivalent possible. Proper names are given in the original language unless there is a familiar English form. This holds true for both people and places. Therefore, *Sainte Jeanne-Françoise Frémiot de Chantal* has been rendered as *Saint Jane Frances Frémiot de Chantal*, whereas *Pierre Séguier* remains in French. For places, *Brittany* is used instead of *Bretagne*, while *Granada, Villeneuve*, and similar names remain in the original language. Proper foreign names within the text of the manuscripts have been left as written by the correspondents. However, the footnotes and index present the name in its original language form—*Alessandro Bichi* for *Alexandre Bichi*; *Giovanni Francesco Guldi di Bagno* for *Jean-François Bagni*.

An attempt has been made to standardize name variations appearing in the original manuscripts: *Gondi* is always used

in this edition although the form *Gondy* is often seen in the manuscripts. We have, however, left the variations *Pollalion* and *Poulaillon*. Although the correct spelling is the former, Saint Vincent always wrote the latter.

We have also standardized the various forms of the phrase used by Saint Vincent after his signature: *unworthy priest of the Congregation of the Mission*. Throughout this edition the abbreviation *i.s.C.M.* (*indignus sacerdos Congregationis Missionis*) has been used.

The word *fille*, meaning girl, daughter, young woman, appears in many of the manuscripts. In the seventeenth century, this word also denoted a woman religious or nun. We have tried to adjust the meaning of *fille* to the context of the various letters and have sometimes rendered the word as *Sister* rather than *Daughter* when referring to a member of Saint Louise's nascent community.

Monetary terms — *livre, écu*, etc. — have not been translated for it would be difficult to assign them an equivalent value in modern currency. Several other words and phrases have likewise been left in French — *Parlement, Chambre des Comptes, collègue* — since English has no corresponding institution. These terms have been explained in footnotes. For other words of foreign origin used in English and found in English dictionaries no explanation has been given, for example, *faubourg*.

Saint Vincent often makes use of scriptural references which, however, are not always direct quotes. Where he has done so, the translation has been adjusted to flow with the meaning of the sentence. The scriptural quotations given in the footnotes are usually taken from the *New American Bible*, unless a passage cannot be found in that edition or a more suitable rendering of the phrase is found elsewhere. In such instances, the *Douay-Rheims Bible* has been used. In the case of the psalms, both versions have been cited because of the variations.

Coste almost always refers to Vincent de Paul as Saint Vincent or the Saint. In the present edition we have added this title to the names of Louise de Marillac and any other individual who has been canonized since Coste's time.

Generally speaking, in the titles of the letters, Coste gave the location of the addressee only when he was sure of it and when the locality was outside the then city of Paris. We have continued this practice and have attempted to make it more consistent. We have also followed Coste's custom of placing within brackets dates that are uncertain or conjectural. Brackets have also been used to indicate words either missing from the manuscript or inserted by the editors.

The capitalization forms of the original manuscripts have been adjusted to American usage as has the punctuation. Number forms—words versus figures—follow common American practice as well.

In addition to our goal of producing a smooth English translation which is faithful insofar as possible to the meaning and style of the original French, we have also purposed to present a work which is interesting and informative with regard to Saint Vincent, his correspondents, and his times. Both the scholar who may wish to use this work as a research tool and the ordinary reader who may be unfamiliar with the Double Family and the religio-political history of the period have been kept in mind. A great effort has been made to update, correct, and amplify Coste's footnote material. Irrelevant notes have been eliminated and new annotation added whenever this has been deemed necessary or helpful. In the case of new matter, no indication has been given to distinguish Coste's footnotes from the annotation added by our editor.

A biographical sketch of each personage has been supplied throughout the work the first time that he or she appears in a volume. To facilitate reference to this data and also to the explanations of terms and places given throughout the text an index has been added to each book. The index indicates the

number of the letter to which the reader should refer for the information sought. A general index will also be provided as an appendix to the entire work.

All references in the indices and the footnotes have been given by citing the volume and the number of the item rather than the page. Since Coste's volume span and his numbering of items have been retained, this practice should facilitate research in both his edition and the present translation.

In order to enjoy these volumes more thoroughly, the reader would do well to keep in mind that, as now, so then, one correspondent did not spell out to the other details that were already known and understood by both. Reading these letters at a distance of some three hundred years will often arouse a curiosity which in many cases must remain unsatisfied. The allusions made will not always be clear, nor can they be. However, a familiarity beforehand with the life of Saint Vincent will greatly aid one's knowledge and understanding of the situations mentioned and the people involved. The three-volume definitive biography written by Coste⁴ provides extensive information, but many shorter versions of the Saint's life can be found. Placed against such a background, these writings take on still more a life of their own and make the Saint vividly present once again. The twinkle in his eyes and the smile or tenderness in his voice seep through the words and we meet the delightful, charming man known to his contemporaries. The severe, ascetic Saint takes on a new personality and somehow becomes more human.

Let us not fail to seek the man beyond these words, the man of compassion, warmth, humor, savoir faire, authority, and, most of all, the mystic whose sanctity was carved amid the bustle and involvement of very human situations. He will

⁴Pierre Coste, C.M., *The Life and Works of Saint Vincent de Paul*, trans. Joseph Leonard, C.M., 3 vols. (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1952; repr., New York: New City Press, 1987).

give us hope that we, too, can find holiness in an ordinary, busy life. May this personal acquaintance with the real Vincent de Paul lead us to encounter the dynamic force behind his life, Jesus Christ, Who, for him, was all things.

SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

CORRESPONDENCE

417. - TO SAINT LOUISE DE MARILLAC,¹ IN ANGERS

Paris, January 11, 1640

Mademoiselle,

I received three letters from you this week, which gave me a consolation that God alone can express; He is the only one who can give it to me. However, this consolation is missing now and then because of what you tell me about the state of your illness. I entreat you, Mademoiselle, always to do this and, when you are able, have someone send a litter to bring you home. And do everything you can to get well.

Letter 417. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 60.

¹Saint Louise de Marillac was born in Paris on August 12, 1591. Her father was Louis de Marillac, brother of the devout Michel de Marillac, Keeper of the Seals (1626-1630), and the Marshal de Marillac, renowned for his misfortunes and tragic death. She was the widow of Antoine Le Gras, secretary of Queen Marie de Médicis. She had married him February 5, 1613, and lost him December 21, 1625. They had a son, Michel, who at the time of this letter was twenty-six years old. The devout widow had placed her entire confidence in her spiritual director, Vincent de Paul, who employed her in his charitable works, made her his collaborator in the creation and organization of the Confraternities of Charity and, with her, founded the Daughters of Charity. The life of Louise de Marillac, whom the Church beatified on May 9, 1920, has been written by Gobillon (1676), the Comtesse de Richemont (1883), Comte de Lambel, Monsignor Baurard (1898), and Emmanuel de Broglie (1911). Her letters and other writings were copied and partially published in the work entitled: *Louise de Marillac, veuve de M. Le Gras. Sa vie, ses vertus, son esprit* (4 vols., Bruges, 1886). Louise de Marillac was canonized on March 11, 1934, and on February 10, 1960, she was named patroness of all those who devote themselves to Christian social work. Therefore, in this English edition of the letters of Saint Vincent, *Saint* has been added to her name in Coste's titles of letters and in the footnotes. To the

Seeing that those Gentlemen² want to communicate in writing, do this, *in nomine Domini*. Have the contract drawn up in your name as Directress of the Daughters of Charity, servants of the sick poor in hospitals and parishes, under the authority of the Superior General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, the Director of the aforesaid Daughters of Charity. And in the place where it is mentioned in their little Rule, that they will depend on the Superiors in Paris, [in whatever does not]³ concern the hospital, you can indicate the above-mentioned Superior. If they ask you for the letters of establishment of this body, you will say that they have no other than the power which has been given to the said Superior, Director of the Charity, as is done everywhere, especially in that diocese, in Bourgneuf,⁴ on Madame Goussault's⁵ estates, I believe, although I am not very sure about it, [and] in Richelieu, in the diocese of Poitiers.

above bibliography should be added: Monsignor Jean Calvet, *Louise de Marillac - A Portrait*, translated by G. F. Pullen (1959); Joseph I. Dirvin, *Louise de Marillac* (1970); the compilation by Sister Anne Regnault, D.C., (1906-1987): *Louise de Marillac, ses écrits* (1961), the letters of which have been translated by Sister Helen Marie Law: *Letters of Saint Louise de Marillac* (1972); and, finally, the revised edition of her writings: *Sainte Louise de Marillac, Ecrits spirituels* [Tours: Mame, 1983].

²The Administrators of the hospital in Angers.

³The Saint Paul manuscript evidently omitted several words; those which we have added give some meaning to the phrase. Moreover, the article of the regulations reads as follows: "They shall obey their Superiors in this city of Paris with regard to discipline and interior guidance, and the Administrators in exterior matters pertaining to the regulations of the hospital for the assistance of the poor; they shall obey the Superior among them in that which concerns the carrying out of the aforesaid regulations and in general in whatever she orders them to do." (Cf. vol. XIII, no. 143, p. 541.)

⁴A hamlet in the commune of La Chapelle-Saint-Laud, an *arrondissement* of Baugé (Maine-et-Loire). An *arrondissement* is an administrative district, a division of a *département* (e.g. Maine-et-Loire), administered by a sub-prefect.

⁵In 1613 Geneviève Fayet had married Antoine Goussault, Seigneur de Souvigny, Councillor of the King and President of the *Chambre des Comptes* in Paris [sovereign court for the examination, registration, and auditing of taxes]. Five children were born of the marriage. Widowed in 1631, she dedicated herself untiringly to works of charity. She was the first to have the idea of an association of Ladies for the relief of the sick at the Hôtel-Dieu and was the first superior of the group. It was thanks to her that the Daughters of Charity were called to the hospital in Angers. Her name recurs constantly

You would do well to send for the Sisters in Richelieu,⁶ and to do so as soon as possible, because, since the contagion is ending there, they can begin to work again.

People are praying to God for you in many places in Paris. Everyone is interested in your health; you would not believe how much.

418. - TO LOUIS ABELLY,¹ VICAR GENERAL OF BAYONNE

January 14, 1640

The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with you forever!
I thank God for all the graces that His Goodness is granting

in Saint Vincent's letters to Saint Louise. She died on September 20, 1639, in the exercise of charity.

⁶Louise Ganset and Barbe Angiboust. The latter occupies an important place in the first twenty-five years of the history of the Daughters of Charity, undoubtedly the most important after Saint Louise. She entered the Community July 1, 1634, at the age of twenty-nine, and was admitted to vows March 25, 1642. The Holy Founder placed her at the head of the houses founded in Saint-Germain-en-Laye (1638), Richelieu (1638), Saint-Denis (1645), Fontainebleau (1646), Brienne (1652), Bernay (1655), and Châteaudun (1657), where she died December 27, 1658. Nothing is more edifying than the conference on her virtues held at the Motherhouse, April 27, 1659 (cf. vol. X, no. 109).

Letter 418. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, eighteenth century copy taken from the original. The original letter was sent to the Grand Duke of Tuscany on January 20, 1704, by François Watel, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, and is now found in Centro Salesiano, 32, Via Maria Ausiliatrice, Turin.

¹Louis Abelly was born in Paris in 1604. From the earliest years of his priesthood he took part in Saint Vincent's apostolic labors. The Saint recognized his worth and spoke so highly of him to François Fouquet, Bishop-elect of Bayonne, that he appointed him his Vicar General. His stay in Bayonne was not long. He accepted a simple village parish near Paris and shortly afterwards (1644) was given charge of Saint-Josse, a parish in the capital, where he formed an ecclesiastical community. He later became Director of the Sisters of the Cross (1650), chaplain of the general hospital (1657), and Bishop of Rodez (1664). In 1666 he resigned from his See for reasons of health and retired to Saint-Lazare, where he spent the remaining twenty-five years of his life in recollection and study. We have almost thirty of his books of devotion, history, and theology. The best known are *Sacerdos christianus* (Paris, 1656), *Medulla theologica* (2 vols., Paris, 1652-1653), which earned for him from the author of the *Lutrin* the nickname "Moelleux" [from the French for *medulla* - moelle]; and above all, *La vie du Vénérable Serviteur de Dieu Vincent de*

to the Bishop of Bayonne,² which I see from your letter of December 10, and I pray that He will continue to give them to him. O Monsieur, how astonished those people are, in my opinion, to see their prelate living like a real bishop, after so many centuries of being deprived of such a happiness! Of course, Monsieur, I have perfect confidence in the goodness of God, who called the Bishop to the ministry in such an unusual way. He will give him all the graces he needs to continue and to become perfect in the way of life he has begun, and the good corporeal angels He has placed near him will do the same. Alas! Monsieur, what can we not hope for from a prelate who has so well regulated his own life and that of his servants; who has given so many corporal and spiritual alms in his diocese; who takes such care of poor prisoners; who is blessed with the conversion of heretics; who does not admit

Paul. He is not merely the sponsor of this work as has been asserted, but is truly its author. His task was greatly facilitated by Brother Ducournau, who collected and classified the documents. He made a donation to the house of Saint-Lazare of some property he owned in Pantin, which became the country house of the students. Abelly died October 4, 1691, and was buried, according to his wish, in the church of Saint-Lazare, under the Holy Angels chapel. (Cf. Pierre Collet, *La vie de St. Vincent de Paul* [2 vols., Nancy: A. Leseure, 1748], vol. I, pp. 5 ff.)

² François Fouquet. He was the son of François Fouquet, Comte de Vaux, and of the devout Marie de Maupeou, who was, among the Ladies of Charity, one of the most admirable for her zeal and her devotedness to Saint Vincent. Fouquet's brothers were Nicolas Fouquet, Superintendent of Finances, and Louis Fouquet, Bishop of Agde. His sister Louise-Agnès, became a nun in the first monastery of the Visitation. François Fouquet, appointed to the bishopric of Bayonne in 1636, was not consecrated until March 15, 1639. He was transferred to the See of Agde in 1643, appointed Coadjutor of Narbonne on December 18, 1656, and Archbishop of that diocese in 1659. Relegated to Alençon in 1661, he died in exile on October 19, 1673. He summoned the Priests of the Mission to Agde and Narbonne and established the Daughters of Charity in the latter town. A very zealous prelate, too zealous perhaps, he found Saint Vincent's slowness hard to understand, but he, more than anyone else, admired his virtue. He felt deeply the death of this great servant of God. As soon as he received news of it, he wrote to the priests of Saint Lazare: "However prepared I may have been for M. Vincent's death, since he was advanced in age, I assure you that I did not hear the news of his passing without surprise and without being moved by great sorrow, humanly speaking, at seeing the Church deprived of a most worthy subject, the Congregation of its very dear Father, and I myself of a very charitable friend to whom I am so greatly obligated. I think that of all those whom his charity caused him to embrace as his children there is no one to whom he showed more affection and gave more signs of friendship than to me."

women into his house, or *ad proximiora sacri altaris*; ³ who put together his council as well as he could and is willing to act with its advice? What can we not hope for, I repeat, with regard to the graces and blessings to be granted to such a prelate and to those *quos vocavit in sortem operis ejus*?⁴ Indeed, there is no good or assistance that you and he ought not to hope for from Our Lord.

Alas! Monsieur, how you embarrass the son of a poor plowman, who tended sheep and pigs and is still in ignorance and vice, by asking for his views! I shall obey you, nonetheless, in the same sentiment as that poor donkey,⁵ who on another occasion spoke out of obedience to the man who commanded him to do so, on condition that, as no one takes into account what is said by fools, because of what they say, so neither His Excellency nor you will pay any attention at all to what I shall say, except insofar as His Excellency finds that it is in accord with his own better judgment and yours.

Therefore, first of all, I shall say with regard to religious in general, that I think you would do well to deal with them as Our Lord did with the people of His time. Show them first by example, as He did, how they are to live. A priest should be more perfect than a religious as such, and a bishop even more so. And after speaking to them by example for a considerable time (Our Lord spoke this language to them for thirty years), He spoke to them gently, charitably and firmly, without, however, using suspensions, interdictions and excommunications against them, and without depriving them of their functions. That, Monsieur, is how Our Lord acted. Now, I have complete confidence that a prelate who acts in the same way will be of more benefit to those sorts of persons than all

³*Near the sacred altar.*

⁴*Whom he has called to share in his work.*

⁵Balaam's donkey or, rather, mare. Nm. 22:28. "But now the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she asked Balaam, 'What have I done to you that you should beat me these three times?'"

ecclesiastical censures put together. Our Lord and the saints accomplished more by suffering than by acting. That is how the blessed Bishop of Geneva⁶ and, following his example, the late Bishop of Comminges⁷ brought about the sanctification of so many thousands of souls.

What I am saying to you, Monsieur, may seem severe, but what can you expect? I feel so strongly about the truths Our Lord taught us by word and example that I cannot help but see how everything done according to that teaching always succeeds perfectly well, while things done the opposite way have quite a different result. Yes, but they will hold a prelate who acts that way in contempt. That is true, and must be in order to honor the life of the Son of God in all its stages by our person just as we do by our circumstances. However, it is also true that, after having suffered for some time and as much as Our Lord pleases and with Our Lord, He lets us do more good in three years of our life than we would in thirty. But what am I saying? Indeed, Monsieur, I do not think we can accomplish anything any other way. We can make a great many regulations; we can employ censures; we can deprive them of hearing confessions, of preaching, of taking up collections, but with all that they will never mend their ways, and never will the dominion of Jesus Christ be extended or preserved in souls that way. On other occasions God armed

⁶Saint Francis de Sales. He was born August 21, 1567, in Thorens, near Annecy, and died in Lyons, December 28, 1622. He honored Saint Vincent with his friendship. "Many times I have had the honor of enjoying the close friendship of Francis de Sales," said the holy priest at the beatification process of his illustrious friend on April 17, 1628. Saint Vincent spoke of the Bishop of Geneva only in terms of admiration. He considered him worthy of the honors reserved to the saints. On his part, Saint Francis de Sales, according to Coqueret, a Doctor of the Sorbonne, used to say that "he did not know a more worthy or more saintly priest than M. Vincent." (Postulatory letter from the Bishop of Tulle, March 21, 1706.) Also, when it came to appointing a superior for the convent of the Visitation in Paris, his choice fell upon Vincent de Paul.

⁷Barthélemy Donadieu de Griet, Bishop of Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges (Haute-Garonne), died November 12, 1637. (Cf. E. Molinier, *La vie de messire Barthélemy de Donadieu de Griet, évêque de Comenge* [Paris: Vve Camusat, 1639].)

heaven and earth against men. Alas! what progress did He make by doing so? And was it not necessary at last for Him to be humbled and brought low before man in order to get him to accept the gentle yoke of His dominion and His guidance? And that which a God was not able to do with all His power, how will a prelate do with his? That being so, Monsieur, I think that His Excellency is right in not thundering excommunications against those religious who own property, and even in not stopping so hastily those whom he had once examined and approved, from going to do the Lenten and Advent preaching in those country parishes in which there is no church designated, because that would seem to them to be extremely severe and more. The pastors and the people who are especially fond of them would be annoyed. If someone is abusing the ministry, *in nomine Domini*, your reasonable manner will be well able to remedy this.

As for the religious who you tell me is necessary in her monastery and who, nevertheless, carries on intrigues and schemes and can thus do harm to the other—I don't know how to answer you there, Monsieur, because you do not explain yourself. If you judge it expedient to write to me about it again, it would be well for you to tell me in what way she is necessary and if she is from an Order in which they transfer the religious.

That, Monsieur, is what I can say to you right now with great haste and in a rambling way. You will excuse the deficiencies in all that I say and will do me the kindness of assuring the Bishop of Bayonne of my obedience and Messieurs Perriquet,⁸ Le Breton, and Dumesnil of my services. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

⁸He was, like Louis Abelly, a Vicar General of François Fouquet, Bishop of Bayonne.

419. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN ANGERS

Paris, January 17, 1640

Mademoiselle,

Mon Dieu, Mademoiselle, you oblige me to write without a scruple! What! You have sent me no word at all about the state of your illness! I beg of you, Mademoiselle, to let me know exactly how you are so that I can send you a litter when you are able to come home—as soon as your indisposition permits. Oh! how necessary your presence is here, not only for your Sisters, who are doing well enough, but also for the general affairs of the Charity!

The General Assembly of the Ladies of the Hôtel-Dieu was held last Thursday. The Princess¹ and the Duchesse d'Aiguillon² honored it by their presence. Never have I seen the gathering so grand, and at the same time so modest. They decided to take in all the foundlings. You may well suppose, Mademoiselle, that you were not forgotten at the meeting.

I sent you word that it would be well for you to make the stipulation as Directress of the Company of the Poor Village Girls of the Charity, under the authority of the Superior

Letter 419. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 62.

¹Charlotte-Marguerite de Montmorency, wife of Henri II de Bourbon, First Prince of the royal blood, Prince de Condé, Duc d'Enghien, Peer and Grand Master of France. This charitable Princess, mother of the great Condé, lost her husband on December 26, 1646, and died herself in Châtillon-sur-Loing on December 2, 1650.

²Marie de Vignerod de Pontcourlay was born in 1604, in the Château de Glenay near Bressuire, of René de Vignerod and Françoise de Richelieu, the eldest sister of the great Cardinal. While still very young, she married, in the chamber of Anne of Austria, the nephew of the Duc de Luynes, Antoine de Beauvoir de Grimoard du Roure, chevalier, Seigneur de Combalet, whom she had never seen and did not love. During the two years this union lasted, the couple lived together only six months. The Marquis de Combalet, kept from his home by the necessities of war, died in battle at the siege of Montpellier on September 3, 1622. A widow at the age of eighteen, the Marquise de Combalet left the Court and withdrew to the Carmelite convent in Paris. She was admitted to the novitiate and, after a year of enclosure, received the religious habit from the hands of M. de Bérulle and made her first vows. Richelieu, who loved her a great deal, did

General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, Director of the Congregation of the above-mentioned young women.³ However, Mademoiselle, I ask you to do that as soon as possible and leave Angers immediately after you have signed the articles, which I entreat you to draw up as soon as you can.⁴

I am writing to M. Lambert⁵ to ask him to send you your

everything he could to bring her back to the Court. It was at his request that the Pope forbade the young Marquise to enter the cloister, that Marie de Médicis chose her, on January 1, 1625, as lady of the bedchamber, and that the King elevated her estate of Aiguillon to a duchy-peerage on January 1, 1638.

On that day, the Cardinal had her take up residence in a small mansion prepared for her in the rue de Vaugirard, one of the dependencies of the Petit Luxembourg Palace where he himself lived. The Duchesse d'Aiguillon made noble use of her immense wealth and great influence. She frequented and protected men of letters and placed herself at the head of all works of charity. She established the Priests of the Mission at Notre-Dame de la Rose and in Marseilles, where she entrusted them with the direction of a hospital which she had built for sick galley-slaves. The houses of Richelieu and Rome lived on her generosity. It was she who had the consulates of Algiers and Tunis given to the Congregation of the Mission. She contributed to the foundation of the general hospital and of the Society of Foreign Missions, took under her protection the Daughters of the Cross and the Daughters of Providence, and was a great benefactress of Carmel. She was president of the Confraternity of Charity established at Saint-Sulpice and replaced Madame de Lamoignon at the head of the Ladies of the Hôtel-Dieu. The Duchesse d'Aiguillon must be placed, along with Saint Louise, Madame de Gondi, and Madame Goussault, in the first rank of Saint Vincent's collaborators. No one perhaps gave him more; few were as attached to him. She watched over his health with a maternal solicitude. The carriage and horses which the Saint used in his old age came from her stables. The death of the servant of God grieved her deeply. She had a silver-gilt reliquary made in the shape of a heart surmounted by a flame to enclose the Saint's heart. The Duchesse d'Aiguillon died April 17, 1675, at the age of seventy-one, and was buried in the Carmelite habit. MM. Bresacier and Fléchier preached her funeral oration. (Cf. Comte de Bonneau-Avenant, *La duchesse d'Aiguillon* [2nd ed., Paris: Didier, 1882].) Le Long mentions in his *Bibliothèque historique de la France* (Fontette ed., 5 vols., Paris: Hérisant, 1768-1778), vol. III, no. 30.854, a manuscript collection of her letters, which has been lost.

³In no. 417 Saint Vincent advised Saint Louise to use these titles and organizational structure in drawing up the contract with the Administrators of the hospital in Angers.

⁴The contract was signed on February 1.

⁵Lambert aux Couteaux, born in Fossemanant (Somme) in 1606, had been a member of the Congregation of the Mission since August 1629. He founded the house of Toul in 1635 and remained there as Superior until 1637. In January 1638, he began the establishment in Richelieu (Indre-et-Loire), where he was Pastor and Superior for four

Sisters from Richelieu;⁶ but, if everything is arranged for you to come home, do not wait for them. Rather send them a messenger telling them to wait for you in Tours, if you think they will not be able to meet you in Angers.

420. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN ANGERS

Paris, January 22, 1640

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I came back from the country last night and found the letter you wrote to M. Dehorgny¹ on the fourteenth of the month. Your letter makes me think that you are not receiving mine.

years. The General Assembly of 1642 named him Assistant to the Superior General. In 1650 and 1651 he was again in Richelieu. For a brief period he was Superior at the Bons-Enfants (1646-1649), then at Saint-Charles (1650). The Saint had such confidence in him that he had him make the visitation of Saint-Lazare. He sent him to render the same service to the Missionaries of La Rose and Toul, as well as to the Sisters of Angers and Nantes. Urged by Propaganda in 1647 to designate someone as Coadjutor of Babylon, Saint Vincent could think of no one more worthy than Lambert aux Couteaux. In his response to Bishop Ingoli of Propaganda he expressed himself as follows: "I must admit, Your Excellency, that the loss of this man is like having me tear out one of my eyes or cut off one of my arms." The plan did not materialize. It was again upon him that the Saint cast his eyes to establish the Congregation in Poland, where the Queen was calling for the Missionaries. Lambert aux Couteaux went there in 1651. Everything had to be organized in this war-torn and plague-stricken country. His efforts were blessed by God but short-lived; he died January 31, 1653, a victim of his dedication to the plague-stricken. (Cf. *Notices sur les prêtres, clercs, et frères défunts de la Congrégation de la Mission* [1st series, 5 vols., Paris: Pillet et Dumoulin, 1881], vol. II, pp. 1-28.)

⁶Barbe Angiboust and Louise Ganset. Saint Vincent wanted to afford them the consolation of seeing Saint Louise again.

Letter 420. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, 140 rue du Bac, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹Jean Dehorgny from Estrées-Saint-Denis (Oise), entered the Congregation of the Mission in August 1627, and was ordained a priest April 22, 1628. In 1632, when Saint Vincent went to live at Saint-Lazare, Jean Dehorgny took over the direction of the Collège des Bons-Enfants, which he retained until 1635 and took up again from 1638 to 1643

I have written to you every week and it is only three days since the last time, which makes me think that my letters are not being delivered to you.

Here is the answer to the principal matters about which you wrote to me. First of all, with regard to the stipulations [of]² the Directors of the hospital,³ it seems to me that you would do well to sign them in your own name, as Directress of the poor Daughters of Charity, under the authority of the Superior General of the Company of the Priests of the Mission, Director of the above-mentioned young women. As for the terms, I do not know what to tell you without having seen them, except that if they wish them to correspond to their regulations and expenses, I think they each need at least one hundred francs or twenty-five écus.⁴

With regard to your return, I ask you to let it be as soon as possible. Hire a stretcher and rent two good strong horses. I would have sent you a litter, but I do not know which you need, a litter or a stretcher. I entreat you, Mademoiselle, to

and from 1654 to 1659. He was Assistant to the Superior General from 1642 to 1644, and again from 1654 to 1667; Superior of the house in Rome from 1644 to 1647 and from 1651 to 1653; and Director of the Daughters of Charity from 1660 to 1667. In 1640, 1641, 1643, 1644, 1659, and 1660, he made visitations of several houses of the Company and reestablished good order wherever necessary. His sympathy for Jansenist ideas merited for us two beautiful letters from Saint Vincent, who had the joy of seeing him return to sounder beliefs. He lived until July 7, 1667. Still extant are twenty-three of his conferences to the Daughters of Charity and several letters. (Cf. *Notices*, vol. I, pp. 153-220.)

²The original letter has *that* and not *of*. Written in this way, the sentence makes no sense. We could not state positively, however, that our change corresponds to Saint Vincent's thought. It could be that the Saint was distracted and left that part of the sentence unfinished. Following this hypothesis, we would have to leave *that* and add several words after "the Directors of the hospital."

³The Administrators of the hospital. Saint Vincent sometimes calls them *Directors of the hospital* or, at other times, *Fathers of the poor*.

⁴Throughout this edition the various denominations of foreign money have been left in the French since no adequate, unchanging value in modern currency can be assigned. One *écu* equals three *livres*; one thousand *livres* could support two priests and one Brother for a year on the missions, "and it hardly takes less for those who stay at home" (cf. Vol. V, no. 1972).

spare nothing and, whatever it may cost, to get what will be the most comfortable for you.

The arrival of a gentleman of rank is causing me to lay down my pen and so I must tell you that I am awaiting you with the affection known by Our Lord and His Holy Mother. I am, in their love, your servant.

V. DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, Directress of the Daughters of Charity, presently at the hospital of Angers, in Angers

421. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN ANGERS

Paris, January 28, 1640

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have been greatly consoled that you sent me word concerning the nature of your illness and I hope that the air will restore you to health. If you take a stretcher, as I wrote you to do, because the coach—especially on the cobblestones—from Orléans to Paris would be too hard on you, it will suffice to have one Sister with you. You can have the others come by water as far as Tours and by coach from there to here.¹

Letter 421. - Archives of the Mission, 95 rue de Sèvres, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹When Saint Louise went to Angers, she had taken several of her Sisters with her, without knowing exactly how many would be retained at the hospital. She left only nine of them: Madame Turgis, Elisabeth Martin, Cécile-Agnès Angiboust (Barbe's sister), Clémence Ferre, Madeleine Monget, Geneviève Caillou, Marguerite François, Marie-Marthe Trumeau, and Barbe Toussaint. Elisabeth Martin held the office of Superior.

As for Madame Turgis,² I am of the opinion that she should be left there until the time you indicate and perhaps permanently.³ What you wrote to me as a difficulty is of no consequence.

I forgot to tell you, with regard to your return, that I would have sent you a coach were it not for three leagues⁴ of bad road between Chartres and Le Mans, which are impassable at this season. Added to that besides, we cannot divert the coaches from their ordinary route without raising a public outcry.⁵

I have told you my opinion concerning the stipulations and the status you should assume in them.⁶

You would do well to bring along that good demoiselle and the girls you mentioned to me.⁷

What I told you about your son⁸ is true. If you let me know the day you can be in Chartres, if you pass through it, he will meet you there; and there, if you are strong enough, you can take the coach.

²Elisabeth Le Goutteux, the widow of M. Turgis, left a good position in the world to consecrate herself to God in the Company of the Daughters of Charity. She was Superior of the hospital in Angers (1639-1640, 1644), at the Foundlings (1642), in Saint-Denis (1645), in Chars near Pontoise (1645, 1647), and in Richelieu (1646-1647). She died in Chantilly in October 1648 after a long and painful illness.

³She returned to Paris before the end of the year.

⁴One league equals approximately 2.5 miles.

⁵Cardinal Richelieu had given the Congregation of the Mission the income from the Loudun coaches as an endowment for the new house in Richelieu. (Cf. vol. I, no. 293.) Although Saint Vincent was free to divert the coaches from their usual route, he had to take into consideration the interests of the public and not give them cause for complaint.

⁶In nos. 414, 417 and 419 Saint Vincent discusses with Saint Louise the rules to be followed in Angers and advises her to sign the contract with the Administrators of the hospital under the title of Directress of the Daughters of Charity.

⁷Probably postulants.

⁸Michel Le Gras, born October 19, 1613, intended to embrace the ecclesiastical state. To encourage the vocation of her son, Saint Louise had placed him in the seminary of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet, which had been founded and was directed by the austere and virtuous Adrien Bourdoise. Michel, however, caused his mother a great deal of anxiety by the instability of his character. He ultimately gave up his studies for the priesthood at the age of twenty-seven (1640). After ten years of wavering, on January 18, 1650, he married Demoiselle Gabrielle Le Clerc in the church of Saint-Sauveur; Saint Vincent witnessed the marriage contract.

You had better draw the money from there so that you are not caught short on the way. We shall repay here the amount you tell us.

I am hoping to see you in good health, and my desire is that this may be soon, without however rushing you.

Enclosed is a picture that was printed at the Charity. You are the first one to whom I am sending any. It was a painter who had it engraved; it cost him eighty écus.⁹

Your Sisters are in good health, thank God, and are doing good as well. And I, I am, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, Directress of the Sisters at the Charity Hospital, in Angers

422. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN ANGERS

Paris, January 31, 1640

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The letter you wrote to me by someone else's hand, which

⁹The Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity possesses a seventeenth century painting that could well be the work of the painter mentioned here by Saint Vincent. Our Lord has His hands extended as though He is calling people to Him. His bare feet are resting on a globe of the world. Above His head is the inscription: *Deus caritas est*. On the lower left, a priest is giving Communion to a sick woman lying in her bed. On the right, a "sister" from the Confraternity, a glass in her hand, is waiting for the moment to offer it to the patient. Saint Vincent and Saint Louise distributed this picture of the "Lord of Charity." (Cf. Saint Louise, *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 3.) This picture is the last of those reproduced by M. George Goyau in his book *Les Dames de la Charité de Monsieur Vincent* (Paris: Lib. de l'Art catholique, 1918).

Letter 422. - The original autograph letter is in the Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity.

was delivered to me yesterday and which told me of your diarrhea attack, made me quite anxious about the ailment you are suffering. May God be blessed for that which is His Will! I hope that in His goodness He will restore you to health and I am redoubling the prayers for that intention. But what are you saying about coming back by water, Mademoiselle! *O Jésus!* You must do no such thing! Please have a stretcher hired and rent or, rather, buy two good horses—we will pay here what they cost—and come home that way. I did that once, and the air did me so much good that in less than three days I was so well that I got into the coach of Madame, the late wife of the general, so it seems to me.¹ M. Grandnom² has written about this, to a man of rank in Angers, as you will see from his letter.

M. du Fresne³ told me, on his own and without my speaking to him about it, that it would be well for you to send me a receipt for the two thousand livres he has of yours and some word in a letter for him by which you direct him to place that sum in our hands or in those of someone else of your choice.

¹ Françoise-Marguerite de Silly, wife of Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi, General of the Galleys, was born in 1580 of Antoine de Silly, Comte de Rochepot, Baron de Montmirail, Ambassador to Spain, and of Marie de Lannoy. Shortly after Saint Vincent entered her house as her children's tutor, she entrusted to him the direction of her soul. The Saint's influence was not long in making itself felt. The devout woman formed the habit of visiting and serving the sick and of distributing abundant alms to the poor. She had missions given on her estates and joined the Confraternity of Charity in Montmirail. She died on June 23, 1625, after having her saintly director named head of the Collège des Bons-Enfants, and having provided him with the means of establishing the Congregation of the Mission by a gift of forty-five thousand livres. (Cf. Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. I, chaps. VII-XVIII; Hilarion de Coste, *Les éloges et vies des reynes, princesses, dames et demoiselles illustres en piété, courage et doctrine* [Paris: S. Cramoisy, 1630], vol. II, pp. 389 ff.; Régis de Chantelauze, *Saint Vincent de Paul et les Gondi* [Paris: E. Plon, 1882].)

²Remi de Grandnom, intendant of Madame Goussault.

³Charles du Fresne, Sieur de Villeneuve, former secretary of Queen Marguerite de Valois. After the death of this princess, he entered the house of Emmanuel de Gondi, for whom he was secretary, then intendant. (Cf. Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. I, chap. V, p. 21.) He was one of the closest friends of Saint Vincent.

Your son offered yesterday to come and see you in Angers, but I did not judge that to be necessary. Let me know how you feel about it.

Your Sisters are doing well. Anne, the older one, told me that Marie⁴ is too strict. Oh! how greatly we need you here for the general running of affairs! I hope that, in God's goodness, He will bring you back in good health. In the name of God, Mademoiselle, do everything you can to that end and be as cheerful as possible.

I thank God that our dear Sister Isabelle⁵ is better, and most humbly thank our dear Mother, the Superior of the Visitation Sainte-Marie⁶ for her remembrance of me. I am going to celebrate Holy Mass for her and for her entire holy Community.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I beg you once again to take care of your health. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

I received the two letters enclosed some time ago.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, Directress of the Daughters of Charity of the Hôtel-Dieu of Angers, in Angers

⁴Probably Marie Joly, who had been employed at the Hôtel-Dieu and the Charity of Saint-Paul, and was at this time working in the parish. She was later the first Superior of the Sedan house where she remained from 1641 to 1654. Recalled from that city, she yielded to discouragement and ran away from the Motherhouse. A few days later, she was readmitted at her request and made up for her momentary weakness by exemplary conduct. On August 5, 1672, she was the Superior at Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas.

⁵Isabelle or Elisabeth Martin was among the first Daughters of Charity and one of the most talented. Sister Servant at the hospital in Angers in 1640, in Richelieu in 1641, and at the hospital in Nantes in 1646, she returned to Richelieu in 1648 and died there the next year. Her health always left much to be desired.

⁶Claire-Madeleine de Pierre, previously a religious in the first monastery of the Visitation in Paris, where she had made profession on May 28, 1623, and which she had left in 1626 to enter the second monastery at the time of its foundation. She was placed

423. - TO LOUIS LEBRETON,¹ IN ROME

Paris, February 1, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I just received your letter of January 3 and have seen from it the blessings Our Lord is bestowing on your labors. I am thanking Him for them and asking Him to preserve you for many years for His glory and for the good of this little Congregation. And you, Monsieur, I entreat you to do what you can in that regard. Moderate your labors and eat well. The little indisposition you have just had comes from failing to do that, I fear.

I paid the bill of exchange for the hundred livres you obtained from M. Marchand² two months ago or thereabouts, also the fifty livres in exchange, and will do likewise, God willing, for all that you obtain. Please, Monsieur, do not fail to draw what you need.

I praise God that you and the Reverend Father Assistant³ approve of the last plan I sent you and I respect the modifications you brought to it. I shall examine it more in detail and write to you at the first opportunity.

at the head of the convents in Angers, Tours, and Saumur. It was in this last-named town that she died in 1674, at the age of seventy-one.

Letter 423. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹Louis Lebreton was born in Saint-Jean-sur-Erve (Mayenne) in 1591. He entered the Congregation of the Mission on May 8, 1638 and was sent to Rome at the beginning of 1639 to further the affairs of the Company at the Roman Court, especially the question of vows. He gave several missions in the Roman countryside, where he was very successful. His career as a Missionary was short but full. He died in Rome on October 19, 1641. The biographical notes dedicated to him in volume II of the *Notices*, pp. 205-222, do not give any details other than those contained in Saint Vincent's correspondence.

²A banker in Rome.

³Father Etienne Charlet, French Assistant to the General of the Society of Jesus.

I think, Monsieur, that you would do well to work unceasingly at the establishment in Rome and to rent some small lodging or even buy some little house for that purpose, if you can find one, for three or four thousand livres, however small and wherever it may be, *dummodo sit sanus*.⁴ What does it matter if it is in one of the faubourgs since we do not wish to carry on any public activities in the city! The district outside the Vatican is not very far away. I have such trust in M. Marchand's kindness; he will see that you receive that amount, which we shall return from here at the appointed time. We must become established there, I mean in the city or in one of the faubourgs.

I am sending your letters to M. de Trévy and, to your cousin, his letter and the three briefs from Rome.

Our Missionaries for the diocese of Geneva, five in number, left three days ago.⁵ One of them is to be sent to you if you get the establishment.

With regard to the Bull concerning our consolidation as in the last version, please send me the abridged draft I sent to you. I shall write to you in eight to ten days to tell you whether we should be satisfied with this last version, according to the above-mentioned modifications, without waiting for the brief. I shall likewise send you the order that Providence has followed in the institution of our Company. I was unwilling to have anything written about it until now, but I think it is God's Will for us to act this way since it has been made known to us by such a worthy authority.

⁴*Provided it is healthful.*

⁵By the contract of June 3, 1639, Saint Vincent had agreed to provide two priests and a Brother, and by that of January 26, 1640, he had promised to double the number. The five Missionaries in question were: Bernard Codoing, Pierre Escart, Jacques Tholard, Jean Duhamel, and Etienne Bourdet.

I am, nevertheless, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Monsieur Lebreton, Priest of the Mission, in Rome

424. - TO JACQUES THOLARD,¹ IN ANNECY

Saint-Lazare-Jez-Paris, February 1, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter with inexpressibly great joy, and that, for no other reason except that it was a letter from M. Tholard who is dearer to my heart than I can say. However, I was, of course, no less afflicted to read what you said about the cross to which Providence has attached you, certainly not to be the ruin of you, as you fear, but so that, as in Saint Paul, *virtus tua in infirmitate perficiatur*.² Since the grace God gave him

Letter 424. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter. Coste stated that he omitted certain sections of this letter because of the delicacy of the matter. Thanks to the research of Fr. Thomas Davitt, C.M., in the archives of Turin, these passages have been retrieved and are here inserted as noted.

¹Jacques Tholard was born in Auxerre on June 10, 1615 and was received into the Congregation of the Mission on November 20, 1638. He was ordained a priest on December 17, 1639, and died after 1671. He manifested throughout his life, in Annecy (1640-1646), Tréguier, where he was Superior (1648-1653), Troyes (1658-1660), Saint-Lazare, Fontainebleau and elsewhere, the qualities of an excellent Missionary. During the generalate of René Alméras, he was Visitor of the Province of France and that of Lyons.

²*Your virtue may be made perfect in infirmity.* 2 Cor. 12:9. "He said to me, 'My

when his temptations were the strongest was sufficient to bring that about, you have reason to hope that the grace He is giving you is likewise sufficient and is apparent in the purity of intention with which you begin your confessions, in the fear you have of offending God in them, in the remorse you feel when the violence of the temptation has deprived you of your liberty and caused nature to succumb, *vacando rei licitae*,³ and finally in your constant resolution to prefer to die rather than do evil voluntarily. All of that makes it evident that these happenings are not voluntary nor, therefore, are they culpable,⁴ for, as you know, sin is such a voluntary act that, if consent does not enter in, there is no sin at all in actions in which there seems to be matter for sin. That is why the masters of the spiritual life think that these happenings which occur in confession are not sins at all, and do not require in our day that they be confessed.⁵ I know a holy priest right now who never or rarely hears confessions without falling into these difficulties; and, although that is so, he never confesses them except in his annual confession. At that time he accuses himself, not of the substance of the act, but of not having sufficiently detested the pleasure that his miserable carcass takes in it and for fear that his will may have contributed to the act in some way. And if you take my word for it, Monsieur, you will never confess any of these failings except at the same time and in the same way as this man who is one of the best and most fervent priests I know on earth and, what is more, he is recognized as such.

Yes, but it is not the same. That man has some sign perhaps by which he recognizes that he was not free when he was

grace is enough for you, for in weakness power reaches perfection.' And so I willingly boast of my weaknesses instead, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (NAB)

³While you are engaged in lawful work.

⁴This sentence was omitted by Coste.

⁵This sentence was omitted by Coste.

carried away by the violence of nature. However, I am not to that point, for it seems to me that I could help myself. No, Monsieur, do not believe that, because neither that impulse nor its effect depends on your will. It could not prevent them when nature is disturbed. Therefore the act is not voluntary in you any more than it is in him, or in any other. . . .

Yes, but I could get up and leave until the disturbance has passed, or at least not ask the questions that bring me to that point. I shall answer that if this happened to you somewhere else or while you were doing something else that you were not commanded to do or which was indifferent, you should leave the place and stop what you are doing as soon as you become aware of that emotion. But when it occurs while you are performing a holy and divine action, which in our day every priest is obliged to do, you are not permitted to leave the place, neither can you stop what you are doing, nor cease to ask the questions necessary for salvation on account of the emotion or because of the emission which is wont to follow it, because the salvation of the neighbor and your vocation are involved.⁶

Yes, but would it not be better for me to abstain completely from hearing confession? *O Jésus!* no. God has called you to the vocation in which you are; He has blessed you in it; He has preserved you. You have by this means greatly extended the kingdom of God and have saved many souls and will continue to do so after this with more grace and success, I trust.

O Jésus! Monsieur, and how would you be able to make amends for the chagrin and the prejudice you would bear to the glory of God and the souls whom He has redeemed by His precious blood, if you were to give up what you are doing there? Remember, Monsieur, that roses are not gathered except in the midst of thorns and that heroic acts of virtue

⁶This entire paragraph was omitted by Coste.

are accomplished only in weakness. Saint Paul did not give up the work of God because he was tempted, nor do we forsake Christianity because we endure great and horrible temptations within it. And we are not free to give up living because our life lies in the concupiscence of the flesh, in that of the eyes, and in the pride of life. . . .

Yes, but I could suppress the emotion or its effect. You would not be able to prevent the effect in the force of the emotion without endangering your life. One of our Brothers died from doing so and [we] have another one now who is running the risk of doing the same. That is why the masters of the spiritual life forbid the doing of violence to one's feelings in these cases and [enjoin]⁷ us to let this distress go as an excrement of nature and continue to hear confessions without being troubled.⁸

It would be well for you to pass over these matters as lightly as you can. That is the first piece of advice that is usually given, and that one be not troubled when one feels too much pleasure.

The second is to try to turn your eyes away from the faces and the other parts of the body of the female sex that cause the temptation. And when the opposite happens, be assured, Monsieur, that it will be when you are not free and your will is weakened by the strength of the temptation. And do not be troubled when you think that is not so.⁹

That, Monsieur, is what I must tell you before God and in view of the doctrine and the teaching of the saints.

Do not be troubled by what you say your confessors tell you about this matter. They are not enlightened enough and

⁷The sense demands the words "We" and "enjoin," which were obviously omitted by oversight.

⁸Coste omitted this entire paragraph.

⁹The last section omitted by Coste extends from the words "when one feels" in the preceding paragraph, to the end of this paragraph.

do not have enough experience. Do not confess it any more except in the way I have told you. I offer myself to answer to God for you. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

425. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN ANGERS

Paris, February 4, 1640

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

You can well imagine the joy my soul experienced on seeing your letter of January 28, but you cannot feel it. *O Jésus!* Mademoiselle, with what pleasure I am thanking God that you are feeling better and how heartily I am begging Him to restore your strength so that you can come back soon!

Oh! Mademoiselle, we shall be very pleased to receive that fine gentleman among the ordinands. We shall lodge and serve him as well as we can because of the good Abbé de Vaux¹ who spoke to you about him, and in acknowledgement of the obligations you have toward him, and which we all have because of you.

Letter 425. - The original autograph letter is in the Archives of the Mission, Paris.

¹Guy Lasnier died on April 29, 1681, at the age of seventy-nine. He was one of the most remarkable priests of Anjou during the seventeenth century. For a long time his only ambition was to satisfy his vanity and his passion for hunting and other worldly amusements. On February 29, 1627, he was appointed to the abbey of Saint-Etienne de Vaux in Saintonge; in 1628 he was named Vicar General of Angers, then Canon of Notre-Dame de Paris. In spite of the obligations imposed on him by these dignities, he continued to lead a very worldly life. In 1632, like many others, he was anxious to satisfy his curiosity as to what was going on in the convent of the Ursulines of Loudun. [It was rumored that some of the nuns were possessed by devils; Richelieu ordered the exorcism of the nuns and the execution of the Pastor, Urbain Grandier, for the practice of

Monsieur Lambert sent me word that he was going to send your Sisters from Richelieu in the trap belonging to the house. If Our Lord gives you some inspiration concerning Barbe's taking charge,² make use of her and send someone else in her place.

Our good Sisters here are doing well, thank God. I was comforted by their confessions which I heard three days ago.

I was quite preoccupied this morning during my prayer with a lodging in La Villette.³ I found that it has a great number of advantages. The Pastor is offering us his rectory; we shall see.

What shall we do about the sister of Marie, from Saint-Germain,⁴ who stutters? She seems to be a rather nice young woman, but I do not know how intelligent she is. Her good sister is urging us to accept her.

You said nothing to me about what I wrote you concerning the stretcher.

I must lay down my pen to go to Mass. It is going to be

witchcraft.] The Abbé de Vaux had cause to rue the day. It is alleged that one of the nuns, penetrating his interior life, revealed, to his great confusion, faults that he had never mentioned to anyone. From then on, he was a new man. In 1635 he came to make a retreat at Saint-Lazare and there met Saint Vincent de Paul, with whom he remained in contact. He also had dealings with Saint Jane Frances de Chantal, Jean-Jacques Olier, Father Surin, and Baron de Renty. In his city, Angers, he established a convent of the Visitation, richly endowed the seminary, and founded the ecclesiastical conferences in his diocese. The Daughters of Charity of the hospital in Angers had no protector more dedicated or counselor more enlightened than the Abbé de Vaux. He gave hospitality to Saint Vincent, Saint Louise and Jean-Jacques Olier.

We have only one of the letters Saint Vincent wrote to him (cf. vol. I, no. 416), but there are many from Saint Louise, about one hundred of them. (Cf. François Chamard, *Les vies des saints personnages d'Anjou* [3 vols., Paris: Lecoffre, 1863], pp. 279-303.)

²Saint Louise was considering the appointment as Superior of the hospital in Angers of Sister Barbe Angiboust who was coming from Richelieu. (Cf. no. 481 in this volume and *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 103 and L. 108.)

³La Villette, like La Chapelle, was at that time outside of Paris; today they are two populous sections of the capital.

⁴The future Sister Gillette Joly, sister of Sister Marie Joly.

said at Notre-Dame for the Charity in Lorraine. Good day, Mademoiselle. I am, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, Directress of the Daughters of Charity, presently at the Hôtel-Dieu, in Angers

426. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN ANGERS

Saint-Lazare, February 10, 1640

Mademoiselle,

I received your letter of the twenty-seventh of this past month and it brought me so much consolation that nothing has been able to make me sad since. Blessed be God that you are now in better health and are planning your return! Oh! how welcome you shall be and how eagerly you are awaited! I praise God that the Ladies of that fine town are showing signs of accepting the model of the Hôtel-Dieu Charity and I pray that He will grant success to that holy enterprise for His honor.¹

Did I not send you the reports of the Ladies here, Mademoiselle? I thought that I did and that you had received them by now. If not, we shall send them on your return. Do not fail to put them into practice. We often do it that way for the Charities in the country. The time is short to have a copy made for you; the messenger leaves in four days.

Your Sisters are doing well, thank God. We have admitted two whom we shall be able to place with the others in two

Letter 426. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 63.

¹An association of the Ladies of Charity had been formed in Angers, modeled on that of Paris.

days. I have been putting them off for a long time waiting for your return.

These good young women from Lorraine do not last.

In six hours time I am expecting the daughter of M. Cornuel.² He has left a revenue of six thousand livres to the galley-slaves to undertake a way to help them.³

I am surprised that you said nothing about your Sisters from Richelieu; they went to see you.

Now then, I shall finish with renewed acts of thanksgiving, which I here again offer to God because, by His grace, we shall be seeing you soon. I am, as I look forward to that precious day, in the love of Our Lord. . . .

427. - A PRIEST OF THE MISSION¹ TO SAINT VINCENT

Bar-le-Duc, February 1640

At each distribution of bread, clothes were given to twenty-five or thirty poor people.

Recently, I clothed a total of 260 of them. But shall I not tell you, Monsieur, how many I alone have clothed spiritually by means of general confessions and Holy Communions in the space of only one

²Claude Cornuel, former Intendant of Finances and Presiding Judge of the *Chambre des Comptes*.

³Saint Vincent took great pains to retain possession of this legacy, which was being contested by the heirs. He begged, insisted, set to work Mathieu Molé, the Attorney General at that time, and finally succeeded in having a capital capable of assuring an income of six thousand livres, to be placed in the hands of the latter and administered by him and his successors in that office. From this revenue were drawn funds necessary to maintain the Daughters of Charity who were placed in the service of the galley-slaves and to provide suitable remuneration for the priests of Saint-Nicolas, who served as chaplains. (Cf. Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. I, chap. XXVIII, p. 128.)

Letter 427. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. XI, sect. I, p. 383.

¹Leonard Boucher was at Bar-le-Duc in July 1640 (cf. no. 457 for the letter Saint Vincent addressed to him there); the Saint mentions him also as being at this assignment, in a letter of February 28, 1640 (cf. no. 433). It seems appropriate to presume this letter (no. 427) was written by him.

month? I have counted more than eight hundred. I hope that during this Lenten season we shall accomplish still more. We give the hospital a pistole² and a half every month for the patients that we send there; and because, among them, there are about eighty who are more ill than the others, we give them soup, meat, and bread.

428. - TO ANTOINE LUCAS,¹ IN SAINT-PRIX

Saint-Lazare, February 21, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Blessed be God, Monsieur, for the grace He gives to you and your Company of working so valiantly that Monsieur de Cuménon² has written to me about it! But how are you, Monsieur? Have you somewhat moderated your excessive fervor? I beg you, in the name of Our Lord, to do so. If it should be that you or any of your Company need some remedy after the mission, please come back here. If not, take your rest where you are after the mission. Then go and give the two small missions simultaneously—not all by yourself, as you wrote to me. I shall send you Messieurs Germain³ and the

²*Pistole*. A piece of money valued at about ten francs.

Letter 428. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹Antoine Lucas, born in Paris, January 20, 1600, had pursued higher studies at the Sorbonne. He entered the Congregation of the Mission in December 1626, and was ordained a priest in September 1628. His zeal, his talent for preaching, and his skill in debate made him much appreciated by Father de Condren and by Jean-Jacques Olier, who one day asked Saint Vincent for him for his personal instruction and for the conversion of a heretic. Antoine Lucas was in the house of La Rose in 1645, directed the house in Le Mans from 1647 to 1651, and was placed then in Sedan. He died in November 1656, a victim of his zeal among the plague-stricken. (Cf. *Notices*, vol. I, pp. 135-146.)

²There is some doubt about the reading of this word.

³Richard Germain was born in 1603 in Vaudry (Calvados) in the diocese of Bayeux and entered the Congregation of the Mission as a priest on June 22, 1639. He was stationed in Rome (1642-1643) and died in Richelieu in 1644.

young Guérin,⁴ or the first only, in place of M. Teluatz,⁵ whom you shall send back after the mission.

Can you find any cod, herring, butter, fruit, and “four beggars”⁶ for dessert there? Write and let M. Portail know what you need, please.

I greet your dear Company, and am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Please take care of your health, and give M. Louistre⁷ charge of whatever remains to be done and set to rights at the Charity. I beg you, Monsieur, to leave that job to him. There are objections to the establishment of this Charity and the Confraternity of the Rosary; and besides, the General of the Jacobins⁸ is reluctant to do it.

Our news is that M. Boucher⁹ is better, that we had eighteen retreatants yesterday and seventeen today, three of whom are from the Sorbonne house.

⁴Jean Guérin was born in 1618 in Remiremont, near Nancy in Lorraine, and entered the Congregation of the Mission on February 4, 1639, at the age of twenty-one. No further information about him is available. He must not be confused with Jean Guérin (born in 1594, entered the Congregation of the Mission on November 7, 1639), who became Superior in Annecy, nor with Julien Guérin (born in 1605, entered the Congregation of the Mission on January 30, 1640), who later exercised his apostolate among the slaves in Tunis.

⁵There is some doubt about the reading of this word. Neither this name nor any similar name is to be found in the personnel catalogue of the Congregation of the Mission.

⁶This was a name given to four kinds of dried fruits: figs, hazel-nuts, raisins and almonds. It was the Lenten season; that is why Saint Vincent did not list meat or eggs.

⁷Jean Louistre was born in Nantes, in the diocese of Chartres, entered the Congregation of the Mission on March 14, 1637, at the age of twenty-four, and made his vows on March 14, 1642. A coadjutor Brother, Robert Louistre, also entered the Congregation in 1637.

⁸Dominicans. Because their first monastery was situated on the rue Saint-Jacques in Paris, the Dominicans were popularly called the Jacobins.

⁹Leonard Boucher was born August 29, 1610, entered the Congregation of the Mission on November 12, 1632, and was ordained a priest on September 23, 1634.

Addressed: Monsieur Lucas, Priest of the Mission, in Saint-Prix¹⁰

429. - JACQUES ROUSSEL¹ TO SAINT VINCENT

*Bar-le-Duc, February 1640*²

You have heard about the death of M. de Montevit,³ whom you had sent here. He suffered a great deal during his illness, which was long. I can truthfully say that I have never seen a greater, more resigned patience than his. We never heard him say a single word indicating the slightest impatience. His every word manifested an uncommon piety. The doctor told us quite often that he had never treated a more obedient and simple patient. He received Communion very frequently during his illness, over and above the two times he communicated by way of Viaticum. His delirium of eight whole days did not prevent him from receiving Extreme Unction in his right mind. The delirium left him when he was given that sacrament and overcame him again immediately after it had been given to him. Finally, he died as I desire and ask of God that I shall die.

The two Chapters in Bar honored his funeral procession by their presence, as did also the Augustinian Fathers. However, that which gave the most honor to his funeral were six to seven hundred poor people who accompanied his body; each one had a candle in his hand. They wept as much as if they had been at the funeral of their father. The poor really owed him this recognition. He had become ill healing their diseases and lightening the burden of their poverty. He was

¹⁰In Seine-et-Oise.

Letter 429. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. XI, sect. I, p. 384. In 1747, the original of this letter was in the seminary in Toul (cf. Collet, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 299, note).

¹Jacques Roussel was born in Nevers on February 2, 1598, and was received into the Society of Jesus on August 5, 1614. He was a professor of grammar, humanities, and rhetoric; was four times Rector, in particular in Bar-le-Duc; he died in Autun on January 20, 1647.

²Saint Vincent received this letter between February 21 and 28. (Cf. nos. 428 and 433.)

³Germain de Montevit was born in Camberton (Manche), near Coutances; was received into the Congregation of the Mission on April 19, 1638 at the age of twenty-six and died in Bar-le-Duc on January 19, 1640.

always among them and breathed no other air than their stench. He would hear their confessions with such assiduity, both morning and afternoon, that not once was I able to prevail on him to take the respite of a walk. We had him buried near the confessional where he had caught his malady and where he had amassed the many merits which he is now enjoying in heaven.

Two days before he died, his companion fell ill with a persistent fever that kept him in danger of death for eight days; he is fine now. His illness was the result of too much work and too great a zeal among the poor. On Christmas Eve, he went twenty-four hours without eating or sleeping; he left the confessional only to say Mass. Your men are flexible and docile about everything, except the advice they are given to take a little bit of rest. They believe that their bodies are not made of flesh, or that their life is supposed to last only a year.

As for the Brother,⁴ he is an extremely devout young man. He has looked after these two priests with all the patience and constant attention that the most difficult sick people could have desired.

430. - A PRIEST OF THE MISSION TO SAINT VINCENT

[Saint-Mihiel, beginning of 1640]¹

When I arrived, I began to give out alms. I find such a great number of poor people that I would not be able to give to all of them. There are more than three hundred in very great need and more than three hundred others in dire poverty. Monsieur, I am telling you the truth. There are more than a hundred who appear to be skeletons covered with skin and who are so ghastly that, if Our Lord did not give me the strength, I would not dare to look at them. Their skin is like bronzed marble, and drawn back so much that their teeth seem to be all uncovered and dry and their eyes and face quite

⁴David Levasseur, a coadjutor Brother, was born in Dancé (Orne) in the diocese of Chartres in 1608, and was received into the Congregation of the Mission on January 2, 1638.

Letter 430. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. XI, sect. I, p. 380.

¹This letter was written in 1640 by a Missionary who had just arrived in Saint-Mihiel. We already find him at work there in March of the same year. (Cf. Abelly, *ibid.*)

sullen. In short, it is the most dreadful thing you could ever see. They search for certain roots in the field, cook them, and eat them. I really have been wanting to recommend these immense calamities to the prayers of our Company. There are several unmarried women perishing of hunger, and there are some young ones among them. I am afraid that despair might cause them to fall into a greater misery than the temporal one.

431. - SAINT JANE FRANCES DE CHANTAL¹ TO SAINT VINCENT

[Annecy, February 1640]²

Very dear Father,

Blessed be our Divine Savior, who fortunately has brought us your dear children for His very great glory and the salvation of many. Everyone is delighted with them in Our Lord, but the Bishop of Geneva³ and I are indeed receiving an inexpressible consolation from them. It seems that they are our real brothers, with whom we feel a

Letter 431. - *Sainte Jeanne-Françoise Frémyot de Chantal. Sa vie et ses oeuvres* (8 vols., Paris: Plon, 1874-1880), vol. VIII, p. 222, letter 1671.

¹Jane Frances Frémiot was born in Dijon on January 23, 1572. Her marriage to the Baron de Chantal produced four children. Widowed at a very young age, she placed herself under the guidance of Saint Francis de Sales, and with him established the Order of the Visitation. The foundation of the first monastery in Paris drew her to that city where she remained from 1619 to 1622. There she became acquainted with Saint Vincent whom she requested of Jean- François de Gondi (Archbishop of Paris) as Superior of her daughters. Until her death in Moulins, December 13, 1641, on her return from a trip to Paris, she kept in close contact with this holy priest, whom she liked to consult for her spiritual direction and with regard to the business affairs of her community. (Cf. Henri de Maupas du Tour, *La Vie de la Vénérable Mère Jeanne-Françoise Frémyot* [new ed., Paris: Siméon Piget, 1653].)

²The Missionaries from Annecy had left for their destination on January 29 (cf. no. 423).

³Juste Guérin. Born Balthazar Guérin in Tramoy in 1578, he studied law in Turin and Pavia, then entered the novitiate of the Barnabites in Monza on December 10, 1599. He made his profession there on February 24, 1601, taking the name Dom Juste. Ordained a priest on September 24, 1605, he was chosen to collaborate in the foundation of a Barnabite convent in Turin and became the confessor of the young daughters of Duc Charles-Emmanuel I, Marie and Catherine. In 1614 he took possession of the Collège

perfect union of heart, and they with us, in a holy simplicity, openness, and trust. I spoke to them and they to me as though they were truly Sisters of the Visitation. They all have great goodness and candor. The third and the fifth⁴ need some help to come out of themselves a little. I shall speak of it to the Superior,⁵ who is truly a man qualified for that office. M. Escart is a saint.⁶ I have given each of them a practice. I am doing all that, and shall always do it, God willing, with great love and in obedience to you, very dear Father, and for our mutual consolation. Truly there is much to speak of to those dear

d'Annecy in the name of his Order. Consecrated Bishop of Geneva in Turin on June 25, 1639, he made his entry into Annecy on the following July 17. Having obtained Charles-Auguste de Sales as his Coadjutor in 1645, he withdrew to Rumilly where he died on November 3 of that year.

⁴Jacques Tholard and Etienne Bourdet. The latter was born in Saint-Babel (Puy-de-Dôme) on April 27, 1615, entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 9, 1638, and was ordained a priest, June 2, 1640. He was Superior in Toul from 1641 to 1642 and made his vows on June 10, 1648.

⁵Bernard Codoing, born in Agen on August 11, 1610. He was ordained a priest in December 1635 and was received into the Congregation of the Mission on February 10, 1636. He holds an important place among the first companions of Saint Vincent. He was the first Superior of the seminary in Annecy (1640-1642) and directed the house in Rome for two years (1642-1644). Then he was placed at the head of the Saint Charles Seminary, situated on the grounds of Saint-Lazare (1645-1646). From there he went to Saint-Méen under particularly difficult circumstances (1646-1648), next to La Rose (1648-1649), and finally to Richelieu (1649-1650), always as Superior. He was very successful in his missions in France and Italy. His sermons were so appealing that at one point Saint Vincent considered publishing them. Bernard Codoing would have rendered greater service to Saint Vincent had he been less attached to his own ideas and had he learned to control his tendency to hastiness. We might be tempted to say "Happy faults!", since they merited for us some of the most beautiful letters in Saint Vincent's correspondence.

Sometime between 1651 and 1655 Codoing left the Congregation of the Mission. On July 24, 1654, he was Pastor of Saint-Hilaire in Agen where he last signed the baptismal register on January 2, 1673. He also acted as Vicar-General of the Bishop of Gap. The last reference to Codoing is October 6, 1675, at which time he was at the seminary in Sens. (Cf. *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission*, vols. 114-115 [1949-1950].)

⁶Pierre Escart was born in 1612 in the canton of Valais, Switzerland, entered the Congregation of the Mission on March 6, 1637, and was ordained a priest the following year. He was stationed in Annecy at the time of its foundation and later sent to Richelieu. At the beginning of his sojourn in Annecy, he made a good impression on Saint Jane Frances; she called him a saint as this letter tells us. He was indeed virtuous, zealous and very austere. He would have continued to please Saint Jane Frances if he had known how to preserve moderation in his zeal, to tolerate more patiently the defects of others, and to judge his confreres, especially his Superiors, with greater fairness. His temperament carried him to extremes. In a fit of temper he killed one of his friends and, sometime before 1659, died in Rome where he had gone to beg absolution for this murder.

souls. The good Father [Duhamel]⁷ revealed his difficulties to me with great simplicity. He is virtuous and has good judgment, but it will be hard for him to persevere. I entreated him to think neither of leaving nor of staying, but of consciously applying himself to the work of God, abandoning himself and trusting in His Providence. I would like him to become stronger because he has great promise. In short, they are all affable and gave great edification in this town the three days they stayed here. They do indeed bring to mind the spirit of my very dear Father.

431a. - SAINT JANE FRANCES TO SAINT VINCENT

[Mid-February 1640]¹

As for the Visitor,² it is still the opinion of our Superiors and us that he would be very helpful in the preservation of our Institute. However, we all find great difficulties with the means suggested for establishing him because of the rebelliousness we know to exist in

⁷Jean Duhamel, a young priest in the Congregation of the Mission, left the Congregation from Annecy in 1640. His will, dated April 18, 1643 (cf. Arch. Nat M 211, f°1), reveals that he keenly regretted his departure from the Congregation and his errors.

Letter 431a. - Archives of the Visitation of Annecy: Chantal (Ste J.F. de), Série Oeuvres, B, No. 11, f°11 v - 12. This edition used the text of the manuscript copy published by Roger Devos, "Le Testament spirituel de sainte Jeanne-Françoise de Chantal et l'affaire du Visiteur Apostolique," *Revue Historique Spirituelle*, 49 (1973), pp. 218-219, no. 14.

¹Date of this letter according to Devos.

²For some fifteen years, several people interested in the welfare of the Visitation Order, among them Saint Vincent, Bishop Juste Guérin, and Commander de Sillery, had been discussing with Saint Jane Frances the feasibility of an Apostolic Visitor to insure a uniformity of spirit among the various monasteries. They feared that the absence of a moral bond among the convents of the Visitation, which were autonomous and dependent on the local Ordinaries, might in time lead to a profound deviation in the primitive spirit and to a regrettable diversity. To ward off this danger, they saw nothing better than the appointment of Visitors who, at regular intervals, would make canonical visitations of the monasteries in order to check the abuses and watch over the preservation of the traditions of the Order. For her part, Saint Jane Frances, who originally had rejected the idea because she feared the Gallicanism of the French bishops, the independence of individual bishops, and the opposition of some Sisters, finally accepted the suggestion before her death. (Cf. Devos, *op. cit.*, 48 [1972], pp. 453-476; 49 [1973], pp. 355-360, no. 28.)

the spirit of our Sister Superior, N.;³ it is everything we dread.

I can well see that we shall not succeed in the manner suggested. We must try, if it is deemed advisable, to win over the Prelates and the monasteries by gentleness, adroitly bringing them to understand the matter and to see that it will not run counter to the authority of the Prelates. Likewise, very dear Father, it will be necessary for the Visitor to make tactful use of holy humility and charity, and to keep hidden the authority he has from the Holy See. Otherwise, he will not be able to do anything. I wish that we were already worrying about giving him advice. If God establishes this plan in gentleness, I trust that it will be greatly to His glory. However, very dear Father, your goodness will have to draw up the rules for the Visitor. You have already given so much of your time, which is so dear and precious, to this blessed affair, that I look on in wonder at the way you have been able to find it in the midst of the pressure and urgency of your other concerns. It is the holy love God has given you for us that makes you do the impossible. We shall make no move in this affair until we hear from you. May God direct everything to the end His Providence has ordained!

³Perhaps Saint Jane Frances was referring to this Sister when she wrote to Commander de Sillery: "Sister Superior N. has spoken to M. N. about it in language so harsh and so absolute that he was hardly edified by it. Yet, she is a very good religious and has always shown great affection for me. She asked this good gentleman to find out discreetly whether I was yielding to this scheme and to let her know, and she let slip a number of remarks that made quite obvious her resolution to oppose it. I know of no one in the Institute who can be less flexible than she and who has the ear of Bishop N. and a large share in his inclinations. Now I am convinced that she will not conceal this from him and that she will notify quite a number of the monasteries, if she has not done so already, in order to communicate the same sentiments to them." (Cf. Devos, *op. cit.*, 49 [1973], pp. 217-218, no. 13.)

432. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[February 1640]¹

We are awaiting you with the affection known to Our Lord. You will come just in time for the business concerning the galley-slaves.

433. - TO LOUIS LEBRETON, IN ROME

Paris, Tuesday after Quadragesima,¹ 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have received your letter of January 16. I praise God that you have seen good Bishop Ingoli² and that he seems to have scarcely any difficulty with the objection we made to the suggestion his goodness offered us. We shall ardently await the favors he has led us to expect. I am also praising God for the kindness toward you which He has inspired in that good gentleman, the Canon of Our Lady of the Rotunda.³ I think we shall have to satisfy him in the way he desires, in the matter that you mentioned to me, if it is greatly useful. One gets

Letter 432. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 33. This manuscript adds another sentence that we are omitting because it belongs to no. 213.

¹In February 1640, Saint Vincent was awaiting Saint Louise, who was then in Angers, to attend with her to the work of the galley-slaves, which was going to be entrusted to the Daughters of Charity (cf. no. 426, n. 3). No better date can be given this letter than that of the Saint Paul manuscript, which has preserved the above passage.

Letter 433. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹The Tuesday after the First Sunday in Lent, February 28 in 1640.

²Bishop Ingoli was Secretary of Propaganda Fide from 1622 to 1649. For certain activities within France it was necessary for Saint Vincent to deal with that office.

³The present Pantheon. The Chapter of the Rotunda still exists.

settled as best one can in the beginning. But if the conditions seem detrimental to you, *O Jésus! Monsieur*, he will not be annoyed with you for telling him simply what we can and what we cannot do.

It would be well to hope that the Saint Bibiana⁴ affair succeeds, but the matter is too difficult, and Our Lady of Loretto in the Marches⁵ is expensive and, still more, the palace in which Cardinal Bichi⁶ resides. I do not know what to tell you about the little church of Saint John,⁷ because you did not tell me the price. As for Our Lady of Loretto and the Bichi palace, they are beyond our means and you must not even consider the help you were suggesting for the palace. I return to what I wrote to you about a small, well-ventilated house, not too far from the Vatican where, nevertheless, we can expand in time. Even if it is not so near that holy place and there is no church, it does not matter, for, since we are not working in Rome, we can do without a church. A small chapel will be enough for us, unless there is some indication that in time we may be engaged with the ordinands; but we shall wait and see. At present, we are responsible for all in the Kingdom who are ordained in this city.

I am not mentioning our principal business to you, except that I find myself perplexed about the doubts that occur to

⁴A church built in the fourth century on the site that was allegedly occupied by the house of Saint Bibiana, not far from the gate of San Lorenzo.

⁵A church, north of Trajan's Forum, built in 1507 by the Bakers' Guild. The well-known sanctuary of Our Lady of Loretto is in the Marches, hence the word *Marquisane* used by Saint Vincent.

⁶Alessandro Bichi was born in 1598 in Siena and died in Rome on May 25, 1657. He was Bishop of Isola (1628), of Carpentras (1630), Apostolic Nuncio in France (1630-1634), Cardinal [Cardinal-Priest of the church of Saint Sabina] (1633), and Legate of Avignon (1634). Mazarin entrusted him with important missions. (Cf. Tamizey de Larroque, *Le Cardinal Bichi, évêque de Carpentras*, vol. VIII of *Les correspondants de Peiresc. Lettres inédites*, Marseilles, [1885].)

⁷There were several churches of this name in Rome. We think Saint John before the Latin Gate is referred to here; it was built in 772 near the place where, according to tradition, Saint John the Evangelist was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil.

me and the decision to make concerning the last method I suggested to you: whether it would be sufficient to make a vow of stability and, with regard to the observance of poverty and obedience, to proclaim a solemn excommunication against those who have money laid aside in their own keeping or elsewhere. This should take place in Chapter on a certain day of the year (at which everyone would be obliged to be present and to hand over what he had to the Superior). That is what the Carthusians do. The same could be done against the disobedient; or else, whether, instead of excommunication, we were to have them make a solemn oath every year to observe the rule of poverty, chastity, and obedience. I entreat you, Monsieur, to talk this over with the Reverend Father Assistant⁸ and, to find out whether the vow of stability by itself constitutes the religious state. Everyone here has so great an aversion for this state that it is a pity. Nevertheless, if it is considered expedient, we shall have to do it. The Christian religion was resisted everywhere in the past and, nonetheless, it was the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ. Happy are those who, *confusione contempta*,⁹ embrace this state.

The secular clergy are receiving a great deal from God at present. They say that our wretched Company has made a great contribution to them by means of the ordinands and the gathering of priests in Paris. There are many people of rank embracing this state right now. M. de la Marguerie,¹⁰ formerly the First President of a Province, became a simple priest just ten days ago. We have among the ordinands a Councillor from the Great Council,¹¹ and a Master of Accounts,¹² who wishes

⁸The French Assistant to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Etienne Charlet.

⁹*Headless of shame.* (Cf. Heb. 12:2.)

¹⁰Elie Laisné, Sieur de la Marguerie et de la Dourville, Ordinary State Councillor. After the death of his wife, he entered the priesthood, and died October 3, 1656.

¹¹François Voysin, Seigneur de Villebourg, was born on March 14, 1613, became a member of the Great Council on February 22, 1638, and died of a stroke on April 19, 1660. He left about 100,000 écus to the general hospital.

¹²Thomas Le Gauffre was born in Grand-Lucé (Sarthe), became Commissioner of

to remain such. They are becoming simple priests out of devotion. M. de Mesgrigny,¹³ Advocate General at the Board of Excise, has withdrawn with M. Brandon¹⁴ to Saint-Maur for that purpose. We were not able to receive him into our house for six months, as he was asking, because of the rule we have, with which you are familiar, of admitting among us only persons who wish to become members of the Company, with the exception of the retreatants, who stay for ten days.

What shall I say about the talk you had with the Ambassador,¹⁵ concerning the Italian prelate you mentioned to me, except that we have a rule and, by the mercy of God, are exact in the practice of never getting mixed up in affairs of State, or even discussing them.¹⁶ That is: (1) because *quod supra nos*

Audit in 1628 and Master-Councillor in 1636, and died in 1645. He was a friend of Claude Bernard, whose charitable works he carried on, and of Jean-Jacques Olier, whom he greatly assisted in the evangelization of Canada.

¹³Nicolas de Mesgrigny, Prior of Souvigny and Comte de Brioude; later, Canon of Paris.

¹⁴Philibert Brandon, Seigneur du Laurent, became a Councillor in the Parlement on February 18, 1622. He left this position after the death of his wife, Marie de Ligny, niece of Chancellor Séguier, to enter the priesthood on the advice of Father de Condren. He was one of the founders of the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice. Brandon had offered his house of Saint-Maur-les-Fossés (Val-de-Marne) to M. Olier and his first companions. It was there that this pious phalanx of apostolic men spent part of the years 1640 and 1641. In 1648 he became Bishop of Périgueux, after having refused the See of Babylon, suggested to him by Saint Vincent. He stayed there until his death on July 11, 1652. His relationship with the Abbé de Saint-Cyran did not affect his orthodoxy. (Cf. Frédéric Monier, *Vie de Jean-Jacques Olier* [Paris: Poussielgue, 1914], vol. I, p. 254 ff.)

¹⁵François-Annibal, Duc d'Estrées, Comte de Nanteuil-le-Haudoin, Peer and Marshal of France.

¹⁶Saint Vincent never departed from this practice except when he tried to remedy the numberless evils that arose from Mazarin's politics. Moreover, in the Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission, the first edition of which Saint Vincent distributed in 1655, he stipulated: "No one shall speak against other countries or provinces, since much harm is wont to follow from such actions;" and "In public conflicts and wars that may arise between Christian rulers, no one shall show a preference for one side or the other, in imitation of Christ who was unwilling to arbitrate between two brothers involved in litigation, or to pass judgement on the rights of civil rulers." And, finally, "Everyone shall hold aloof from conversations about matters of state or kingdom, or other public worldly affairs, especially about war and the disputes of contemporary civil leaders, and other such talk of the world. No one shall, as far as possible, even write about these things." (Cf. *Common Rules* [English translation of 1954 edition], chap. VIII, nos. 14-16.)

nihil ad nos;¹⁷ (2) because it is not fitting for poor priests such as we to get mixed up with or to talk about things other than those concerning our vocation; (3) the affairs of Princes are mysteries that we ought to respect and not examine minutely; (4) most people offend God by passing judgment on the things others do, especially important people, not knowing the reasons why they are doing what they do; for when one does not know the primary cause of some matter, what conclusions can he draw from it? (5) everything to be done is problematic except those things determined by Holy Scripture; beyond that, no one possesses the dogma of infallibility in his opinions. That being true, as it is, is it not great temerity to judge the opinions and actions of others? (6) the Son of God, Who is the model on which we are to mold our life, always kept silent about the government of princes, although they were pagans and idolaters; (7) He made known to His Apostles that they were not to interfere curiously in matters concerning not only the affairs of princes but also those of individuals. He said to one of them, speaking of another: *si eum volo manere, quid ad te?*¹⁸

For all these reasons and an infinity of others, I beg you, Monsieur, to keep to our little practice, which is never to talk about, much less intervene in, the affairs of Princes, either by word or in writing, and to inform the Ambassador, if he does you the honor of speaking to you about it, that such is the practice in our Little Company. Entreat him to excuse you if, when he did you the honor of talking to you freely, you reported the opinion of the public concerning the matter about which he spoke to you and went beyond what we ought to do according to our little Rules. And, in order to establish

¹⁷*Things that are above us are nothing to us.*

¹⁸*If I wish him to remain, what is it to you?* Jn. 21:22. ‘“Suppose I want him to stay until I come,’ Jesus replied, ‘how does that concern you? Your business is to follow me.’” (NAB)

yourself more and more in the exact observance of this little rule, I beg you, Monsieur, to make your prayer on this matter, on the day after you receive this letter or as soon as possible, on the points above and to ask God in it to grant to the Company the grace of always being faithful to the observance of this little rule. There will be no need for you to send me a reply about this matter because I am certain that you agree with everything I am saying and that this practice is worth enforcing after this.

As soon as you have your faculty to become established, I shall send you the priest and the cleric you request. If you buy some house at a cost of only three or four thousand livres, send us a copy of the contract, signed and sealed in proper form to be used as a guarantee for those who will be giving us the money. It will serve as a receipt for the letter of exchange you will draw from our account, a month after this letter is received. And as for that Piedmontese boy, we shall accept him and have him study, if you send him to us and think that he has what it takes to be a good Missionary.

I am sending you the power of attorney from M. Dehorgny, Commander of Holy Spirit in Toul, to relinquish the house to the Company *causa unionis*,¹⁹ together with an attestation

¹⁹To understand Saint Vincent's statement, we must go back to the origin of the establishment founded in that city. In 1238, Néméric Barat, the Master Alderman in Toul, had entrusted a hospital which he had just built for orphans and the infirm to the Order of the Holy Spirit, but in 1635 the only members of that Order who were still in the city were Maître Dominique Thouvignon and two monks. Dominique Thouvignon resigned his benefice in favor of Bishop Charles de Gournay, in exchange for a pension of two thousand livres barrois [local measure of money based on the amount of silver or gold in a coin]. The latter offered it to the Priests of the Mission and Jean Dehorgny became titular by a royal decree in May 1635. Lambert aux Couteaux and Antoine Colée were placed there and carried out the functions of their state: missions, conferences to priests, and retreats. On June 16, by amicable arrangement, the two Holy Spirit Brothers surrendered to Jean Dehorgny all their rights to the house and the hospital in exchange for a pension of six hundred livres barrois and certain privileges. The hospital absorbed a great deal of the Missionaries' time which they would have liked to devote to the missions. At their request, it was decreed on March 17, 1637, that the Bishop, the King's

from the Vicar General of Toul, which will serve the same purpose. I entreat you, Monsieur, to work on this matter with your usual prudence and diligence. M. Le Bret²⁰ will tell you about the difficulty this affair is undergoing because of the opposition you have reason to fear on the part of the General of Holy Spirit.²¹

I shall end this letter so that I may go to see good M. Renar²² who sent for me as he is gravely and critically ill.

Lieutenant, and the Master Alderman would administer the hospice by means of two delegates of their choice, and the Mission would receive a third of the movable and immovable goods administered by the Holy Spirit Brothers before 1635. The division was a source of numerous disputes for four or five years. (Cf. Eugène Martin, *Histoire des diocèses de Toul, de Nancy et de Saint-Dié* [3 vols., Nancy: A. Crépin-Leblond, 1900-1903], vol. II, pp. 208 ff.) In December 1657, the King suppressed the Commandery of Holy Spirit in Toul and united it to the Congregation of the Mission.

²⁰Jacques Le Bret, Canon of Toul, Auditor of the Rota, and cleric of the Apostolic Chamber, was a native of Paris. He was appointed to the See of Toul on April 24, 1645, and consecrated at Saint-Louis-des-Français. The King of France, who had not been notified through diplomatic channels, refused to recognize him. The dispute was settled by the death of the party concerned; he passed away in Rome on June 15 of the same year. Jacques Le Bret rendered many services to the Congregation of the Mission.

²¹Etienne Vaius, Bishop in *partibus* of Cyrene, Grand Master of the Order of the Holy Spirit.

²²Among the members of the Tuesday Conferences, Saint Vincent had no one, perhaps, who was a more zealous and useful auxiliary than François Renar, born in Paris on April 25, 1604. This holy priest divided his time between spiritual direction and works of charity. Every morning from six o'clock until noon, he was at the disposition of his penitents, among whom was Jeanne Potier, the wife of Michel de Marillac. He was seen at the Hôtel-Dieu, visiting and instructing the sick. He preached in hospitals and jails, taught catechism to children, and went to proclaim the Gospel in villages, often with the Priests of the Mission. He took part in missions given at the Quinze-Vingts, at the Pitié, at the Refuge, and at La Chapelle where he undertook the teaching of catechism to the poor from Lorraine. Where was he not to be found? He brought the Good News to the people of Poitou, Touraine, Saintonge, Auvergne, Champagne, Burgundy, and to "almost all the provinces of France," says his biographer. Saint Vincent invited him to give talks to the ordinands at Saint-Lazare. Like so many others, François Renar was curious enough to go see the possessed nuns of Loudun who were being talked about everywhere; he said Mass in their Chapel, constantly distracted by their vociferations and their blasphemies. Toward the end of his life, when his infirmities no longer allowed him the same activity, he became the director of the nuns of Saint-Thomas. Death put an end to his work on January 14, 1653. (Cf. Louis Abelly, *L'idée d'un véritable prestre de l'Eglise de Jésus-Christ et d'un fidèle directeur des âmes, exprimée en la vie de M. Renar, prestre, directeur des religieuses du monastère de S. Thomas* [Paris: F. Lambert, n.d.]; Louis

God has disposed of our good late M. de Montevit, whom you knew at the seminary. His death came in Bar-le-Duc, where he was reputed a saint, at the College of the Jesuits. They did us the kindness of housing him with the other Fathers while he was working for the corporal and spiritual nourishment of five or six hundred poor people. These latter all accompanied him to the tomb, two by two, candle in hand, weeping for him as at the death of their own father. The Reverend Father Rector wrote me noteworthy things about him.²³ M. Boucher replaced him, but he has also fallen ill because of the great amount of work he undertook for the poor. Brother Mathieu²⁴ returned from there yesterday evening as well as from Metz, Toul, and Verdun,²⁵ after having sent Nancy its share of the alms. We are continuing to assist those poor people to the amount of five hundred livres per month²⁶ in each of the above-mentioned towns. But indeed, Monsieur, I greatly fear that we will not be able to keep it up much longer. It is so hard to find twenty-five hundred livres every month.

Abelly, *Les opuscules spirituels de Monsieur Renar, prestre, directeur des religieuses du monastère de S. Thomas* [Paris: n.p., 1698].)

²³Cf. no. 429.

²⁴Brother Mathieu Régnard was born in Brienne-le-Château, now Brienne-Napoléon (Aube), on July 26, 1592. He entered the Congregation of the Mission in October 1631, made vows October 28, 1644, and died October 5, 1669. He was the principal distributor of Saint Vincent's alms in Lorraine and during the troubles of the Fronde. He was a great help to the Saint because of his daring, composure, and savoir faire. His biography is in vol. II of the *Notices*, pp. 29-33.

²⁵Between the Town Magistrates of Verdun and Saint Vincent there was an exchange of letters that we no longer have. On January 21, 1640, the Municipal Council of the town decided to write to "M. Vincent, General of the Priests of the Mission in Paris, so that he might be so kind as to continue the charities and distributions of alms that he has begun in these districts." (Cf. *Revue de Gascogne* [1908], p. 354.)

²⁶Brother Mathieu made fifty-three trips to Lorraine, each time carrying sums of money varying between twenty and fifty thousand livres. Bands of thieves, who had been alerted to his passage and knew what he was carrying, watched him closely, but he always arrived at his destination with his treasure. His company was considered a safeguard. The Comtesse de Montgomery, who was reluctant to make the trip from Metz to Verdun, decided to do so only after having procured Brother Mathieu as a traveling companion. Queen Anne of Austria used to enjoy listening to Brother Mathieu tell of his adventures.

I recommend our deceased man and our sick man to your prayers, together with the needs of our poor and I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.²⁷

I jotted down what Bishop Ingoli requested but so poorly that I am ashamed to send it to you. I ask you to fix it up, and give it to him, Monsieur, and assure him of my obedience.

Addressed: Monsieur Lebreton, Priest of the Mission, in Rome

434. - TO LOUIS LEBRETON, IN ROME

Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris, March 1, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter of January 28 here at two o'clock. It told me: (1) about our principal business;¹ (2) about what M. Le Bret achieved with the Vice-Gerent with regard to your establishment; (3) about what you told me of the churches mentioned to you and the lodging; (4) about the offer made

He left a written narration of eighteen dangers from which he had escaped, but it has been lost. (Cf. Collet, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 319, note.)

²⁷*Indignus sacerdos Congregationis Missionis - unworthy priest of the Congregation of the Mission.* Saint Vincent often wrote this phrase in French after his signature, varying it from "priest of the Mission" to "unworthy priest of the Mission." Since it has become traditional in the Congregation of the Mission to append to one's name the Latin of these words, usually abbreviated to *i.s.C.M.*, this edition uses the *i.s.C.M.* wherever Saint Vincent added any form of the phrase.

Letter 434. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹The matter of the vows.

to you by that good Canon from the Rotunda; (5) about the dispatches I requested from you concerning marriage impediments; and finally about what happened with Cardinal de Bagni.²

Now, with regard to the first point, let me say that I think you would do well to waste no time in our principal business according to the modification or change that I sent to you in the letter of December 10, which you mentioned to me.³ His Eminence⁴ sent me word that, when the situation has changed somewhat, he will be able to write about it. Nevertheless, do not fail to propose the matter the way it is and please send me a rough draft.

As for the second point, I am heartened by what you say M. Le Bret has accomplished with the Vice-Gerent. I think you would do well not to waste any time on that matter.

As for the churches and the lodging, we are too poor to agree to Our Lady of Loretto. I think you should keep to what I wrote you. Buy some hospice at low price, but with a garden, nevertheless, and in some place where we can expand with time.

²Giovanni Francesco Guidi di Bagno, born in October 1578, was the Bishop of Cervia and Rieti; the Vice-legate of Avignon; Nuncio in Flanders, then in France (1627); Cardinal in 1629; died July 24, 1641.

³This letter is not extant.

⁴Armand Jean du Plessis, Cardinal Richelieu, was born in Paris on September 9, 1585, the youngest of five children of François du Plessis and Suzanne de la Porte. As Bishop of Luçon he acted as a spokesman for the clergy at the Estates-General of 1614. Raised to the cardinalate in 1622, he entered the Council of the King (1624) and quickly became its head. His guidance of foreign affairs helped to raise France to the highest echelon among the European powers. In the administration of French internal affairs Richelieu imposed useful reforms in finances, the army, and legislation (*Code Michau*). He was the author of royal absolutism: he destroyed the privileges of the Huguenots and of the Provinces, and reestablished the authority of the intendants throughout France. He died on December 4, 1642, attended by, among others, his niece, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, and King Louis XIII, who followed the Cardinal's deathbed advice in appointing Mazarin as Chief Minister.

Mon Dieu! what shall we do about the exchange? I shall make inquiries as to whether we can send the money by some ship from Marseilles; you do the same.

I see immense difficulties in the offer of the Rotunda. Warmly thank that good gentleman who offered it to us.

I shall write to you later concerning the dispatches for the invalid marriages.

I entreat you meanwhile, to tell Cardinal Bagni what I had the happiness of telling him before. I hope he will some day approve what we are asking.

In the meantime, I ask you, Monsieur, as I did in my preceding letter, to observe exactly our little rule with regard to never discussing State matters, mortifying the curiosity to know and converse about worldly affairs. One of our Brothers, who goes back and forth, carrying money into Lorraine for the poor, told me that he finds it a great consolation when he is here in this house, never to hear any news. He is very much astonished to see the opposite practice in the religious Communities with whom he stops. M. du Coudray⁵ wrote the same thing to me from Toul and said that we must retain this invaluable practice and observe it.

Good day, Monsieur, I am your servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Lebreton, Priest of the Mission, in Rome

⁵ François du Coudray, born in 1586 in the city of Amiens, was ordained a priest in September 1618, and in March 1626 he was received into the Congregation of the Mission, of which the only other members were as yet Saint Vincent and Antoine Portail. He was gifted with extraordinary intelligence and knew Hebrew well enough to be judged capable of doing a new translation of the Bible.

It was he whom the Saint chose to go to Rome to negotiate the approbation of the nascent Congregation. He remained there from 1631 to 1635. We find him next in Paris;

435. - A PRIEST OF THE MISSION¹ TO SAINT VINCENT

Saint-Mihiel, March 1640

At our last distribution of bread, there were 1,132 poor people, without counting the sick, of whom there are a large number. We assist them with food and appropriate remedies. They all pray for their benefactors with such sentiments of gratitude that a number of them weep with emotion, even the rich, who are touched by these things. I do not believe that these people, for whom so many and such frequent prayers are offered, could be lost. The noblemen of the town have high praise for this charitable work. They say openly that many would have died without this help and voice the obligation they have toward you. A few days ago, a poor Swiss gentleman abjured his Lutheran heresy and, after having received the sacraments, died in a very Christian manner.

436. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

[Before 1642]

To the question addressed to him, as to whether it would be advisable at the end of the missions to request attestations of the work accomplished and the results achieved, the Saint answered:

from there he went into various areas to relieve the poor, to assist soldiers, or to give missions. In 1638, the Saint confided to him the direction of the house in Toul, which he retained until 1641. He was recalled to Saint-Lazare in 1641, spent part of the year 1643 in Marseilles evangelizing the galley-slaves and founding a house in that city, and in 1644 took over the direction of the house in La Rose (Lot-et-Garonne).

Unfortunately, his vast erudition was not accompanied by sufficiently solid theological knowledge. He maintained some unorthodox opinions and persevered in them despite the admonitions given him. The measures that Saint Vincent was obliged to take to prevent him from spreading his errors darkened the last years of his life. In 1646, he went from the La Rose house to Richelieu. There he ended his days in February 1649, in his sixty-third year.

Letter 435. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. XI, sect. I, p. 380.

¹This letter was written by the same priest who wrote no. 430. He had recently arrived in Saint-Mihiel.

Letter 436. - Collet, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 292.

“that they would do well not to ask for any. It was sufficient that God knew their good works and that the poor were assisted, without their wishing to produce any other proofs.”¹

437. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1638 and 1650]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am afraid you cannot refuse the alms that poor woman is asking of you without some sort of failing in charity toward your neighbor. I do not think that will oblige you to go to any lengths to feed the child. She will have to have it placed at the Foundlings; or if the mother nurses some small infant from a titled family, she can have her own child cared for in the country for half as much. In any case, God will provide for the child and for your son as well, without your giving way to anxiety about what will become of him. Give the child and the mother to Our Lord. He will take good care of you and your son. Just let Him do His Will in you and in him, and await it in all your exercises. All you need to do is to devote yourself entirely to God. Oh! how little it takes to be very holy: to do the Will of God in all things.

[I am in]² the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

¹Collet noted that Saint Vincent subsequently changed his mind, and to substantiate this he referred to a letter written on January 21, 1642, which letter is no longer extant.

Letter 437. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Dates of the institution of the work for the foundlings and of the marriage of Michel Le Gras.

²These words and the signature were carelessly cut off when someone wanted to reduce

438. - A PRIEST TO SAINT VINCENT

[Between 1639 and 1643]¹

Having seen the letters coming from Lorraine, which you sent to M. N., who showed them to me, I must confess that I was not able to read them without weeping and, so copiously, that several times I was forced to stop reading them. I praise our good God for the paternal providence He has for His creatures and I am asking Him to continue His graces to your priests who are employed in that divine exercise. There remains only my regret at seeing those charitable workers winning heaven and helping so many others to win it, while I, in my wretchedness, do nothing but crawl about the earth like a useless animal.

439. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Thursday morning [Between 1639 and 1642]¹

Mademoiselle,

I did not remember yesterday, when I sent you word that I would come to your house today,² that I had orders from the Archbishop³ to go and see the Duchesse d'Aiguillon in Rueil today with the Pastor of Saint-Leu.⁴ See which would

the original letter to the measurements of the frame that holds it.

Letter 438. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. XI, sect. I, p. 378.

¹The period during which the Priests of the Mission were engaged in relief work for the devastated Province of Lorraine.

Letter 439. - The original autograph letter is preserved at the Provincial House of the Daughters of Charity in Le Mans.

¹The position of "Thursday morning" and the simultaneous presence of Jean Dehorgny and François Soufliers in Paris do not allow this letter to be placed at any other time.

²Probably to give a conference.

³Jean-François de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris.

⁴André du Saussay, born in Paris around 1589, was a doctor in both laws, a talented

be better: either tell the Sisters not to come or let Monsieur Dehorgny or M. Soufliers⁵ speak to them, and decide which of the two. Meanwhile, I wish you a good day and am, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

440. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Friday at noon [Between 1639 and 1651]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

For several days I have had five hundred livres which I am sending you by this messenger because we owe it to you. Now the Prior² has asked me for some three thousand livres he gave

controversialist, a renowned orator, a prolific writer, and the Pastor of Saint-Leu and Saint-Gilles (1624-1656). He found favor with the King who made him his counselor and preacher. He became ecclesiastical judge and Vicar General of Paris (1643-1655). Proposed by the Queen Regent as candidate for the episcopal See of Toul in 1649, he was not approved by the Pope until 1656. He governed his diocese wisely and died on September 9, 1675, after having merited the epitaph engraved on his tomb: *vir clero et populo amabilis* [a man beloved by the clergy and the people]. (Cf. Martin, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 236 ff.)

⁵François Soufliers, born in Montmirail in 1606, in the diocese of Soissons, was received at the Bons-Enfants in August 1629, was ordained a priest in September 1631, and made his vows on the feast of Saint Matthias [February 24], 1642. He was Superior of Notre-Dame de la Rose from 1642 to 1644. Saint Vincent recommended that his manner of dealing with heretics be imitated.

Letter 440. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹The position of the words "Saint-Lazare" does not allow the letter to be placed prior to 1639. Moreover, this letter antedates the death of Adrien Le Bon, the Prior of Saint-Lazare.

²Adrien Le Bon, Canon Regular of Saint Augustine, was born in Neufchâtel

us about three months ago without our asking him, to be returned when he wished. And although he gave us silver money, he is asking us for louis or weighted coin, which is the reason, it seems, for which he gave us that sum. Now, we are caught a bit unawares. Mademoiselle, could you lend us that amount? We shall return it to you when you wish and try to convert it into money of standard weight—I mean the three thousand livres I think you still have. There is nothing in the world that you can be more sure of, by the grace of God.

The meeting³ has been postponed until Monday. If you think it advisable to reprove Sister Marie Monique, do so.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am feeling better, thank God, and am your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

441. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Monday at noon [Between 1639 and 1641]¹

Mademoiselle,

You did not send me word as to where the Abbé de Vaux is staying. Do you not think it fitting for us to ask him to

(Seine-Maritime) and died at Saint-Lazare on April 9, 1651, in his seventy-fourth year. As Prior of Saint-Lazare, he supervised the transfer of the Priory to Saint Vincent and the Congregation of the Mission. He also donated a number of farms for the support of the Congregation.

³The meeting of the Ladies of Charity.

Letter 441. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Before 1639, the Sisters were not yet in Richelieu; in 1641, Sister Perrette was already a member of the Community.

come to dinner here? I would like you to be able to make the arrangements for Thursday; if you cannot, I shall try to go and visit him at his lodging.

It would be well to send word to that good Sister in Angers to come right home. She may not find the Sisters in Richelieu ready or they may have left.

I saw our Sister Henriette's² niece³ yesterday. Since things have happened the way they have, I think it will be well to give her a try and for me to write to the Bishop of Beauvais⁴ in case she is brought to justice.

I no longer have any congestion or fever, since God is so pleased. I am about to go out right now and shall try to have the happiness of seeing you one day this week. I am your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

²Henriette Gesseume was one of the first Daughters of Charity. She was very intelligent and resourceful, but too independent. Her first years in the Company were spent in the environs of Paris. A clever pharmacist, she was of great assistance at the hospital in Nantes, where she remained from 1646 to 1655. She returned to Paris in 1655 and worked in the parish of Saint-Séverin; she also nursed wounded soldiers in Calais in 1658 and later ministered to the galley-slaves. Two of her nieces, Françoise Gesseume and Perrette Chefdeville, also became Daughters of Charity. One of her brothers and a nephew, Claude Gesseume and Nicolas Chefdeville, entered the Congregation of the Mission as coadjutor Brothers.

³Perrette Chefdeville was born in Villiers-sous-Saint-Leu and entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity in 1640 or 1641. She served the poor in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, in Fontenay, and then in Serqueux. In 1653 she assisted the war victims in Châlons (cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 526, n. 1). "She is a very good young woman," Saint Louise wrote of her, "never was there such submission, at least none greater." (*Ibid.*, L. 328.)

⁴Augustin Potier, Seigneur de Blancmesnil, consecrated in Rome on September 17, 1617, renewed his diocese with the help of Saint Vincent and Adrien Bourdoise. He summoned the Ursulines to Beauvais and Clermont, had missions given in which he himself took part, established a seminary in his episcopal palace, and multiplied the Confraternities of Charity. He became Grand Almoner of the Queen, and was a member of the Council of Conscience. Named Prime Minister at the death of Louis XIII (1643), he was going to receive the cardinal's hat when Mazarin's influence prevented this. He

442. - A PRIEST¹ TO SAINT VINCENT

[Around 1640]²

Among the people who made general confessions, I can assure you that there were more than fifteen hundred who had never made a good one. Moreover, for the most part, they had wallowed in quite grievous sins for the space of ten, twenty, and thirty years; they frankly admitted that they had never confessed them to their ordinary pastors and confessors. Great ignorance was to be found there, but still more, malice. They were so ashamed to make known their sins that some of them could not make up their minds to reveal them even in the general confessions they made to the Missionaries. But finally, strongly impelled by what they heard in the sermons and catechism lessons, they yielded and confessed their faults frankly with wailing and tears.

443. - TO LOUIS ABELLY, IN BAYONNE

Paris, April 26, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of our Lord be with you forever!

I am writing to the Bishop of Bayonne¹ to say a word about the subject you did me the honor of mentioning in your letter,

died June 20, 1650. (Cf. Abbé Delettre, *Histoire du diocèse de Beauvais* [3 vols., Beauvais: Desjardins, 1842-1843], vol. III, pp. 377-438; cf. also, Fernand Potier de la Morandière, *Augustin Potier, évêque et comte de Beauvais* [Paris: P. Féron-Vrau, 1902].)

Letter 442. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. I, p. 2.

¹"An ecclesiastic of importance and virtuous life, who had assisted and even worked," says Abelly, in the mission whose fruits he is here describing, a mission being given in a large and important town of Anjou.

²In 1664, Abelly stated that this letter dated back "more than twenty years."

Letter 443. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹François Fouquet.

which is that the deceased Monsieur Fouquet² did not agree for many years with everything the above-mentioned Bishop thought about the establishment of women religious in Bayonne. He told me some very important reasons for his [disagreement], although I do not think I have ever made known to him my opinion of the matter, which is quite in conformity with that of his father. The disadvantages are considerable and the good to be hoped for far less than the expectations you wrote to me. Nevertheless, the Bishop is the one in charge, and I am too bold in daring to tell you what I have told you. It rests with the Bishop to identify the Will of God in this affair, as in all things, and it is my responsibility to submit to it. That is what I am doing and I submit to everything that you, Monsieur, will advise him. I do so with all the humility and affection in my power, I who am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

I had the happiness of meeting your brother during the course of an arbitration with M. de Cordes.³ O Monsieur, what a comfort it was to me!

Addressed: Monsieur Abelly, Vicar General and Officialis of Bayonne, in Bayonne

² François Fouquet was the father of the Bishop of Bayonne and of the Superintendent of Finances, Nicolas Fouquet. He died on April 22.

³ Denis de Cordes, Counselor at the Châtelet. It was at his request and that of M. Lamy that Saint Vincent had established the Charity at the Quinze-Vingts when the members of the Tuesday Conference gave a mission there at the end of 1633. (Cf. Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. I, chap. XXIII, p. 109; also, Antoine Godeau [Bishop of Grasse], *L'idée du bon magistrat en la vie et en la mort de M. de Cordes, conseiller au Chastelet de Paris* [Paris: A. Vitré, 1645].)

The Quinze-Vingts was a hospice founded by Saint Louis, King of France, for three

444. - TO THE DUCHESS D'AIGUILLON

Saint-Lazare, Monday morning [April or May 1640]¹

Madame,

Messieurs de Liancourt,² de la Ville-aux-Clercs,³ de Fontenay,⁴ and several other persons of rank met here yesterday to begin working for the nobility of Lorraine who are in this city.⁵ You would not believe, Madame, the blessings they all hope for you, because of the great good you are doing for the

hundred [quinze(15) times vingt(20)] blind poor people. In 1779, Cardinal de Rohan transferred the hospice from the rue Saint-Honoré to the Hôtel des Mousquetaires noirs, 28 rue de Charenton. The institution was suppressed during the French Revolution and reestablished in 1814. It is still a functioning hospital.

Letter 444. - According to Coste, the original autograph letter was in the possession of Father Joseph-Marie, a Capuchin from Elizondo, Spain. A facsimile is preserved in the Archives of the Mission, Paris.

¹An unknown hand wrote 1638 on the original. That date is incorrect; the work among the Lorraine nobility did not begin until 1640 (cf. no. 459).

²Roger du Plessis, Duc de Liancourt (1598-1674), a man of piety and good works; he later allied himself with the Jansenists.

³Henri-Auguste de Loménie, Comte de Brienne et de Montbron, Seigneur de la Ville-aux-Clercs, Secretary of State, died on November 5, 1666, at the age of seventy-one.

⁴François du Val, Marquis de Fontenay, Seigneur de Mareuil, de Villiers-le-Sec, et de Jaguy-en-France, Marshal of His Majesty's Camps and Armies, Counselor of the King in his Council of State. He was French Ambassador to Rome from 1640 to 1650. He died in 1665.

⁵In this work of assistance to the nobles of Lorraine who were refugees in Paris, the chief auxiliary of Saint Vincent was the Baron de Renty, an unparalleled Christian gentleman. It was a stroke of genius on the part of Saint Vincent to have the destitute nobility of Lorraine helped by their peers, without having recourse to the already overburdened Ladies of Charity. From the very first meeting, it was decided that they would establish the number and rank of the needy nobles of Lorraine who had taken refuge in Paris. M. de Renty undertook the investigation. The meetings were held at Saint-Lazare on the first Sunday of each month and continued until the end of the turmoil, for about seven years, with unflagging zeal and success. There were usually seven or eight gentlemen present. They personally carried material assistance and words of comfort to the refugees. When more peaceful times allowed the nobles to return to their own lands, the society helped them to pay for their journey with its alms, and gave them money enough to subsist for a time. (Cf. Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. I, chap. XXXV, p. 167; cf. also, Abbé Ulysse Maynard, *Saint Vincent de Paul* [3rd ed., 4 vols., Paris: Retaux-Bray, 1886], vol. IV, p. 128.)

men and women religious and for the poor people of Lorraine. They said that if you had never done any good but that, you could hope for a large share in the eternal kingdom. We discussed the means of sending your 15,000 livres to that province. Monsieur de Fontenay, who has been the Governor in Nancy, said that we should call in two companies of cavalry to reinforce the convoy in which it is placed. M. du Halier will be glad to do that if we write to him about it. It will cost nothing, or little.

The saving will not be small for your poor if we can change the silver money given to us into gold. There are 12,500 livres in silver money of rather poor coinage. Monsieur Chenevis will not be willing to give us coin for coin, I am afraid. He will give us pistoles for twelves livres there that he can get here for ten. Nevertheless, I have instructed our Brother Louistre⁶ to find out about it this morning.

I am sending you the request we are presenting to the Deputies of Amortizations.⁷ The Bishop of Saintes,⁸ who is one of them, is of the opinion, Madame, that if you would be so kind as to recommend the matter to those gentlemen, they would exempt us, because he considers the case just. We make mention in it of you, Madame. I most humbly entreat you to have the request read to you and to examine the reasons we allege so that you can speak to those gentlemen about them.

I most humbly ask your pardon, Madame, for all the trouble I am giving you. The unequalled benevolence Our Lord

⁶Robert Louistre entered the Congregation of the Mission as a coadjutor Brother in 1637 (cf. *Notices*, vol. V, p. 394). There is no other information about him.

⁷Commissioners appointed by the King, following the Declaration of April 19, 1639, to see to the research, taxing, and liquidation of mortgage rights.

⁸Jacques-Raoul de la Guibourgère, born in 1589, was the widower of Yvonne de Charette and father of several children when he was ordained. In 1631 he became Bishop of Saintes, succeeding his uncle, then went on to Maillezais, and finally to La Rochelle when the episcopal See was transferred there. Very few bishops were so intimately associated with Saint Vincent as was he. He died in 1661.

has given you for us encourages me to trust in you and causes me to be, in His love and that of His holy Mother, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

It will be my pleasure to let you know, when it is time, so that you may take the trouble of seeing those gentlemen. I shall give you a list of their names.

Addressed: Madame la Duchesse d'Aiguillon

445. - TO JEAN DE FONTENEIL, IN BORDEAUX¹

Paris, May 1, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I give thanks to God for the blessing He is incessantly showering on your Company and your works and I most humbly entreat you, Monsieur, to pray for the remission of my sins and that I may die well.

Letter 445. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹Jean de Fonteneil, born in Bordeaux around 1605, was a friend and imitator of Saint Vincent. His outstanding qualities procured for him the highest positions in the diocese. He was appointed Canon of Saint-Seurin in July 1623, Vicar in perpetuity of the parochial church of Saint-Colombe, then of Saint-Siméon in Bordeaux in 1650, and Vicar General of the diocese on September 10, 1655. Like his friend Saint Vincent, he was convinced of the great good that would result from seminaries, missions, retreats, and weekly meetings of priests to discuss matters of theology, discipline, or piety. For this purpose, he founded the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Clergy, who directed the ordinands' seminary in Bordeaux and the seminaries of Aire and Sarlat. They were given the chapels of Notre-Dame-de-Montuzet, and the parishes of Saint-Louis-du-Marais and Saint-Simon-Cardonnat (Gironde). This Congregation was short-lived, surviving its founder by only three years. He died in Bordeaux, March 2, 1679. (Cf. Louis Bertrand, *Histoire des Séminaires de Bordeaux et de Bazas* [3 vols., Bordeaux: Féret, 1894], vol. I, pp. 207 ff.)

Your goodness encourages me to trouble you too frequently; I shall curtail this whenever you choose. I entreat you, Monsieur, to add to all your previous kindnesses that of sending the enclosed packages to Bayonne and to Dax by a safe means and as soon as possible, and making use of me in return.

I am, in the love of Our Lord, for you, for the Messieurs de Cruseau, and for all the men in your holy Company, Monsieur, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

I entreat you, Monsieur, to send the enclosed package to M. Benoît,² at Notre-Dame de la Rose, near Sainte-Livrade.³

Addressed: Monsieur de Fonteneil, Canon of Saint-Seurin de Bordeaux, in Bordeaux

446. - TO SAINT JANE FRANCES, IN ANNECY

Paris, May 14, 1640

Most worthy and amiable Mother,

I cannot thank you humbly or affectionately enough for all the incomparable kindnesses you unceasingly bestow on our Missionaries and on me. I am asking Our Lord to carry

²Benoît Bécu, born in Braches (Somme), March 21, 1602, was ordained a priest in 1627 and entered the Congregation of the Mission on May 14, 1637. In 1639, he went to found the establishment of La Rose and later returned to Richelieu, where he was still living in 1646.

³Sainte-Livrade-sur-Lot is the principal town of a canton in Lot-et-Garonne.

Letter 446. - According to Coste, the original autograph letter was to be found in the Visitation Convent of Montluel. However, the Convent of Montluel was forced by

out this duty Himself, dear Mother; may He be your reward. You have given them furniture, dear Mother; may it please the goodness of God to become Himself the furnishing and precious adornment of your dear soul, so that it may shine like the sun in heaven as it does on earth! We are in your debt as always, and at fault for not having written to you sooner. The only reason for that, I think, was the hope of writing from week to week to tell you the latest decision concerning the Visitor. However, [the difficulties]¹ and the importance of the matter will still hold things in abeyance, for at least eight to ten days.² We thought it advisable, however, to tell you, dear Mother, that the Commander³ will send you M. Roton, his

necessity to close in 1747, and the Sisters were dispersed into six other Visitation monasteries, none of which is in existence today. The French Revolution and several centuries also intervening, no trace of the letter can be found, either in the present monastery of Montluel, in the Visitation Mont-Lumière, or in the Departmental Archives of Ain, which received a small amount of archival material from the former Convent of Montluel.

¹There is some doubt about the reading of these words.

²Saint Vincent, the Commander de Sillery, and Octave Saint-Lary de Bellegarde, the Archbishop of Sens, were entrusted with the study of two very important matters for the Order of the Visitation: should Visitors be established and, if so, what limits should be placed on their powers.

³Noël Brulart de Sillery, a member of the Order of the Knights of Saint John of Malta and Commander of their establishment in Troyes, was one of Saint Vincent's most glorious conquests. After holding the highest posts at Court, after being the Queen's First Squire, then her Knight of Honor, extraordinary Ambassador to Italy, to Spain, and later in Rome to Popes Gregory XV and Urban VIII, he renounced public life, left the magnificent Hôtel de Sillery, sold his most sumptuous possessions, dismissed most of his servants, and went to live in a modest house near the first monastery of the Visitation. This took place towards the end of 1632. Saint Vincent, his director, had brought about this miracle. When he saw the Commander detached from all worldly possessions, he taught him how to make good use of his immense fortune. He took him to prisons and hospitals, and initiated him in the practice of all sorts of charity. Noël Brulart de Sillery began his priestly studies in 1632, and received Holy Orders and was ordained a priest in 1634. He celebrated his first Mass on Holy Thursday, April 13, 1634, in the chapel of the Sisters of the Visitation. His priestly life was short, but replete with works of charity. He gave generously to religious Congregations, especially to the Visitation, the Priests of the Mission, the monastery of the Madeleine, the Jesuits, and Carmel. He tried

chaplain, in ten to twelve days at the most, with the latest decision he is to make with the Archbishop of Sens.⁴ And since the said Commander will explain the state of the affair to you concisely, I will say nothing to you about it, except: (1) that we recognize more and more the usefulness of the Visitor's making visitations when necessary; (2) that we think it is expedient for him to have the authority the holy canons confer on a Visitor, independently of the Ordinaries, and that he make use of it, yet without changing anything in the rules, with all the respect, circumspection, and deference possible; (3) that if you, dear Mother, write to the . . . that they, or at least some that I know, use it in the same way with regard to the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre-Dame,⁵ concerning the rumor of a Bull that their Foundress had had written for some matter relevant to the affair in question; (4) that the only remedy is that . . . ; (5) that it would be more advisable to leave things as they are and entrust them to the direction of Divine Providence than to act otherwise; (6) that our worthy Mother is the only one to whom we think Our Lord will make known

unsuccessfully to organize a seminary in the House of the Temple in Paris. God called him to Himself September 26, 1640, at the age of sixty-three. Saint Vincent assisted him in his last moments and personally celebrated his funeral service. (Cf. *Vie de l'illustre serviteur de Dieu Noël Brulart de Sillery; Histoire chronologique* [1843], vol. I, pp. 290-307; cf. also, Marcel Martin Fosseyeux, "Contribution à l'Histoire du monastère de la Visitation Sainte-Marie du faubourg Saint-Antoine au XVII^e siècle," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Ile-de-France*, [1910], pp. 184-202.)

⁴Octave Saint-Lary de Bellegarde. He was born in Brouage (Charente-Maritime) in July 1587 of César, Duc de Bellegarde and Governor of Saintonge, and Jeanne de Lion de Châteauneuf. Bishop Bellegarde enjoyed a rapid and brilliant ecclesiastical career. Having already been made Abbé of Saint-Germain in Auxerre and customary chaplain of Henri IV in 1607, he became Bishop of Conserans in 1612, and on November 14, 1621, was named Archbishop of Sens. He promoted the reform of the old religious Orders and brought into his diocese a variety of new foundations. He also presided over several Assemblies of the Clergy of France. He died in Montreuil, near Paris, on July 26, 1646.

⁵The Sisters of Mercy of the Charity of Notre-Dame, founded in Paris in 1624 by Mother Françoise de la Croix. Before approving their Constitutions, the ecclesiastical authority had entrusted them to Saint Vincent, Father Binet, and Father Vigier for examination.

His holy Will, since she is the Foundress of this holy Order, His Divine Goodness being such that He communicates to people with that title important lights concerning the work He has entrusted to them.

These, dear Mother, are the thoughts we have at present and about which we are to confer fully beforehand with the Archbishop of Sens.⁶

I made the visitation in the city and the faubourg.⁷ I shall tell you how they are in the letter I am sending you by Monsieur Roton.

To get back to your Missionaries,⁸ I shall tell you, dear Mother, that I think God has given you in one single glance as clear a discernment as if you had formed them. O dear Mother! to what a degree you are my mother and theirs, and how fortunate they are, in my opinion, to have the happiness of being near you and how fortunate I also am because you are so good to me. I am, in the love of Our Lord, most worthy Mother, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Reverend Mother de Chantal, Superior of the first monastery of Annecy

⁶The preceding lines of the original, beginning with the words "The only remedy," have been heavily crossed out in an effort to render them illegible. We have omitted two passages which we were not able to decipher.

⁷Of the monasteries of the Visitation in the city and the faubourg.

⁸The Priests of the Mission in Annecy.

447. - SAINT JANE FRANCES TO SAINT VINCENT

Live Jesus!

[Annecy, May 1640]¹

My very dear Father,

We received your letter of May 14 rather late. Believe that the affection and desire God has given us to cherish and serve your dear children produces no [state] comparable to our love, which would be happy to have the power to do more. They are so good that it takes little to please them. Moreover, the holy edification and usefulness of their lives and their unceasing work for the greatest glory of God and the profit of souls makes everyone say that they have been sent by God and that M. Codoing has the spirit of God.

Our very good father, the Commander,² sent me word that, if we wish, he will have the house in Troyes provide two more priests and a Brother. God knows how gladly the Bishop of Geneva³ will accept them. This diocese has 455 Catholic parishes and 145 held by the heretics. That makes 600, and they are large, densely populated parishes. Consequently, M. Codoing says that it will take four years to visit all of them. You can see, dearest Father, how profitably the increase in this blessing will be put to use. Your dear children are delighted to find a people so well disposed; may the Holy Trinity be glorified for this! Oh, what a fine crown awaits you, dearest Father, and our dearest father, the Commander, because of the good use he is making of these faithful workers! I think this mission here will put more souls in Paradise than many others, with the help of divine grace.

Letter 447. - *Sainte Jeanne-Françoise Frémyot de Chantal, sa vie et ses oeuvres*, vol. VIII, p. 282, letter 1709.

¹This letter is the answer to that of May 14.

²Commander de Sillery.

³Juste Guérin.

447a. - SAINT JANE FRANCES TO SAINT VINCENT

As for the Visitor,¹ the reasons that indicate his usefulness are so solid that they cannot be questioned. However, since God has permitted that, unbeknown to me, so many monasteries have been informed of this plan and are so strongly against it and have expressed that to me, would I be able to join in it without separating myself from them? And what would be the outcome of that? I leave it to you to ponder, my very dear Father. They would all stir each other up and then as you say, they would inform the Prelates who would cut off their communication with us. That, to all appearances, would cause a great upset in the Institute, which is blessed with complete peace and union as far as I can tell, and by the grace of God, I know of no disorders except that which came about from the dismissal of those Sisters from N.² That was very disturbing and must have greatly humiliated that Superior in the eyes of the Bishop. Such things are bound to happen when one does not follow the Rule.

Oh! very dear Father, I must confess that I am perplexed when I consider the usefulness of the Visitor and when I see that he cannot be established without an enormous upheaval in the Institute, if it does not accept him. I cannot help feeling that in this case he may do more harm than good and, consequently, if the houses cannot be won over tactfully, that it would be better to leave things as they are, in the hands of Divine Providence, than to proceed further. These are my sentiments and those of the Prelates.

Letter 447a. - Archives of the Visitation of Annecy: Chantal (Ste J.F. de), Série Oeuvres, B, No. 11, f°13 v -14. This edition uses the text of the manuscript copy published by Devos (*op. cit.*, 49 [1973], pp. 342-343, no. 19), who states that the passage belongs at the end of a letter. It appears reasonable to attach these lines to the preceding one.

¹An Apostolic Visitor appointed by Rome to help preserve uniformity of spirit among the Visitation monasteries.

²The monastery in Rouen.

448. - TO LOUIS LEBRETON, IN ROME

Paris, June 1, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Yesterday I received three of your letters at once: one from the second, another from the third Sunday after Easter, and the other from April 18, I think. Here, briefly, is the answer to all three.

I praise God and am inexpressibly consoled because of all that Our Lord is doing there through you, although we still do not have what you are requesting with regard to our affairs. But, may God be blessed for not seeing fit to grant it and for all the good you are doing in the midst of it all! If the principal matter is not settled during this pontificate,¹ *in nomine Domini*.

I thank God meanwhile that the Vice-Gerent has given you verbal permission to buy a house in Rome and to establish yourself there. I think those people are right who do not wish you to be situated where the air is bad, or where you are too far away. I entreat you, Monsieur, to pay heed to both, especially the first. One must be satisfied with a little in the beginning. If we can send you four thousand livres for that purpose, that will be all. The title of the chapel will be the Most Holy Trinity, please, and the house can be called the Mission.

Do you see any objection to accepting the alms people give you for Masses? I do not think I see any problem in your visiting the poor in the vicinity, or in your offering yourself to the Vice-Gerent to receive ecclesiastics for retreat and

Letter 448. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹The pontificate of Urban VIII (1623-1644).

ceremonies. But all that in time, when you have the support I shall send you, on learning that you actually have a house. If matters are pressing in that regard, get the money from M. Marchand and we shall repay it here. If not, I shall try to have it sent to the Nuncio² or to M. Mazarini.³

I still have not seen the said Nuncio for important reasons that I cannot write to you and I shall not be able to see him personally until business matters both here and there are settled. I shall try to have him visited this week by someone who sees him often. He promised to do so and would already have seen him, were it not for the fact that he has just returned from the country.

What shall I say about Bishop Ingoli's suggestion?⁴ Nothing certainly, Monsieur, but that I accept it, with all the reverence and humility in my power, as coming from God. We shall do our best to undertake it, but we have absolutely no one in either of the two Companies from the county of Avignon. Nevertheless, I think that it is absolutely necessary for the Bishop and the other two who are to accompany him to be from the same Company.

Since writing the above, I have been to celebrate Holy Mass. This is the thought that came to me: because the power to send persons *ad gentes* resides, on earth, in the person of His Holiness alone, he has consequently the power to send every

²Bishop Renuccio Scotti.

³Jules Mazarin was born in Pescina in Abruzzi in 1602, had studied in Spain as a youth, and had served in the Papal army and the Papal diplomatic corps. He met Richelieu for the first time in 1630. In 1631, the Holy Father had him negotiate the Peace of Cherasco with France. He had hardly entered the ecclesiastical state [he received tonsure in 1632, but never became a priest] when he was assigned to important diplomatic positions: Vice-Legate of Avignon (1634), then Nuncio in France (1635-1636), in which positions he demonstrated the ability and flexibility of the most subtle statesman. He became a French citizen in 1639, and Richelieu obtained a cardinal's hat for him in 1641. Before his death, Richelieu recommended Mazarin to Louis XIII. He became the principal minister of Queen Anne of Austria during the regency of Louis XIV (1642-1661) and, until his own death (1661), was the absolute master of France.

⁴We think that the suggestion concerned the mission in Persia. It was, in fact, in June

priest throughout the world for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and all priests have the obligation to obey him in that regard. According to that maxim, which seems reasonable to me, I offered this Little Company to God, to His Divine Majesty, to go wherever His Holiness commands. However, like you, I think it is necessary for His Holiness to consent that the direction and discipline of those sent belong to the Superior General, together with the faculty of recalling them and sending others in their place. Nonetheless, they shall see to it that they are with regard to His Holiness like the servants of the Gospel with regard to their master. If he says to them: *go there*, they will be obliged to go; *come here*, they will come; *do that*, they will be obliged to do it. We have few in the Company who have the talents necessary for a mission of such importance, yet there are some,⁵ by the mercy of God.

I have not been able to talk to His Eminence⁶ about M. Le Bret's business matter. I shall speak of it to the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, his niece. I greet the said Sieur Le Bret with all the respect in my power and am his most humble servant and yours.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Monsieur Marchand, banker at the court in Rome, to be sent, courtesy of him, to Monsieur Lebreton, Priest of the Mission, in Rome

1640, that the new Bishop of Babylon, Jean Duval, in religion Bernard de Sainte-Thérèse, of the Order of Discalced Carmelites, left France to go to Ispahan (Iran). He arrived there on July 7, with three men from his Order. Bishop Ingoli, Secretary of Propaganda Fide, had requested Saint Vincent to give the prelate two auxiliaries.

⁵We think Saint Vincent had Lambert aux Couteaux particularly in mind, as he later proposed him by name to be Coadjutor of Babylon.

⁶Cardinal Richelieu.

449. - JUSTE GUERIN, BISHOP OF GENEVA, TO SAINT VINCENT

June 1640

Would to God that you could see the center of my heart, for I truly love and respect you with all my affection. I acknowledge myself to be the most obligated of all men in the world to your charity because of the great benefits and fruits that the Missionaries, your dear children in God, are producing in our diocese. They are so great that I cannot put them into words; they are unbelievable except to one who sees them. I was an eye-witness of this on the occasion of the visitation I began after Easter. Everyone is unanimous in loving, cherishing, and praising them. Indeed, Monsieur, their doctrine is holy and their conversation as well. They give great edification to everyone by their irreproachable life. When they have brought their mission to a close in one village, they leave for another and the people go along with them weeping and saying, "O bon Dieu! what shall we do? Our good Fathers are leaving," and for several days they continue to go and see them in the other villages.

People from other dioceses are seen coming to confess to them and admirable conversions are accomplished through them. Their Superior¹ possesses great gifts from God and marvelous zeal for His glory and the salvation of souls. He preaches with great fervor and great fruit. To be sure, we are exceedingly obligated to Commander de Sillery for having provided for their support. Oh! how admirable Divine Providence is for having graciously inspired the heart of that good gentleman to procure these evangelical workers for us! It is the good God who has accomplished all this, without any human persuasion entering in. He took into consideration our need and our unfortunate nearness to the wretched city of Geneva.

Letter 449. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. II, pp. 34-35.

¹Bernard Codoing.

450. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN LA CHAPELLE

[Between 1636 and 1641]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Here is a fine young woman who has come from thirty-two leagues away to see if she is suited for the Charity. Please consider her. The man accompanying her is her father; he brought her expressly for that purpose. And I, I am, in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras, in La Chapelle

451. - SAINT JANE FRANCES TO SAINT VINCENT

[Annecy, between 1626 and 1641]¹

Alas! my true and most dear Father, could it really be possible that my God is granting me the grace of bringing you to these parts! That would indeed be the greatest consolation I could receive in this world, and this news is for me like a special act of God's mercy on my soul, which I think would be incomparably relieved by it in the midst of a certain interior suffering which I have borne for more than four years and which serves me as a martyrdom.

Letter 450. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹These dates embrace the time period during which Saint Louise lived in La Chapelle.

Letter 451. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. VII, p. 316.

¹In 1626 Saint Jane Frances was living in Annecy to which she had returned from Paris in 1622. This letter could not have been written before 1626 and the Saint died in 1641. The letter is most probably from 1640 because in that year Saint Vincent had some thought of going to Annecy (cf. no. 452), and we are not aware that he planned to do so at any other time.

452. - TO FRANCOIS DU COUDRAY, IN TOUL

Paris, June 17, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

We are sending everything we have for those men and women religious.¹ You can see from the letter I wrote to M. de Villarceaux,² which you will seal, how the Duchesse d'Aiguillon feels about the distribution. It would be good perhaps for you to take [it] to him.

Mathieu³ is bringing you your little allowance and you will adjust your expenditures accordingly. As for the two thousand livres you received for the religious from M. de Saint-Nicolas,⁴ in the name of God, Monsieur, use none of it for any other purpose under any pretext of charity whatsoever. There is no act of charity that is not accompanied by justice or that permits us to do more than we reasonably can.

I shall say nothing to you concerning the business about M. Fl[eury], except that I am very glad he talks things over with M. Midot⁵ and that you settle your differences with him

Letter 452. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹The end of an attestation signed December 20, 1639, by the Dominican nuns of the main convent in Toul reads as follows: "We can say and we declare with the entire diocese of Toul: 'Blessed be God, who has sent us these angels of peace, in such a time of calamity, for the good of the town and the consolation of its people,' and for us in particular, 'to whom they have given and are still giving every day alms from their goods, providing us with wheat, wood and fruit, thus coming to the assistance of our great need!'" (Cf. Collet, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 291.)

²Anne Mangot, Seigneur de Villarceaux, Intendant of three dioceses. He died as Master of Requests on April 10, 1655.

³Brother Mathieu Régnard.

⁴Probably Georges Froger. The gentle and zealous Froger, Doctor of the Sorbonne, had been Pastor of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet in Paris since 1603. He directed the Community of the Daughters of the Cross for five years and died September 3, 1656.

⁵Jean Midot, Doctor in Theology, Councillor in the Parlement of Metz, Grand Archdeacon, Canon, and Vicar General of Toul. He was highly thought of in the courts of Rome and Lorraine. After the death of Charles de Gournay, he governed the diocese

amicably as the need arises, whereas President de Trélon⁶, who could moderate the little flare-ups, is removed from the situation. It would be desirable for those gentlemen to approve of matters being returned to their original state, but, since Providence has disposed otherwise through that good and holy prelate now deceased,⁷ we must submit. Besides there is no hope that justice will dispose things otherwise, nor is it expedient to attempt to do so.

The visitations I have made up to the present in Richelieu⁸ and in Troyes⁹ took place with so much fruit and so many blessings that I could see the truth in what they say about the Carthusians, that among the means by which they maintain their primitive observance is the annual visitation. That made me think that it is advisable for us to make ours every year. Therefore, since I myself cannot go to make them in Lorraine in person, I am sending M. Dehorgny. You are well acquainted with his simplicity, piety, and exactitude to the observance of the Little Rule of the house. I entreat you, Monsieur, to receive him in this capacity and to have the same confidence in him as you would in me. You know that it was you who gave him to us, and are aware of his gratitude for that and, moreover, of the esteem he has for you. I hope that you will act in such a way that everyone in the house may profit from this action, which is never carried out without great fruit and blessings.

I just sent M. Lambert to our house in La Rose for the same purpose and hope to go and do the same, around the middle of autumn, with regard to Troyes, Geneva, and some other places, if God gives me the health to do so. It is

as Capitular Vicar. According to Collet (*op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 291, note), in the seventeenth century his family possessed several letters that Saint Vincent had written to him. Only one is known to us (cf. vol. IV, no. 1225). Jean Midot was the author of *Mémoires sur les évêques de Toul*, which has remained in manuscript form.

⁶Nephew of Commander de Sillery.

⁷Charles Chrétien de Gournay had died September 4, 1637.

⁸In November 1638 and in November 1639.

⁹In July 1639.

important that the above-mentioned gentleman not be known in Toul for who he is, for many reasons. He will give you news of us and tell you how I embrace you in spirit with all the humility and affection in my power. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur du Coudray, Priest of the Mission, in the house of Holy Spirit, in Toul

**453. - TO MOTHER FRANCOISE-ELISABETH PHELIPPEAUX,¹
IN SAINT-DENIS**

Saint-Lazare, the last day of June, 1640

Dear Mother,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

If the profession of our dear Sister de Chaumont² can take

Letter 453. - According to Coste, the original autograph letter was in the possession of Baron Bich of Aosta. The present whereabouts of the original is unknown but a manuscript copy is preserved in the Archives of the Mission, Paris. The letter was also published, with the authorization of its owner, Baron Bich, in the seventh "Bulletin de l'Académie Saint-Anselme d'Aoste" in 1871, pp. 5-6.

¹Mother Françoise-Elisabeth Phelippeaux de Pontchartrain entered the first monastery of the Visitation, on the rue de Saint-Antoine, at the age of sixteen. She was thirty when the Saint-Denis monastery was founded, and became its first Superior (June 30, 1639 - June 5, 1642). When her term of office was completed, she returned to the convent on the rue Saint-Antoine. At Saint-Denis she left a small but fervent Community. She remained at the monastery of Chaillot from 1653 to 1655 and was sent to the Madeleine as Superior in 1665. The historian of the Visitation monasteries wrote of her (*Histoire chronologique des fondations de tout l'Ordre de la Visitation Sainte-Marie* [Ms., 10 vols.], p. 561): "She radiated only God, His glory, and His perfection, and was so extraordinarily fervent that she could not understand how a Sister who followed the exercises of the Rule exactly could possibly suffer trials. She was like a true seraphim, all burning with love, at the head of her little Community, which she led like another Moses in her little desert." She died on July 2, 1674.

²Marie de Chaumont, daughter of Louis de Chaumont, Seigneur d'Athieules, and of

place next Saturday, the day of your holy feast,³ I trust that Our Lord will grant me the grace of coming to serve you, or else I shall come the next day, Sunday. If not, I cannot do it on Monday, because I gave my word that I would be of service to the little Chandénier girl,⁴ who is to take the habit that day at your house in the faubourg, and on Tuesday we have our meeting for priests.⁵ Wednesday I think I will be able to leave for my trip of fifteen or twenty days.⁶ Nevertheless, I shall do what I can to wait for a Thursday, if necessary. God knows how much I want to be of service to that dear child and how much I am, in His love, dear Mother, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mother Superior of the Visitation Sainte-Marie de Saint-Denis, in Saint-Denis⁷

Marie de Bailleul, lady-in-waiting to Anne of Austria and sister of Nicolas de Bailleul, Superintendent of Finances.

³The Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin, July 2.

⁴The Rochechouart de Chandénier family gave three of its members to the second monastery of the Visitation in Paris: Marie-Louise, Catherine-Henriette, and Marie-Henriette, grand-nieces of Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld and sisters of the two Abbés de Chandénier, who were so closely associated with Saint Vincent. Marie-Louise and Catherine-Henriette were transferred to the third monastery at the time of its foundation [the Sisters took possession of a house on the rue de Montorgueil on July 25, 1660], and after thirteen years they returned to the second monastery together. Marie-Louise had had the happiness of making her profession before Saint Jane Frances in 1635. She died in the odor of sanctity on January 3, 1694, at the age of seventy-four. (Cf. *Année sainte des religieuses de la Visitation Sainte-Marie* [12 vols., Annecy: Ch. Burdet, 1867-1871], vol. I, pp. 40-54.) Marie-Henriette was elected Superior four times, in 1670, 1673, 1691, and 1694. We read in the *Histoire chronologique*, vol. II, p. 445: "Our most honored Mother Marie-Henriette de Chandénier has governed us with so much prudence and moderation that she has always seemed to us a rare example of all the virtues, constantly united to God, tranquil in all circumstances, zealous without temerity to maintain the observance. We have enjoyed more than nine years of happiness under her direction, and we are still enjoying, at present, her fourth three-year term of office, which is not yet finished."

⁵For the Tuesday Conference.

⁶This trip did not materialize or, at least, it was delayed or cut short.

⁷The monastery of Saint-Denis was founded by Mother Héliène-Angélique Lhuillier,

454. - JEAN DEHORGNY TO SAINT VINCENT

[Saint-Mihiel, June or July 1640]¹

Monsieur, I shall tell you astonishing things about this town which would seem unbelievable if we had not seen them. Besides all the poor beggars I mentioned, the majority of the inhabitants of the town and especially the nobility are enduring so much hunger that it cannot be described or imagined, and what is most deplorable is that they do not dare to ask for anything. There are some who pluck up their courage, but others would rather die. I myself have spoken to people of rank who do nothing but weep incessantly because of the situation.

Here is another even stranger thing. A widow, who no longer had anything for herself or her three children and who saw herself reduced to dying of hunger, skinned a grass-snake and put it on the coals to roast it and eat it, since she could not find anything else. Our confrere who lives here, having heard about it, ran to her house and, having seen this, remedied the matter.

Not a single horse dies in the town, of any disease whatsoever, that is not immediately carried off to be eaten. Just three or four days ago there was a woman at the public almshouse with her apron full of that kind of foul meat; she was giving it to other poor people for scraps of bread.

A young woman had for several days been deliberating about selling what was most dear to her in the world for a little bread, and she had even sought opportunities several times. God be praised and thanked that she did not find them and that, at present, she is out of danger.

Another extremely deplorable case is that the priests, who are all, thank God, of exemplary life, are suffering the same want and have no bread to eat. Things are so bad that a pastor who lives half a

Superior of the first monastery of Paris, thanks to the patronage of Queen Anne of Austria and in spite of the objections of the people and of Armand de Bourbon, Prince de Conty. Saint Vincent was its first Superior. According to the author of the remarks dedicated to this monastery in the *Histoire chronologique*, p. 529, the Saint stated that he was aware of God alone when he entered the convent of Saint-Denis, where, he said, "the spirit of the Institute was flourishing in its first fervor."

Letter 454. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. XI, sect. I, pp. 381-382.

¹The year is given by Abelly; moreover, Jean Dehorgny spent only part of the months of June and July in Lorraine (cf. nos. 452 and 459).

league from the town was reduced to pulling a plough, harnessed with his parishioners in the place of the horses. Is it not deplorable, Monsieur, to see a priest, and a pastor at that, brought to such a condition. One no longer has to go to Turkey to see priests condemned to ploughing the earth, since they are reducing themselves to that at our doors, being constrained to do so by necessity.

Moreover, Monsieur, Our Lord is so good that he seems to have privileged Saint-Mihiel with a spirit of devotion and patience, for amid the extreme poverty of temporal goods, they are so avid for spiritual things that up to two thousand people come to hear the catechism lessons. That is a big number for a small town where the majority of the large houses are deserted. The poor themselves are very conscientious about attending, and about frequenting the sacraments. Everyone in general has a high esteem of the Missionary who is here. He instructs and helps them and one man considers himself fortunate to have spoken to him just once. He also exerts himself with great charity and much labor at the borders. He even allowed himself to be so overwhelmed with general confessions and want of food that he fell ill.

I am amazed at how, with the small amount of money he receives from Paris, he can give so many alms both in general and in private. That is where I see so clearly the blessing of God who causes His gifts to multiply. What Holy Scripture said about the manna came back to me: each family was to take the same amount and there would be enough for everyone, whether there were more or fewer people to gather it.² Here I see something similar, for our priests who have more poor people do not give any less and yet are not left empty-handed.

455. - JEAN DEHORGNY TO SAINT VINCENT

Bar-le-Duc, July 1640

First of all, every week our Missionaries give a great number of poor people linen, especially shirts. They take back the old ones to

²Ex. 16: 16-30.

have them washed, mended, and given to others, or else they tear them into pieces to serve as bandages for those with wounds or sores.

Secondly, they themselves tend a large number of people suffering from ringworm. There used to be twenty-five of them before on a regular basis and there are still twelve. This disease is extremely common throughout Lorraine. In all the other towns there is a proportionate number. Thank God, they are cared for in such a conscientious and charitable way that all of them are cured of it by a very effective remedy our Brothers have learned.

Thirdly, our priests here lay out a considerable amount of money—but it is well spent—on taking in the poor who are passing through, for our Missionaries in Nancy, Toul, and other places, very often refer groups of poor people to them to be sent into France because this town is the gateway of Lorraine. They also provide them with food and some money for their trip.

456. - TO FRANCOIS DU COUDRAY, IN TOUL

Paris, July 10, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Mathieu has brought you your money. We shall find out from the President¹ how things stand with M. de Fleury and shall look into it.

I wrote to tell you that you must carry out the distribution according to the orders of M. de Villarceaux and see that the others do the same. I think you have the order he signed and that you will follow it exactly. That, Monsieur, is what I most humbly ask you to do. Also, obtain a receipt from each monastery for what you give them.² With regard to the

Letter 456. - The original autograph letter is at the house of San Silvestro in Rome.

¹The Président de Trélon, nephew of Commander de Sillery (cf. no. 452).

²The Archives of the Priests of Mission, Paris, still possess several of these receipts, all belonging to the year 1647.

distributions to be made in the other towns where there are individuals from the Company, please instruct them to do the same. They are to follow in their entirety the orders the above-mentioned Sieur de Villarceaux gave you and obtain a receipt for everything they give, because we must keep an account of it so that, whatever the pretext may be, not a speck of it is diverted or applied elsewhere. And please send me by way of Brother Mathieu a copy of the accounts, signed by M. de Villarceaux, and a copy of his orders, if there is one. Also send me every month the amounts you have given out or ordered to be distributed in other places. Never has greater order been seen than what is being required and observed. You have mentioned nothing concerning the number of poor country people who have been given refuge in the town or the faubourg to whom you dispense help. I show that to the good Ladies³ every month from all the other places. It is only from Toul that I have not shown it to them for a rather long time. It gives them great consolation. Last Saturday we spent two or three hours looking at the other letters and they were extremely gratified by them.

That, Monsieur, is all I have to tell you at the moment, except that I beg you take care of your health, and I ask this of you with all the affection in my power through Our Lord, in whose love and in that of His holy Mother, I am, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur du Coudray, Priest of the Mission, at the house of the Holy Spirit of Toul, in Toul

³The Ladies of Charity.

457. - TO LEONARD BOUCHER, IN BAR

Paris, July 10, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord with you forever!

We have need of you here; please come at your earliest convenience once you have received this letter. I am sending you six écus for that purpose and am sending M. Dupuis,¹ the bearer of this note, in your place. Please show him how you do things and ask the Rector of the Jesuits² to offer him the same kind hospitality he has offered you and to assist him with his good and holy advice. The said Monsieur Dupuis is still young and inexperienced, but very docile and pious. Place the money and provisions you have in his hands and enjoin our dear Brother David to regard him in Our Lord and Our Lord in him and to obey him in the same way. Before you leave, obtain a receipt for all the money you gave to the nuns and entrust them to the above-mentioned Monsieur Dupuis. Take leave of the Governor,³ the Mayor,⁴ the City Magistrates, and the other leading citizens; and introduce and commend the said Sieur Dupuis to them. As for what concerns M. Baptiste,⁵ we shall talk about that here, where I await you with

Letter 457. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹Michel Dupuis, born in Ver (Oise), was received into the Congregation of the Mission on March 29, 1639, at the age of twenty-three. Although he was still a simple cleric in 1646, Saint Vincent was using him in the seminary of Cahors. It was a common practice for Saint Vincent to employ seminarians in various works of the Congregation. It appears that both a shortage of personnel and a need for practical experience on the part of some of the clerics necessitated this practice.

The *Notices* contain no information about Dupuis' ordination to the priesthood or his death.

²Father Roussel.

³Charles de Mouchy, Marquis d'Hocquincourt, Governor and Lieutenant-General in Lorraine and in Barrois.

⁴Gérard Jacob.

⁵Jean-Baptiste Delestoile, born in Bar-le-Duc in 1615, entered the Congregation of the Mission at the seminary in Paris on April 1, 1637.

an affection known to Our Lord. In His love and in that of His holy Mother, I am your servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Monsieur Boucher, Priest of the Mission, in Bar

458. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, July 11, 1640

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I approve of what you wrote me; therefore, kindly do it as soon as possible, Mademoiselle. Excuse me if I do not come to see you today; I am anxious to get to the city. I shall send you someone soon to hear the confessions of your young ladies and would like to be able to do the same with regard to the points you requested of me.¹ However, I do not remember a single one of them, as I said what came to my mind at the time. If I recall any of them by concentrating on them on my way to the city presently, I shall write them down and send them to you. Meanwhile, I wish you a good day and I am, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Letter 458. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Points for a conference to be given to the Daughters of Charity.

459. - TO LAMBERT AUX COUTEAUX, IN RICHELIEU

Paris, July 22, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Yesterday I received your letter, the date of which I have forgotten, together with the ones [you] sent me from M. Cuissot¹ and the official report of the visitation in La Rose. O Monsieur, how distressed I am about the clash between those two men. What shall we do about it? Is it not advisable for you to bring both of them to an awareness of their fault, especially M. B[enoît],² and to take the matter as an opportunity to give a conference on the subject of how important it is never to talk about people in the house outside or about things that happen there. That is the reason for what has occurred in La Rose. According to what M. Savinier³ has told me, and the things he made up in order to penetrate into people's minds, to fix himself there and become indispensable to them, it was the Vicar General who caused him⁴ to act in that way and brought things to the point where they are. Oh!

Letter 459. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹Gilbert Cuissot, born November 5, 1607, had been a priest for six years when he entered the Congregation of the Mission on May 14, 1637. After directing the house of Luçon, he was appointed Superior in La Rose (1640-1644), then at the Collège des Bons-Enfants (1644-1646), where he made his vows November 11, 1644. We find him next at the seminary of Le Mans (1646) and at Saint-Lazare (1646-1647). He was director of the Cahors seminary from 1647 to 1662, and in charge of the Richelieu house from 1662 to 1666. He declared in writing that, at the time of the election of Saint Vincent's successor, because he was hesitant about voting for René Alméras, whose state of health left much to be desired, the Saint appeared to him and determined his choice. He also declared that in 1662, while exorcising a possessed woman, he drew from the demon precious avowals concerning the Founder's holiness and the reward reserved by God for Missionaries faithful to their vocation. He died in 1666.

²Benoît Bécu.

³Annet Savinier, born near Clermont in Auvergne, was received into the Congregation of the Mission in Paris in 1635 and ordained a priest in March 1637.

⁴Benoît Bécu.

no, never must what is done inside the house be discussed outside. Would it not be fitting at the end of the conference for you to obtain a public promise from the Company and for them to give themselves to God to act in this way?

Good M. Sa[vinier] is here; I am giving him the best welcome I can. He is very eager to go back where he came from and visit his home.⁵ I have discussed with him the objections to both and am standing firm; we shall see. What shall we do meanwhile for that place?⁶ I can see that we need another Superior⁷ and a priest in M. Gautier's⁸ place. We have a priest who is qualified. What do you think of our putting M. Cuissot to take charge in that place and M. Chiroye⁹ in Luçon?¹⁰ I find it difficult to do otherwise. Let me know your opinion, please. There are two things to be considered here: (1) whether M. Chiroye is capable of directing; (2) whether M. Thibault¹¹ can be submissive; he is so at present with regard

⁵He was originally from Clermont-Ferrand and was coming from La Rose.

⁶La Rose.

⁷To replace Benoît Bécu.

⁸Denis Gautier, born in Langres (Haute-Marne) in 1610, was already a priest when he entered the Congregation of the Mission on July 19, 1639, at the age of twenty-nine. He was the Superior in Richelieu from 1642 to 1649.

⁹Jacques Chiroye was born in Auppegard (Seine-Maritime) on March 14, 1614, entered the Congregation of the Mission on June 25, 1638, and made his vows on March 9, 1660. He served as Superior in Luçon (1640-1650, 1654-1660, 1662-1666) and in Crécý (1660-1662). He died on May 3, 1680.

¹⁰One of the clauses contained in the foundation contract of the establishment in Richelieu stated that three priests from that house would go to the diocese of Luçon "four times a year, at the most suitable seasons," and work there "for six weeks, each time" (cf. vol. I, no. 287). Shortly before, Saint Vincent had decided to establish, in Luçon itself, a house distinct from the one in Richelieu, with Gilbert Cuissot as Superior. At first the Missionaries were content with a rented house. They had not yet finished moving in when Saint Vincent wrote this letter. A gift from Cardinal Richelieu, their founder and benefactor, facilitated the purchase of the mansion called the Pont de Vie, in December 1641. (Cf. Charpentier, "Saint Vincent de Paul en Bas-Poitou" in the *Revue du Bas-Poitou* [1911], pp. 33-50.)

¹¹Jean Thibault was born in Paris in 1615 and entered the Congregation of the Mission on July 29, 1638. The fears of the Saint were well founded. Jean Thibault did not possess a spirit of submission. He was recalled to Paris shortly after and left the Company in 1642. He must not be confused with Louis Thibault, the future Superior in Saint-Méen, whose behavior elicited praise from the Saint.

to M. Cuissot and is satisfied and in fine trim. I ask you let me know your opinion about this as soon as possible. In this case, M. Benoît would come back to Richelieu or I would send you someone else.

I am writing to tell M. Cuissot to take three hundred livres for his furniture. We shall pay them here upon presentation of his letter. As you see it, what would really be needed for the three of them? Is Pierre Rogue, the shepherd who was here in this house,¹² the one who is in Richelieu? I would be pleased if he were willing to stay there, and I think he needs to do so, because the people he is going to meet will maintain his little vanity of mind; you take care of that.

The Bishop of Tours¹³ has complained to me that sermons have been preached in favor of the women in Chinon, said to be possessed. He has assured me that they are not and that it is not fitting to treat them as being so.¹⁴ I did not know what to say to him, except that I would find out about it. Please send me a report and tell the Company to neither say nor do anything contrary to the judgment he has made. In fact, judgment concerning such things should be referred to him and no one may perform exorcism in a diocese without the permission of the bishop.

As for that good young woman, everything I have been told about her makes me distrust her state of mind. I am sorry

¹²Probably as a servant. Pierre Rogue subsequently entered the Congregation of the Mission as a coadjutor Brother, but did not persevere in his vocation.

¹³Bertrand d'Eschaux (October 14, 1618 - May 21, 1641). At that time the diocese was governed by the Archbishop's Coadjutor, Victor le Bouthillier.

¹⁴Urged by Pierre Barré, the Pastor of Saint-Jacques in Chinon, whose name is involved in the history of the nuns of Loudun whom he exorcised, several women agreed to play the part of possessed women to give more weight to hateful accusations against Sansterre, the Pastor of Saint-Louand, and the priest Gilloire, by formulating them in the name of the demon. Pierre Barré hesitated at nothing: lies, trickery, sacrileges — everything served his purpose. The Coadjutor Bishop of Tours was not deceived. Arrested and judged in 1638, the impostor was shut up in a monastery in Le Mans for the remainder of his life. His accomplices were severely punished and their scandals ended. (Cf. Dumoustier de la Fond, *Essais sur l'histoire de la ville de Chinon* [Chinon: Coufinhal, 1809], pp. 131-141.)

that she is in Richelieu, and if she has no place to live in Chinon, nor any relative who is willing to take the responsibility for her, *in nomine Domini*, I think you will have to send her here.

Mademoiselle Le Gras would like you to take a trip to Angers to make a visitation of her Sisters under the guise of a simple visit.¹⁵ You can take as a reason our business with Pont de Cé¹⁶ and the rent or custom dues owed us in that locality.¹⁷ You will be able to see Abbé de Vaux, who is a very great servant of God and who has a similar love for those Sisters. He is the Vicar General. You could speak to each one privately and then give them a general talk, without its seeming to be one. And perhaps it will be sufficient for you to see them privately this time. I have been notified that the Gentlemen from the Hôtel-Dieu have had dresses made for them from a finer material. Look into that and see whether it would be advisable to place Sister Barbe in Angers to take charge, to have Madame Turgis come back to Paris, and to send Sister Isabelle, who is the Superior of the Sisters, and still sick, to Richelieu, where perhaps the air will restore her to health.¹⁸ That is Mademoiselle Le Gras' thought, and mine is to cherish you a million times more than myself and to be, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

¹⁵*Visit* and *visitation* mean two different things. What Saint Vincent is requesting of Lambert aux Couteaux is that, while acting as though he were making a simple visit at the Sisters' house in Angers, he should discreetly make the canonical visitation customary in Communities.

¹⁶A small picturesque town on the Loire River, near Angers, formed by small islands linked by bridges and spreading to both banks. Its strategic importance caused it to be under siege several times.

¹⁷The customs dues of Pont de Cé were valued at eighteen hundred livres on June 19, 1638, the day they were assigned to the Congregation of the Mission for the house of Troyes by Commander de Sillery. (Cf. Arch. Nat. S 6712.)

¹⁸The transfer of Sister Isabelle did not take place until sometime between the months of August and October 1641.

M. Dehorgny came back yesterday evening from visiting the Company in Lorraine. God blessed his trip abundantly and he found things in good order, thank God, except for Toul where M. [Colée]¹⁹ is still trying the patience of good M. du Coudray. O Monsieur, how obliged the Company is to humble itself and to praise God for that employment and to ask His grace to make good use of it! I shall try to have copies made for you of the letters M. Dehorgny wrote to me about it and send them to you.

Our Lord is protecting our Brother Mathieu in an exceptional way, whereas He is allowing most people in that region to be robbed, right before his very eyes, although he goes there every month with twenty-five hundred livres. Last month he had twelve thousand, the surplus being for the assistance of the men and women religious who are dying of hunger in that district.

For two or three months now, God has done us the kindness of bringing together some people of rank in this city to assist the nobility here. His Providence provides us with six thousand livres per month and a little more for this purpose. In the name of God, Monsieur, let us pray and humble ourselves greatly; I entreat you to help a poor Gascon to do so.²⁰

Addressed: Monsieur Lambert, Superior of the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission of Richelieu, in Richelieu

¹⁹The name written on the original was scratched out so effectively that it is illegible. Coste supplies *Colée*.

Antoine Colée was born in Amiens, October 28, 1610, entered the Congregation of the Mission in 1630, and was ordained a priest in 1635. He was Superior of the house in Toul from 1637 to 1638 and left the Company in 1646.

²⁰In the course of the nineteenth century, in opposition to a constant and unanimous tradition, some people claimed that Spain was Saint Vincent's native country. All pertinent records extant agree with the tradition. In no. 575, Saint Vincent himself asserts that he is French; here, he calls himself a Gascon. In one of his letters he asks Saint Louise to convey his respects to Madame de Ventadour, the Marquise de Pouy, "as to his one and only Lady, whose subject Providence had made him from birth." A notarized act

460. - TO PIERRE ESCART, IN ANNECY

Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris, July 25, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I most humbly ask your pardon for taking so long to send you an answer and I promise to improve with the help of God.

Your letter consoled me more than I can say, because I see the zeal Our Lord is bestowing on you for your own advancement in perfection and for that of the Company. Continue, Monsieur, in the name of Our Lord, to ask His Divine Goodness for that grace and to work at your perfection seriously; *tempus enim breve est, et grandis nobis restat via*.¹ O Monsieur Escart, whom I cherish more than myself, how willingly I make this same prayer to God both for you and for myself! What! My misery is so great that I am still in the dust of my imperfections; and whereas my sixty years of age should be a more powerful incentive to work at amending my

from September 4, 1626, signed with his name, begins with these words: "Was present Vincent de Paul..., a native of the parish of Poy [sic], diocese of Acqs, in Gascony." In his conference to the Missionaries on May 2, 1659 (cf. vol. XII, no. 204), he mentions a journey to Poy [sic], "the place I am from." The Bishop of Dax was his Bishop; he always spoke of him that way. His letters of tonsure state that he was born "in the parish of Pouy, diocese of Dax." In the seventeenth century, the house in which he was born was pointed out in Pouy and honored with a religious cult. Every effort was made to conserve it. As the old house crumbled an effort was made to save at least the room in which the Saint had been born. When time had finished its work of destruction, a chapel was built on the site of this room. (Cf. "Histoire de la maison de Ranquine avant le XIXe siècle" in the *Bulletin de la Société de Borda* [1906], pp. 337 ff.) Popes (Brief of beatification and Bull of canonization), Kings (Arch. Nat. MM 538), witnesses for the process of beatification and the Saint's biographers, with the exception of a few Spanish writers of the nineteenth century—all agree in asserting that Saint Vincent was born in the village of Pouy, in the diocese of Dax. It is one of the most solidly established historical facts.

Letter 460. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹*For the time is short, and a long journey is ahead of us.* This statement is a combination of two biblical texts: 1 Cor. 7:29 - "I tell you, brothers, the time is short"; and 1 Kgs. 19:7 - "Get up and eat, else the journey will be too long for you." (NAB) In the Douay-Rheims version, this latter text is 3 Kgs. 19:7 - "Arise, eat: for thou hast yet a great way to go!"

miserable life, I do not know why it is that I am making less progress than ever. Your prayers, Monsieur Escart, my dear friend, will help me in this endeavor, as will those of so many good souls you see there. I ask you for a Mass at the tomb of our blessed Father² for this intention.

I do not know if the sight I have of my miseries is bringing me to say what I am going to write to you. However, I intend to mention it to you in the sight of God and in the spirit of simplicity in which I think I reflected on it this morning before God.

I shall tell you then, Monsieur, that I think the zeal you have for the advancement of the Company is always accompanied by a certain harshness, which even goes as far as bitterness. What you told me and what you called laziness and sensuality in some people revealed this to me, and especially the spirit in which you said it. *O mon Dieu!* Monsieur, you must be careful of that. It is easy, Monsieur, to go from the deficiency to the excess of the virtues, from being just to becoming rigid, and from zealous to inconsiderate. It is said that good wine easily turns to vinegar and that exceedingly good health indicates an impending illness. It is true that zeal is the soul of the virtues, but most certainly, Monsieur, it must be according to knowledge, as Saint Paul says;³ that means: according to the knowledge of experience. And because young people ordinarily do not possess this experiential knowledge, their zeal goes to excess, especially in those who have a natural asperity. *O Jésus!* Monsieur, we must be careful of this and mistrust most of the movements and outbursts of our spirit while we are young and of this temperament. Martha murmured against the holy idleness and the holy sensuality of her dear sister Magdalen, and looked upon her as doing wrong for not hurrying as she did to entertain Our Lord. You and I

²Saint Francis de Sales.

³Rom. 10:2. "Indeed, I can testify that they are zealous for God though their zeal is unenlightened." (NAB)

would perhaps have felt the same way if we had been present. However, *O altitudo divitiarum sapientiae et scientiae Dei! quam incomprehensibilia sunt judicia ejus!*⁴ There you see how Our Lord proclaims the idleness and sensuality of Magdalen to be more agreeable to Him than the less considerate zeal of Saint Martha! You will tell me perhaps that there is a difference between listening to Our Lord, as Magdalen did, and listening to our little tendernesses, as we do. Alas! Monsieur, how do we know it was not Our Lord Himself who prompted those two with the idea of the trip you mentioned to me and the thought of the little comforts they take? I am very sure of one thing, Monsieur, that *diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum*,⁵ and I have no doubt that those same individuals love the good God very much. How could they have left their parents, friends, possessions, and all the satisfactions they had in all of that, to go and search for the poor sheep lost in the mountains, if they did not love God! And if the love of God is in them, how can we not be of the opinion that God is inspiring them to do what they do and what they do not do, and that everything they do is for the best, as well as what they do not do! In the name of God, Monsieur, let us enter into these genuine sentiments and practices and let us fear lest the evil spirit seek, by the excess of our zeal, to bring us to a lack of respect toward our Superiors and of the charity that we owe to our equals. That, Monsieur, is where our less discreet zeal usually ends up and the advantage the wicked spirit draws from it. That is why, I entreat you, in the name of Our Lord, Monsieur, let us work to rid ourselves of our attacks of over-zealousness especially when it offends against respect, esteem, and charity. And

⁴*Oh the depth of the riches, the wisdom, and the knowledge of God. How incomprehensible are his judgements.* Rom. 11:33. "How deep are the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How inscrutable his judgements, how unsearchable his ways!" (NAB)

⁵*To those who love God, all things work together for good.* Rom. 8:28. "We know that God makes all things work together for the good of those who have been called according to his decree." (NAB)

because it seems to me that the evil spirit intends to do that to you and to me, let us try to humble our spirit, to place a good interpretation on our neighbor's way of acting, and to support him in his little weaknesses.

Yes, but if I support him, farewell to our little Rules; not a single one will be kept again. And then you are aware, you will tell me, that you gave me the responsibility of enforcing the Rules.

To the first difficulty, which is the destruction of the observance of the Rules, I respond that it must be enough for us to make the Superior aware, with the respect and reverence we owe him, of the failings we see and the inconveniences which ensue and wait for Our Lord to take care of the situation, either by means of the next visitation, in which one ought to report the failings of the Community in general and of each person in particular, indeed even those of the Superior, especially carelessness in having the Rules observed. We also can inform the Superior General and after that be at peace, confident that Our Lord will attend to it, either by changing the officers or because they themselves change through some retreat or meditation in which God gives them light and strength to remedy the fault. In a word, this should be entrusted to Divine Providence and we should be at peace.

As for the second objection, which is that it is your responsibility to watch over the Rule, I shall tell you, Monsieur, that that is true. However, it is understood to mean that one is to watch in the way I have mentioned above: tell the Superior in a spirit of humility, meekness, respect, and charity, and after that, if he does not remedy the situation, inform the Superior General. And that is what you have done, but in a spirit of bustling zeal, harshness, and even bitterness. It is that, Monsieur, that we must always hold suspect in what we do; *non enim in commotione Dominus, sed in spiritu lenitatis.*⁶ If,

⁶*For the Lord is not in commotion, but in the spirit of meekness.* 1 Kgs. 19:11-13.
“Then the Lord said: ‘Go outside and stand on the mountain before the Lord; the Lord

after all this, things go on as they did before, we must remain at peace. That, Monsieur, is what I ask you to do.

I hope, at the end of this autumn, to come and visit you and then we shall talk about this at greater length, as also about the trip you proposed. I beg Our Lord meanwhile, Monsieur, to be the joy and peace of your heart.

Now then, Monsieur, I must close, telling you again that I cherish you more than myself and that I have complete confidence that after you have honored the humility and meekness of Our Lord in a special way for some time—by affection, by acts seasoned with that spirit of meekness and humility—you will become, with the help of God, a totally apostolic man. That is what I ask of Him with all the affection in my power. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Monsieur Escart, Priest of the Mission, in Annecy

461. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ANNECY

Saint-Lazare, July 26, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Never have I had a sharper vision of my unworthiness for

will be passing by.' A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the Lord - but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake - but the Lord was not in the earthquake. . . . After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound. When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak." (NAB)[D-R B, 3 Kgs. 19:11-13.]

Letter 461. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

the office I hold than right at this minute as I think about the answer I have to give you, because of my wretchedness which kept me from writing to you sooner. O Monsieur, how long will you put up with me? Or when shall I mend my ways? To add the last straw to my present misery, I lost your latest letter, at the bottom of which our worthy Mother¹ was so kind as to write me a few lines. Here is an answer to the letters of April 28 and the last day of May.

I thank God for all the graces he has bestowed on your little Community, which most certainly seem to me beyond all that could be hoped for. I pray that He will continue to grant them to you and that He will restore you to perfect health, unless He has decided to sanctify your soul by indispositions of the body. I entreat you, Monsieur, to do everything you can to get well. Oh! how consoled I am by what you tell me concerning each of your Company in particular.

I have written to M. Escart and, if I can, I shall do the same for M. Duhamel. I spoke to the former all about what you, and then he himself, wrote to me. He is a man filled with the spirit of God, but harsh in his zeal, as you said. I wrote to him in such a way that I hope he will make progress in meekness and humility, that he will help good M. Tholard to regain his physical strength, maintain the spiritual strength of good M. Duhamel,² and finally that he will make good use of M. Bourdet and that our Brother François³ will do well. That, Monsieur, is the prayer I am offering to God.

¹Saint Jane Frances.

²Jean Duhamel was being tempted to leave the Congregation of the Mission and did so at the end of the year.

³Several coadjutor Brothers bore this name; we do not know which one this is.

What shall I say about the ordinands, Monsieur? I am grateful to you for having offered to shoulder the expense of the first ordination; but I think we must acquiesce to what the Bishop of Geneva⁴ is suggesting, obliging each of them to pay a florin a day, if that is enough after taking everything into account. It has been noted that the expense of the Paris ordinands comes to twenty sous a day. Included in that is the expense of the increased number of Brothers needed, the wood, small expenditures, and the change of linen. The big difficulty is with the furniture; you will need two or three thousand livres for that.

The Commander⁵ recently expressed to me his disapproval of our taking the liberty of raising objections to prelates concerning the ideas they have for the good of their dioceses. He said this because you were suggesting going to see the members of the Senate⁶ concerning the objections they were raising, and offering to discontinue your missions if they did not approve of them, even though the Bishop held an opinion to the contrary. And surely he would say the same thing to me if he were aware that you had objected to the said Bishop's ordering each of the ordinands to pay a florin a day for his expenses without the consent of the synod or the Senate. He did say that it was an indication of your prudence, but that you need to act with more simplicity. And, indeed, it will not put a strain on the ordinands to give ten or twelve florins for their sustenance during ordination. If the exercise of the ordinands is according to God, why should they not take care of their own nourishment while they are receiving this benefit from their prelate?

I think, Monsieur, that you would do well to submit to the opinion of the said Bishop in this situation and in all matters

⁴Juste Guérin.

⁵Commander de Sillery.

⁶The Senate of Chambéry.

that would not affect our little Institute, which I am afraid confessions in the town would do. That is completely contrary to our little Institute. Our worthy Mother, if you will please mention it to her, which I think will be a good idea, will very easily get him to understand that. I trust he will agree. I do not know whether we should exclude Annecy from the benefit of the mission. I think that, if Our Lord gives the Bishop the idea to have it, we shall have to do it. However, before, after, or except for that, I do not consider it advisable to preach there or hear confessions. That is the way we must understand the rule not to work in the towns, because, in fact, that would prevent us in time from going to the country.

Mon Dieu! Monsieur, how worried I am about your little indisposition and how I wish some house or some place to build one might be found in the better section of the city! That faubourg, where the Capuchins are, I think, has a higher elevation.⁷ Such being the case, *O Jésus!* we must not think of establishing ourselves in any other town. We would be too far away from the opportunity to serve the diocese. Meanwhile, I shall ask the Commander to write [to] the Commander of Annecy⁸ who is so kind as to give you lodging, and to thank him for it.

I do not see any assurance in dealing with the Duc de Nemours;⁹ he is a young prince; both titles hinder him. Our

⁷On their arrival in Annecy, the Missionaries had received hospitality at the home of Jacques de Cordon, Commander de Compesière. The Bishop of Geneva and Saint Jane Frances had each contributed half of their furniture. Commander de Sillery gave them three thousand livres on January 26, 1640, to buy and furnish a house in Annecy.

⁸Jacques de Cordon was a great benefactor of the Missionaries in Annecy. He financed several missions on September 24, 1641, in favor of the parishes that depended on his command posts. (Cf. Arch. Nat., S 6715-6716.) His life was published in Lyons in 1663. (Cf. P. Calemard, *Histoire de la vie d'illustre F. Jacques de Cordon d'Evieu* [Lyon: J. Molin, 1663].)

⁹Charles-Amédée de Savoie, Duc de Nemours, born in 1624, was one of the principal adversaries of Mazarin during the Fronde (1648-1653). He died in Paris on July 30, 1652, fatally wounded in a duel with the Duc de Beaufort, his brother-in-law.

Lord will give you some other opportunity, if He wishes. The King's State goes as far as Geneva. Perhaps we shall find some good there in time, when the Company is working in that region.

Monsieur, most willingly do I approve of your having portable beds as you wrote to me. People will have something to say, but where necessity demands, there is neither law nor reason that should keep you from acting that way. How can anyone subsist in those mountains without a bed in the winter? Not having one, the Missionaries would either have to die or forego the mission, especially in the winter. You will have to find some device that will require only one good mule and that is where the difficulty lies. At the beginning of the Mission, we used to do the same. However, we gave up the apparatus because it was superfluous and caused a great deal of trouble: one horse was not enough for the small light cart we had. It just occurred to me that you could have the furniture brought from one place to another by carts or mules that you rented for that purpose. But, in order to do that, it would be good to work in places adjacent to one another and to take a portion of the diocese at the beginning of the year and work there all year long. This would afford the advantage of easily transporting the furniture from one place to another and, in doing this, you would find the people well disposed because of the proximity of the localities where the mission would be held. We acted in that fashion, this year, in the valley of Montmorency.¹⁰ You would not believe, Monsieur, how much better the people do, how much easier the Missionaries find it, and how much progress they made by this means.

To do things this way, it is advisable that the Bishop choose the sections of his diocese where he wishes the work to be

¹⁰This valley was formerly renowned for its fertility in fruits of all kinds. At its farthest end, on a hill, stands the little town of Montmorency (Val-d'Oise).

done and that you no longer change districts so much, as you have been doing. I want to give this advice everywhere.

As for Masses being said in that region, alas! Monsieur, I would indeed like to see that but I certainly do not see how. Besides the fact that I have never seen anyone so inclined, the extreme poverty of the age is greatly dampening enthusiasm for alms and Mass stipends. Please indicate to the Bishop that I would consider it a mercy from God to render service in that way should the opportunity arise, and in any way in which he might choose to honor me with his instructions, and that there is no creature on earth over whom he has greater power.

Let us touch on the matter of your brother. I have done what I could about it as far as Messieurs de Bullion¹¹ and Tubeuf¹² are concerned, but to no effect. Just about a month ago, a young lawyer from Agen, living in this town, received the final rejection. It has been only six days since he was here and told me that your brother should be satisfied that everything that could be done about the matter has been done. M. de Bullion said that if the King chose to take into consideration such personal losses of the people in his service, half of his revenue would not suffice.

What news shall I give you about us? The house is in good health, thank God, as is the Company everywhere, except for

¹¹Claude de Bullion, Marquis de Gallardon, was very much in the good graces of Henri IV and Louis XIII, and was chosen by both monarchs for very delicate diplomatic missions. After having held the positions of Master of Requests (1605), State Councillor for ordinary affairs, Superintendent of Finances (1632) and, finally, Keeper of the Seals of the Orders of the King, he obtained, in February 1636, the position of President *à mortier* in the Paris Parlement, an office created expressly for him by Louis XIII. He died of a stroke on December 22, 1640.

¹²Jacques Tubeuf became President of the *Chambre des Comptes* on November 14, 1643. He was the Superintendent and Comptroller General of Finances for Queen Anne of Austria, and he died in Paris on August 10, 1670, at the age of sixty-four.

MM. Jegat¹³ and Bastien¹⁴ in Richelieu. However, the former is starting to feel better.

The seminary is doing better and better, thank God. M. Dufestel,¹⁵ the Superior in Troyes, has asked me to allow him to enter with M. Perceval,¹⁶ who came the day before yesterday for that purpose; they will enter tomorrow evening. M. Savinier is also there.

The alms for Lorraine are still being distributed, by the mercy of God. We have taken care of the towns of Toul, Metz, Verdun, Nancy, and Bar, as well as Saint-Mihiel and Pont-à-Mousson, where the destitution was so great as to be unimaginable. M. Dehorgny has just visited the Missionaries there. He has told me unbelievable and distressing things; the people were even eating snakes.

God has done us the kindness of also using the Company to assist men and women religious. The King is giving forty-five thousand livres for that purpose, to be distributed each month according to the order of the Intendant of Justice.

In this city, God has also granted us the mercy of raising up a small group of people from the upper class to assist the nobility in Lorraine and other people of high estate. Now then, Monsieur, it is time for me to close by very humbly begging you to take care of your health and that of the Company, and

¹³Bertrand Jegat, born in Vannes in Brittany in 1610, was ordained a priest on September 20, 1636 and was received into the Congregation of the Mission on October 9, 1638. He died in La Rose in 1646.

¹⁴Sébastien Nodo, a coadjutor Brother, born about 1603 in the diocese of Rouen. He was received into the Congregation of the Mission in 1633.

¹⁵François Dufestel, born in Oisemont (Somme), entered the Congregation of the Mission in 1633 and was ordained a priest in September 1636. He was Superior in Troyes (1638-1642), Annecy (1642), Cahors (1643-1644), and Marseilles (1644-1645). He left the Congregation in 1646 to become Dean of Saint-Omer de Lillers (Pas-de-Calais).

¹⁶Guillaume Perceval, born in Saint-Guillain in the diocese of Cambrai, entered the Congregation of the Mission in 1635, was ordained a priest in 1637, and left the Company in 1644.

to remember my miseries before God, so that He may be pleased to grant me mercy.

I am, in His love, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Monsieur Dufestel, Superior of the Priests of the Mission in Troyes, has asked to enter the seminary. He is there now with Monsieur Perceval.

I am sending you the receipt for the Bishop of Alet's¹⁷ hundred écus.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of the Geneva diocese, in Annecy

¹⁷Nicolas Pavillon was born in Paris, November 17, 1597. As a very young priest he placed himself under the direction of Saint Vincent, who had him teach catechism, employed him in the work of the missions, and sent him to the Charities where his presence was deemed useful. More than once he entrusted him with the direction of the conferences and retreats for ecclesiastics. Appointed to the bishopric of Alet in 1637, Pavillon accepted it only upon the Saint's entreaties. This elevation did not deter him from his apostolic works. He gave a mission in Rueil at Richelieu's invitation and one in Saint-Germain-en-Laye at the King's request. He was consecrated at Saint-Lazare, August 22, 1639, and went to his diocese accompanied by Etienne Blatiron, a Priest of the Mission. A zealous, intelligent Bishop, dedicated to reform, he justified the expectations placed in him. His episcopate would have been more fruitful had he been more on his guard against Jansenistic ideas. Saint Vincent begged him in vain to sign the formulary against Jansenism. The Bishop of Alet died December 8, 1677. There are several biographies of this prelate, the most recent that of M. Etienne Dejean, *Un prélat indépendant au XVIIe siècle, Nicolas Pavillon, évêque d'Alet* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1909).

462. - TO LAMBERT AUX COUTEAUX, SUPERIOR, IN RICHELIEU

Paris, July 29, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Mon Dieu! how wholeheartedly I am giving thanks to Our Lord for having restored M. Jegat's health! Please embrace him, as I am doing as warmly as possible. I am also asking His Divine Goodness to restore our good Brother Bastien's¹ health. I also greet him very humbly and affectionately. If he needs to take the waters, or if the doctor thinks the air would be better for him, you can send him to us.

I sent M. Cuissot² a hundred écus for their furniture. Please see to their sustenance.

You do well to act as you are doing toward that young woman from Chinon;³ you must take no notice of her. You have seen from my last letter⁴ how the Coadjutor of Tours⁵ feels about such people and the complaint he lodged with us on that subject.

Oh! how consoled I am by your telling me that you are going to work at your improvement, I mean the Community! Indeed, Monsieur, you give me more consolation in that regard than I can say. Frequent conferences and the practice of the virtues proper to us are the most efficacious means for doing that. M. de Savinier⁶ was so touched Friday evening by the

Letter 462. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹Sébastien Nodo.

²Superior of the house in Luçon.

³This young woman had dared to pour the blood of a chicken on the altar cloth of the main altar in the Church of Saint-Jacques so as to have an opportunity to make up a shameful story about a priest named Gilloire. Her deception was discovered and she was imprisoned in Chinon.

⁴Letter of July 22, no. 459.

⁵Victor Le Bouthillier was Coadjutor to Bertrand d'Eschaux.

⁶He had just been recalled from La Rose to Paris.

one we had here that he said he had never heard anything that moved him more. Oh! how I hope that the Company will benefit from this, and that on my next visit, around the beginning or the end of the autumn, I shall find it in good order, if Our Lord be pleased to grant me that grace!

I shall talk to the Duchesse⁷ about that funeral in the church.

Good day, Monsieur. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

463. - TO SAMSON LE SOUDIER,¹ IN LUCON

Paris, July 29, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I most humbly thank you for the letter you were so kind as to write me. It gave great comfort to me, and also to your brother² to whom I showed it. Oh! what a good young man he is! Your father tried to tempt him; he stayed as firm as a

⁷The Duchesse d'Aiguillon.

Letter 463. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹Samson Le Soudier was born in 1609 in Ourson (Calvados), entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 9, 1638, and made his vows in Richelieu on June 14, 1642. He was assigned to Luçon, and later to Saintes, where he was in 1646.

²Jacques Le Soudier, born in Vire (Calvados) on October 28, 1619, entered the Congregation of the Mission on May 16, 1638, was ordained a priest in 1642, and made his vows in Richelieu on June 14, 1642. In 1646 Saint Vincent considered him for the foundation of the Mission in Salé (Morocco); the project was abandoned, however, when Saint Vincent discovered that the Order of Recollects (Franciscans) had already made a commitment to that mission. In 1651 Jacques Le Soudier was in Saint-Quentin, where he remained for two years. He became Superior in Crécy (1652-1654) and in Montmirail (1655-1656). A long illness interrupted his work. He died in Montauban on May 17, 1663.

rock. He told me that if he were ever so unfortunate as to leave, he was asking God to let him die at the door. He has finished his two years in the seminary and is going over his philosophy with M. Dehorgny so that he can study theology. He spoke so eloquently to the man who came to see him on your father's behalf, that he promised to send him his title and dimissory. He also spoke to Baron Danti,³ who is often here as well.

So much for him. Now then, Monsieur, what shall I say about you? I cannot tell you how consoled I am to learn of your fidelity to the observance of the Little Rule and of your love for retirement and for living apart from the world and its attractions. Oh! what a good Missionary and apostolic man that will make of you! Keep it up, Monsieur, I beg of you, and practice teaching catechism and preaching. Missionaries must apply themselves to these tasks and although they do not accomplish them as successfully as others do, according to the opinion of men, it must be enough for them that they are doing the Will of God and perhaps producing more real fruit.

There is no time for me to say any more to you and so I am constrained to finish by saying that I am, more than I can tell you, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Le Soudier, Priest of the Mission of
Luçon, in Luçon

³It is possible that the Saint meant the Baron de Renty and wrote the wrong name absent-mindedly. The Baron de Renty was from the same place as Samson Le Soudier and often used to come to Saint-Lazare.

464. - TO N.

Saint-Lazare, Sunday, July 29, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The day before yesterday, I went to Saint-Denis and asked the Mother Superior of Sainte-Marie¹ to make use of her good graces with her dear sister, Madame de Hodicq.² You will see what she sent me from the enclosed, especially at the place where I have marked several lines. Be so kind as to let me know whether, without taking that into consideration, we should continue our little recommendations. I [add]³ to that, Monsieur, my most humble request that you will not divulge the source of your information about what the good gentleman does not wish to be said of him. Please do me the honor of believing that there is no one on earth over whom Our Lord has given you more power than over me. I am, in the love of the same Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Letter 464. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, seventeenth or eighteenth century copy.

¹Mother Françoise-Elisabeth Phelippeaux de Pontchartrain, Superior of the convent of the Visitation established in Saint-Denis.

²Claude Phelippeaux, daughter of Paul, Sieur de Pontchartrain, Secretary of State, and of Anne de Beauharnais. She was the wife of Pierre de Hodicq, Sieur de Marly-la-Ville, who became Councillor in the Parlement on March 26, 1621, then presiding judge in the court of Enquêtes [one of the three main chambers of the Parlement of Paris; it was founded originally to undertake, prior to litigation in the Parlement, the examination of cases involving written rather than oral evidence].

³Text of the original letter: "I address."

465. - TO SAINT JANE FRANCES, IN ANNECY

Paris, July 30, 1640

My most worthy and very dear Mother,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I cannot tell you most worthy Mother, how ashamed I am for having taken so long to answer you and how much I desire to turn over a new leaf. This time I hope Our Lord will grant me the grace to mend my ways for good. But indeed, worthy Mother, I would consider the matter accomplished if you were to ask of God for me the virtue of diligence, which He has given you in such abundance. I hope for this from your charity and from His Divine Goodness. Let us talk about the Visitor.¹

This time, dear Mother, you explained clearly, both in the letter you so kindly wrote to our Mother in the city² and in the lines you wrote at the bottom of M. Codoing's letter, how you could not approve the authority that I told you the Visitor³

Letter 465. - The original autograph letter was at one time the property of the convent of the Visitation in Périgueux. This monastery merged with that of Lourdes which now preserves the original manuscript.

¹For some fifteen years, several people interested in the welfare of the Visitation Order had been discussing with Saint Jane Frances the feasibility of an Apostolic Visitor to insure a uniformity of spirit among the various monasteries. The Gallicanism of the French bishops and the independence of individual bishops were among the obstacles which had to be addressed.

²Mother Hélène-Angélique Lhuillier. Born in 1592, the daughter of François, Seigneur d'Interville and Anne Brachet, Dame de Frouville, she was married in 1608 to Thomas Gobein, Seigneur du Val, Master Ordinary of the Chambre des Comptes. On the advice of Saint Francis de Sales, she was accepted into the Visitation convent in Paris on July 2, 1620, after her marriage was annulled. She was professed February 12, 1622, and was elected Superior several times. Saint Vincent used to say that "she was one of the holiest souls he had known." (Cf. *Sainte-Jeanne-Françoise*, vol. V, p. 65, note.) He put her in contact with Commander de Sillery in the hope that she would finish the work of bringing him back to God. She died March 25, 1655, at the monastery of Chaillot, where she was the first Superior. Her name is often mentioned in the biography of her sister: R. P. Salinis, *Madame de Villeneuve* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1918). (Cf. manuscript life of Mother Hélène-Angélique Lhuillier in the Archives of the Daughters of the Cross of Tréguier.)

³Of all the convents of the Visitation, only the two monasteries in Paris desired, as did Saint Vincent, the institution of a Visitor.

would need. Blessed be God that such is the case! I submit to it with all my heart and consider it to be God's Will made known through yours.

Apart from that, I confess to you, worthy Mother, that what I had written to you on the subject was my opinion, but with two conditions: one, that this Visitor would make use of his authority only in extreme cases and to that end, a man would be chosen who was gentle, wise, and full of respect for the Bishops. Such a one is M. Coqueret,⁴ Doctor of the Sorbonne, whom the Bishop of Sens⁵ had considered. He was recently elected one of the three Superiors of the Carmelites and acquiesced to that election because of the Cardinal's⁶ insistence. He possesses the three qualities I just mentioned to an eminent degree and would have served as an example to the others. The other condition is that he would have no power at all over any house except during the visitation. In those two cases he would have had the authority necessary to remedy certain matters, which otherwise he would be able to do only with difficulty. In the second place, he would never be able to assume nor perform the acts of a Superior General. But as for the objection of displeasing the Bishops, rest assured, dear Mother, that however little you do, it will cause them a singular disappointment and stir up a tempest. It is true that the scale will be smaller.

Jésus! dear Mother, oh! what am I saying! Where did my mind go while I was telling you what I just said? Indeed, it seems that, however much I acquiesce with my will, I do not do so with my judgment. *O bon Dieu!* but I do and do so

⁴Jean Coqueret, a Doctor of the Collège de Navarre, was the head of the Collège des Grassins and Superior of the Discalced Carmelites of France. He was a friend of Saint Francis de Sales, André Duval, and Saint Vincent with whom he had given a mission in Villepreux in 1618. Born in Pontoise in 1592, he died in Marseilles on October 7, 1655. Saint Vincent consulted him before introducing vows into his Company and invited him to the conferences that were held at Saint-Lazare on the subject of Jansenism.

⁵Octave de Saint-Lary de Bellegarde (November 14, 1621 - July 26, 1646).

⁶Cardinal Richelieu.

fully, having only God's good pleasure in view. I submit to it both my will and my judgment, not doubting, however, that it is God's Will since it is that of our worthy Mother. She is so much our worthy Mother that she is my only Mother. I honor and cherish her more tenderly than ever a child has loved and honored his mother after Our Lord. It seems to me that this affection reaches such a degree that I have enough love and esteem to give to an entire world, and that, indeed, without any exaggeration.

It is, therefore, in this filial spirit, dear Mother, that I speak to you and ever give you thanks for all your grandmotherly kindnesses toward your dear sons, your Missionaries. I am, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, your most humble and obedient son and servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Reverend Mother de Chantal, Superior of the First Monastery of Annecy

466. - TO COMMANDER DE SILLERY

[1640]

Monsieur,

Truly, Monsieur, one must confess that God is working wonders in you! Indeed! your quickness to respond to the

Letter 466. - *Vie de l'illustre serviteur de Dieu Noël Brulart de Sillery*, p. 128. The Missionaries, who lived at first in the village of Sancey, took up their abode in Troyes on August 25, 1640, in a house given them by Commander de Sillery, on the right corner of the faubourg Croncels and the rue des Bas-Clos. While the Commander was busy renovating and beautifying the house, Saint Vincent came to town. Finding the house too luxurious, he begged Brulart de Sillery to permit the Missionaries to live in the simplicity and poverty of their state in conformity with the spirit of the Gospel, and

movements of grace as soon as what is most agreeable to God is proposed to you, and to efface, without suffering as a result, all the reasons of your great and wise prudence, is, to tell the truth, rendering God a continual sacrifice of excellent odor and admirable edification for those who are aware of these beautiful deeds.

I do not have words to thank you for the favor you did in accommodating yourself to my humble suggestions concerning our establishment in Troyes. I am as obliged to you as if you had given me everything in the world, both because I thought it was contrary to the simplicity in which our poor Company should be established and because I fear that anything outside that simplicity savors somewhat of the style of worldly men. It is not that I myself do not fail in that regard quite often or that it is not as clear as day that you practice this virtue to a greater degree than I ever shall. I entreat you to trust that I say this, believing it as truly as I am certain that I must die.

Once again, Monsieur, I thank you for having so kindly condescended to my lowly opinion. I admire your humility in doing so, which unites me to you with so great a tenderness that I cannot express it.

asked him to remove the superfluous improvements. So earnest were his entreaties that the Commander was obliged to yield.

467. - CHARLES DE MONTCHAL,¹ ARCHBISHOP OF TOULOUSE,
TO SAINT VINCENT

Toulouse, 1640²

I cannot allow these two Missionaries,³ whom you sent to this locality, to take their departure and return to see you, without thanking you. I do so with all my heart for the great services they have rendered to God in my diocese. I could not tell you the trouble they have taken nor the fruits they have obtained, for which I am particularly obliged to you, since it is in my favor that they have exerted themselves as they have. One of them mastered the language of this region to the point of winning the admiration of those who speak it and proved himself an indefatigable worker. When they have had a little rest, I will entreat you to send them back to us. I am getting ready to have a retreat given to the ordinands and I have further need of their help for that reason. Everything will succeed for the glory of God, if you help us.

Letter 467. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. II, pp. 52-53.

¹Charles de Montchal was one of the most remarkable prelates of the seventeenth century because of his piety, zeal, learning and firmness in defending the rights of the Church against the encroachments of the State. He died in 1651.

²The letter is anterior to August 26. (Cf. no. 475.)

³Robert de Sergis and Nicolas Durot. Robert de Sergis was born March 2, 1608, in Auvers, near Pontoise. He was received into the Congregation of the Mission in June 1628, was ordained a priest in April 1632, and died in December 1640 or January 1641.

Born in Oisemont (Somme), Nicolas Durot was received into the Congregation of the Mission in August 1633 and was ordained a priest in December 1636. In 1639, he was preaching around Toulouse; in August 1640, he was in Paris. He returned to Richelieu in 1642, left the Congregation in 1645, and, thanks to Saint Vincent, was made a Canon of Saint-Martin in Angers.

468. - TO LOUIS LEBRETON, IN ROME

Paris, August 9, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Here at last is the life of Saint Venerandus,¹ which you asked me for.

I am not sending you the Nuncio's² letter yet and have not dared visit him for the reasons I mentioned to you.³ I shall have that happiness upon his return from the court.

We cashed the bill of exchange for 300 livres and paid 150 more for the exchange.

I am returning to the idea I already wrote to you, about making the Good Purposes⁴ the first year in the seminary, simple vows at the end of the second, and a solemn one to end our days in the Company many long years after having entered it.⁵

I am so glad the Reverend Father Assistant⁶ said that this does not make one a religious; discuss it with him a little more thoroughly.

Letter 468. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹The Roman Martyrology mentions three saints named Venerandus: May 25, Saint Venerandus, deacon, martyred in the diocese of Evreux; June 18, Saint Venerandus, bishop and confessor; November 14, Saint Venerandus, martyred in Troyes. *La vie des bienheureux martyrs saint Mauze et saint Vénérand, patrons du diocèse d'Evreux* was published in Rouen in 1614.

²Bishop Renuccio Scotti.

³Not a single letter that Saint Vincent wrote to Louis Lebreton between June 1 and August 9 is extant. It was in one of these lost letters, in several perhaps, that he stated the reasons he mentions here.

⁴A term used in the Congregation of the Mission to indicate a commitment to practice the virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience, in view of making vows at a later time to live the same virtues.

⁵The words "a solemn one" and "many long years after having entered" have been crossed out in the original letter, but it would appear that this was done at a later time because the ink is of a different kind.

⁶Father Etienne Charlet, French Assistant of the Jesuits.

I am awaiting the letters bearing your response to a number of matters about which I have written to you:⁷ about the union of the Holy Spirit house in Toul; that of the two priories in the diocese of Langres; the matter concerning a monastery of Saint-François to be placed under the direction of the Archbishop of Paris;⁸ and I recommend to you a dispensation in line with what M. Soufliers wrote to you and the attestation *in forma pauperum*.⁹ I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

I am waiting for a reply concerning Fernambuco in the Indies.¹⁰ I wrote to M. Le Bret in favor of the Congregation of Sainte-Genève.¹¹ Assure him of my obedience, and my

⁷The letter or letters dealing with the second and third points are no longer extant.

⁸Jean-François de Gondi.

⁹*In the form of the poor.* When people unable to pay the usual fees request a dispensation of familial relationship in view of marriage, this dispensation is sent to them *in forma pauperum*. They pay only partial fees or nothing at all.

¹⁰Pernambuco in Brazil. In the past, Brazil was part of what was known as the West Indies.

¹¹The Congregation of Sainte-Genève was requesting, in Rome, a renewal of the faculties of Cardinal de La Rochefoucauld and an indult permitting Father Faure to continue as Superior General.

François de La Rochefoucauld was born in Paris on December 8, 1558. He became Bishop of Clermont on October 6, 1585, Cardinal in 1607, Bishop of Senlis in 1611, and commendatory Abbot of Sainte-Genève in Paris in 1613. He resigned his bishopric in 1622 in order to dedicate himself entirely to the reform of the abbeys dependent on the Orders of Saint Benedict, Saint Augustine, and Saint Bernard. With that end in view, he obtained from Pope Gregory XV on April 8 special powers and the title of Apostolic Commissary. Supported by such men as Saint Vincent, Father Grégoire Tarrisse, Superior General of the Benedictines of Saint-Maur, and Father Charles Faure, he caused order and discipline to flourish once again in the monasteries. The Cardinal died February 14, 1645, having at his side Saint Vincent, who prepared him to appear before God. His body was buried at Sainte-Genève and his heart was given to the Jesuit Fathers. (Cf. M. La Morinière, *Les vertus du vrai prélat représentées en la vie de l'Eminentissime cardinal de La Rochefoucauld* [Paris: Cramoisy, 1646].)

Charles Faure, born in Louveciennes (Yvelines), November 29, 1594, took the habit of the Canons Regular in the Abbey of Saint-Vincent de Senlis and was professed March

esteem for those persons with whom he is meeting. I told him that you would tell him about the holiness of the reform of Sainte-Geneviève.

Addressed: Monsieur Lebreton, Priest of the Mission, in Rome

469. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Monday at 10 o'clock [1640]¹

I just this minute received the letter you wrote to the Abbé de Vaux and find it well done, except that I think there would be every reason to tell him that, if those Gentlemen want the clause of dismissal, it is just for us to put in one concerning the recall of the Sisters, when we shall see fit to do so.²

1, 1615. The examples of laxity he saw did not lessen his progress in virtue. His reputation for holiness reached the King, who entrusted him with the delicate mission of establishing the reform in the Monastery of Sainte-Geneviève in Paris. He was so successful that, in order to extend the reform, Cardinal de La Rochefoucauld gathered into one congregation, under the name of Congregation of France, several houses of the Canons Regular spread throughout the provinces of the kingdom. He placed them under the Abbey of Sainte-Geneviève and appointed Father Faure Vicar-General of the new Institute. Father Faure visited the establishments, laid down the rules for them, and founded some seminaries. The Congregation of France was canonically erected by a Bull of February 3, 1634. On October 17, the General Chapter elected Father Faure Superior General for a term of three years. He was reelected in 1637. The constitutions not permitting a third term, he yielded his position in 1640 to Father François Boulart, but kept such extensive powers for himself that his successor could do nothing without his advice. When Father Boulart's three-year term ended, Father Faure was once again placed at the head of the Congregation of France. He fell ill that same year and died November 4, 1644. His attitude toward Saint Vincent was rather cold and reserved. He left several works on asceticism. (Cf. Lallemand et Chantonnet, *La vie du Révérend Père Charles Faure, abbé de Sainte-Geneviève de Paris* [Paris: J. Anisson, 1698].)

Letter 469. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter appears to have been written shortly before no. 473.

²Cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 17 and L. 19, in which Saint Louise informed the Abbé de

It is a serious matter that people everywhere are complaining that they are taking what is allotted for the sick. We must make a rule that they may not, under any pretext whatsoever, eat what is intended for the poor.

You would console me by passing on my recommendations to good Abbé de Vaux, and my excuses for not having written to him. Tell him that I shall do so by the next mail.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am your servant.

V. D.

Did you receive a letter I sent you from our Sisters in Richelieu? They sent you word, and M. Lambert wrote to me, that there are two fine young women from there who have presented themselves to become members of the Charity.

470. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[Between 1640¹ and 1644²]

Monsieur,

Madame de Verthamon³ did not fail to come and see the Ladies. After having again made known more clearly that those Gentlemen

Vaux of Saint Vincent's opinion concerning the dependence of the Sisters at the hospital in Angers on the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission.

Letter 470. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹It was in 1640 that the Ladies of Charity took over the work of the Couche.

²The wax used to seal this letter bears the impression of the seal which Saint Louise used before 1644.

³Marie Boucher d'Orsay, Dame de Verthamon, wife of François de Verthamon, Master of Requests.

A Master of Requests was one of an important group of lawyers appointed to the

intended to make themselves absolute masters of the entire work and, having said that she believed they would be quite pleased to be given the means of declaring their intentions openly, she still accompanied the Ladies as had been decided. The said Gentlemen did not fail to make themselves understood. They told the Ladies that they would grant them everything they wished and even that they would have to present only a receipt, without signing anything, for any money they might receive. They themselves would take care of all the merchants' bills and, I think, of the wet-nurses, too.

The Ladies gave her to understand also that they could undertake or continue this work only so long as the original arrangements lasted. This entire discussion took place in the presence of the Chancellor,⁴ who, in conclusion, said that he would put the High Court Judges' intent in writing and give it to the Ladies. Good Monsieur Le Roy,⁵ when the Ladies saw him and related all these proposals to him, told them that, if that settled the matter, he would withdraw completely. If there is anything else, the Ladies will tell you tomorrow at the time you gave them, three o'clock in the afternoon.

I am, Monsieur, your daughter and servant.

L. DE M.

I most humbly entreat you, Monsieur, to take the trouble of letting me know whether you think it would be well for us to notify Madame de Verthamon that you and the Ladies will be here tomorrow. I am afraid she might get angry if we do not do so, because she asked the Ladies when it would be.

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

Council of Requests, a court of first instance in specified civil cases. Their main function in the seventeenth century lay in dealing with pleas to the King for justice.

⁴Pierre Séguier, son of Jean Séguier, Seigneur d'Autry, and Marie Tudert de la Bournaillère, was born in Paris on May 29, 1588. In 1633, he was named Keeper of the Seals [Minister of Justice] and then Chancellor [Prime Minister] in 1635. In 1649, the Seals were taken from him, only to be returned to him in 1656, at the death of Mathieu Molé. He retained them until his death in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, January 28, 1672.

⁵M. Le Roy was the Administrator at the Foundlings.

471. - THE MARQUISE DE MAIGNELAY¹ TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

Some time ago, I wrote to Mademoiselle Poulaillon² to find out from Mademoiselle Le Gras if she could be so kind as to furnish a

Letter 471. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹For a long time, Saint Vincent de Paul had known Claude-Marguerite de Gondi, sister of Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi, the former General of the Galleys, and widow of Florimond d'Halluin, the Marquis de Maignelay, whom she had married on January 7, 1588. Her husband was murdered three years after their marriage; her son died in his prime; and her daughter led a miserable life with a husband, the Comte de Candale, eldest son of the Duc d'Épernon, who abused her mercilessly. Thwarted by her family in her desire to enter the religious life, the Marquise de Maignelay remained in the world and dedicated her life to the service of the poor. King Henri IV used to call her "the good marquise." Queen Marie de Médicis would sometimes entrust her with the distribution of her alms. Every day, a great number of beggars thronged around the door of the mansion in which she lived on the rue Saint-Honoré. She visited hospitals, prisons, churches and convents assiduously. She cooperated in the establishment of the convent of the Madeleine, undertook the support of sixteen of the religious, and left a sufficient amount of money to continue this charitable work after her death. The Capuchin nuns, the Carmelites, the Daughters of Providence, the Oratorians, and her parish church were the recipients of her generosity. Saint Vincent was not forgotten. She gave him her time, her activity, and her money. She assisted him in all his works, especially with the retreats for ordinands. One morning, on awakening, when she realized that she could no longer see, she sang the *Te Deum* in thanksgiving. She died on August 26, 1650, and was buried in the convent of the Capuchin nuns, clothed in their habit. (Cf. P. Marc de Bauduen, *La Vie admirable de très Haute Dame Charlotte-Marguerite de Gondy, Marquise de Maignelais* [Paris, 1666].)

²Marie de Lumague was the widow of François de Pollalion, a gentleman in ordinary of Louis XIII's household. She was among those devout widows whom Saint Vincent put to work in the apostolate. Born in Paris, November 29, 1599, married at the age of eighteen and widowed shortly thereafter, she made a vow of continence and placed herself under the direction of Saint Vincent. Together with Saint Louise and other charitable ladies, she visited the Charities, instructed little girls, and took alms to the poor. She especially wanted to gather together and reform delinquent girls, and to this end she founded the Daughters of Providence. Saint Vincent worked on the rules of this Institute, procured funds for it and good directors as well, and obtained its approbation by the King and the Archbishop of Paris. Mademoiselle de Pollalion died September 4, 1657. (Cf. Hyacinthe Collin, *Vie de la Vénérable Servante de Dieu Marie Lumague, veuve de M. Pollalion* [Paris: Cl. J.-B. Hérisant fils, 1744]; Abbé L. Teillet, *Histoire de l'Union chrétienne de Fontenay-le-Comte* [Fontenay-le-Comte: L. P. Gouraud, 1898].) Saint Vincent always writes *Poulaillon* instead of *Pollalion*.

good schoolmistress for the girls in this locality.³ However, it is to be desired that she be able to teach them a trade, because unless that is the stipulation, the inhabitants of the district will be difficult about taking them away from the schoolmaster, where it costs scarcely anything and where they learn along with the boys. That is a dangerous thing as well, as you know. We have a very good pastor here who would like to see this good work established while we are in the locality. Mademoiselle Le Gras sent word to Mademoiselle Poulaillon that two could be sent, one of whom would tend the sick of the Charity—bleed and give remedies—and that they could be changed as in other places. We will accept any conditions that you and she deem advisable. However, I would like to know as soon as possible what they would expect to earn, so that I can find out whether my daughter would be willing to make a contribution. There is also a Hôtel-Dieu, which has some means and from which something could be given. Do me the kindness, Monsieur, as soon as you can do so, of sending to my home an answer to the above, and of buying for me six booklets on establishing the Charity.⁴ I owe you for many more. They are to be sent to our good pastor in Halluin,⁵ where we come from, and to several others of the locality who are trying in our villages to revive this devotion, which the war had somewhat brought to a halt. People remember well, and rightly so, all the acts of charity your priests did there so effectively.

I entreat you to include me in your holy prayers, and my daughter as well.

We are, Monsieur, your most humble and most obedient daughter and servant.

MARGUERITE DE GONDI

Nanteuil, August 21 [1640]⁶

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior of the Priests of the Mission

³Nanteuil-le-Haudouin (Oise).

⁴No known copy of this booklet is extant.

⁵Commune in the canton of Tourcoing (Nord).

⁶This letter preceded no. 480 by a few days.

472. - THE MARQUISE DE MAIGNELAY TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

I just received your letter. I beg your pardon for being so importunate, but the need of our Charity¹ is urgent. The servant we have is so kind that, although she has been paid up to the sixth of next month, she wishes to leave us on the last day of this one; and I would not want to keep her one hour, if she is unwilling. Since Easter, we have had few poor, thank God; the largest number has been twelve; today I believe it is nine; and sometimes, much less. We pay one hundred livres in wages. Medicines and enemas are prepared here. I retain a fine young woman to carry out the acts of charity that I cannot do as generously as I should. In fact, I do not do any of them, for my strength is diminishing. If the girl whom you are kindly going to send us is a good young woman, we shall try to lodge her without any cost to her; and I shall be greatly relieved about the fine young woman I have in the house. If she does not know how to let blood, it does not matter; she can learn. The woman we had learned it in a short time; and then we do have a surgeon. If you would be pleased to let this messenger bear a note to good Mademoiselle Le Gras and send her this message, she could give us the response.

I end as I began, asking your pardon and entreating you for a share in your holy prayers, because I am, Monsieur, you most humble and obedient daughter and servant.

MARGUERITE DE GONDI

August 26, in the evening [1640]²

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent, Superior of the Priests of the Mission*

Letter 472. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹The Charity of Nanteuil-le-Haudouin.

²This letter belongs near no. 471.

473. - TO LAMBERT AUX COUTEAUX, IN RICHELIEU

Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris, August 26, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am most consoled by what you tell me concerning Monsieur Chiroye and ask that you send him as soon as possible,¹ without mentioning the reason why. You can tell him that it is perhaps to take care of the Company in M. Cuisso's absence during a trip he has to take, and give him some good advice on how to behave in that situation. I will send you someone else in his place, if M. Benoît² does not return right away. I greet and embrace him in spirit with an inexpressible tenderness.

You would do well to get rid of that young woman.³ Advise her not to amuse herself with all those notions she has and to try to adjust to the way of life of the others. Neither Our Lord nor the Blessed Virgin had all those ideas, and they conformed to the common life.

Assure M. Perdu⁴ that I received and sent his information to Rome, and tell M. Dehorgny that his letters were sent to the places to which they were addressed, and that I commended that task to him most conscientiously. I ask him to excuse me for not writing to him.

We are awaiting those two good young women from the Charity⁵ and shall return what you gave them. As for Barbe, look into the matter.⁶

Letter 473. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹Jacques Chiroye had been sent to the house of Luçon as Superior. He was replacing Gilbert Cuisso, who was to direct the establishment of La Rose. (Cf. no. 459.)

²Benoît Bécu.

³One of the "illuminatae" of Chinon. (Cf. no. 459.)

⁴Jacques Perdu, born in Grandvilliers (Oise), entered the Congregation of the Mission in 1630, was ordained a priest in 1632, and died in September 1644.

⁵Probably the two postulants from Richelieu mentioned in no. 469.

⁶There was talk of naming Barbe Superior of the hospital in Angers.

Your trip to Toul⁷ is not judged advisable because of the little time you can give to it.

God has taken good M. Fleury. Please pray to God for him; and have everyone in the Company say a Mass for him. I am asking M. Colée to let me know for how much he sold him his share in the two small houses adjoining the hospital and what they are renting for.

We are making the visitation here just now. Never have I better recognized how important it is for us to make good use of this interval for our spiritual advancement. Providence has given it to us for that purpose. In the name of God, Monsieur, tell this to the Company and that it is important for all of us to make use of all the time we have for that purpose. Therefore, we would do well to put off until some other time every other kind of occupation, even preaching and visiting places where we have gone to give a mission. We must endeavor to have God reign sovereignly in us, and then in others. The trouble with me is that I take more care to have Him reign in others than in myself. O Monsieur, what blindness for me and how I beg God that people do not imitate me in that respect! I am telling you this with tears in my eyes. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Do not be troubled about the exaggeration you mentioned to me.

Addressed: Monsieur Lambert, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Richelieu, in Richelieu

⁷Where he was to make a visitation.

474. - TO SAINT JANE FRANCES, IN ANNECY

Paris, August 26, 1640

My most worthy and very dear Mother,

Mon Dieu, dear Mother, how my heart is moved at seeing the goodness of your incomparable charity with regard to your poor children, the Missionaries! *O Jésus!* how fortunate they are and how I hope they profit by it! In the name of Our Lord, worthy Mother, continue your kindness to them and to give your poor son and servant the share His goodness has granted him in your dear heart.

I wrote at length to Monsieur Escart about a month ago¹ concerning the matter your charity kindly told me to mention to him. I hope he has received my letter and that it has had some effect on his disposition, unless the temptation has made too strong an impression on his imagination. The matter of visiting his sister is important. However, because it runs counter to one of our maxims, which is not to visit our relatives, I ask him to put off doing so until some time when he can go there on his way, coming or going.

What M. Tholard wrote to me about his temptation usually happens to a large number when they first begin hearing confessions, but little by little it disappears. We have a general rule to continue, no matter what bad effect the temptation may have during the confession.

With regard to M. Duhamel, I wrote to tell him that, if residing in Rome with one of our Missionaries² or in Alet with the ones who are there³ does not allow him any rest, then, *in*

Letter 474. - Autograph letter. The original is in the monastery of the Visitation in Annecy, J de C 4, no. 61.

¹July 25. (Cf. no. 460.)

²Louis Lebreton.

³Antoine Lucas (cf. no. 428) and Etienne Blatiron. The latter was born in Saint-Julien-Chapteuil (Haute-Loire) on January 6, 1614, and was received into the Congregation of

nomine Domini, he may return to his home in this city.⁴ After he has spent some time at home, we will see each other. He has a naturally restless disposition and will never be at peace, no matter what situation he is in. A distinguished and holy lady⁵ in whom he had great confidence, told me before she died that he would be lost if he gave up his vocation. I do not think she meant through vice, but through chance events to which she foresaw he would succumb.

What can I say to your dear heart about the good Commander,⁶ dear Mother? *O Jésus!* he does not have the slightest difficulty in the world, I repeat the slightest, with what you wrote concerning the Visitor,⁷ and certainly, most worthy Mother, I assure you of the same on my own account. The reason for this is that, since he and I were seeking in this matter only the Will of God and believed that it would be revealed to both of us by the will of our worthy Mother, I can assure you, most kind and dear Mother, that we did not have the least thought in the world contrary to yours, I repeat the least. And I think, dear Mother, that I can assure you of the same thing as far as the Mother in the city⁸ is concerned. We

the Mission on January 6, 1638. Ordained a priest in 1639, he was placed in Alet (1639-1641), Saintes (1641), Richelieu, Rome (1644-1645), and Genoa (1645-1657). He especially distinguished himself in the last position where as Superior of a new house he had to organize everything. Saint Vincent considered him one of the most competent of his Missionaries and "a very great servant of God." (Cf. Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. III, p. 70.) Etienne Blatiron died in Genoa, July 24, 1657, a victim of his dedication to the plague-stricken. His biography was published in vol. II of the *Notices*, pp. 151-203. In the Lyons manuscript there is a report on his virtues addressed to Saint Vincent.

⁴To Paris.

⁵Madame Goussault.

⁶Commander de Sillery.

⁷These words, "concerning the Visitor," have been crossed out on the original. It is most regrettable that, in order to suppress every trace of disagreement between Saint Jane Frances and Saint Vincent regarding the Constitutions of the Visitation nuns, it was felt necessary to make it impossible to read what he wrote on this question in this letter and elsewhere. This difference of opinion, however, does not in the slightest lessen the sanctity of either, and we do not see that its publication could put anyone in the wrong.

⁸Sister Hélène-Angélique Lhuillier.

are as much at peace as if Our Lord Himself had told us what you wrote to us. That is what made me realize that we sought in this only the absolute glory of God. Since I have been in the world, I have never seen or experienced in myself so great a submission of my understanding and will as on this occasion. O dear and most amiable Mother, you are to a sovereign degree our worthy and most beloved Mother! No, it has reached such a point that there is no word to express it to you. Our Lord alone can bring it home to your dear heart.

Mother de la Trinité⁹ wrote a few days ago, I think it was only three days ago, that she considers it necessary and hopes it will be done. And I shall whisper only to my worthy Mother's heart that she wrote that she has had an inspiration from Our Lord concerning the matter.¹⁰

That, most worthy, kind, and beloved Mother (I cannot express it), is what I can tell you at the moment. *O Jésus!* I just remembered that I am forgetting to respond to what you said to me, about our aspiring to join together priestly and religious perfection. Oh! no, dear Mother, we are too weak to do that. However, it is true that we are worried about finding a means to preserve ourselves in our vocation. Some other time I will tell my dear Mother the reasons why and the various

⁹Marie d'Hanivel, daughter of the Grand Audiencier [officer who proclaims the orders of a court], was born in Paris in 1579. As a girl she found only joy in a world that flattered her. Brought to do some serious thinking by the sudden death of a friend and by the words of the renowned Capuchin, Father Ange de Joyeuse, she refused to marry the nephew of the Duc de Villars. On the advice of her cousin, M. de Brétigny, and of Madame Acarie, she entered the Carmelites on the rue Saint-Jacques in Paris on November 1, 1604, in the early days of its foundation. She took the name of Marie de la Trinité and was professed in the convent in Dijon in 1605. In Dijon she was for some time the confidante of the Baronne de Chantal. Prioress successively in Pontoise, Rouen, Amiens and Caen, she founded the Carmels in Troyes (1620), Châtillon (1621), and a second convent in Troyes (1630), where she died March 6, 1647, at the age of sixty-eight. (Cf. Placide Galleman, *La Vie du Vénérable prestre de J.C. M. Jacques Gallemant, docteur en théologie de la faculté de Paris, premier supérieur des Carmélites en France* [Paris: C. Couterot, 1653], pp. 329-339.)

¹⁰Here we omit four lines of the original, which are completely illegible because they have been crossed out.

ideas that have come to us on this topic, so that we can have your sound and holy advice.

I am, meanwhile, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

In the name of God, worthy Mother, let the last point in my letter be told only to the dear heart of my Mother and to no one else.

Addressed: Reverend Mother de Chantal, Superior of the first monastery of the Sisters of Sainte-Marie of Annecy, in Annecy

475. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ANNECY

August 26, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter of the fourth of this month. In answer, I shall say that I adore the way God is guiding you in the new work you are undertaking. I pray that He will make it successful and allow us to know His divine Will on similar occasions. I wrote to M. Duhamel to tell him that, if he does not feel he can find rest in a change of person and place by going to visit M. Lebreton in Rome or by going to Alet, *in nomine Domini*, he should return to his home in Paris. Tell him that it would be well for him to let some time go by before he returns to this house from his own. I told our worthy Mother¹ that Madame Goussault told me, before she died, that

Letter 475. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹Saint Jane Frances.

he was lost if he did not persevere in his vocation, not because of vice, but because of the nature of his mind, which is uneasy everywhere about everything. However, we have reason to hope that Our Lord will keep him under His special protection, because of his fear of offending Him. I ask you to write me his decision so I can notify the places I indicated to him to receive him, and advise them about this.

I wrote to M. Escart at great length the last time² as you instructed me. I hope that if his ideas have not changed any, my letter will have had some effect on him. And if I can, I shall say a few words to him about it by this mail.³

I am writing to M. Tholard about his difficulties in confession.⁴ He must not stop hearing confessions because of that.

I wrote you a very long letter, I think, in care of M. de Courcilly, the bookseller in Lyons. I believe you have now received my letter.

I told our worthy Mother that neither the Commander⁵ nor I have ever had our understanding and will so submitted to the judgment Our Lord has given our worthy Mother as on this occasion concerning the Visitor; and that is true. *O Jésus!* Monsieur, we must abide by it.

So you are now living the life of the seminary in your new lodging and giving the mission in Annecy. Well, then, Monsieur, I adore Providence in that regard. I told the Bishop⁶ that the success of this will be the rule when we need to make use of it hereafter in similar cases.

At present we are making the visitation here where Messieurs Savinier, de Sergis, and Durot are living.⁷ M. Dufestel,

²July 25 (cf. no. 460).

³Cf. no. 476.

⁴Cf. no. 477.

⁵Commander de Sillery.

⁶Juste Guérin, Bishop of Geneva.

⁷Saint-Lazare.

the Superior in Troyes, just left the Seminary, where he had asked to spend some time. O Monsieur, what an example you have given posterity in that regard!⁸ Monsieur Perceval, who is a member of the Community in Troyes, kept his Superior company.

We have Messieurs du Coudray and the young Guérin⁹ sick in Lorraine. I commend them to your prayers and ask you to help us give thanks and have others give thanks for the goodness of God toward this poor, miserable Company. He has inspired a good soul, who does not wish to be named, to donate twenty-five thousand livres, partly in cash and partly in periodic revenue, so that God may be pleased to grant us the grace of continuing to become more and more attached to the spirit of the Company. O Monsieur, is your heart not moved at seeing God's way of consoling us temporally and spiritually? In the past, He willed to sanction the Rule of Saint Francis *viva voce*, and in our time to confirm the spirit of this poor Company by blessings! For it was for that purpose that this person told me God had inspired her to do this. Only her son, who acted as spokesman, another person, and I, know who she is. There is no one else I can tell about it. *O altitudo divitiarum sapientiae et scientiae Dei! quam incomprehensibilia sunt iudicia ejus!*¹⁰ O Monsieur! who will help us to humble ourselves lower than hell, and where shall we hide ourselves at the sight of so much kindness from God? We shall place ourselves in the wounds of Our Lord, in whose love and

⁸It would seem, from these words, that Bernard Codoing had entered the seminary for a short period of renewal, that is, had suspended his work in order to dedicate some time at Saint-Lazare to his own perfection, under the direction of the priest in charge of the young seminarians.

⁹Jean Guérin.

¹⁰*Oh, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God. How incomprehensible are his judgments!* Rom. 11:33. "How deep are the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How inscrutable his judgments, how unsearchable his ways!" (NAB)

in that of His holy Mother, I am, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Is.C.M.

I entreat you, Monsieur, to tell the Company never to speak to anyone about this. Nevertheless, share it with our worthy Mother and ask her to help us thank God for it.

I gave the three hundred livres you sent me to a student, as you directed; five hundred to Madame de Menthon's son, who is at the Academy—and I am sending you his letter so that you can get them from his mother; and fifteen pistoles to the bursar of Sainte-Marie in the city,¹¹ according to your letter. Send me word if you receive or have already received these sums.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Annecy, in Annecy

476. - TO PIERRE ESCART, IN ANNECY

Paris, August 26, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Although I wrote to you at length about a month ago,¹ I shall not refrain from writing these lines to you on this occasion to tell you that I still love you dearly. I often think of the goodness of heart with which, I imagine, you accepted

¹¹The first monastery of the Visitation.

Letter 476. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹July 25 (cf. no. 460).

what I wrote to you concerning the submission of your judgment. I think, too, of the good use you are making of my remarks. In that regard, it seems to me that you are acquiescing in everything prescribed for you, even though it is directly contrary to your own sentiments. O Monsieur, what a great consolation that is to me and how, I imagine, it rejoices the heart of God! Never have I seen anything that edified me more than the lights Our Lord gave you on this subject last year during retreat.

Our worthy Mother de Chantal sent me word that you were told one of your sisters has apostatized. That touched me deeply. However, I do not know how it is that I am having a little difficulty believing that that is so. I am afraid the enemy of your peace of soul may have suggested this idea to those who wish to see you in your hometown, so as to persuade you to go there. And because that may nevertheless be the case, I entreat you, very dear brother, to put off the thoughts of that trip until, on some occasion when you are passing by, you can see how things are and if you can do her some good. Our Lord has witnessed to us how much He approves one's staying at a distance from one's relatives even though it be a question of distributing one's goods to the poor or, indeed, even of assisting at the burial of one's father. Moreover, we see how, from birth, and in the prime of His manhood He fled his native land. All that, together with my own experience of the prejudicial effect these visits have on a priest, added to the rule we have and which is well observed, by the grace of God; all that, I repeat, causes me to judge that it is not advisable for you to go there expressly for that purpose. Rather, it would be well for you to wait for some occasion that Providence puts in your hands, by means of which you can visit your relatives en route.

Yes, you will tell me, but perhaps I shall bring this dear sister back to the bosom of the Church. You are right, Monsieur, to say "perhaps," because you have reason to

doubt it, and because, in thinking you will do her some good unaided, you may inflict harm on yourself. Our Lord saw His relatives in Nazareth, who needed His help to be saved. He could have been of some benefit to them, and yet He preferred to leave them in danger rather than go and visit them. He understood that His Father would take no pleasure in it and wished to give this example to posterity and instruct His Church in what should be done in similar cases. I have admired many times the way Saint Francis Xavier practiced this example of Our Lord. On his way to the Indies, he passed quite close to his relatives without visiting them.

Here is what you might do, however. You could write to the Capuchin Fathers of Sion asking them to visit your good sister and your other relatives and to do all they can to bring back this dear sister and to have your other relatives make a general confession. You might write to the latter entreating them to take advantage of the grace that will be offered to them by those good Fathers.

That, my dear M. Escart, is what I shall say to you for the present, except that I greatly hope we may set about stripping ourselves entirely of affection for anything that is not God, be attached to things only for God and according to God, and that we may seek and establish His kingdom first of all in ourselves, and then in others. That is what I entreat you to ask of Him for me, who am, in His love, [Monsieur],² your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Escart, Priest of the Mission, in Annecy

²The Saint wrote "Madame" absent-mindedly.

477. - TO JACQUES THOLARD, IN ANNECY

Paris, August 26, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The Lord knows the consolation I received from your letter. In response, I shall tell you, Monsieur, that you must not be troubled because of the temptations that come to you while hearing confessions or because of their effects. That happens naturally to some people when they see or hear the slightest thing conducive to it; it happens to others through the suggestion of the evil spirit, to turn us aside from the good accomplished in this divine action. Neither in one case nor the other do we ever offend God mortally or venially, so long as these happenings are displeasing to us in the transcendent part of our mind. Most confessors, or at least quite a number of them, are tormented by these afflictions when they first begin this work; but, little by little, these thoughts make no impression on the imagination, *quia in assuetis non fit passio*.¹ In the early days of the Church, a holy bishop suffered these trials when he was baptizing women by immersion. Having entreated God a number of times to deliver him from these temptations and not having been heard, he finally lost patience and withdrew to the desert. There, God let him see three crowns, one richer than the other, which He had prepared for him, had he persevered. He would have only the least because he had not believed that He would keep him from succumbing to the temptation since He was permitting him to be tried in the duties of his vocation. This example, cited for me one day by a Carthusian monk under whom I was making my retreat

Letter 477. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹A well-known scholastic adage. Its meaning is as follows: *Things to which we are accustomed make no impression.*

at Valprofonde,² eradicated an almost similar temptation I was undergoing in the exercise of my vocation. I hope from the goodness of God, Monsieur, that it will have the same effect on you, and that, if you persevere, you will receive a special crown before God on that account. It is enough for you to make an act disclaiming all those things when you begin to hear confessions, and there is no need for you to confess them, rather you should refrain from doing so. Therefore, hear confessions in peace and have a greater love for the goodness of Our Lord because He is not offended by these things nor by anything that happens within us against our will.³ And never mind saying that the violence of the sensuality does not allow you to make any act of denial during it, because it is not necessary and almost impossible, at least in a perceptible way. What Our Lord asks of us, is that we pass over such matters quickly, yet in such a way that we do not neglect saying and doing the things we should to help souls rid themselves of these faults. Our Lord will be your guide and your strength in this. Have complete confidence in Him and remember, Monsieur, that His goodness gives me such heartfelt affection for you that He alone can make you conscious of it. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Tholard, Priest of the Mission, in
Annecy

²In the commune of Béon (Yonne).

³Here the Saint scratched out the following words: "except the temptation. It is not important for you to say that you . . ."

478. - THE MARQUISE DE MAIGNELAY TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

God has sent us a servant for our Charity; she is a virtuous widow from this faubourg. We shall give her a trial because she is familiar with the neighborhood. I thought it appropriate to see what she can do. Do not bother to send us the woman for whom I troubled you so much. I know you will graciously excuse me and do me the kindness of praying for my needs, which, by the grace of God, are not small. But, in whatever state I may be, I am, Monsieur, your most humble and most obedient daughter and servant.

MARGUERITE DE GONDI

August 29 [1640]¹

479. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[August 29 or 30, 1640]¹

Mademoiselle,

I received this letter this morning before mine was written and before the Marquise had seen your letters or mine, because our Brother found that she had left. You can still have that fine young woman and the girl from Lorraine make a retreat.

Letter 478. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter seems in place near nos. 471 and 480.

Letter 479. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This date has been assigned because of the reference to the letter from the Marquise de Maignelay, no. 478.

480. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Thursday morning [August 30, 1640]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I just wrote to the Marquise de Maignelay and sent her your two letters of yesterday and today. I shall keep the young woman here until I receive an answer as to whether she can make five or six days of retreat.

Yesterday I lost a day going to visit the Duchesse d'Aiguillon and Madame du Vigean² upon the death of the latter's son.³ The said lady's retainers came to get me for that purpose.

Letter 480. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹The death of the Marquis de Fors, which is mentioned in this letter, took place in the month of August 1640. Moreover, the reference to the Marquise de Maignelay necessitates the placement of this letter near nos. 478 and 479. Finally, since no. 479 is from Wednesday, August 29 or Thursday, August 30, this letter, dated Thursday, can only be from August 30, if we take its content into account.

²Anne de Neubourg, wife of François Poussart de Fors, first Baron, and then Marquis du Vigean. The beautiful Baroness—as Voiture styled her—was closely associated with the Duchesse d'Aiguillon. Richelieu's enemies spread infamous rumors about the two women. (Cf. Tallemant des Réaux, *Les historiettes de Tallemant des Réaux. Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du XVIIe siècle* [6 vols., Paris: A. Levasseur, 1834-1835], vol. II, p. 32; also, *Recueil des chansons historiques* [Ms. in the Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal], vol. I, p. 149.) Voiture described the magnificent country house she possessed at La Barre, near Montmorency. (Cf. Vincent Voiture, *Oeuvres* [new ed., Paris: Firmin-Didot frères, 1858], p. 96.)

³Madame du Vigean had two sons and two daughters, Anne and Martha. The eldest, the Marquis de Fors, a courageous and even reckless officer, taken prisoner twice and twice freed, had just died at the siege of Arras, at barely twenty years of age. His death touched the poet Desmarets, who mourned him in a long elegy (cf. Jean Desmarets, *Oeuvres poétiques* [Paris: H. Le Gras, 1641]). The Marquis' younger brother was assassinated, under circumstances that have never been explained. Anne became the Duchesse de Richelieu by her marriage with a grandnephew of the Cardinal-Minister. Martha, after a brilliant appearance in the world, where she both took and gave pleasure, became a Carmelite in the Convent on the rue Saint-Jacques in Paris, in spite of the objections of her mother, and was known as Sister Martha of Jesus. Saint Vincent had foreseen her entrance into the cloister and had announced it to her at a time when she was thinking only of enjoying worldly pleasure. Quite troubled by the prophecy of a man whose power with God she well knew, she had begged him, in vain, not to pray for that intention. She personally certified the authenticity of this fact in a declaration signed by

However, I found that Our Lord had acted as the mother's consoler in a supernatural way. Never have I seen the reflection of God's strength in affliction as in that virtuous lady. That and some important business of ours are taking a lot of time away from our visitation, which, I fear, will not be finished a week from today, Thursday. Consequently, I am afraid it will have to take two weeks.

This young woman will bring you the present letter, after I have received an answer from the Marquise,⁴ and she will show it to you. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

I am very glad that you have some hopes for that good girl from Lorraine and are putting her in retreat and keeping her. I am afraid she is a little lazy.

481. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Tuesday morning [August or September 1640]¹

Mademoiselle,

Here are two young women from Richelieu, whom Providence is sending you for your need. (It would be [good] to begin putting them in retreat the first thing tomorrow,)

her hand. (Cf. V. Cousin, *Madame de Longueville. Nouvelles études sur les femmes illustres et la Société du XVIIe siècle* [Paris: Didier, 1853], pp. 196-203 and pp. 456-475; also, Collet, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 516; and the deposition of Brother Chollier at the process of beatification.)

⁴The Marquise de Maignelay.

Letter 481. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter belongs between nos. 469 and 482.

since I am thinking of sending for Louise, and Barbe,² if she is not needed in Angers. We shall discuss that. If I can do so, I shall come to see you immediately after dinner, so that I can return to the meeting.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

482. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Saturday morning [August or September 1640]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have not decided about the journey you mentioned and do not know who told your son that.

It is important that your Sisters in Richelieu do not see M. Durot or the brother. We must very gently bring him to understand that it is not advisable for us to have any communication except for necessary matters.

I saw Madame de Souscarrière's² note, and shall send the one you sent me to the Procurator General.³

²Louise Ganset and Barbe Angiboust, who were then in Richelieu.

Letter 482. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Mention of the visitation of Saint-Lazare, which began on August 26, 1640 (cf. no. 473), prompts us to assign the months within which this letter was probably written.

²Madame de Souscarrière became superior of the Ladies of Charity of the Hôtel-Dieu in Paris after the death of Madame Goussault.

³Mathieu Molé, born in Paris in 1584, became Attorney General in 1614 and First President [chief justice] of the Parlement of Paris in 1641. Appointed Keeper of the Seals, April 3, 1651, he lost the office on the thirteenth because of political pressure resulting

I have given instructions concerning a house.⁴

I am very busy today with our visitation. Nevertheless, I shall speak to Mademoiselle Lamy,⁵ please God. In His love, I am your servant.

V. DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

483. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[1640]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I shall speak to M. de Vincy² tonight about the coach for tomorrow afternoon. I was not able to slip away today; it is too late this evening, and tomorrow morning I have to go to

from the Fronde, but was reappointed on the ninth of September. He held the position of First President of Parlement until the Queen Regent, Anne of Austria, summoned him to the Royal Court outside Paris. He died January 3, 1656. (Cf. Amable-Guillaume-Prosper Brugière, Baron de Barante, *Le Parlement et la Fronde. La vie de Mathieu Molé* [Paris: Didier, 1859].)

⁴Saint Vincent was looking for another Motherhouse for the Daughters of Charity.

⁵Catherine Vigor, wife of Antoine Lamy, auditor in the Chambres des Comptes, was president of the Confraternity of Charity in Gentilly. Antoine Lamy and his wife founded a mission in that locality and also in Ferreux on December 30, 1634.

Letter 483. - The original of this letter, which, according to Coste, was in a house of the Daughters of Charity in Gerona, Spain, was probably destroyed during the Spanish Civil War, when many religious archives suffered destruction. A photograph of the original is preserved, however, in the Archives of the Mission, Paris.

¹This letter seems to belong near no. 481.

²Antoine Hennequin, Sieur de Vincy, priest brother of Mademoiselle du Fay, and nephew of Marie de Marillac, an aunt of Saint Louise, died in 1645, four hours after being received into the Congregation of the Mission. He was a great friend of Saint Vincent.

see the Bishop of Meaux³ at Notre-Dame, concerning a matter of great importance.

I am very much of your opinion concerning your new Sisters, but a little sorry that there will be no more of them in Richelieu, and I do not know how M. Lambert feels about it.

I shall see your Sisters in two or three days and shall instruct them to obey Anne.⁴

I see very well that I will need to see your Sisters at the Foundlings on Thursday, but I do not know if I shall have any time for the Rule. We shall see. Therefore, you can summon them for that day, please, or for Friday, which will be less inconvenient for me.

Good evening, Mademoiselle. I am your servant.

V. D.

Send one of your Sisters to me tomorrow in the morning, please, for the answer about the coach.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

³Dominique Séguier, Bishop of Meaux (1637-1659).

⁴Anne Hardemont, perhaps, of whom we get a glimpse from the numerous letters she preserved. She was on mission in the parish of Saint-Paul in 1640; in 1647, she was chosen to establish the mission in Montreuil-sur-Mer; and then in 1650, the one in Hennebont (Morbihan). In 1651, because of illness, she was transferred to Nantes, and in 1653 went to Châlons-sur-Marne. She was present in Paris on August 8, 1655, and signed the act instituting the Company of the Daughters of Charity. In the same year she was sent to La Roche-Guyon, and then returned to the Petites-Maisons in Paris. In 1658 she was in Ussel. In all these places, except Nantes, she was Superior because of her leadership capabilities. (Cf. vol. IV, no. 1342 and *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 110.)

484. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Wednesday morning [1640]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I just read the order of the day you sent me and think it is fine. What made me see the matter differently was that I was making no distinction among the Sisters' duties. Now this is what I think would be good: the ones from La Chapelle and the Hôtel-Dieu can observe it as it is; those from the parishes, the Foundlings, and the galley-slaves should strive to observe it as far as their duties allow. The one for the Sisters in the parishes gives sufficient details. At the end, add to these lines what you judge appropriate for the duty with the Foundlings, and to the one for the galley-slaves, what is suitable for the Sisters with the galley-slaves. However, in that regard, it is well to find out what they do and put it down. Today, put down the one for the Foundlings and send it to me. I will look it over this evening.²

I think that Providence does not want you to go to the Foundlings today. M. de Vincy needs his coach and I am fearful about coming back so far from the Foundlings tomorrow, because I shall be overheated after talking. Could you hold off until Friday and summon the Sisters to your house in La Chapelle tomorrow? I shall make my way there.

Letter 484. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹The content of this letter prompts us to assign this date. In his conference of July 19, 1640 (cf. vol. IX, no. 3), Saint Vincent had announced to the Sisters his intention of setting up Particular Rules for the Sisters of the Motherhouse, the Hôtel-Dieu, the parishes, the Foundlings, and the galley-slaves. Saint Louise started to work on them immediately. Perhaps her work had already begun. This letter seems to have been written a day after the preceding one.

²We still possess various observations of Saint Louise concerning the Common Rules and the Particular Rules for the Sisters in specific works. (Cf. *Ecrits spirituels*.)

If you are reluctant to change the orders you have already given, do not hesitate to borrow another coach and depart today.

I shall go to the Foundlings tomorrow, God willing.

Good day, Mademoiselle. Send me the above-mentioned order of the day this evening.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

485. - TO MOTHER DE LA TRINITE, IN TROYES

Paris, October 1, 1640

My very dear Mother,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I give thanks to the goodness of God, dear Mother, for His restoring you to better health. I pray that He will preserve you many years for the good of your holy Order and for your dear children, the Missionaries, whom you have begotten in Our Lord in the diocese of Troyes.

Our Mother Superior of Sainte-Marie¹ told me, dear Mother, that she wrote to you about the new life of the late Commander de Sillery. God took him to Himself on the feast of Saint Cyprian, September 26, between noon and one o'clock, in a most touching way.

At the beginning of his illness, during the attacks, he changed somewhat becoming a little stubborn, but this was apparent only in some childish actions on certain occasions.

Letter 485. - The original autograph letter is in the Carmelite monastery of Troyes, now transferred to Saint-Germain, 10120 Saint-André-les-Vergers. The first monastery in Troyes was destroyed during the War, in 1940.

¹Hélène-Angélique Lhuillier.

Six days before his death, he became as wise, firm, and gentle as we had ever seen him, and continued so until the blessed hour he went to God filled with the spirit of God and submission to His Will that was constant and admirable in my sight.²

He made his confession, a more or less general one, of the most serious faults of his life, to the pastor of the parish³ and publicly received Communion from his hand by way of Viaticum on this same day, the sixth before his death. And six hours before he died, the death-rattle began and he had difficulty expectorating. He gladly accepted Extreme Unction, which he had told me to administer to him when I thought it advisable. He received that sacrament with a very firm but nonetheless tender devotion. He began and continued to make aloud very frequent acts of faith, hope, charity, and contrition. He thanked his good angel for all the help he had given him throughout his whole life, asked pardon of him for the misuse he had made of it, and entreated him to assist him in the last action he had left to do. He gave thanks to God many times for the choice He had made of His holy Mother, for the graces He had given her, and thanked her for all those she had obtained for him, especially that of having accepted him as her slave. He thanked God for entrusting Saint John to the Blessed Virgin and the Blessed Virgin to Saint John. In addition, he thanked Him many times for the Incarnation, life, and death of Our Lord, and for having left us His Body on earth in order to unite us to Himself, and also gave thanks that His kingdom would never end. He asked pardon for all the misuse he had made of His divine mysteries. Then he thanked the Holy Spirit for all the inspirations He had given him and asked pardon for the misuse he had made of them.

²Here Saint Vincent had written the words: "six o'clock he received Communion," but then he scratched them out.

³Nicolas Masure, Pastor of Saint-Paul.

He thanked the Eternal Father for the existence He had given him and the Godhead in the Trinity for the glory it possesses. He entreated God to increase His own glory, as well as that which He gave Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, the angels and saints, and especially our Blessed Father.⁴ He thanked Him, moreover, for having withdrawn him from the corrupt mass of the world eight or ten years before, and for having brought him to live a more solitary life. He thanked him further for the glory He had given Saint John, the patron of his Order,⁵ and all the blessed religious, and asked pardon for not having lived in it as a true religious. Also, in the midst of all that, which he used to repeat now and then, he would often express his desires of seeing God in these words of Saint Paul: *Cupio dissolvi et esse cum Christo;*⁶ *veni, Domine, veni et noli tardare.*⁷

An hour before he died, he sent for M. de Cordes, one of the three executors of his will,⁸ and had him distribute to his servants, in silver, what he had bequeathed to them in his will, in union with the division of Our Lord's garments before His agony. He gave all of them his blessing and a few *Misereres*. After that, he very gently gave up his blessed soul to God.

And there you have, dear Mother, the method that God in His goodness followed in His treatment of this servant of His, who had such unparalleled confidence in you and whom you loved and brought so often before God.

I asked his blessing for you, dear Mother, as I did for Sainte-Marie and for ourselves. *O Dieu!* dear Mother, how

⁴Saint Francis de Sales.

⁵The Order of the Knights of Saint John of Malta.

⁶*I desire to be freed and to be with Christ.* Phil. 1: 23. "I am strongly attracted by both: I long to be freed from this life and to be with Christ, for that is the far better thing." (NAB)

⁷*Come, O Lord, come and do not delay.* Commander de Sillery appears to be paraphrasing Heb. 10: 37 - "For just a brief moment and he who is to come will come; he will not delay." (NAB)

⁸The other two were President Trélon, his nephew, and M. Desbordes, the Comptroller.

willingly he gave it to you and with what unparalleled filial esteem and confidence he spoke of your charity. The one he bestowed on me was particularly consoling to me and makes me hopeful that he will obtain mercy for me before God.

During those six hours, he wanted me to be near him constantly, so much so, that he could not bear that I go to another room, nor even receive any messages, and, about half an hour before his death, wanted me to have my dinner near his bed. And there, on the whole, dear Mother is what happened at the blessed departure of this servant of God.

After his death, it was feared that his Order might cause an uproar,⁹ but they did not. Rather, everything took place with the same peace and gentleness as it would have if he had had children. The executors of his will were there at the same time and took charge of everything. The following day, he was buried, in the evening, according to the wishes of his relatives, because he had directed in his will that his funeral be carried out without pomp and without arms. As the cortege was forming, I heard people saying: "*O mon Dieu!* what a loss for the poor today!" And others said: "Oh! may he now find in heaven the good he did for the poor."¹⁰

⁹The Order of the Knights of Saint John of Malta would have liked a larger share in the liberalities of Brulart de Sillery's will.

¹⁰The historian of the Visitation monasteries gave other details on the funeral of Noël Brulart de Sillery. We read in his manuscript, quoted by the author of the Commander's life, *Vie de l'illustre serviteur*. . . , p. 225: "The day after his death, towards six o'clock in the evening, all the priests of Saint-Paul, candle in hand, came for his body and bore it, without pomp, to the parish, because he had so directed. After the usual prayers had been said, the same procession brought the body to our church (the church of the Visitation), where he was to be buried. The coffin was open and he was clothed in a chasuble. The tears of the students he used to support and the cries of the poor he fed could be heard on all sides. The Priests of the Mission celebrated a service, at which M. Vincent de Paul officiated, and afterwards eulogized the deceased but without going up into the pulpit." M. de Sillery was buried under the chapel dedicated to Saint Francis de Sales. An epitaph engraved on the marble, above the crypt, recalled his virtues, his titles, and his services. In 1835, the body was transferred to the new convent of the Visitation nuns, rue Neuve-Saint-Etienne-du-Mont, then rue d'Enfer. The old Visitation chapel had become a Protestant church.

At present, the conversation in Paris is about this beautiful death, and about the disposal of his property, which everyone is praising except those who were expecting something from it. He gave one hundred thousand francs to his Order,¹¹ and to us what Monsieur Dufestel may have told you, and made the poor of the Hôtel-Dieu his heirs. I forgot to mention that he gave fifty thousand livres to a poor nephew of his so that he might buy an office in the Parlement¹² or on the Great Council, with the condition that it revert to the Hôtel-Dieu in the event that he does not do so; and to another he gave a pension of fifteen hundred livres, also with the condition that it revert to the said Hôtel-Dieu.¹³ He gave no thought to the Visitors of the two Orders you know about, nor will I ever have thoughts other than acknowledgement of the untold obligations we have to you. I renew the offers of my obedience to you and am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Since I cannot write to our dear Mothers of Sainte-Marie,¹⁴ I entreat you to show them this letter.

Addressed: Mother de la Sainte-Trinité, Prioress of the Carmelite Monastery of the City of Troyes, in Troyes

¹¹Brulart de Sillery had willed to the Council of the Order eighty thousand livres, besides the twenty-four thousand he owed it for having obtained the permission to make a will.

¹²*Parlement* refers to the French judicial system. At the time of Saint Vincent, France had eight *Parlements*, each with its own legal jurisdiction, chief of which was the *Parlement* of Paris. They registered or gave sanction to the King's edicts, ordinances, and declarations, and supervised the implementation thereof.

¹³On the clauses of Commander de Sillery's will, see Marcel Fosseyeux, "Contribution à l'Histoire du monastère de la Visitation Sainte-Marie du faubourg Saint-Antoine au XVII^e siècle" dans le *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Île-de-France* (1910), p. 200.

¹⁴The Sisters of the Visitation of Troyes.

486. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[October 1 or 2, 1640]¹

Monsieur,

The friends of the mother of one of our children² are pushing hard to settle the lawsuit initiated against her during her absence, and are asking us to propose what we want to get her out of the difficulty. There is a benefactor who is interfering, and the said woman's employer. I promised to reply whether, in order to serve as an example for others, we would proceed according to the law, which would completely ruin her reputation; or whether we would take the more lenient way, which would be to ask her to pay the expenses, to take back her child, presenting some individual who is solvent and will guarantee that she will do the child no harm but will raise him as she should, and to give some alms to the house. Please let me know the amount; I think that those who are interfering will pay it. That is why I think we should either ask her for a good sum, Monsieur, or, before making these demands, request that they fix the sum themselves. Please, take the trouble to let me know all this without referring it to others, because Monsieur Le Roy³ has put the matter entirely in my hands.

I intend to act always in this work in obedience to you, since you have charge of the Ladies, whom I would like to meet at the house every week. If you agree, after you give me your decision, I shall notify them to come there to resolve this affair. Otherwise, kindly tell our Sister to notify them to meet there tomorrow, Wednesday, at eleven o'clock, the time Monsieur Bret is supposed to come and get the answer I am awaiting from you.

Madame Turgis has arrived. Do you think it advisable for the

Letter 486. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter and the following one, which is the reply to it, were written between the time of Commander de Sillery's death (September 26, 1640) and the return from Angers of Madame Turgis, who was in Paris on October 3, 1640. (Cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 30.) Now, between these two dates there is only one Tuesday, October 2, the date of the reply to this letter.

²A foundling.

³One of the Administrators for the work of the Foundlings.

*good Sister she brought with her to make her retreat here, with the one who spoke to you at Sainte-Marie, or at the home of the deceased Commander?*⁴

I told the good Sister from Saint-Germain that we could not keep discontented people in the house, nor those who disedify the other Sisters, and that, if she wanted to remain, she would have to change that behavior and not count on going to serve the poor, at least for several years.

Our money is all in French currency, and very little in weighted coin. I indeed desire that God may be pleased to make use of it, if such is His holy Will.

I saw Madame de Villeneuve.⁵ She told me that she was being shown a house in La Chapelle. I have no idea whether it is ours. Please give it some thought. I think we should tell you all the inconveniences and what can be adjusted, before proceeding, so that we will have no regrets about it.

I pray the goodness of God that nothing may hinder His designs and that I may truly be, Monsieur, your most obedient daughter and servant.

L. DE M.

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

⁴Commander de Sillery.

⁵Widow of Claude-Marcel de Villeneuve, Master of Requests, sister of Mother Hélène-Angélique Lhuillier of the Visitation, friend of Mademoiselle Le Gras and of Madame de Lamoignon, and foundress of the Daughters of the Cross, which she instituted in 1641. She died January 15, 1650, at the age of fifty-three. (Cf. Salinis, *op. cit.*)

487. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Tuesday morning [October 2, 1640]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

My thinking is the same as yours concerning the lawsuit against that child's unnatural mother, and that you should make her the propositions you mentioned to me, if the Ladies are of that opinion. You could ask them to meet for that purpose.

I am going off to Rueil and will not be able to be there.

It would be well, as you say, for the Ladies to meet every week.

I am consoled that Madame Turgis has returned and bid her good day.

You would do well to have those two young women you told me about make a retreat, and to sound out the owner of your lodging as to whether he is exposing the house for sale. Just the day before yesterday I inquired whether there were any in La Chapelle and asked someone to be on the lookout.

Take care of your health, I entreat you as far as in my power, I who am, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Letter 487. - The original autograph letter is at the house of the Priests of the Mission in Lujan, Argentina.

¹This letter is a response to the preceding one and has been dated accordingly.

488. - TO JACQUES CHIROYE, IN LUÇON

October 6, 1640

Our good God wishes to make use of you in Luçon as Superior of our little Community. I ask you, Monsieur, to accept the responsibility for it, trusting that, by proceeding in the spirit of gentleness, humility, patience, and zeal for the glory of God in the Company—and through it, in the souls of our good lords and masters, the good country people—His Goodness itself will lead you, and your family through you. And because I see that your dear heart will groan and will say to me upon reading this letter: *A, a, a, Domine, nescio loqui*;¹ and, how can you give me this duty? To that, I have nothing to say except *sufficit tibi gratia Dei*,² that you try to act as you have seen others do, and that you get all the advice you can from M. Cuissot³ whom we are sending to La Rose as Superior. Well now, Monsieur, have great confidence in God, really give yourself to Him, so that He may direct you and be Himself the Superior. Obey Him well and He will see that what you command is done. Have a particular devotion to the way the Blessed Virgin guided Our Lord, and all will go well. Write to me often and greet Messieurs Soudier⁴ and Thibault. They will find here the very humble entreaty I make them to excel in the good example they will give the whole Company by their union and submission, and Our Lord will bestow upon them a thousand blessings.

Letter 488. - Reg. 2, p. 261.

¹*Ah, ah, ah, Lord, I do not know how to speak. Jer. 1: 6. "Ah, Lord God! I said, 'I know not how to speak; I am too young.'"* (NAB)

²*The grace of God is sufficient for you. 2 Cor. 12: 9. "He said to me, 'My grace is enough for you, for in weakness power reaches perfection.'"* (NAB)

³His predecessor at the head of the house in Luçon.

⁴Samson Le Soudier.

489. - TO LOUIS LEBRETON, IN ROME

Paris, October 9, 1640

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Your letters are always particularly consoling to me, even though we are making no progress, because I can clearly see that it is not at all your fault. It is because God does not wish it, and I have complete confidence that we shall see, in the long run, that it was not expedient. May His Holy Name be blessed!

Business here did not permit me to see the Nuncio.¹ As soon as matters there are settled, I hope to have permission to do so. This is said for you alone and no one else; however, patience; if we do not accomplish anything before the arrival of Cardinal Bichi, we shall do what you told me.

In my opinion, you would do well to hold to the renting of a small house or of two rooms that you can furnish while you are waiting. It is better for you to have a little house, if you can have a chapel in it.

You acted properly with regard to that good priest from Béarn. They have never given any mission at all, except for one of them who worked with our good M. Brunet,² and another who gave half of one. I do not think there are twenty thousand people or thirty thousand in the whole of Béarn. It is my opinion that you should resist when you are asked something during the month, and do so with your usual prudence.

I would very much like you to get the advice of several people there concerning the vow of stability, as to whether it

Letter 489. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹Bishop Renuccio Scotti.

²Jean-Joseph Brunet was born in Riom in 1597, joined the companions of Saint Vincent in 1627, gave missions in Bordelais, and was stationed in Alet, Genoa, and Marseilles where he died August 6, 1649, a victim of his dedication to the plague-stricken. (Cf. *Notices*, vol. I, pp. 147-151.)

constitutes the religious state. You wrote me that the Assistant³ is of the opposite opinion. It is alleged that the Carthusians and Benedictines take only that same vow of stability and yet they are religious. It is true that to the vow of stability they add that of the conversion of manners, which perhaps leads to that which constitutes the vow of religious life.⁴

I am in no hurry to send you any men, because you have no lodging yet, but mainly because I learned from your next to last letter that the entire diocese of Rome is confined to the city of Rome. I do not see the need except for the dioceses nearby, or if there was a way to work with the ordinands and retreatants.

I sent you the testimony concerning the poverty of the people about whom Monsieur Soufliers wrote to you.⁵ They are from L'Hay, in the diocese of Paris. Here is another for the people from the diocese of Poitiers about whom M. Perdu wrote to you, or I for him. I do not remember the degree of the impediment.

My most humble thanks for the extremely conscientious attention you brought to the business of the religious women in Chanteloup,⁶ about whom Monsieur Féret⁷ wrote to you.

³Father Etienne Charlet, French Assistant of the Jesuits.

⁴Saint Vincent did not want to turn his Congregation into a religious Order. Rome, the Bishops, and the majority of his priests were opposed to it also. On the other hand, he felt the necessity of urging its members to perfection and of preventing defections by imposing on them the vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and stability. But were not these two desires contradictory? The hesitations of the Saint are understandable at a time when the attention of theologians had not yet been drawn to the question of knowing what formally constituted the essence of the religious state; it was not enough to make the vows commonly called vows of religion; they had to be pronounced before a person who had the mission of accepting them in the name of the Institute or of the Church. Because of the absence of this latter condition, the members of the Congregation of the Mission remained part of the secular clergy, as stated by Pope Alexander VII. (Cf. Brief "Ex commissa Nobis" in *Acta apostolica*, p. 16.)

⁵Those who could not afford the full offering stipulated for a dispensation could still obtain one if they could present evidence of poverty. These people were requesting a dispensation in view of marriage.

⁶There was a conventual priory of Benedictine nuns in Chanteloup (Seine-et-Marne).

⁷Hippolyte Féret, Doctor of Theology, was born in Pontoise. He was to become Vicar

A Gascon priest, who has gone to Rome with regard to the Bulls for the Bishop-elect of Comminges,⁸ was asked about the same matter. You can tell him the state of the affair, and my requesting you to work on it. If he wishes to join you or do something on his own, act according to your usual charity. If those gentlemen had known that you would take the matter so much to heart, and work at it so effectively, they would not have asked anyone else but you.

Thank you, moreover, for what you did for Commander Harque. The evil you were told about him does not exist. The deceased Grand Prior of France⁹ employed him as intendant of his estate and house. In that office, he comported himself, as a matter of fact, with care and intelligence, and he did increase the revenue, as they take great care to do in that Order. However, no complaint came to his knowledge. He is, moreover, a devout man and never fails to celebrate Holy Mass daily. If some monk said something about him, perhaps they have had some legal proceedings with him because of the proximity or crossing of their property. Lawsuits always bring on some alienation and lessening of esteem. Commander de Sillery thought highly of him and of his piety, and he always struck me as a champion of God's interests in all things.

Mon Dieu, Monsieur, is there no way to make allowance for those two priories in Langres and to maintain them in case of death, in the meantime? It is difficult to obtain the consent

General of Alet, of Paris, and Pastor of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet.

⁸Hughes de Labatut, appointed in 1637, died on February 10, 1644. The old district of Comminges included Haute-Garonne and Gers.

⁹Guillaume de Meaux-Boisboudran, Grand Prior in France of the Order of the Knights of Saint John of Malta.

of the Abbots, who are the Prince,¹⁰ and the Cardinal.¹¹ Although I suggested the solution you mentioned of handing them over temporarily to someone in the Company, the person gave me no answer in that regard, fearing perhaps either a lack of faith on the part of that person or death. Mishaps have occurred in a Community that way. The office of the theologian and the parish in Luçon were taken away from that Community in this way.

Our seminary is still growing, by the mercy of God, in number and in virtue; and the rest of the Company is well enough, thank God. The aid to Lorraine is still going on and the assistance of the poor as well. We have here in the house ten thousand livres to send there after our Brother Mathieu¹² has finished his retreat.

God has taken the late Commander de Sillery. He died like a saint, as he had lived since he withdrew from the cares of the world. He left to the Company eighty thousand livres for the seminary, in addition to the foundations in Geneva and Troyes.

The late Duchesse de Ventadour¹³ left forty thousand livres for the foundation of a mission; and a person who does not

¹⁰Armand de Bourbon, Prince de Conti, brother of the Grand Condé, was born in Paris on October 11, 1629, and became the head of the Conti, a cadet branch of the house of Bourbon-Condé. His father, who had destined him for the ecclesiastical state, had conferred on him a large number of abbeys, among others those of Saint-Denis, Cluny, Lérins, and Molesme. Arms attracted him more than the Church. His passion for the Duchesse de Longueville drew him into the intrigues of the Fronde. After having him locked up in the prison of Vincennes, Cardinal Mazarin gave him his niece, Anne Martinuzzi, in marriage. The Prince became Governor of Guyenne (1654), General of the armies in Catalonia, where he captured several cities, Grand-Master of the King's house, and Governor of Languedoc (1660). He died February 21, 1666. His virtuous wife had been able to bring him back to God and even to instill great piety in him. He consecrated two hours to prayer every day. A friend of Saint Vincent, he offered his services to him more than once and made a point of assisting at his funeral rites.

¹¹Cardinal Richelieu.

¹²Mathieu Régnard.

¹³Catherine Suzanne de Thémines de Monluc, daughter of Antoine, Marquis de Thémines, and of Suzanne de Monluc, was the wife of Charles de Lévis, Duc de

wish to be known sent us, recently, twenty-five thousand livres, the reason being, she said, that God may be pleased to maintain in the Company the spirit it now has. O Monsieur, how good God is and how admirable are the philters of His love! I ask you to pray to God for all these people and help us obtain the grace to carry out the wishes of that good soul, who is of modest circumstances.

I am leaving for Rueil to try and pay my respects to His Eminence.¹⁴ If I can, and if I have the chance and the time, I shall say a word to him about M. Le Bret's affair. I greet the latter with all possible respect and affection and am his servant and yours.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Excuse me; I do not know how the enclosed items went astray among our papers.

Addressed: Monsieur Lebreton, Priest of the Mission, in Rome

Ventadour, and Marquise de Pouy, Cauna, Thétieu, Buglose, and other places today situated in the Landes. She was one of the great benefactresses of the Sanctuary of Notre-Dame de Buglose. (Cf. Arch. Nat. S 6703.) Witnessing the fruits reaped everywhere by the sons of Saint Vincent, she was anxious to have them on her estates. It was for this purpose, that, in her will, dated September 8, 1634, she bequeathed to the Saint forty thousand livres for the foundation in Cauna of a house for missions composed of six priests. (Cf. Reg. des établissements, Arch. de Mission.) The foundation was not made, probably because the Saint was never able to obtain the sum willed.

¹⁴Cardinal Richelieu.

490. - TO ETIENNE BLATIRON, IN ALET

October 9, 1640

Everything you wrote to me about your exercises gives me consolation and shows me what a blessing it is to have capable direction and good example before one's eyes.¹ Enjoy it, Monsieur, *in nomine Domini*. Aim unceasingly and without respite to form yourself on that model and you will become more and more a good Missionary. Always remember that in the spiritual life little account is taken of the beginnings. People attach importance to the progress and the end. Judas had begun well, but he finished badly; and Saint Paul finished well, although he had begun badly. Perfection consists in a constant perseverance to acquire the virtues and become proficient in their practice, because, on God's road, not to advance is to fall back since man never remains in the same condition, and the predestined, according to what the Holy Spirit says, *ibunt de virtute in virtutem*.² Now the way to do that, Monsieur, is to be continually grateful for God's mercy and goodness to us, and to have a constant or frequent fear of rendering ourselves unworthy and of failing to be faithful to our little exercises, especially those of prayer, the presence of God, examens, spiritual reading, and the daily performance of some acts of charity, mortification, humility, and simplicity. I hope, Monsieur, that the exact practice of these things will finally make us good Missionaries according to the heart of God.

Letter 490. - Reg. 2, p. 34.

¹Nicolas Pavillon, Bishop of Alet.

²*They will go from virtue to virtue.* Ps. 84:8. "They go from strength to strength; they shall see the God of Gods in Zion." (NAB) [D-RB, Ps. 83:8. "For the lawgiver shall give a blessing, they shall go from virtue to virtue: the God of gods shall be seen in Sion."]

491. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Sunday morning [October 28, 1640]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Be at peace about my health. The fever I had yesterday has greatly lessened and I am going to take some medicine directly, which, if Our Lord pleases, will cause me to perspire. May His Holy Name be blessed!

I did not say to notify the Ladies; the officers will be sufficient. And if you are getting along well where you are, I do not think you should come to La Chapelle for this ceremony. Think about it. I dread the thought of the coach for you. If you do go, try a sedan-chair, please.

With regard to your business matter, I exclude the wood merchant. Those people have a propensity for going bankrupt and I know hardly any, except one in Troyes, who has not finally gone under. As for the other, I would not know what to say, except that this large number of new houses causes me to think he is a contractor, and those people usually get their affairs all mixed up.

I just asked M. Dehorgny whether we would need it; he foresees that we shall. In two days, I shall make a decision about it for you, if you do not find anything better, although before God I see nothing more reliable.

By the mercy of God, we repaid ten thousand livres this

Letter 491. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter, written on a Sunday, with winter approaching, between the death of Commander de Sillery (September 26, 1640) and no. 494 (November 1, 1640), could have been written only on September 30 or October 7, 14, 21, or 28. If we compare what the Saint said here about the state of his health with what he wrote on November 1, we are inclined to prefer the Sunday nearest All Saints' Day.

year, really a little short of fifteen,² and I hope that what Providence has given us through the Commander³ will keep us from running into debt, except for the house we need to buy for the Sisters.⁴

Enclosed is a letter a virtuous priest from Sedan wrote to me. See if we can send a very good Sister. It is a newly-Christianized area. The Duc and the Duchesse have been Catholic for just a little while. Heresy established its throne in that principality ninety years ago.⁵ Oh! how I wish you were in good health! But what can we do? Winter is here; we must not think about it.

He is writing to Marguerite from Saint-Paul. I will not give her the letter until I have seen you. If Barbe, from Richelieu, were here, that would be fine. Think about the matter a little, and about your health.

I am, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

²The money was probably used to pay the debts incurred by the purchase of Saint-Lazare.

³Commander de Sillery.

⁴The Daughters of Charity.

⁵In 1555, Sedan went over to the Reformation with its Seigneur, Henri-Robert de la Marck. The abjuration of Frédéric-Maurice de la Tour d'Auvergne, Duc de Bouillon (1634), and his marriage with Eléonore-Catherine de Bergh, daughter of Frédéric, Governor of Frise, and one of the first Ladies of Charity, were the main reasons for the return of that ancient town to the Catholic faith.

492. - THE TOWN MAGISTRATES OF METZ TO SAINT VINCENT

October 1640

Monsieur,

You have placed us under so great an obligation by relieving, as you have, the poverty and extreme need of our poor and our beggars, who are uncomplaining and sick, and especially the poor monasteries of nuns in this city, that we would be ungrateful people were we to remain any longer without expressing to you our sentiments about it. We can assure you that the alms you sent to this area could not have been distributed or used in a better way than for our poor, who are in such great number here, and especially as regards the nuns, who are without any human assistance. Some have not enjoyed their limited revenues since the war and the others no longer receive anything from the wealthy people of the city who used to give them alms, because the latter have been deprived of the means of doing so. All this obliges us to entreat you, as we do most humbly, Monsieur, to be so kind as to continue, both to the said poor and to the monasteries in this city, the same assistance you have bestowed up to now. It is a cause of great merit for those who are doing such a good work, and for you, Monsieur, who are responsible for it and which you administer with so much prudence and skill. You will thus acquire a great reward in heaven.

493. - TO LAMBERT AUX COUTEAUX, SUPERIOR, IN RICHELIEU¹

Paris, October 29, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Letter 492. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. XI, sect. I, p. 376.

Letter 493. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹The name of the person to whom this letter was addressed is not indicated on the original; the contents allow us to guess the name of the recipient.

I wrote yesterday asking you to give Monsieur des Noyers² a written statement³ of what you would like His Eminence⁴ to be so kind as to grant you. And in this letter, I beg you to do nothing about it, if he does not ask you to do so. It would also be well for you not to complain, but rather to express a most profound gratitude for the good things he has done for us, as we are obliged to do.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

494. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, All Saints' Day [1640]¹

Mademoiselle,

My slight fever obliges me to stay at home. I went out last Tuesday with the intention of going to see you, but I became more ill. Nevertheless, there are a great number of matters demanding that I see you. There is a small property in La Villette,² just about one acre, including the house and the

² François Sublet des Noyers, Secretary of State. He died October 20, 1645, at the age of fifty-seven. His uncle, M. de Champigny, had been Superintendent of Finances at the same time as Michel de Marillac, Saint Louise's uncle.

³ In the original manuscript, the Saint inadvertently repeated "in a written statement" before and after the words "Monsieur des Noyers."

⁴ Cardinal Richelieu.

Letter 494. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹ Reference to the Saint's fever in a previous letter (cf. no. 491 [October 28, 1640]) and in this letter; the continued interest in a house in La Villette (cf. no. 425 [February 4, 1640]); and the certainty of All Saints in the heading of this letter prompt us to assign 1640 as the year in which this letter was written.

² Then a small commune, it is today a district in Paris.

garden. It belongs to the parish of La Villette and comes under that house for dues³ and justice. It is the last house in the village, beyond and on the same side as the church, from which it is not so far as yours. They mentioned four or five thousand francs. There is a main building or two, with a barn and stable, country style, and it gets air on the side and in the back. It is the only thing for sale in La Villette; see what you think of it.

The Ladies in this parish⁴ are complaining about Marie and her way of acting and want someone else. How will we discharge her and whom will you send in her place?

Whom do you have in mind for Sedan? I am being pressured for a Sister. I have written that perhaps you will be going there, but how can we expose you to so much danger in such a season?

I do not know what to tell you about that fine young woman from Angers, except that it is not your concern, seeing that she cannot put up with so important a matter as that of uniformity of habit.⁵ Still I think we should wait a while.

Your son could be part of the mission in Le Mont-le-Héry.⁶

The Duchesse d'Aiguillon is supposed to come and see you the first chance she gets. Please keep things the way she likes them. She will speak to the Procurator General⁷ with regard

³A tribute that certain properties owed to the feudal lords on whom they depended.

⁴Saint-Laurent.

⁵The uniformity of the habit was not the only obstacle to the perseverance of the postulants from Angers. The climate of Paris did not agree with them. Saint Louise stated this in a letter to the Abbé de Vaux who wished to send her two young women: "I hope," she wrote, (cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 44) "that they will be free of the weaknesses to which the young women from Angers who come here are subject. I think that our Sister Marie, whom I brought along with me, will be the first of those who will have enough courage and strength. The last two who came before her had caught incurable illnesses as soon as they arrived, have been constantly listless since they have been in this house, and are now on their deathbed. They are the two Perrines." It would appear that at least one of them survived because in a letter dated November 27 (1646) Saint Louise told the Abbé de Vaux that "of all our Sisters who have come from Angers, only Sister Perrine has left." (Cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 164.)

⁶Today it is Montlhéry (Essonne).

⁷Mathieu Molé.

to relieving you of the children who have been weaned. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

495. - TO JACQUES THOLARD, IN ANNECY

Paris, November 13, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter and have read and reread it with consolation, seeing the sensitivity of your conscience; and on the other hand with sorrow, because you are not submitting to the advice of that holy Prelate¹ and to what I said to you concerning those miserable feelings that come upon you in confession. In the name of Our Lord, Monsieur, hold firmly to what we have told you. From whom can you learn God's Will better than from that holy Prelate and, if holy humility allows me, from him who is the interpreter of God's Will for you? *O Jésus!* Monsieur, *absit*² from you to ever reflect on all that again, any more than on feelings of gluttony or on thoughts that come to you at times; or on marriage, any more than on feelings of despair. All those things are nothing but exercises for your purgation, illumination, and perfection, and so that you can sympathize with those whom you see in similar dispositions. Alas! Monsieur, it is God's plan that those who are to help others spiritually fall into the temptations of mind

Letter 495. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹Juste Guérin, Bishop of Geneva.

²*Far be it.*

and body by which others can be tormented. Therefore, submit your judgment to what the Bishop and I have told you, please, and do not think about and do not even confess these things. Scorn both these evil suggestions and the wickedness of their author, who is the devil. Be very cheerful and humble yourself as much as you can. Ordinarily, God allows these things to happen to free us from some hidden pride and to engender in us holy humility. They will diminish in the measure that you humble your understanding, and will disappear when you have made noticeable progress in that virtue. Strive therefore to acquire it.

No rule obliges one to sin if the substance of the act of transgression is not sinful in itself, or if contempt, bad example, or disobedience do not enter in, when the thing is commanded by virtue of holy obedience; but we do well to render ourselves exact to it on the mission just as at home.

With regard to genuflections in the rooms, it suffices to make them at the long intervals and not every time one leaves and returns, and only in places where one sleeps.

And as far as your letters are concerned, they will always be very dear to me. I think it would be well for you to make them a little shorter and in brief paragraphs, so that I can put the answer in the margin.

My little weak spells from a double quartan fever³ prevented me from writing to your mother. I will do so and will send her the books you indicated to me.

Well now, Monsieur, I will close by telling you that I receive an inexpressible consolation from you. You will understand

³An intermittent fever that recurs at approximately seventy-two-hour intervals.

it in the presence of God. In His love and in that of His holy Mother, I am, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Monsieur Tholard, Priest of the Mission, in Annecy

496. - TO LOUIS LEBRETON, IN ROME

Paris, November 14, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Your letters still console me, even though our affairs are making no progress. I know that nothing can be added to your diligence and that this is not due to you personally, to your zeal, nor your handling of the matter. Our Lord has given you both and is directing this matter according to the order of His eternal Providence. Be assured, Monsieur, that you will see in this situation that it is for the best and I think I can already see it as clearly as the light of day. O Monsieur, how good it is to let oneself be guided by His Providence! The problem here has been that the one who has the power¹ did not approve of my having forwarded the letter you sent me for the purpose of informing His Holiness² about us, and he told me himself, just three days ago, to wait for another one³ and he would

Letter 496. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹Cardinal Richelieu.

²Urban VIII (1623-1644).

³Another Pope. Innocent X (1644-1655) was elected after Cardinal Richelieu had died, so the latter's promise was without effect. The question of a house in Rome was not settled until 1659 when the Missionaries moved into Monte Citorio, the house of Cardinal Bagni.

take care of our business personally. So let us leave it at that, Monsieur. And if you are able meanwhile to obtain permission to have a small hospice in Rome, do so.

Work patiently with your shepherds;⁴ what you told me about them thrilled me with pleasure because you can say with good reason that *pauperes evangelizantur*.⁵

And in the midst of that, labor at our other little affairs as we are doing here on our little Rules, which we are adapting, as much as we can, to the ones you mentioned to me. I think we shall decide to make the Good Purposes of living and dying in the Mission, the first year in the seminary; the simple vow of stability in the second year of the said seminary; and of making it solemnly in eight or ten years, as the Superior General sees fit. That will be equivalent, in a sense, to the faculty of expelling incorrigibles. We will have to find some safeguards with regard to the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, such as inflicting excommunication against proprietors every year. It seems that the majority of our friends are leaning that way and that differences of opinion are common in the religious state, which we avoid in this manner, although we have reason to hope for its spirit.

With regard to the Bishops, we submit to their obedience, as the servants of the Gospel to their master, as far as our external functions are concerned, and to their punishments, for exterior faults outside the house. And the Bishop of Meaux⁶ wished us to submit to him, when faults in the house

⁴All around Rome, for a radius of more than twenty miles, lay uncultivated land. In the winter, this vast solitude of pastureland was the meeting place of a great number of shepherds, who returned to their own lands with their flocks when spring arrived. In attending to these poor forsaken people, deprived of Mass and the sacraments, Louis Lebreton had undertaken a very difficult and meritorious work, completely conformed to the end of his Institute.

⁵*The poor are evangelized.* Luke 7:22. "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard. The blind recover their sight, cripples walk, lepers are cured, the deaf hear, dead men are raised to life, and the poor have the good news preached to them." (NAB)

⁶Dominique Séguier.

are concerned, in three cases, namely, murder, mutilation of limb of someone in the Company, and lechery in the said house. For domestic discipline, government of the Congregation, election and resignation of officers and transfer from one place to another, and visitations: all those matters will depend on the Superior General. What do you think of all that?

We are working, from this side of the mountains, on obtaining consent from the General of Holy Spirit⁷ for the union. I am sending you the power of attorney, from the one who was appointed by him, to tender his resignation in favor of M. Dehorgny.⁸ Please have it recognized as soon as possible and take care of the creation (?) of the hundred écus pension he reserved for himself. We are in agreement with the town of Toul, although the matter has not yet been committed to writing. I ask you, Monsieur, not to waste time on that and not to tell anyone whomsoever what I wrote to you concerning the letter you sent me to inform His Holiness, nor what I was promised.

I am, nevertheless, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Thank you for the care you are taking of the young women about whom M. de Saint-Aignan⁹ wrote to you. Please continue.

Addressed: Monsieur Lebreton, Priest of the Mission, in Rome

⁷Olivier de la Trau, Sieur de la Terrade, was appointed Superior General of the Order of the Holy Spirit in France in 1619 and in 1621. Until 1625 the General in France depended on the one who resided in Rome. Olivier de la Terrade was detained for some time in the prisons of the Inquisition.

⁸This refers to the establishment in Toul.

⁹Paul Chevalier had been the Canon of Saint-Aignan in the church of Notre-Dame in

497. - TO PIERRE ESCART, IN ANNECY

Paris, November 14, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter with a very special consolation, seeing how you accepted what I told you about the difficulty you are having with regard to M. C[odoing]. O Monsieur, how I thank God for that, as also for the zeal he has given you for the observance of the little Rules, and for the advancement in virtue of the person you mentioned to me. But because zeal like other virtues becomes a vice through excess, we must be careful not to let ourselves fall into this labyrinth; for zeal which goes outside the enclosure of love of the neighbor is no longer zeal, but the passion of antipathy. I admit that the beginning may have been zeal, but the excess caused it to degenerate into what I have just told you. The proof is that neither what our worthy Reverend Mother¹ said to you, nor what I wrote you, nor the fact that you were told that others did not support what you wrote in your last letter to me—none of this has rid your spirit of the feelings (would that it were only feelings!) but has not even dispelled or changed the opinion you have of him. That is why, Monsieur, I most humbly beg you to think about the matter seriously before God and about what I am going to say to you, namely, (1) that Our Lord imputes to Himself the contempt in which you hold that individual; *qui vos spernit me spernit*;² (2) that what

Paris since 1638. He later became Vicar General of Cardinal de Retz, the Archbishop of Paris, and died in 1674.

Letter 497. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹Saint Jane Frances de Chantal.

²*He who spurns you, spurns me.* Lk. 10:16. "He who hears you, hears me. He who rejects you, rejects me. And he who rejects me, rejects him who sent me." (NAB)

He appears to have denounced the most in the Gospel are rash judgments; (3) that He pronounced a number of maledictions on people who judged their neighbor rashly; (4) that He was accused of being a vain man, a lover of self, allowing people to pour ointments on His head; that those who drew near to Him proclaimed Him a man who ate sumptuously, drank wine, and who did not observe any rule of Moses or make His Apostles observe them, allowing them to pick ears of corn and eat the grains on the Sabbath day; that He did not teach His disciples to pray as Saint John did. Now, who spread these rumors? It was His own disciples, or one of them. Why so? It was because they had not recognized, in the beginning, the spirit in which Our Lord was doing those things. And because it did not resemble their own, they did not, in the beginning, confront their feelings, which so obscured their reason that it was no longer able to distinguish the appearance of truth or of falsehood. Thoughts in conformity with their feelings and their marred reason crowded in on their imagination, and *inde*,³ little by little, contempt, hatred and everything ensuing from them appeared. *O Dieu!* Monsieur, how rightly did He who saw all that cry out so strongly against rash judgments, and how right you are to fear that what you told me about that person may have begun with some natural antipathy or with a strong tendency to zeal, which, through too harsh a spirit, has become less circumspect! In the name of God, Monsieur, think about it; and even though you will not believe what I am telling you, at least entertain the doubt that it may be so, seeing that you are the only one who holds that opinion, and that the Bishop,⁴ our worthy Mother, and those who are near him, who see and observe him as you do, tell me the

³*Then.*

⁴Juste Guérin, Bishop of Geneva.

contrary. And in this doubt, *O Jésus!* Monsieur, you are obliged to do all you can to free yourself of these opinions, to humble yourself greatly in that regard and to allow no longer a single thought contrary to the esteem, charity, and submission of spirit that you owe to the said Gentleman. Bless God, however, Monsieur, since you do not sin by defect, but rather by an excess of a virtue, because it will be less painful to moderate your zeal than to acquire it if you did not have it. Pray to God for me, please, who have none at all for my advancement in the virtue that He has given me.

I am, in His love and that of His holy Mother, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

I entreat you, Monsieur, to make a few meditations on what I have said to you and to send me the resolutions Our Lord gives you on this subject.

Addressed: Monsieur Escart, Priest of the Mission, in Annecy

498. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ANNECY

Paris, November 15, 1640

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I wrote you a long letter about a month ago; there is little left to tell you at present.

I had the four hundred livres sent to those two young men from Annecy who are studying in Orléans and had them given to the Sisters of Sainte-Marie¹ from the Paris house for that purpose.

Monsieur Duhamel wrote to me from Lyons, eight or ten days ago, that he wished to see me two leagues from Paris; I have not heard anything about it since.

I sent you word, I think, about the demise of the late Commander de Sillery. His death corresponded to his beautiful life. He went to heaven like a monarch going to take possession of his kingdom, with an indescribable peace, confidence, gentleness, and strength. O Monsieur, what a great servant of God he was! I was recently telling His Eminence what I just told you, and that, for the eight or ten years I had the honor of being near him, I never saw in him a single thought, word, or deed that did not have God as its aim, directly or indirectly, not even one thought of impurity in all the cordial communications he had at Sainte-Marie; and he assured me of that many times.² O Monsieur, how good God is to those who detach themselves from the affections of the world to unite themselves to Him!

I most humbly greet the Company and am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Annecy, in Annecy

¹Visitation nuns.

²He had left his magnificent mansion, toward the end of July 1632, to establish himself in a house adjoining the first monastery of the Visitation, with the intention of assisting at the religious exercises of the nuns. For this purpose he had reserved for himself in their church the first chapel to the right on entering.

498a. - SAINT JANE FRANCES TO SAINT VINCENT

November 24, 1640

I cannot doubt that there is need of an Apostolic Visitor to preserve uniformity in the Institute and to prevent changes. If that does not come about during my lifetime, I will leave very express and exact statements about it, which will have to be well digested and consulted. This will come about through the assistance of your goodness and of people qualified to do it, for, since I know that people are always wanting me to speak my mind, I shall do so plainly, but not so as to take a stand on what I say.

Now, I think, very dear Father, that we must take the time to pray hard and weigh the affair—as well as how and when it is to be realized—for I even think that the reason that made those Gentlemen decide to put the matter off still holds. Sister Superior wrote telling me that it was a secret she dared not put on paper. I almost think that this may be what our Blessed Father did not want; now may God preserve us from it! Do you not think that I am being inspired, very dear Father? I would be very glad to know if, with regard to that person, it is not advisable, indeed necessary, to let the matter wait until it is no longer on her mind. I trust you understand me, and there is scarcely any hurry, since the monasteries are still fervent in their observances, thanks to Our Lord.

I sometimes think that, if Our Lord grants me a little longer life, I ought to send our confessor to visit our monasteries in order to examine the state of their observances, and to bid them my last farewell, so that I might take news from them to our Blessed Father. This pretext would give no offense and, since he is known and esteemed by a large number of our houses, at least the principal ones, he could gently slip in some ideas about the necessity of a few visits in order to maintain uniformity and, if it was thought advisable, he could show the letter I had written to them on the subject,¹ which

Letter 498a. - Archives of the Visitation of Annecy: Chantal (Ste J.-F. de), *Série Oeuvres*, B, No. 11, f°17 v°18. This edition uses the text of the manuscript copy published by Devos, *op. cit.*, 49 (1973), pp. 350-351, no. 25.

¹In March 1640, Saint Jane Frances wrote to all the Superiors of the Visitation Order to ascertain their opinions with regard to an Apostolic Visitor. (Cf. Devos, *op. cit.*, 49 [1973], pp. 219-223, no. 15.)

had been approved by all of you. I trust that the majority would concur with the idea; at least, they would keep the secret until we had won over our Prelates, whom I cannot bring myself to believe would not acquiesce, if the matter were communicated to them properly, as could be done by the Bishops of Sens, Bourges, and Châlons, and by you, dearest Father. Once a year, several of them go to Paris and, by winning over a certain number, they could enact a decree of their commendations that could be communicated to some others with favorable letters such as they judge advisable. For, if this establishment does not come about by common agreement — of the principal ones, of course — it would bring trouble to the Institute. I think that it would be better to wait until some need arises by way of some disorder that cannot be rectified by the means ordained in the "Custom Book."

I am putting down here everything that comes to my mind in the presence of my dearest Father's spirit. I know he bears with me graciously, for alas! how do I know what I am saying? These important affairs are not suitable for weak minds like mine. Most certainly, I make too great demands on your time, but it is the goodness of your fatherly heart that gives me complete confidence. Best and dearest Father, beseech the Infinite Goodness to receive me, when I depart this life, into the arms of His gentle mercy. I am. . . .

499. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[November 28, 1640]¹

Monsieur,

Madame de Liancourt² told me she would send for me tomorrow around eight o'clock. I most humbly entreat you to let me know if

Letter 499. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 22.

¹In this letter Saint Louise refers to the establishment of the Daughters of Charity, November 29, 1633. If she is not mistaken, this letter should belong to November 28, 1638, 1639, or 1640. Only the third date is possible, for Saint Vincent was absent from Paris on November 28 of 1638 and 1639.

²Jeanne de Schomberg, the daughter of Marshal Henri de Schomberg and the wife of Roger de Liancourt du Plessis, was a pious and talented woman. We have a booklet of

there is anything that could keep me from going to see her, and to remember what I told you today with regard to our Sisters. It was on such a day as tomorrow, five or seven years ago, that the first ones began to live in community, although quite poorly. I had a thought this evening that delighted me. It was that, since, by the grace of God, they are better than they were in the beginning, that after the few years I hope to remain on earth, the one whom God will give them will draw down upon them more blessings by her good example. That is what I desire with all my heart and ask of our good God, and that I may be until my last hour. . . .

500. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[November 28 or 29, 1640]¹

Mademoiselle,

There is nothing to keep you from going to see Madame de Liancourt, whom I greet most humbly.

I will try to arrange the meeting for our Ladies for next Monday, since I cannot do so any sooner. Never have I had such a strong feeling of God's guidance of your Sisters as I have recently.

hers entitled: *Règlement donné par une dame de haute qualité à Madame * * ** [the Princess of Marsillac, her granddaughter], edited by Abbé Jean-Jacques Boileau, Paris, 1698. The Château de Liancourt was famous for its beautiful gardens and admirable fountains. It was truly a princely residence and well-known to high society. More than once the Duchesse de Liancourt had received Saint Louise there. She used to call her dear friend. She helped Saint Louise considerably in her charitable works, encouraged the zeal of Adrien Bourdoise, and took under her patronage the Daughters of Providence. Pascal, Arnauld and Le Maistre de Sacy finally succeeded in completely winning over to Jansenism both her husband and herself. She died in the Château de Liancourt on June 15, 1674, at the age of seventy-four. Abbé Boileau wrote her biography at the beginning of the above-mentioned booklet. A sketch of her life is also found in the Jansenist work of Abbé Leclerc, *Vies intéressantes et édifiantes de religieuses du Port-Royal et de plusieurs personnes qui leur étaient attachées*, 1750-1752, 4 vols., vol. I, pp. 411 ff.

Letter 500. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 22.

¹This letter is a reply to no. 499 and was written shortly after it.

501. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Monday morning [Around 1640]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I did not receive the letter you wrote to M. de Vaux in answer to his which I am returning to you; I did have the one you wrote to Richelieu, which I just sent. When I see the first-mentioned, I will tell you my opinion, and we shall discuss what the said Monsieur de Vaux wrote to you and talk about the little children.² We must hold a general meeting³ as soon as possible.

I ask you, in the meantime, to take care of your health. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

I think there would be more humility in calling the Daughters of Charity by the title of Sisters rather than Daughters.⁴ That is what they do at Sainte-Marie.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

Letter 501. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹Internal evidence prompts us to assign this date: it was in 1640 that Saint Vincent began to use the term "Sisters," and in March of that year that the Daughters of Charity undertook the work of the Foundlings at the Couche.

²The foundlings.

³A general meeting of the Ladies of Charity.

⁴Henceforth Saint Vincent will try to conform to the advice he gives Saint Louise here, but at times habit will prevail.

502. - THE TOWN MAGISTRATES OF PONT-A-MOUSSON¹
TO SAINT VINCENT

December 1640

The fear of seeing ourselves deprived, in a short time, of the alms it has pleased your goodness to distribute to our poor, causes us to have recourse to you, Monsieur, in order to procure for them, please, with as much zeal as heretofore, the same assistance, since the need is greater than it has ever been. Two years ago the harvest failed; the troops have used our young wheat as feed; the never-ending garrisons have left us only objects that arouse compassion; those who were comfortable are reduced to beggary. These are motives as powerful as they are true to animate the tenderness of your heart, already full of love and pity, to continue its kindly influence on our five hundred poor. They would die in a few hours, if, unfortunately, that kindness were to fail them. We entreat your goodness not to allow this extremity, but to give us some crumbs from the superfluity of the other towns. You will not only bestow alms on our poor, but you will draw them out of the jaws of death and make us deeply obliged to you.

503. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saturday morning [1640 or 1641]¹

Mademoiselle,

I think, Mademoiselle, that Sister Vincente² from Richelieu

Letter 502. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. XI, sect. I, pp. 379-380.

¹Pont-à-Mousson is in the present *département* of Meurthe-et-Moselle, between Metz and Nancy, an area which formed part of the province of Lorraine at the time of Saint Vincent. Lorraine suffered great destruction from the Thirty Years War (1618-1648).

Letter 503. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹When Saint Vincent was writing this letter, among the Daughters of Charity there was a Sister sent from Richelieu; Lambert aux Couteaux was Superior of the establishment founded in that town; and Saint Vincent was thinking about the transfer of the Sisters' Motherhouse. These three details together bring us to adopt the approximate date given here. However, it was more likely 1641 than 1640.

²Perhaps Sister Vincente Auchy, who was born in Richelieu and had recently entered

is to be preferred in this situation. And then, that young woman needs an important duty to satisfy her quick mind. She is a very fine young woman, with a good reputation in her own region and has perseveringly served her mistress for seven or eight years. That poor woman is inexpressibly pained by her absence. There are some persons that do not adjust at first to every little rule. Time takes care of everything. I experience that situation every day among ourselves.

I am filled with esteem and affection for that work.³ This morning, I thought of sending for M. Lambert, the Superior in Richelieu, to be of service to that work and to all our Charities, but it is not yet time.⁴

I will take a look at the house.⁵

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

504. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Vincent de Paul wants to know what the number of foundlings is and if it is possible to have wet-nurses at the price he mentioned; that would encourage everyone.

the Daughters of Charity. It seems that she remained in Paris her whole life, except for a few months spent in Chars in 1652. She did not know how to read or write, and signed with a cross the document establishing the Company of the Daughters of Charity on August 8, 1655. (Cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 36.)

³Probably the Confraternities of Charity.

⁴Lambert aux Couteaux remained in Richelieu until 1642.

⁵Most probably a house proposed to Saint Louise for herself and her small Community.

Letter 504. - This letter was listed in a catalogue of M. Charavay, an autograph dealer in Paris. The original letter was entirely in Saint Vincent's hand and comprised two pages.

505. - TO CHARLES OZENNE,¹ IN TROYES

January 14 [1641]²

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Mon Dieu! Monsieur, how sorry I am about good Monsieur Dufestel's³ illness. I entreat you, in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Monsieur, to have him well taken care of in every way possible. I have no doubt that you and the whole Company are doing that with all the charity imaginable; however, please have him carefully examined by the best doctor and spare nothing for him. *O mon Dieu!* Monsieur, how I would like to be with you to support you in the care and assistance you are giving!

Our Lord has been pleased to reward good Monsieur de Sergis for his labor; I will let you know how in two or three days.⁴ Meanwhile, please pray to God for him.

Tell Monsieur Dufestel that we shall let him know later if

Letter 505. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, seventeenth or eighteenth century copy.

¹Charles Ozenne, born in Nibas (Somme) on April 15, 1613, was ordained a priest in 1637, and was received into the Congregation of the Mission on June 10, 1638. After his seminary, he was placed in Troyes, where he made his vows on August 29, 1642, and was named Superior in 1644. Saint Vincent recalled him from that house in 1653 to entrust him with the direction of the Mission in Poland. "He is," he said, "a zealous and detached man of God, who has the grace of leadership, and is able to win the hearts of those within and outside the Community." Unfortunately the career of this excellent Missionary was brief. He died in Warsaw on August 14, 1658. (Cf. *Notices*, vol. III, pp. 148-154.)

²The copyist wrote *January 14, 1740*. The number 7 is evidently the result of a distraction and the 0, a misreading. Robert de Sergis, whose death is mentioned in this letter, was spoken of as still living in letter 475 of August 26, 1640. In letter 507 of February 3, 1641, Saint Vincent speaks of his death as a quite recent occurrence. Therefore, 1641 has been assigned as the probable date of this letter.

³Superior of the house of Troyes.

⁴This letter, sent to the Superiors of all the houses of the Congregation, is not extant. We know nothing about the last moments of Robert de Sergis.

it is appropriate for him to make use of the nephew of the Bishop of Troyes⁵ to get payment from Monsieur de Saint-Armand, and that, nevertheless, we shall continue the payment, as well as the Commander's⁶ annuity. Tell him also that I really think we shall have to make an effort, through a friend, to obtain the house he spoke to me about and that we must not waste any time. Good Monsieur Gouault⁷ will continue his assistance with that as with all things, as I am asking him in his goodness. And I shall earnestly request the place he discussed with me, now that that good confrere is back.

Monsieur du Coudray has not yet returned. I am very worried about him, because he should have been here ten days ago.

We have one of your relatives here by the name of Hurtel.⁸ He wishes to give himself to Our Lord in our Little Company. And I, I greet good Monsieur Dufestel and embrace him in spirit with all the humility and affection in my power, as I do all the rest of your family. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Reverend Mother Superior of the Visitation Sainte-Marie of Troyes to be delivered to Monsieur Ozenne, Priest of the Mission, in Troyes

⁵René de Breslay, Bishop of Troyes.

⁶Commander de Sillery. He and Bishop Breslay had desired to have the Congregation of the Mission established in Troyes and to this end had negotiated a contract with Saint Vincent in 1638. Six priests and two Brothers were to be stationed there to preach missions in the diocese and on the estates of Commander de Sillery and to prepare the ordinands for ordination. The Bishop assured them an annual income of two thousand livres; the Commander half that amount.

⁷Sébastien Gouault, a middle-class gentleman of Troyes.

⁸François Hurtel, born in Nibas (Somme) in 1621, entered the Congregation of the Mission on November 26, 1640, made his vows on December 1, 1642, and was ordained a priest in 1645.

506. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Thursday morning [January 31, 1641]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I cannot thank you as humbly and affectionately as I would like, for your assistance in our need. I beg Our Lord to reward you and to increase His love in you. I just told someone to send for the notary tomorrow to draw up a statement of that sum for you and I will try to give you some money we owe you as soon as possible.

I was thinking of coming to see you today, but they think I should be bled a second time. If I can do so, it will be tomorrow, God willing. We have many things to discuss with you; the most urgent is the one concerning the Sister for Sedan. Please send for Marie, from Saint-Germain, and speak to her and see whom you will put in her place. She must leave in five or six days and I must send the final decision to the Pastor of Saint-Germain.²

The meeting went well enough in my opinion, thank God. In His love, I am your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

Letter 506. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹The reference to Sister Marie Joly leads us to think that this letter precedes no. 509 and no. 512, which were written in 1641; this letter seems to precede no. 509 by a week.

²Pierre Colombet was Pastor of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois from March 16, 1636 to July 6, 1657.

507. - TO LOUIS LEBRETON, IN ROME

Paris, February 3, 1641

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have not written to you for a long time. My journey from Richelieu, the urgent business matters I found upon my return, and the illness I had afterwards, together with my usual laziness, are the cause. Hereafter I shall write my letters to you more often, with God's help, which I hope for.

The account you gave me of your mission in the diocese of Porto consoled me greatly, and more than I can tell you. I have one remaining difficulty about it, to know why you stay so briefly in each place. The maxim of the Mission is to stay and work on the spot until every soul has fulfilled his obligation or not, which we have had to do because those who have the greatest need of it are always *ad feces*.¹

I spoke to the Duchesse d'Aiguillon about your suggestion to be made to His Eminence² concerning our foundation in Rome. I have no answer yet.

I am greatly consoled by what you wrote to me: that Cardinal Bagni³ has thought of us with reference to that chapel, and I entreat God to sanctify his dear soul more and more.

I would not know what to tell you about the various suggestions you made to me concerning those chapels and the different places you proposed, except that I entrust the whole matter to the Providence of God and to the good advice that persons kindly disposed toward us could give you there. I

Letter 507. - Collection for the process of beatification.

¹The dregs come out of the barrel last.

²Cardinal Richelieu.

³Giovanni Francesco Guidi, Cardinal di Bagno.

cannot tell you how much alms have diminished here and the difficulty of finding any loans. Everyone is being affected by the misery of the age. We are patiently awaiting the decision of His Eminence and the timing of Providence with regard to our establishment.

No one has asked me for the money you told me you drew there.

I am also waiting for the opportunity to speak and have others speak in reference to the Abbots on whom the two priories depend,⁴ in order to obtain their consent regarding the union. We got along well with the man who held the authority of General de la Terrade from Holy Spirit, concerning the house in Toul, and were told that he was working to obtain his consent, as you informed me.

Here are some letters and notes from the Bishop of Geneva⁵ concerning his plan for a seminary, whose direction he wishes to give to the Missionaries we have in his diocese. Take a look at these letters and his note and the one from Monsieur Codoing; seal the letters and deliver them to those to whom they are addressed; and do all you can, please, for the success of his plan. See how important it is in so many circumstances that there be an establishment of the Company.

The Reverend Fathers⁶ with whom you communicate most familiarly there are writing back everything you do and everything else that is done to you; and they are making it known here. Please be careful about that. I am not speaking of the Jesuit Fathers.

I almost forgot to tell you, concerning the plan of the Bishop of Geneva, that it seems fine to me in all its extent, except with regard to the children he wishes to be raised there. Up to now I have not heard that any like that have succeeded

⁴The Prince de Conti and Cardinal Richelieu.

⁵Juste Guérin.

⁶The Oratorians.

for the good of the Church. And experience has shown us the contrary with regard to those in Rouen, Bordeaux, and Agen.⁷ I shall write my humble opinion about it to the holy Prelate or, in any case, to Monsieur Codoing, but the objection will not be made by you from there, please.⁸

Write to both of us, please, and give us an account of what you have done.

I received and sent to Richelieu the indulgences and the dispensations you had obtained for them. I wrote to tell you that it is not thought advisable here for us to employ or negotiate with the man whose letter you sent me concerning our affairs. And the one who can do it says that he will take care of our affair in a little while.

I have had the honor of seeing His Eminence only once, and of saying just two or three words to him since my return. When the opportunity presents itself, I will say a word to him about the Seigneur who is our patron there and assists us with such charity. I entreat you to renew to him the offers of my obedience, and to Monsieur Marchand also, as this new year begins.

I hope you received the foundation of Saint-Eutrope⁹ and that you will continue to see to the success of that affair.

The Prelates all seem to want to have seminaries of priests,

⁷The seminary of Rouen received only young men of at least fourteen years of age. Saint Vincent remarks elsewhere (cf. no. 709) on the small number of priests who came from this seminary. (Cf. Abbé Antoine Degert, *Histoire des séminaires français jusqu'à la Révolution* [2 vols., Paris: Beauchesne, 1912], vol. I, p. 86.) The seminaries of Agen and Bordeaux were empty.

⁸Saint Vincent had so very little objection to the admission of children into the seminaries that he always accepted them during his lifetime either at the Bons-Enfants or at Saint-Charles. However, he was taught by experience that this method was not sufficient to realize the reform of the clergy, both because it yielded few results and because these results were slow in coming. He judged rightly, therefore, that this remote preparation ought not to cause the neglect of the immediate preparation of those who were about to receive Orders or had already been ordained, and that, when resources did not permit the undertaking of both objectives, it was better to concentrate on the more urgent.

⁹In Morangis (Essonne).

and of young men. The Bishop of Meaux, who is approving of a foundation being made for us in his diocese, wishes that sort.¹⁰ And it seems fine to me with regard to clergy only. The Bishop of Saintes¹¹ is offering us the same thing. And thus God will make use of this Company: for the common people, through the missions; for the clergy who are starting out, through ordinations; for those who are already priests, by not admitting to benefices or vicariates anyone who has not made his retreat and been instructed in the seminary; and for benefactors, through the spiritual exercises. May it please the Divine Goodness to grant us His grace to succeed!

The Company is increasing in number and in virtue, by the mercy of God, which everyone recognizes and which was apparent to me during the visitations. I am the only wretch who keeps on heaping new iniquities and abominations on myself. O Monsieur, how merciful God is to put up with me with so much patience and forbearance, and how weak and miserable I am to abuse his mercies so greatly! I entreat you, Monsieur, to offer me frequently to His Divine Majesty.

The alms for Lorraine are still coming in, by the mercy of God. Our Brother Mathieu¹² takes 2,500 livres there for the poor every month, and 45,000 livres for the men and women religious. And today we are having the meeting for the assistance of the poor nobles who are refugees. We distributed one thousand or so livres to them last month, and hope that we will distribute as much today.

God has taken our good Monsieur de Sergis. I am writing to you about it in a separate letter.

¹⁰Dominique Séguier, Bishop of Meaux, had requested the Priests of the Mission for Crécy.

¹¹Jacques Raoul, Sieur de la Guibourgère.

¹²Brother Mathieu Régard.

There you have our little news. I always receive yours with consolation and I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

After the man to whom the Bishop of Geneva is writing has seen that what he says about this Little Company can be of service there, how about your borrowing the letter from him to communicate it to Bishop Ingoli and those whom you judge advisable?

Addressed: Monsieur Lebreton, Priest of the Congregation of the Mission, in Rome

508. - TO ADRIEN BOURDOISE¹

February 6, 1641

The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with you forever!
The young priest named M. Clauset, who left here and asked to enter your house, is full of good will and worthy of

Letter 508. - Reg. I, f^o34, v^o. The copyist noted that the original letter was in Saint Vincent's handwriting.

¹Adrien Bourdoise, who was born July 1, 1584, in Brou (Eure-et-Loir) and died in Paris, July 19, 1655, was one of the most zealous reformers of the clergy in the seventeenth century. He founded a Community of priests, the priests of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet, or Nicolaites, from the name of the Parisian parish in which they resided. He made one of his retreats at Saint-Lazare. This fact and his advising the Duc de Liancourt, patron of several benefices, to rely on the judgment of Saint Vincent de Paul for the choice of beneficed clergymen, show the great esteem he had for the Saint. The Saint returned this esteem: "Gentlemen," he said one day to his Missionaries, "what a great thing a good priest is! What can a good priest not do! What conversion can he not obtain! Look at Monsieur Bourdoise, that excellent priest, what is he not doing and what can he not do!" (Cf. Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk II, chap. V, p. 298.) Much could be said about the relationship of these two men. As always, legend and history are intermingled, but this is not the place to distinguish one from the other.

your doing him the charity he is asking of you. Just four or five days ago, I advised another priest, who is leaving Saint-Gervais and has just made his retreat in our house, to request the same favor of you as the first. He has let me know, since then, that you have granted it to him. As often as I have the opportunity to direct anyone to you, I do it, and entreat you also to kindly allow it, and what is more, not to make any objection to receiving all those from here who wish to leave and ask you if they can enter your house, and that, without asking my approval. If any one of your boarders presents himself to enter our poor, weak Company, I also entreat you most humbly, Monsieur, to allow us simply to accept him. I mean your boarders and certainly not those who have the happiness of being bound to your holy Community, which I esteem one of the holiest in the Church of God, and in which I would deem myself most fortunate to be, if Providence had not attached me to this one. If I do not have this happiness in fact, I have it in my esteem and in my attachment to being, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, Monsieur . . .

509. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Thursday morning [February 7, 1641]¹

Mademoiselle,

The lady officers of Saint-Germain-de-l'Auxerrois were here at the house yesterday to remonstrate strongly with me about our Sister Marie,² not so much in order to keep her as

Letter 509. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter belongs to the Thursday preceding no. 512, dated February 9.

²Marie Joly. She was appreciated by the Ladies of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, who

to get some Sisters who know how to serve and to make up the compounds and remedies. Marie's companion does not know anything, not even the houses of the Ladies so as to give them information. They are asking for the one who was taken from them and is at Saint-Etienne,³ and for Vincente. It is up to you to see how you can remove that Sister and which other you can put in her place, or give them someone else who knows how to make up the compounds and has some experience. This situation shows us how necessary it is for you to come to this parish and for all your Sisters to be well-trained.

Yesterday I saw the house that I had mentioned to you, in the faubourg Saint-Martin, but there is not enough room. It would be good, as you say, to have one for yourselves as soon as possible, but that is not so easily found. In the meantime, you will have to take the first one that is offered for rent.

Let me know, as soon as possible, please, about the choice of the Sister and about sending her, so that you can withdraw Marie in order to have her begin her retreat and leave next Monday. I am ashamed of how far behind we are with regard to that good lady from Sedan.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

were sorry to see her leave, but did not dare resist the will of Saint Vincent. Marie Joly was being taken away and they were getting a Sister with whom they were not satisfied. Their complaints are understandable.

³Saint-Etienne-du-Mont, a parish in Paris.

510. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Thursday, at two o'clock [February 7, 1641]¹

I think, Mademoiselle, that I did not make myself well understood concerning the Sister we must send to Saint-Germain. I wrote you that those Ladies are requesting the one you took from there and placed at Saint-Etienne. It is up to you to see if you can give them that one or some other who comes near her in experience. If you send them that one today, the Pastor² told me yesterday that he would send Marie back to you this very day.

It is true that the need we have for well-trained Sisters is very important to me.

As for the lodging in that parish, we must rent one at any price, while waiting for the opportunity to buy one, as the kind we need does not turn up every day.

I still see a little of the human in your feelings as soon as you see me ill. You think all is lost, for want of a house. O woman of little faith and acceptance of the guidance and example of Jesus Christ! For the state of the whole Church, this Savior of the world refers to His Father with regard to rules and order, and for a handful of young women whom His Providence has manifestly raised up and brought together, you think He will fail us! Come, Mademoiselle, humble yourself very much before God, in whose love I am your servant.

V. D.

Letter 510. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹This letter is a continuation of the letter Saint Vincent wrote earlier this day, no. 509. He felt some clarifications were in order.

²Pierre Colombet.

I was bled today, but I am feeling much better because of it, thank God.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

511. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[February 8, 1641]¹

Mademoiselle,

Blessed be God that that good Sister Marie² has made up her mind! All for the best, since you think the one from Beauvais³ has the natural aptitude to become capable of the work at Saint-Germain.⁴ *In nomine Domini*, send her, please.

Monsieur Jourdain,⁵ whom I intended to send to Montmorency tomorrow, is unwell. Nonetheless, your wet-

Letter 511. - Archives of the Provincial House of the Daughters of Charity, Lille, original autograph letter.

¹This letter was written after no. 510 and before no. 512.

²Marie Joly.

³Probably Françoise Carcireux. Born in Beauvais, she entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity around 1640-1641. Stationed first at Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, then with the foundlings at Bicêtre, she was sent in 1648 to Richelieu. She was recalled from there in September 1659 and sent to the hospital in Narbonne. From 1672 to 1675, the important function of Assistant of the Company was confided to her. Two of her sisters were Daughters of Charity and one of her brothers, Paul, was a priest in the Congregation of the Mission.

⁴Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois.

⁵Jean Jourdain, born in Gallius-la-Queue in 1587, was the first coadjutor Brother in the Congregation of the Mission, which he entered on February 13, 1627. He was equerry and majordomo at the home of the Marquise de Maignelay, Marguerite de Gondi, when

nurse will, please, attend to your little children for only seven or eight days. I lost the note you sent me concerning the meeting.⁶ Please take the trouble of writing me another.

I wish you good day and peace of mind. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

V. DEPAUL

512. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

Our good Sister Marie is here at last, full of good will. I find her a little tired from the work she has had for eight days, and greatly fearful of departing all alone and of no longer finding herself with her Sisters. But she accepts all that in a good way, without complaint or without any opposition to being obedient. She just seems very fearful. I, however, am less docile, because the resolution that I think you made of never sending anyone alone has remained so strongly in my mind that it appears necessary to send someone with her. She may become sick on the way or, once there, she may encounter wicked people who think ill of her and may do her harm. And then, since one is not without feeling, and it is not a small matter that these fine young women have given up everything, she may become very sad, and not being able to get the weight off her mind, we can fear discouragement. I am also afraid that such a situation may harm the others, who will say that we do not care much about the Sisters since we let them go all alone. All these reasons, Monsieur, cause me to take the liberty of entreating you to think about this matter, and to see if there is some way she can serve as an example to the others to encourage them. The journey will not cost a great deal, for, besides the ten écus she brought a week ago, she brought as many more

Saint Vincent was chaplain to the De Gondis, and the two had begun to get acquainted at that time. Of a lively temperament, Brother Jean was inclined to give admonitions at every turn, but he quickly repented and those whom he had offended saw him on his knees before them a moment later. He died April 25, 1657. (Cf. *Notices*, vol. I, pp. 373-375.)

⁶A meeting of the Ladies of Charity.

Letter 512. - According to Coste, a copy made from the original was preserved in the

yesterday. As for their expenses, since they do not spend much on food, I think the little that people give to one of them will help support the other; and they will work to earn the rest. For, although she had a lot of work and sick people at Saint-Germain, she still did laundry for others and earned something.

I was thinking, Monsieur, if you approve, of giving her our big Sister Claire. She is the one who went to see you at Sainte-Marie about being received — her mother brought her there. She has a rather docile disposition, and I think they will get along well together.

I most humbly entreat you to take the trouble of letting me know if you want it this way and the day they can leave, and whether I should have their place reserved in the coach.

I am very sorry to bother you during your illness, which I entreat our good God to cure. I am, Monsieur, your most humble daughter and most grateful servant.

L. DE M.

February 9, 1641

The Sister I am suggesting to you to go with Sister Marie Joly knows how to read, and she does not; she could teach school to the poor little girls. If you should think of another Sister, please tell me her name, and so, by this means, give our good Sister Marie a companion.

513. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[February 9 or 10, 1641]¹

Mademoiselle,

I approve of your idea with regard to sending two Sisters,

Archives of the Mission, Paris. However, the present location of both the original and the copy is unknown.

Letter 513. - According to Coste, a copy made from the original was preserved in the Archives of the Mission, Paris. However, the present location of both the original and the copy is unknown.

¹This letter is an answer to the preceding one and probably written on the same day or the day after.

provided the second knows how to teach school, and that is something I doubt. It would be good for you to instruct her. I have some other objection as far as their maintenance is concerned. If that Sister does not teach school, would it not be better to send someone else who is less necessary in this city?

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am feeling better, thank God, and am your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

514. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[February 10, 1641]¹

Here is the copy of the letter I wrote to the Duchesse de Bouillon² and to the Reverend Capuchin Father, in Monsieur de Rozière's absence. See if there is anything to be added or deleted.

I forgot to tell you, as far as the money is concerned, that, if you give them the twenty écus Marie brought, I think that would be fine, but most of it should be in gold and they should fix a place for it in their clothes.

Send these letters back to me within the hour, please.

Letter 514. - According to Coste, the original autograph letter was at the hospital of Bon Secours in Metz. The present location of the original is unknown, but a photograph of the letter is preserved in the Archives of the Mission, Paris.

¹Because of the mention of the twenty écus and Sister Marie Joly, this letter must have been written shortly after no. 512.

²Eléonore-Catherine Fébronie de Bergh was the daughter of Frédéric, Governor of Frise and Françoise Ravenel. On February 1, 1634, she married Frédéric-Maurice de la Tour d'Auvergne, Duc de Bouillon, and died July 14, 1657, at the age of forty-two. She was one of the first Ladies of Charity and, by her liberalities, contributed to the establishment of the Daughters of Charity in Sedan for the care of wounded soldiers.

514a. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Monday at noon [February 11, 1641]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I most humbly thank you for the care you take of me. I am feeling fine, thank God. M. Delorme saw me yesterday and prescribed a dose of medicine for me; I took it today. I have no more fever, and almost no more swelling in my cheek, so that, by the grace of God, it will depend entirely on me whether I do penance for my faults. It seems the Lord has been pleased to give me the time for it.

I reserved and paid for two places in the Sedan coach. It leaves tomorrow at ten o'clock. Have our Sisters ready to leave at nine o'clock, please. I am quite disappointed about not seeing them. Assure them that I will see them with the eyes of my spirit and that, tomorrow, God willing, I hope to say Mass for their intention.

I wrote to the Duchesse² and the Capuchin Father who is there, according to what you told me. One difficulty remains: I have been told that people are afraid there may be some prohibition concerning communication with that town. That is why I wrote to the Duchesse d'Aiguillon and asked her to let me know if there is any danger in sending these Sisters. I am waiting for her answer, and because she may perhaps not have the time to see my letter I requested one of the Chancellor's³ servants to find out from him and send me word.

Letter 514a. - Original autograph letter, Archives of the Berceau, near Dax. This letter was published in the *Annales* (1928), pp. 256-257, and was reprinted in *Mission et Charité*, 19-20, pp. 25-26. This edition uses the latter text.

¹Date imposed by the establishment of the Daughters of Charity in Sedan (February 1641) and by comparing the contents of the letter with that of nos. 512, 513, 514, 517, 518, and 519.

²The Duchesse de Bouillon.

³Pierre Séguier.

Nevertheless, have them ready to leave at the time I said, please.

I am sending a priest from here to hear that good young woman's confession. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

515. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[Before 1650]¹

Our good God has been pleased to add to the consolation His Goodness has bestowed on me through your charity by showing me, in another individual, that His Providence does not disdain sinners. He sent me Madame de Marillac² to tell me that she believed I was short of cash. She begged me to speak to her freely, so that she might give me the support her mother³ had offered me, which was a certain sum every year. I admitted to her quite frankly the difficulty I was having and that I would not need anything if my son had some occupation.

She wanted to see you about the matter but you had gone out, to find out from you, Monsieur, how the Bishop of Beauvais⁴ had received the suggestion she had made to him, and his opinion on this subject. Because she does not know how she ought to talk to him about it, and since he is supposed to leave tomorrow or the day after, she and I most humbly entreat you to take the trouble of writing her a note about the matter, I mean to Madame de Marillac, if you think

Letter 515. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Date of the marriage of Michel Le Gras, Saint Louise's son.

²Wife of Michel de Marillac, a Counselor in the Parlement.

³Or rather, her mother-in-law, Marie de Creil, the widow of René de Marillac; she had become a Carmelite.

⁴Augustin Potier.

it advisable. She wished you to do that for fear that you might have to tell me something that might sadden me.

I do not know if it is my pride that makes me sorry for the trouble I cause other people. I should be better, since I have the honor of being, Monsieur, your most humble daughter and most grateful servant.

L. DE M.

516. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saturday morning [Between 1639 and 1641]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

It would be well for you to continue with the usual meditations and to give a special one to that fine young woman concerning her entrance into the married state:

(1) Reasons that a wife has to live well with her husband, on which subject you will quote her three authorities. The first, what Saint Paul said,² that the husband is the head of the wife and, therefore, that it is up to her to have the same dependence on her husband that the members have with regard to the head; (2) what the same Saint Paul said to women, that is, that they are to obey their husbands; (3) that God said a woman must leave father and mother to follow her husband.

The second point is namely in what the good life of a woman with her husband consists. Now, it consists in loving

Letter 516. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹The position of the words "Saturday morning" at the head of the letter indicates that it was not written before 1639. On the other hand, after 1641, the Sisters were no longer in La Chapelle.

²Eph. 5:22-33.

her husband more than anything after God; in the second place, in pleasing and obeying him in everything that is not sin.

The third point is some means for a woman to obtain the grace to live well with her husband: (1) to ask it of God; (2) not to allow in her heart any thought that might lessen her esteem for him; (3) never to say or do anything that might displease him; (4) to propose to herself the example of some married woman who lives well with her husband; (5) to have devotion to honoring the marriage of Saint Joseph and the holy Virgin.

You do not trust enough. Have confidence that Our Lord will do as He pleases with your son.

You must carry out what you promised for Angers, although it is contrary to your feelings.

If I can do so, I shall go to La Chapelle tomorrow or send someone there. Good day, Mademoiselle, I am your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

517. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saturday, at noon [February or March 1641]¹

Madame de Chaumont² just left here. She spoke to me about an actress who wishes to give up her way of life and return to her region. She wants to buy a piece of land there,

Letter 517. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter precedes no. 518 by a few days.

²Marie de Bailleul, lady-in-waiting to Anne of Austria, wife of Louis de Chaumont, Seigneur d'Athieules, and sister of Nicolas de Bailleul.

as she has earned enough money to do that. But this good lady would like a retreat of seven or eight days for her beforehand. I led her to expect this charity at your house. Do you want to do it, Mademoiselle?

This good lady has taken a young woman from the Ursulines,³ whom she had placed with them and who lived with them for six years. She knows that those good Sisters give lessons, excellent ones, in tapestry work. It occurred to me that she could perhaps be useful to the Sisters in La Chapelle for two or three months, especially to show them how to teach school. What do you think, Mademoiselle? A word in reply to all that. The young woman is not this good lady's daughter nor is she inclined to devote herself to the Charity; she wants to be a nun.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

518. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Wednesday morning [February or March 1641]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I do not think you should fear what you told me about that young woman. That is why I am asking you, with all due deference, to write to Madame de Chaumont to send her to you, or to tell her concierge verbally. For that is what I wrote to her in case you would agree: if she left the young woman in the city, we would send for her. If not, I think it would be

³This convent was founded in 1612, in the parish of Saint-Jacques, by Mademoiselle Lhuillier, the widow of Claude Le Roux.

Letter 518. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹This letter preceded no. 519 by four days.

well for you to tell the concierge to send her your letter in Saint-Germain. And as far as her board is concerned, you could tell the Marquise² that you will accept whatever she chooses to give.

Here is a letter from Madame Le Roux who hopes to come and make her retreat at your house on Monday with Madame Lotin. Will your health permit you to be there, Mademoiselle? My catarrh seems to be letting up a little and allows me to hope for a way of being present at the meeting next Friday, which I entreat you to offer to Our Lord. In His love, I am your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

519. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Sunday morning [February or March 1641]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have many things to tell you here; I do not know if I shall remember all of them. The first is that our Sister Maurice, of Saint-Sulpice, has left the Charity; her mother went for her yesterday. These are the effects of our Sister Marie. The

²Madame de Chaumont.

Letter 519. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹One sentence in the letter leads to the belief that it was written during Lent, while the text in its entirety can belong only to 1641.

Duchesse² cried out in my presence when she learned of it, for I saw her yesterday. She said that it was the bad treatment those Sisters were receiving from their parish and she wanted to give up everything herself.³ Oh well! we must attend to it. In the name of God, Mademoiselle, see whom you can give her, starting today. One of those remaining is ill and there is only one who can work. I entreat you, Mademoiselle, to do all you can about this matter. She spoke to me again yesterday about establishing those Sisters and I told her we would talk about it in two or three days.

I think you would do well to send Jeanne⁴ to Saint-Germain.⁵

Mesdames Le Roux and Lotin are insisting on beginning their retreat tomorrow at your house. What do you think, Mademoiselle? The latter is accustomed to eating meat. It would be difficult for me to go to your house because of my little ailment; they will have to come here.

Do what you can for Saint-Jacques⁶ and for the galley-slaves.

²The Duchesse d'Aiguillon, President of the Charity established in the parish of Saint-Sulpice.

³The parish of Saint-Sulpice was foremost among the parishes of Paris for its size and bad reputation. (Cf. Abbé Etienne-Michel Faillon, *Vie de M. Olier, fondateur du séminaire de Saint-Sulpice* [4th ed., 3 vols., Paris: Poussielgue, 1873], vol. II, p. 12.)

⁴Jeanne Lepeintre, whom Madame Goussault, her mistress, had sent to the Daughters of Charity around 1638. Saint Vincent said she was "a very fine girl, wise and gentle." Both he and Saint Louise had great confidence in her because of her intelligence and organizing ability. She was first employed at the school of the Charity in Saint-Germain-en-Laye (1642). In the spring of 1646, after installing the Sisters in the hospital of Le Mans, she returned to Paris where she was put in charge of the Motherhouse while Saint Louise was establishing the house in Nantes. Jeanne then became Superior in Nantes (1647) where great difficulties were being encountered. In 1654 she headed the foundation in Châteaudun and then, in 1657, at the Salpêtrière. (Cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 64) In the manuscript, *Recueil de Pièces relatives aux Filles de la Charité* (p. 24), we read: "During the lifetime of Mademoiselle Le Gras, she appeared to be a hypochondriac. Moreover, she could not be made to do what she did not like, nor would she accept other opinions than those of her own mind." She was reprimanded more than once by Saint Vincent because of this fault. Her last days were sad ones spent at the Nom-de-Jésus, to which she had to be committed because she was no longer rational.

⁵Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

⁶Parish of Saint-Jacques-de-la-Boucherie in Paris.

I shall hurry M. Lambert with regard to the Sisters.

As for the Angers affair, I forgot to speak to M. de Cordes about it yesterday; we shall see. You could use my little indisposition as an excuse, as far as the papers are concerned.

We must keep on praying for the house; I am not so worried about it as about the way to set you up right now in a rented lodging. *O Jésus!* Mademoiselle, your concerns do not depend on a house, but on the continuation of God's blessing on the work.

I am going to ask Monsieur du Coudray whether he knows any suitable young women from Lorraine, and will have letters written everywhere on this subject. This is an avenue that just occurred to me now.

Let me know as soon as possible how you feel about those good ladies and their retreat.

Good day, Mademoiselle, I am your servant.

V. D.

I just wrote to Madame Le Roux to postpone the retreat.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

520. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Tuesday, at two o'clock [After 1639]¹

Mademoiselle,

I thought it advisable to have the Angers papers copied and checked; that will be finished in two days.

Letter 520. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Date the Daughters of Charity entered the hospital in Angers.

I would like to see the letter Abbé de Vaux wrote to you.
I am feeling fine, thank God, and am, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

521. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[After 1637]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am feeling well, thank God, with the exception of my little fever. I took some waters yesterday and intend to continue, with God's help, if I can find some. I think they will do me good, as they have always done.

And you, how are you feeling? If I can, I shall see you soon. In the meantime, I am sending you two letters from Richelieu. We shall talk about them.

I am, meanwhile, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

V. D. P.

522. - A PRIEST OF THE MISSION TO SAINT VINCENT

1641

It is unimaginable how much our past labors are now bathed with

Letter 521. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹The house in Richelieu was founded in 1638.

Letter 522. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. II, p. 50.

consolations that our good God is sending us to give us courage. These souls in Poitou, who seemed hard as rocks, have caught the sacred fire of devotion so intensely and with so much enthusiasm that I do not think it will be able to be extinguished for a long time.

523. - TO SAMSON LE SOUDIER, IN LUCON

Paris, Palm Sunday,¹ 1641

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am very much ashamed of having taken so long to answer you. I ask your pardon as humbly as I can, hoping that I shall mend my ways.

Your good brother² has his title and dimissorial letter³ and will receive the first sacred Order at this ordination. I hope Our Lord will give him a great share in His spirit, and I am asking Him to grant you the grace to continue your preaching and catechism lessons. In the name of God, Monsieur, take heart in this, and do not be discouraged. Although you do not have so many talents, Our Lord will increase them for you, if He chooses, in the spirit of humility and charity in which I am convinced you live both within and outside the house. O Monsieur, how I beg God to perfect you in this spirit! I hope for it from His Goodness and am going to ask Him for it right

Letter 523. - Archives of the Provincial House of the Daughters of Charity, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹March 24.

²Jacques Le Soudier.

³For ordination to Major Orders candidates must have a canonical title, which is the guarantee of permanent and proper maintenance. Dimissorial letters are statements giving a subject permission to be ordained by a bishop other than his own Ordinary.

now at the Holy Sacrifice. I am, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Le Soudier, Priest of the Mission, in
Luçon

524. - TO MONSIEUR PERRIQUET, IN BAYONNE

Paris, Easter Sunday,¹ 1641

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter with consolation and learned with admiration of the blessings Our Lord is bestowing on you. I offer most humble thanks to His Divine Majesty and ask Him to continue sanctifying your dear soul more and more.

I have been thinking for a long time about the matter you did me the honor of setting before me, namely, whether you would do better to continue the service you are rendering to God in those districts, or to return to the place where Providence seems to be summoning you, namely, to your benefice. Now, I must tell you in the simplicity of my heart, that I think you would do better to remain in Bayonne: (1) because the same Providence, which never contradicts itself, called you to Bayonne first; (2) because it is blessing you there beyond measure; (3) because I doubt you would be as effective

Letter 524. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter. Coste published a more complete text in the second supplement of vol. VIII, pp. 551-552, no. 524. The editors followed this text.

¹March 31.

here as in Bayonne; (4) because Our Lord has granted you the dispositions you need to serve Him, without expecting any other reward than that of heaven; (5) because, not only do I believe you are useful to the Bishop of Bayonne,² but also necessary, especially in the situation in which he finds himself. What would you answer to God, Monsieur, if, for want of your assistance, this good Prelate who holds you in such high esteem, were to abandon his dear spouse?

The poor ideas I am suggesting to you and submitting to your own, I would dare mention to only a few priests because it seems to me that there are few among them whom God has predisposed with the grace of attaching no importance at all to temporal interests; and you are, I think, one of the most disinterested men that I have ever seen. What makes me believe I am not mistaken is that I have been thinking about this for a long time. The Bishop of Bayonne can bear witness that, although he told me about it when he was here, I could not decide then to tell you what I am telling you now. And so, I can assure you, as I do before God, that no human reason is making me say this to you, but rather the thought of God alone and of the good of His Church. However, because I am a poor plowman and a swineherd and, what is worse, the most abominable and detestable of all the sinners in the world, I beg you to take no account at all of what I am saying to you, if it does not seem to you in conformity with God's Will. In His love and that of His holy Mother, I am, Monsieur, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Perriquet, Vicar General of the Bishop of Bayonne, in Bayonne

² François Fouquet.

525. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Tuesday, at noon [Between 1641 and 1654]¹

Here are your papers, Mademoiselle. We shall discuss what you told me about the room for Madame Lhoste (?). Brother Pierre Rogue left without saying good-bye; he has not been here for a month.

Do what you please concerning the papers of our Sister Marie, from Sedan. I shall write to her and reply to Madame Forest.²

They are asking for five hundred livres from the house, and I, for your prayers. I am your servant.

V. D.

526. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[1641]¹

Monsieur,

Here is a letter from the mother of Sister Aimée from Troyes; her brothers did not want to take her away. I most humbly entreat you to take the trouble of letting me know when that good lady whom she mentions is going back and whether I should give her any money,

Letter 525. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Duration of Sister Marie Joly's stay in Sedan. The year 1641 seems the more likely date for this letter.

²A Lady of Charity whom Saint Vincent directed. At the process of beatification of Saint Vincent, twenty-seven letters which he had written to Madame Forest were submitted to the tribunal. All these letters have been lost.

Letter 526. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter was written while the Motherhouse was still in La Chapelle, after Sister Barbe Angiboust was recalled from Richelieu, and when Marguerite de Turenne had just come to the Motherhouse.

both for her expenses and for her place in the coach, and how much.

The opportunity, which I think God gave me today to speak to you, made me see similar faults that I often commit, but also, most honored Father, I think it must make you aware of my need for assistance in doing God's most holy Will. Besides, you should not expect anything at all of me except that which you do me the honor of commanding me, for in that regard I think our good God does me the kindness of remembering me.

One of the most pressing matters for me is to ask your direction on how to behave towards our good Sister Barbe and to tell you that she has a great need to speak to you. She believes that, until she does, she will not be satisfied. If you could go to La Chapelle on Saturday, it would be a great service for us.

I am afraid our Sister Marguerite, the demoiselle,² may go astray in the end. If it were convenient for you to allow me to speak to you beforehand, I would be very glad.

Would your charity please remember the paper you promised me to help me speak to our Sisters two or three times a week in order to try and encourage them? I think I deserve great punishments for all their failings. Ask God for someone who can serve them better. I entreat this of you with tears in my eyes, what with God's having, for so many years, done me the kindness of speaking to me through you and with my being such as I am! Please ask Him for mercy for my poor soul, which He has placed in your hands to be forever, Monsieur, your most humble and most grateful daughter and servant.

L. DE MARILLAC

Thursday

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

²Probably Marguerite Deshaies de Turenne, a relative of the Pastor of Saché. She did not persevere in the vocation of a Daughter of Charity.

527. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[1641]

I think, Mademoiselle, you would do well to give what is necessary to your good Sister¹ so that she can return. Direct her to Madame Gouault, who is with her son the merchant on the rue Saint-Honoré.

It is impossible for me to see to our Sisters before the end of next week. We have meetings every day from now until Wednesday. I shall speak to Barbe at that time. We have to give that young woman something to do elsewhere, things being the way they are. As for that good demoiselle, what do you have in mind for her?

I shall speak to M. Guilloire about Mademoiselle Constance. It would be good meanwhile to give Madame Belot² some direction; however, do you not think that Madame Turgis could act as a substitute? It would be well, if you think it fitting, for you to give her some title among the Sisters.

And as for you, in the name of God, Mademoiselle, excuse me for not speaking to you sooner. I will do so as soon as I can. I am in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

V. D.

Letter 527. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter. This letter answers the preceding one.

¹Sister Aimée.

²Perhaps Marie Le Maistre, the wife of Martin Belot, a day laborer, who lived in the parish of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet, on the rue des Rats, subsequently the rue d'Arras.

528. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[1641]¹

That good Sister has finally decided to go to Saint-Côme,² although in her wavering mood she says that she will not be there for long. That is fine; her uncle was just like her.

M. Dehorgny sent me word two or three days ago that they are not satisfied with our Sister Jeanne who is with the galley-slaves. It was the Pastor of Saint-Nicolas³ who spoke to him about it. That being so, it behooves you to remove her as soon as you can. I do not know whether that service would be beyond the strength of our Sister Barbe Angiboust.⁴

I hope to see you tomorrow, God willing. I praise God, meanwhile, that you are feeling well.

I continue to be very edified by that good demoiselle from Arras. When will she begin her retreat? She is very contemplative. I do not know if she will be given enough to action; Our Lord will supply for her want.

529. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[April or May 1641]¹

It seems to me, Mademoiselle, that our dear Sister Mar-

Letter 528. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹It was at this time that Sister Barbe Angiboust went to serve the galley-slaves.

²A parish in Paris.

³Georges Froger, Pastor of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet. It is a known fact that the clergy of Saint-Nicolas had charge of the chaplaincy for the galley-slaves.

⁴As everywhere, she became known for her great charity and unalterable patience. Sometimes, when the galley-slaves were dissatisfied with their food, they would throw it on the floor. Then Barbe would stoop down, pick up the bread and meat and, after cleaning the food, would hand it to them again with the same smiling face.

Letter 529. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Marguerite de Turenne took the habit of a Daughter of Charity on or around

guerite, from Saché,² is a little too vacillating or less determined. Speak to her and, if you are satisfied, you can admit her. It is to be feared that, if we refuse her, it may be a greater subject of temptation for her. The girl from Liancourt,³ who has been in Nanteuil,⁴ must be put off, I think.

I told Jeanne⁵ not to think of that kerchief for the coiffe when she goes to church. I think we will have to bear with her in this attachment. She will be able to get over it with time. It is a pity; she is a fine young woman.

At eight o'clock, I will go down to celebrate Holy Mass. God knows with what pleasure I hope to say it for you and your Sisters, and how affectionately I recommend myself to your prayers and theirs.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

530. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Blessed be God, Mademoiselle, for all He has been pleased to accomplish in you during your retreat and for having deprived me of the consolation of seeing you then!

I am feeling well enough, thank God, and [am] able to offer you to Our Lord tomorrow in the new exterior and interior

Pentecost Sunday in the year 1641. (Cf. letter from her mother preserved in the Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity.) Reference in this letter to her acceptance into the Company prompts us to assign this date for this letter.

²Small commune in Indre-et-Loire, near Chinon. Marguerite de Turenne was one of five women from Saché who had entered the Daughters of Charity in 1641.

³Possibly Françoise Noret, from Liancourt, who spent a great part of her life at the Motherhouse. In 1645 she was sent to Saint-Denis and accompanied Saint Louise during her journey to Nantes in July-August 1646. On August 8, 1655, she signed the act of establishment of the Company of the Daughters of Charity. Her sister, Marguerite, was also a Daughter of Charity.

⁴Nanteuil-le-Haudouin (Oise).

⁵Jeanne Lepointre.

Letter 530. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

state to which Divine Love has disposed you.¹ He compensates for and accomplishes in a divine way what men are not able to do in a human way. Perhaps He deliberately permitted my not having seen you so that I might not put my sickle into His harvest. I pray that He may animate you completely with His Spirit and your two Sisters also, as well as your sick.

You would do well to send back that good young woman from Angers as soon as possible after the feasts. After that we shall consider Our Lord's work in you; and tomorrow heaven will behold you wearing the exterior habit of repentance that has so long filled your spirit and her spirit, by His mercy, in whose love, I am your. . . .

V. D.

I will find out what you want to know about M. Le Gras.

530a. - TO SAINT JANE FRANCES, IN ANNECY

Paris, June 9, 1641

My very dear and most worthy Mother,

¹Sister Barbe Bailly, secretary to Saint Louise in the 1650s, stated in her notes that Saint Louise put on the habit of the Daughters of Charity one Pentecost Sunday and became so ill from doing so that she had to return to her previous headdress. Although 1639 has been mentioned as the year this took place, we believe 1641 is more reasonable. It is very doubtful that Saint Louise had any Sisters native to Angers in her Community before the Daughters of Charity entered the hospital in Angers. In her correspondence and that of Saint Vincent, Sisters from Angers are never mentioned before December 1, 1640. Moreover, in a letter to the Abbé de Vaux, June 6, 1641, Saint Louise asked him in a post script "to speak to those good Daughters about the change of habit." (Cf. *Ecrits Spirituels*, L. 45.)

Letter 530a. - The original autograph letter is in the Monastery of the Visitation in Sault-de-Navailles (Pyrénées-Atlantiques). Coste published an incomplete copy (no. 539), which had been presented at the beatification process of Saint Jane Frances de Chantal.

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received today the letter you wrote me in care of our Mother in the faubourg.¹ In answer to it I shall tell you, dear Mother, that I thank God for all the graces He is giving our poor Missionaries through the communication² you allow them to make to you. I beseech Him to render them worthy of the continuation of the same grace by the good use I sincerely hope they are making of it. In the name of Our Lord, my worthy [Mother], continue to do them this same charity.

I shall try to obey you with regard to the faubourg as far as the visitation is concerned, and shall follow the order you indicate to me, if you obtain from Our Lord for me a share in the gentle firmness He has bestowed on you. Oh! how your good angel would help us in that regard, if you, dear [Mother], were to ask him fervently.

This is how that affair is going—the one about which a certain prelate had complained to the person who you said wrote to you concerning it. There is no need for me to mention here the troubles of your dear daughters who are at the Madeleine.³ Some of the professed nuns, fearing that our

The complete original was published in the *Annales* (1954-1955), pp. 621-628, and was reprinted in *Mission et Charité*, 19-20, pp. 27-29. This edition uses the latter text.

The certain date on the original necessitates the change in the placement of this letter, a change Coste had recommended in his corrections in vol. VIII.

¹Anne-Marguerite Guérin was the Superioress of the second Monastery of the Visitation, in the faubourg Saint-Jacques, from May 24, 1640 to May 21, 1643. She had entered the Visitation Order at the first Monastery, in the faubourg Saint-Antoine (founded in 1619), and was sent to the second Monastery when it was established in 1626. She was later put at the head of the Monastery in Rouen and then of the third Monastery in Paris (founded in 1659). She died there on January 24, 1669, at the age of seventy-seven.

²In 1640 the Missionaries had established themselves in Annecy to preach missions and to receive the ordinands of the diocese. Saint Vincent recommended that his confreres there make their internal communication to Saint Jane Frances: they had recourse to the Superioress of the Visitation in their spiritual anxiety and in actual fact entrusted to her the direction of their souls.

³The Monastery of Sainte-Madeleine (a house for penitent young women) had been

Sisters might withdraw and that the malcontents might get the upper hand, found a way to write to the Duchesse d'Aiguillon themselves and asked her, without the Superior's knowledge, to come and see them. This she did, because she is charitable and is a benefactress of the house. They complained to her in such a way that the lady spoke of it to that good bishop and asked him to settle the matter. When she saw that the affair was being drawn out, that the smoldering continued and was increasing more and more, and that it was being fomented by the boldness they assumed because they were being upheld by the said bishop, that good lady sent him word, beseeching him to settle the matter or she would complain about it. This made him extremely angry and set him strongly against your dear daughters, saying that the trouble came from them — which it did not. I assure you they had no part in . . .⁴ Would that I were in a position to tell you the circumstances of this affair, worthy Mother, and you would see that they are innocent. He himself admitted to me some time ago that he did not believe it, but that they were, at least, the cause of his being ill-treated. The house is doing well for the present. That was a little storm which has passed and has produced a greater calm than ever in those spirits. There is reason to praise God in this, and to assure you, dear Mother, that the affair was dealt with

directed by the religious of the Visitation since 1629. The Superior at this time was Mother Anne-Marie Bollain.

Anne-Marie Bollain was born September 30, 1599. She presented herself to Saint Francis de Sales, in Paris, in order to be received into the first Monastery of the Visitation. Her mind was so mature, even in the novitiate, that Saint Jane Frances moderated various articles of the Custom Book in accord with her advice. In 1629 she was sent as Superior to the convent of the Madeleine, which she left in 1633, summoned to the first Monastery by the votes of the Sisters who wanted her at their head. Three years later she resumed her place at the convent of Sainte-Madeleine, from which she again departed in 1664 to govern the community in Chaillot for six years. The first Monastery asked for her again in 1673. She died there on January 15, 1683, having served God in the cloister for sixty-three years. Saint Jane Frances said of her that she was "a very fervent and virtuous soul who went straight to God." (Cf. *Année Sainte*, vol. I, pp. 360-375.)

⁴The manuscript is torn here.

according to the advice of the brother and sister of that good bishop, in a spirit of respect and submission, and nothing contrary to that.

Another slight unpleasantness concerning the same subject occurred a little while ago. It caused fresh complaints, but I can assure you, dear Mother, that it was no fault of theirs. Well, Our Lord is permitting your good daughters to be tried in this way. Blessed be God that there are no grounds for it! Charity is patient, says Saint Paul.⁵ Does not the great work of charity they are doing require that they suffer to try their patience? Never is a work of God done for God where one is not paid back in this coin.

Our dear Mother in the city⁶ seems to have the spirit of God in her way of directing. Our dear Sister Angélique⁷ lives amidst her infirmities with a humility and cordiality toward the Sisters that edifies me. Oh! how I desire this same blessing for all Orders. How admirable this harmony is in the eyes of God and what an edification to those who see them!

Good evening, dear Mother!

⁵1 Cor. 13:4.

⁶Mother Louise-Eugénie de Fontaines, who had just been chosen, May 16, 1641, Superior of the Visitation of the rue Saint-Antoine (first Monastery).

Louise-Eugénie de Fontaines was born in Paris, March 13, 1608, of Huguenot parents and was received into the first Monastery of the Visitation in 1630, seven years after her abjuration of heresy. She soon became Mistress of Novices there. After her election as Superior in 1641, she was reelected so often that the convent had her at its head for thirty-three years. In 1644 she went to the Abbey of Perrine, near Le Mans, to establish the reform there. On her return, the Archbishop of Paris requested her to work on the rule of the Abbey of Port-Royal. Saint Vincent, who observed her at work in certain difficult situations, stated "that an angel could not have comported himself with more virtue." (Cf. *Sainte Jeanne-Françoise*, vol. VIII, p. 446, note.) She died September 29, 1694, at the age of eighty-six, leaving the reputation of a holy religious. "God always blessed her leadership and her undertakings," says the book of professions (Arch. Nat. LL 1718). Her biography was written by Jacqueline-Marie du Plessis, *Vie de la Vénérable Mère Louise-Eugénie de Fontaine, religieuse du monastère de la Visitation de Sainte-Marie* (Paris: n. p., 1696).

⁷Marie-Angélique Le Masson, or Hélène-Angélique Lhuillier, or yet some other religious of the Visitation.

I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

If I am not able to write on this occasion to M. Codoing, I shall do so at the first opportunity. I hope this letter finds M. Dehorgny of our Company, in Annecy where he has gone to see our Missionaries. However, worthy Mother, please tell M. Codoing that I gave four hundred livres to Monsieur de Menthon⁸ for the July quarter.

Addressed: Most worthy Mother de Chantal, Superior of the First Monastery of the Visitation of Annecy, in Annecy

531. - TO JEAN DES LIONS¹

July 20, 1641

Monsieur,

I received the letter you kindly did me the honor of writing to me. I did not send you an answer as soon as I received it, because of the difficult situation in which I found myself. Pardon me, please, and kindly allow M. Duchesne² to give you

⁸A Savoyard nobleman living in Annecy.

Letter 531. - Reg. 1, f°21 v°. The copyist notes that the original was in Saint Vincent's own handwriting.

¹Jean Des Lions, born in Pontoise in 1615, had become Dean and theologian of Senlis on September 11, 1638, and received his doctorate from the Sorbonne on June 5, 1640. He became involved in Jansenist ideas and persevered in them despite Saint Vincent's efforts to win him back. This was all the more unfortunate in that he was virtuous, very learned, and esteemed by all who knew him. He was passionately attached to the ancient practices of the Church and anxious to restore them. He wrote several highly appreciated works. He died in Senlis on March 26, 1700.

²Jérôme Duchesne, a Doctor of the Sorbonne and a member of the community of

the response verbally. He is coming to see you with the Dean of Saint-Frambourg³ about the matter in question. I most humbly entreat you, Monsieur, to assist him with your good advice and your protection.

If you judge before God that our poor, weak Company can render some small service to His Divine Majesty in your fine city, the said Dean and he will tell you the state of affairs. And I, for my part, humbly entreat you to accept here the renewal of my offers of obedience. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur. . . .

532. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

Here is a letter from our good Sister in Sedan.¹ I entreat you to take the trouble of reading it and of being so kind as to give her some consolation. I read to our Sisters everything that might encourage them from her example. To me, they were like soldiers are said to be when they hear the alarm, especially Sister Henriette.² Although she is on retreat, [she] would rather leave today than tomorrow.

If you think it advisable for me to write to Madame de Bouillon, as she wishes, please let me know. I hope you will also give me the pleasure of being able to speak to you, Saturday or Sunday at least, so that I may prepare myself to begin my fifty-first year— which I shall enter on Monday, the feast of Saint Clare,³ if God grants me the grace of being alive.

Saint-Nicolas from 1612 on. In 1621 he had given a mission with Saint Vincent in Montmirail.

³Today it is called Villers-Saint-Frambourg. This parish had had as Dean, since April 2, 1637, Philippe Robin, a Councillor in the Presidial of Senlis.

Letter 532. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Marie Joly; she had left for Sedan in February.

²Henriette Gesseume.

³August 12.

The Pastor of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois⁴ sent word asking if a lady could come here to make her retreat. I do not know whether it is at your house that her husband is to make one. According to what I have been told, they are people who have suffered great distress, but I do not know their name. I sent him word that I would give him an answer tomorrow, after talking it over with you. Please take the trouble of letting me know what I should tell him and of remembering that I am, Monsieur, your most humble and most grateful daughter and servant.

L. DE M.

Wednesday, August 7 [1641]⁵

There are five good Sisters on retreat: Henriette, Marguerite from Saint-Laurent,⁶ the relative of the Pastor of La Gève; Claude Lauraine, who looks after the little children;⁷ and the one from Angers.⁸ They will be able to make their confession Friday morning or afternoon, some a general one, and the others for four or five years. Please decide, Monsieur, when it will be.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

533. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[August 7, 1641]¹

Here are just two or three words because I am in a hurry. I am consoled by what Sister Marie wrote to you. It is

⁴Pierre Colombet.

⁵It was on August 12, 1641 that Saint Louise entered her fifty-first year.

⁶Marguerite Lauraine.

⁷The foundlings.

⁸Sister Marguerite Deshaies. She did not persevere in the vocation of a Daughter of Charity.

Letter 533. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter replies to the preceding one, and is written on the back of the original.

dangerous to write to her. Let us wait a little while until I have seen the Comte's chaplain.

I do not think there is any objection to your receiving that lady, after she has told you her name and titles. I know nothing about her husband.

It would be difficult for M. Soufliers to hear your Sisters tomorrow. I shall ask M. Dehorgny or someone else to do it.

I am leaving for Nanterre tomorrow morning, God willing, and hope to be back here Sunday evening. After that, we shall have the happiness of seeing you.

Let me know what the Marquise de Maignelay² [says]³ about a schoolmistress for that place.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am your most humble servant.

534. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Tuesday morning [1641]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I do not know what to tell you about little Jeanne,² except that something must be said to her about the temptation of that kerchief and that, in fact, we shall deal with the situation when she is here for this feast.³

²Marguerite de Gondi.

³A word was forgotten here in the original letter.

Letter 534. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter appears to belong near no. 537. It dates from the time when the Sisters still had their Motherhouse in La Chapelle.

²Jeanne Lepeintre.

³The costume of the first Daughters of Charity, almost all natives of the environs of Paris, was the one they were wearing when they presented themselves to Saint Louise to become members of the Little Company. Those who came from farther away used to dress, for the sake of uniformity, like the village women of the area surrounding Paris.

As for Anne,⁴ I think you would do well to write to her in a rather warm way about her sadness. With regard to Perrette,⁵ I think it would be good for you to write her a note, pending the time when you will see her.

I hope to go to La Chapelle on Thursday, if you send word to Madame Caregré, the daughter of M. de la Bistrade, that she can take you in her carriage. You can tell her that I shall go there between two and three o'clock on the same day, about which I left her in doubt. I am your most humble servant.

V. D.

535. TO SAINT LOUISE

Thursday morning [Between July and September 1641]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Their habit was similar to that worn by the Sisters until 1964; however, the dress was gray, the collar shorter and only a toquois or toquet (small brimless hat) covered the head. In the mind of the Holy Founder, the Daughters of Charity were, and were to remain, village girls. He wished them to be laywomen and not religious, and, consequently, intended that they be dressed as "ordinary women," according to his own expression. However, since the toquois gave poor protection from the weather, in 1646 the Saint allowed the more delicate among the Sisters, and in particular Sister Jeanne Lepeintre, who suffered from eye trouble, to add to their headpiece, as did many village women, the white cornette, an *unstarched* piece of material raised up in front and falling on both sides. The use of the cornette became generalized, and in 1685 Edme Jolly, the third Superior General, made it obligatory in order to remedy what might be shocking in a Community, a disparity of headdress. During the second half of the eighteenth century, the cornette became larger and, in the nineteenth century, starching was allowed to give it more consistency. Saint Louise did not dress like her Daughters. With Saint Vincent's permission, she wore the usual costume of devout widows.

⁴Anne Hardemont perhaps.

⁵Probably Perrette Chefdeville, niece of Sister Henriette Gesseume.

Letter 535. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter belongs between the arrival of Sister Elisabeth Martin in Richelieu (July

I am back,² by the grace of God, whom I thank for your health.

Isabelle³ is perfectly well physically, but she is not pleased to find herself in a house where there is no observance.⁴ Her companion is a pathetic creature.⁵ I do not know if there is a way to find her some employment; she has only four or five girls⁶ and does not take care of the sick.

What mortifies Isabelle, our dear Sister, even more is that she has not gone to the sick for some time since she has been occupied with the arrangements for forty or fifty ordinands. I spoke to M. Lambert about this, so that he will not make use of her that way any more. This good Sister seems to be longing for her return here or to Angers.⁷ Nonetheless, she will do out of virtue what we ask of her.

The Duchesse d'Aiguillon told me yesterday that she likes the suggestion Madame de Lamoignon⁸ made to her about

1641, at the earliest) and the purchase of the new Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, across from Saint-Lazare (September 1641).

²Saint Vincent had just returned from Richelieu.

³Elisabeth Martin.

⁴The house in Richelieu.

⁵Perhaps Louise Ganset who had been sent to Richelieu with Barbe Angiboust at the time of its foundation. On October 26, 1639, Saint Louise wrote, "My daughter, place a little constraint on your feelings. What good does it do you when you pay visits and go on pilgrimages without permission and want in everything to live according to your own will? . . . I think that what causes most of the faults you commit . . . is that you have money and have always liked having it." (Cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 11.)

⁶In her school.

⁷She was Superior in Angers before going to Richelieu.

⁸Madame de Lamoignon, born Marie de Landes on September 28, 1576, had married, on June 10, 1597, Chrétien de Lamoignon, President à mortier in the Parlement of Paris. Of this union were born the renowned Guillaume de Lamoignon, who became First President [Chief Justice] of the same Parlement; and a daughter, Madeleine de Lamoignon, well-known for her piety and her dedication to the unfortunate. The mother, according to Saint Francis de Sales, was one of the holiest women of her time. Probably after the death of her husband in 1636, she joined the Ladies of Charity. Her admirable qualities of mind and heart led to her election as their President on the retirement of Madame de Souscarrière. She held this post from about 1643 till her death on December 30, 1651, at the age of seventy-five. One of Saint Vincent's best supporters, her name deserves to be placed beside those of Madame Goussault and the Duchesse d'Aiguillon.

putting the forty-five thousand livres in an annuity and renting a house in the meantime.⁹ We shall be seeing one another along with the Lady officers Saturday afternoon. Please notify them about this and postpone the Sisters' meeting until next week, because of the excessive work this return has given me. And with regard to yourself, I shall have the happiness of seeing you as soon as possible. I am your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

536. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Wednesday morning [August or September 1641]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I think it is good to answer the woman who wrote to you concerning the Sisters of Saint-Roch, that we cannot send a single one of them.

I am supposed to receive an answer from Madame Marez² today. If she wishes to give us the house for twelve thousand livres, we shall give her six thousand of it in cash and the rest in an annuity.

When the Saint was seen entering her house, people would say, "The Father of the poor is going to see their Mother." She always assisted at the Divine Office. One day, when she had fainted, it was discovered that she was wearing a hair-shirt and a belt with iron spikes, which was hurting her terribly. On her death, the poor of her parish would not allow her body to be taken away to the Church of the Franciscans of Saint-Denis, where her husband was buried. (Cf. Bibl. Nat., ff. 32.785.)

⁹To make of it the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity.

Letter 536. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹This letter preceded by just a few days the purchase of the new Motherhouse of the Sisters, near Saint-Lazare.

²Wife of Jean du Marez, owner of the house.

I shall try to see you one of these days for your communication.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am, in the love of Our Lord,³ your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

537. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[September 6 or 7, 1641]¹

I am a little worried about your illness, Mademoiselle. I most humbly entreat you to do what you can to get better. We shall have to deal, then, with those Sisters in the way you suggested to me, and either you or I shall have [to speak]² plainly to our Sister Jeanne Lepeintre.³

I shall try to come and see you tomorrow, and your good Sisters, too.

The Pastor of Saint-Germain-en-Laye did speak to me highly of Sister Perrette yesterday, but I do not know how that can [be done].

We finally have the contract of purchase [for the house] and the money has been paid.⁴ Please let me know how many

³Saint Vincent inadvertently added "Monsieur" here.

Letter 537. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Mention of the contract of purchase for the property of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity enables us to assign this date.

²The original is damaged here and in several other places.

³Because of the way she wore her coiffe.

⁴The bill of sale between Jean de Marez, bourgeois of Paris, and Marie Sadot, his wife, on the one hand, and, on the other, the Congregation of the Mission represented

rooms there are. We shall announce the purchase tomorrow in the homily.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am your servant.

V. D.

538. - TO ETIENNE BLATIRON, IN ALET

September 9, 1641

Mon Dieu! how consoled my soul was with all that M. Dehorgny told me and wrote about you! But then, I was grieved in the same measure by your illness and the difficulties you are having in some encounters with that person you know.¹ In the name of God, Monsieur, take care of your poor life. Be content with consuming it little by little for Divine Love. It is not your own; it belongs to the Author of life, for love of whom you must preserve it until He asks it of you, unless an opportunity arises to offer it, like a good priest, eighty years of age, who was just martyred in England after

by Vincent de Paul, Antoine Portail, Antoine Lucas, Jean Dehorgny, François Souffliers, Léonard Boucher and René Alméras, was signed on September 6, 1641, before the notaries Guillaume Le Roux and Etienne Paisant. It involved "two adjoining houses, situated in the faubourg Saint-Denis opposite the church of the aforesaid Saint-Lazare, on the main street. One building consisted of a cellar, two low rooms, four bedrooms, two next to each other on the second floor and the other two upstairs in the attic, a stable, a courtyard enclosed by walls and a well common to both houses in the said courtyard. The other house consisted of a low room with adjoining kitchen, a large bedroom, two upper rooms and an attic above, covered with tiles, and a carriage gateway serving as an entrance to both of the said houses. Right inside the entrance, was a small lodge, like a pavillion, with a slate roof, common to both houses, with the garden in the back. The entire property was enclosed by walls." The Saint paid the sellers 6,600 livres in cash, and contracted to pay the remaining 5,400 livres in an annuity of 300 livres each year. The Sisters' new house was enlarged over the years. Saint Vincent resold it to Saint Louise in 1653. (Cf. Arch. Nat., S 6.608.)

Letter 538. - Reg. 2, p. 263.

¹Probably Antoine Lucas.

cruel torture.² When he was half strangled, his heart was torn out; and when they told him, before executing him, that, if he were willing to renounce his religion, they would save his life, he replied that if he had a thousand lives, he would most willingly give them all for the love of Jesus Christ, for whom he was dying. I am telling you this with tears in my eyes at the thought of that holy priest's happiness and the attachment I still have for my miserable carcass.

539. - TO SAINT JANE FRANCES

(Now 530a.)

540. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

The desire good Mademoiselle Chamillac expressed to me that you would pray to God for her brings me to entreat you most humbly to assist her in the greatest need she has ever had. I have just been told that she is dying. I believe I can say in truth that it is God's love which has put her there so soon. I am losing a great deal in this beautiful creature, except that this is entirely the most holy Will of God, to which I wish to be wholly submissive. With this in view, I most humbly entreat you to do us the charity your goodness has led us to expect, since we are greatly in need of it. Occasions that have prevented you from doing this will always be bound to come up, unless you do us the honor of disregarding them.

²William Webster, alias Ward, put to death in London on July 26, 1641. More information about the death of this martyr can be found in M. de Marsys, *Histoire de la persécution présente des catholiques en Angleterre* [n.p., 1646].

Letter 540. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

Forgive me this liberty. It is the fear I often have, which might seem to be directed by Divine Providence, that is keeping this benefit from us.

I entreat God with all my heart to preserve for us what He has given us in you. I am, Monsieur, your most obedient and most grateful servant.

L. DE M.

September 11 [1641]¹

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

541. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ANNECY

Paris, September 15, 1641

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I thank God for all the graces He has given you, and beseech Him to bless you, your dear Company, and your works more and more. Assure our very dear and most honored Mother de Blonay¹ that I have accepted with respect and entire submis-

¹Date written on the back of the original.

Letter 541. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter. Coste published this letter from the text given in Jean-Baptiste Pémartin, ed., *Lettres de Saint Vincent de Paul* (4 vols., Paris: Dumoulin, 1880), vol. I, p. 375, letter 333. The original text, used in this edition, bears a more complete closing, a postscript, and an address.

¹Marie-Aimée de Blonay was born in Saint-Paul (Haute-Savoie), the daughter of Claude de Blonay and Louise de Livron. She took the habit of the Visitation at the first Monastery in Annecy on January 25, 1612. She was Superior successively in Lyons (1622-1628 and 1631-1637), Bourg-en-Bresse (1638), and, at the time of this letter, of the first Monastery of Annecy (1641-1647). She died in Annecy on June 15, 1649, at the age of fifty-nine. She was one of the first spiritual daughters of Saint Francis de Sales and highly esteemed by this great Saint and by Saint Jane Frances de Chantal. Miracles have been attributed to her. (Cf. *Année sainte*, vol. VI, pp. 368-369.) Charles-Auguste de Sales, Bishop of Geneva and nephew of Saint Francis de Sales, wrote her life in 1655.

sion the reasons she brought forth for the prompt return of our worthy Mother,² and that it will not depend on me that the Bishop of Geneva³ and she get the satisfaction they desire in that matter and in all things. I greet her with all the humble respect in my power and recommend myself to her holy prayers.

We have given three hundred livres for the October quarter, fifty écus to M. Châtillon and the other fifty to M. Monnellet, and we shall send the rest in the manner you specify, since you informed us that we should act in this way.

M. Dehorgny has delighted us with consolation in the account he gave us concerning the fine and pleasant state of the Company and the great fruits it is producing.⁴ O Monsieur, how I most humbly thank God for all that and beseech Him to continue the same grace for you!

I still persist in the thought that it is advisable to accept only priests or individuals who are in Orders, and that we should not teach them the sciences, but rather the use of them, in the way we do with the ordinands.

What you wished of Rome has been done, by the grace of God. His Holiness has allowed us to rent or buy a house, to live there, and to exercise our functions with regard to the people and clergy according to our Institute, on condition that we depend on the Cardinal Vicar General and the Vice-Gerent⁵ with respect to our functions concerning the neighbor and, as far as the discipline of the Company is concerned, on the General of the said Company. This permission is given in recognition of the good work of M. Lebreton, to whom God

²Saint Jane Frances de Chantal.

³Juste Guérin.

⁴He had just finished a visitation of the house in Annecy.

⁵Substitute for the Cardinal Vicar; at that time, it was Giovanni Battista Altieri, brother of the future Pope Clement X (1670-1676). Giovanni Battista later became Bishop of Todi (1643-1654) and was also named Cardinal (1643). He died in Narni on November 25, 1654. He was one of the Saint's most powerful protectors in Rome.

is granting great blessings.⁶ We are getting ready to send two or three members of the Company there this October. I entreat you, Monsieur, to help us thank God for all of this.

I most humbly greet your dear Company and very humbly recommend myself to your prayers and theirs.

I am, [in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

We shall send you the Missionary you requested, at the first opportunity.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Annecy, in Annecy]⁷

542. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Wednesday morning [Between 1639 and 1641]

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Here are some letters for the good Sisters from Saché.¹ If I can do it, I shall go to La Chapelle this afternoon.

⁶A document, dated July 11, 1641, gave permission to the Congregation of the Mission, through Louis Lebreton, to be established in Rome. (Cf. vol. XIII, no. 86.)

⁷The section in brackets is that added from the original to the Pémartin text given by Coste.

Letter 542. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹A small commune in Indre-et-Loire, near Chinon. Saint Vincent is not referring here to Daughters of Charity stationed in Saché, but to Sisters native to that locality. There were five of them in Paris on September 17, 1641: Louise Rideau, Marguerite Deshaies de Turenne, Andrée Guilmine, Perrine and Renée, whose family names are unknown.

I see clearly from the Pastor's letter² how much those good Sisters mean to him, and that it is advisable to speak to them sometimes. I shall do so, who am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble and obedient servant.

V. D.

543. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[1641]¹

It is true that good Madame Caregré has expressed to me her wish that I see her now and then, but that does not mean you should not deal with her as with any other person — I mean in everything; in short, give her the exercises yourself, as if I were not to see her. She has complete confidence in you.

I had a note put in the sacristy this morning to have prayers offered to God for that good child. Please let me know how she is this morning. I am begging Our Lord to preserve her.

I shall soon be leaving to begin the visitation at Sainte-Marie in the city,² God willing.

544. - TO SAINT LOUISE

I am sending you Madame N.'s resolutions, which are good,

²Several letters of M. de Mondion, the Pastor of Saché, are still extant. (Cf. Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity.) If the letter that Saint Vincent mentions is among them, it can only be the one dated September 17, 1641, to Sister Louise Rideau.

Letter 543. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Apparently, this letter was written shortly after no. 534.

²First Monastery of the Visitation nuns in Paris.

Letter 544. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. I, chap. XXVI, p. 122.

but they would seem even better to me if she came down to particulars a little. It would be well to train the women who make their retreat exercises at your house to do that. All else is merely a product of the mind, which, because it has found some facility and even some sweetness in the consideration of a virtue, flatters itself into thinking that it is quite virtuous. Nevertheless, in order to become soundly virtuous, it is advisable to make good practical resolutions concerning particular acts of the virtues and to be faithful in carrying them out afterwards. Without doing that, one is often virtuous only in one's imagination.

545. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL

October 5, 1641

Saint Vincent de Paul gives Antoine Portail news of Saint-Lazare and the other houses of the Company.

546. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Sunday, at four o'clock [October 1641]¹

Mademoiselle,

I was very pleased with the note you sent me yesterday

Letter 545. - The original letter, made up of three pages in Saint Vincent's handwriting, belonged to the Marquis de Gerbéviller.

Letter 546. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter was written during a Jubilee Year, after the purchase of the new Motherhouse, and between the foundations of Fontenay and Nanteuil-le-Haudouin (Oise).

evening concerning the Lady with the galley-slaves. It was decided yesterday that I should see M. Accar² in order to find out from him more in detail what duties he requires of this Lady. I sent M. Dehorgny and am awaiting his answer. I did not go myself, because I intended to make a little retreat for the Jubilee and began it today. I commend it to your prayers.

I received a letter today from the Marquise de Maignelay who is waiting for the Sisters. When are you sending them to her? You will have to reserve seats in the Soissons coach.³

I forgot to speak to the gardener's wife about your door.⁴ I will have someone tell her, as I sent word to her this morning not to give the empty room she has to anyone; in that case, Madame Lhoste could be put there.

A man from Fontenay⁵ told me wonderful things yesterday in praise of your poor Sisters. After the retreat, we shall discuss the way they can go about gaining the Jubilee,⁶ and you, also, for whom I am, in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

²Administrator of the house of the galley-slaves.

³For the Sisters destined to go to Nanteuil-le-Haudouin.

⁴The door of the new Motherhouse on the rue du Faubourg-Saint-Denis.

⁵Fontenay-aux-Roses.

⁶On October 15 Saint Vincent gave the Sisters the conference he is announcing here (cf. vol. IX, no. 7).

547. - TO SISTER JEANNE LEPEINTRE,
IN SAINT-GERMAIN-EN-LAYE

(now 556a.)

548. - NICOLAS PAVILLON, BISHOP OF ALET, TO SAINT VINCENT

Alet, October 20 [1641]¹

I shall begin answering the letter you did me the honor of writing to me on September 9 by most humbly entreating you not to make any sort of excuse to me any more for not letting us hear from you as often as we wish. I am well convinced that this deprivation, which we feel deeply, will never arise from any want of your charity in our regard, but rather from a lack of leisure on your part, and because I have rendered myself unworthy in the past. This obliges me most humbly to ask your pardon, as for an infinity of other faults that I have committed against you, and to entreat you to assist me by your holy prayers to improve in the future.

I am greatly obliged to the charity of those who have reported to you something good about me, and especially to His Lordship of Bourlemont² and Monsieur Perrochel,³ but I can assure you that, because of my wretchedness and laziness, I am in a state more worthy

Letter 548. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹This date is dictated by the mention of the diplomatic posting of the Marquis de Brezé.

²Claude d'Anglure, Prince d'Amblise, Marquis de Sy, Comte de Bourlemont, Vicomte de Forest and Baron de Busancy. He had married Angélique Diacette, daughter of Anne d'Acquaviva d'Aragon, Duchesse d'Atri.

³François Perrochel, born in Paris, October 18, 1602, was M. Olier's cousin. He was one of the pious and zealous priests who gathered around Saint Vincent to be animated by his spirit and to work under his direction. He gave missions in several places, especially in Auvergne, in Joigny, and in the faubourg Saint-Germain. He was a member of the Tuesday Conferences and was present at the meetings in which the retreats for ordinands were organized. As Bishop-elect of Boulogne, he was invited to give the conferences for the ordinands at the Bons-Enfants and was so successful that the Queen wished to hear him. Moved by his words, she left generous aims for the Saint to help him defray a part of the expenses incurred by the retreats. François Perrochel was consecrated bishop in the church of Saint-Lazare on June 11, 1645. The episcopate of this holy prelate was one of the most fruitful and glorious known to the diocese of Boulogne. When, worn out by age and infirmity, the Bishop of Boulogne saw that he could not govern his diocese

of compassion than envy. I hope, nonetheless, in the midst of all this, that, since the Divine Goodness considers more His own love than my offenses, He will grant me mercy if you deign to remember me now and then and ask for it in my favor.

My cousin Bourdin still has not spoken to me about the plan for his retreat. I did not think I should begin the conversation, but should wait until he made the overture, so as to leave the matter entirely in his hands. After all, who am I to say anything about his releasing himself from such a long captivity and so much weariness which I am causing him to endure on my account?

I am very thankful to you for remembering my father's affair in order to speak of it to the Duchesse.⁴ I hope that, if God does not allow him to receive the offers of that recommendation, He will give him the strength to endure and to make good use of the loss. However, that would not make me less confident in having recourse to this same influence you have with her for an undertaking that concerns this poor, miserable diocese. I have learned that the Marshal de Brezé⁵ is coming to Catalonia as Viceroy. I would hope that, since we shall have the honor of being in his district, places there belonging to our diocese will also enjoy the advantage of being protected from fighting men. We might hope for this through some letter of grace that the Duchesse could send us to give to him. I can assure you, Monsieur, that if we do not experience some effects of the divine protection, we are in danger of being very soon reduced to beggary from the way things seem to be going in this region, and it is this that obliges me to engage your intercession.

If I were not afraid of troubling you too much, I would remind you of the hope you were pleased to give me some time ago, of mentioning our need to His Eminence,⁶ when an opportunity of seeing him arose, with regard to reducing our taxes which, as I see it, are the highest in the province. They have been set at one thousand

properly, he resigned; this was in 1675. He crowned his career on April 8, 1682, by a death worthy of his life. (Cf. Van Drival, *Histoire des évêques de Boulogne* [Boulogne-sur-Mer: Berger Frères, 1852].)

⁴The Duchesse d'Aiguillon.

⁵Marshal Urbain de Maillé, the Marquis de Brezé, brother-in-law of Cardinal Richelieu, had fought in the Piedmont campaign, was Commander-in-Chief of the army in Germany, served in the capacity of Ambassador in Sweden and Holland, and governed Calais and Anjou. He became Viceroy of Catalonia in 1641, and died on February 13, 1650, at the age of fifty-three.

⁶Cardinal Richelieu.

écus, and the Bishop of Narbonne,⁷ who has five or six times as much revenue from his bishopric, pays only two thousand. You see the proportion, and this at a time when this diocese is the poorest and most afflicted, not only in the province, but in France. Oh! may God be forever blessed, who gives to us and takes from us when and as He pleases!

Oh! to be sure, I esteem Messieurs Blatiron and Lucas,⁸ whose charity I am testing in putting up with my weaknesses! I beg Our Lord to be their reward. I am not saying anything to you concerning them, since they have taken it upon themselves to render you an account, except that they are striving toward the perfection of their state according to the measure of God's grace and the different ways in which He is leading them by His hand. I cannot tell you how obliged I am to you for being willing to add to this number several others—whom you are so kindly preparing for us—with the competence and virtue required to cultivate this field. I am searching for some suitable place to put them and, when everything is ready, I shall give the word to have them go.

The extreme ignorance of those aspiring to Holy Orders and the slight hope there is of their becoming more adequate in the future have obliged me to summon them to Alet and to keep them as long as necessary in order to teach them the little required in order to admit them. I am using Monsieur Blatiron and some other priest we have at hand to assist in this little plan, which is only, in a manner of speaking, a simple attempt that I recommend to your Holy Sacrifices. I shall give you an account of the outcome.

I think I told you that I had selected the pastorate of Alet with the intention of associating it to the Mission, according to your good pleasure, when it would be in my power. The way to do this would be to have the archdeaconry entirely at my disposal. Now, Monsieur de Saint-Martin, by reason of an indult, has a claim to it and has always told me that he would dispose of it to our advantage. However, a few days ago, he wrote me the letter I am sending you, in which he seems to be asking for compensation. One word from you on the first remark will make him give an explanation of this. He is already burdened with a pension for the chaplain of M. des Noyers,⁹ and the one who . . . purposely would wish to give up his

⁷Claude de Rebé (1628-1659).

⁸Antoine Lucas.

⁹François Sublet, Seigneur de Noyers.

alleged right only for some compensation. Consider, Monsieur, whether I could satisfy so many people. I fear he was urged to make this request, not so much by any thought of his own as by that of M. Le Camus, as he informed me. Mon Dieu! Monsieur, pardon me so many importunities.

I bless God with all my heart for all the progress you have been pleased to report to me concerning your dear Company, and I beseech Him to enable me to share in the precious services you render Him, in order to make up for my negligence. I remain always in His love, Monsieur, your most humble and most affectionate servant.

NICOLAS, B[ishop] of Alet

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, at Saint-Lazare

549. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[October or November 1641]¹

I forgot to tell you that Madame Traversay² sent me word to remind you about the galley-slaves' paper to be brought to the Attorney General,³ and that one of the Sisters who are to make their Jubilee confession today is from Normandy, from the district of a poor little man who is in the seminary.⁴ In his great goodness and

Letter 549. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Period within which Saint Jane Frances de Chantal was in Paris.

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

³Blaise Méliand (1641-1650).

⁴Julien Guérin, born in Lacelle (Orne), had spent some time in the army before beginning his preparation for the priesthood. The entrance of his brother, Jean Guérin, into the Congregation of the Mission, November 7, 1639, left free the parish of Saint-Manvieu, which he (Julien) administered for three months. He left it, at the age of thirty-five, to come to Saint-Lazare, where he was admitted January 30, 1640. In 1641, he went to assist the unfortunate populace of Lorraine. His health failed and he was sent

simplicity, he has sometimes had her make resolutions, and told her, the morning of the day before yesterday, to come and talk to him. I did not dare allow her to do so without your permission. He also gave her some pictures, but I think it was because he could not keep them. I am holding them, awaiting your instruction.

I most humbly entreat you, Monsieur, to pay heed to what Abbé de Vaux told me concerning the establishment of the nuns of Sainte-Geneviève. Would it not be advisable to suggest to the Administrators that they ask the Bishop of Angers⁵ to sanction the service and residence of our Sisters in the hospital, excusing themselves for not having spoken to him about it until they had given it a try, and had done this for fear the Fathers might get the idea of wanting to make them nuns? I am afraid, now that our Sister Elisabeth⁶ is no longer there, that the rest might easily be convinced of this.

Please take note also that there are now only six Sisters on duty, the seventh being ill, and that neither the gentlemen nor the Sisters are asking for another, not even Monsieur de Vaux.

Would you also please let me know what I should tell him about good Madame de Vertus?⁷ Today is the day the messenger leaves and I am, Monsieur, your most grateful daughter and servant.

L. DE M.

Saturday morning

Would you please let us know what time our Sisters should go to La Chapelle? I was fortunate enough to see Madame de Chantal⁸

to Richelieu, where he made his vows June 14, 1642. The missions he gave in the diocese of Saintes in 1643 and 1644 were very successful, and it was he who was chosen by Saint Vincent in 1645 to lay the foundation of the Mission in Tunis. It was there that this valiant Missionary died on May 13, 1648. His biography has been published in volume III of the *Notices*, pp. 57-82.

⁵Claude de Rueil (1626-1649).

⁶Elisabeth Martin.

⁷Catherine Fouquet, the widow of Claude de Bretagne, Comte de Vertus and de Goëlle, first Baron de Bretagne, State Councillor, who died in Paris August 6, 1637. She died in that same city May 10, 1670, at the age of eighty.

⁸Saint Jane Frances had arrived in Paris on October 4 and left on November 11. She died a month later, December 13, 1641.

yesterday. I do not know what our good God will do with me; I am so unfaithful to Him and filled with sins.

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

550. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[October or November 1641]¹

(1) I shall give the paper to Madame Traversay.

(2) That priest from our house is new and does those things in simplicity; you did well to hold the pictures.

(3) I do not think it is necessary to do anything about the establishment of Sainte-Geneviève. It is, however, desirable that the Bishop of Angers² approve of those Sisters, if he can approve of any of them.

(4) Those good gentlemen³ are probably expecting the return of our Sister Elisabeth.

(5) I would not be able to be of service to that lady,⁴ nor know whom to recommend to her. She would do well to get a Jesuit.

I hope to be in La Chapelle at two o'clock.⁵

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

Letter 550. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter is the answer to no. 549. Saint Vincent wrote it in the space left by Saint Louise at the top of her letter.

²Claude de Rueil.

³The Administrators of the hospital of Angers.

⁴Madame de Vertus.

⁵The Sisters, therefore, had not left La Chapelle in October 1641. This is understandable, given the work that had to be done on their new house.

551. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[October or November 1641]¹

Monsieur,

Today, five or six Sisters began their little retreat. Nevertheless, almost all say that they are ready to make their confession. Sister Barbe² also wanted to make hers in order to fulfill her Jubilee this week, because she was not in good enough spirits last week. Please let me know if you think it advisable for all of them to come to La Chapelle and you can receive the ones you judge fitting, or if I should send all those who say they are ready and let the others stay here. It is necessary, I think, for me to speak to you, before sending word to Mademoiselle du Mée.³

I am, Monsieur, your most humble and most grateful daughter and servant.

L. DE M.

All would prefer to come rather than not be able to go to you some other time.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

552. - JUSTE GUERIN, BISHOP OF GENEVA, TO SAINT VINCENT

October 1641

I confess that I am forever grateful to you and to your dear

Letter 551. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Between 1636 and 1641, the period during which the Daughters lived in La Chapelle, there were only two Jubilees, one in 1636 and the other in 1641. The mention of Mademoiselle du Mée leads us to prefer 1641.

²Sister Barbe Angiboust.

³A Lady of Charity who dedicated herself to the work of the Foundlings.

Letter 552. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. II, p. 35.

children, our good Gentlemen of the Mission, who keep on doing better and better and winning more and more souls for heaven. To be sure, Monsieur, I shall not cease to admire the guidance of Divine Providence on this poor diocese, since He has sent us these fine workers through you. Therefore, I shall not cease thanking Him for this, and you likewise, for I would be extremely ungrateful if I did not do so.

Alas! to our great regret, we have lost Commander de Sillery, our great benefactor. . . .

553. - TO N.

It is a maxim of ours to work in the service of the people, with the good pleasure of the pastors, and never to act contrary to their wishes. And, at the opening and closing of each mission, we get their blessing in a spirit of dependence.

554. - TO SAINT LOUISE

I thank God for your improved health, Mademoiselle, and beseech Him to strengthen you more and more. If I can do so, I shall have the honor of seeing you today, or else tomorrow.

That good young woman from Lucé,¹ who came the day before yesterday, seems fine to me, if she has the health to match. Her father says that she is not sickly. Deal with her as you like.

I am your servant.

V. D.

Letter 553. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. III, chap. XIV, p. 232.

Letter 554. - According to Coste, the original autograph letter was in the Archives of the Mission, Paris. The present location of the letter is unknown.

¹Several places have this name. The nearest to Paris is situated near Chartres (Eure-et-Loir).

**555. - TO THE SUPERIOR OF THE CONVENT OF THE VISITATION,
IN METZ**

Paris, November 2 [Between 1639 and 1645]¹

My very dear Mother,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter and was embarrassed because you attribute praises to me that render me guilty before God. However, I was quite consoled by the trust with which you spoke to me of your needs; I most humbly thank you. I beseech Our Lord to be Himself your provider and your provision and to make me worthy to render you some small service. I tried to begin by writing a note to our dear Mother, the Superior of the first monastery in our city. She replied that she would try to do what she could for your dear house and that, as a matter of fact, she already has a hundred livres promised to her. As soon as she receives them, she will send them to me, and I shall not fail to send them to you immediately, as well as whatever more she can manage. Her heart is entirely filled with charity. Were it not for some financial difficulties in this house, you may believe, dear Mother, that she would send you some money from their monastery.

In the meantime, I am beseeching God, dear Mother, to provide for all your needs and to make me worthy of being, in His love and that of His holy Mother,² your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Letter 555. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹Nothing in the content of the letter indicates a precise date. There is reason to believe that it belongs somewhere between 1639 and 1650, the period during which Saint Vincent was engaged in repairing the ruins left by the armies in Lorraine during the Thirty Years' War, and when he was writing his own letters without the assistance of a secretary (before 1645).

²Saint Vincent inadvertently added "Monsieur" here.

I almost forgot to tell you, dear Mother, that, if I could do so, I would set something aside for you from what is sent for the poor in Metz; however, we are allowed to give that only to those poor people who are begging, in order that we might help them and keep them from dying of hunger.

Addressed: Reverend Mother Superior of the Sisters of the Visitation Sainte-Marie of Metz, in Metz

556. - TO MOTHER DE LA TRINITE, IN TROYES

Paris, November 5, 1641

My very dear and most worthy Mother,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter with so much respect and affection that I cannot express it, and ever in the spirit of recognition of all the obligations we have towards you. And to render you an account of the matter about which you kindly did me the honor of writing to me, dear Mother, I shall tell you that, as soon as I received your letter, I wrote to our Mother in the faubourg¹ (our worthy Mother² was there and two days previously the Superior from Rouen³) that I was still thinking about it. I asked her to speak to our worthy Mother concerning the matter I was writing to her about, and concluded my letter by telling her that in the kingdom of charity, one prefers to suffer some inconvenience rather than inconvenience the neighbor.

Letter 556. - The original autograph letter is at the Carmelite Monastery of Troyes, now transferred to St-Germain, St-André-les-Vergers. The first monastery in Troyes was destroyed during the War, in 1940.

¹Anne-Marguerite Guérin.

²Saint Jane Frances de Chantal.

³Anne-Thérèse de Préchonnet.

In reply to this, she said that our worthy Mother had advised the Mother Superior of Rouen to lay this dispute before their friends and the said Mother from Rouen had acquiesced in this and had left with that determination. She also noted that this good Mother had told her that the Carmelites saw into their rooms and their garden just as they saw into those of the Carmelites; that she wished to give you every possible satisfaction in this regard; that, in truth, you are her good Mother and she would write to you.

That, dear Mother, is what has happened. Would to God that I were worthy to render some small service greater than this to your holy Order. His Goodness knows the affection I bear for it and the reverence He has given me for my dear Mother whom I cherish beyond compare and would like to see return to her old home,⁴ were I not afraid of wishing something contrary to the Will of God, who is directing you by His very special Providence. What causes me to moderate the too tender attachment I had for this is the reading done recently in our refectory. It reported that a Spanish Jesuit Father, who had grown old in many great and remarkable services which he had rendered to God in the Indies, entreated his superiors to allow him to return to die in his native land and to do nothing else there but prepare himself to die well. This was granted him and he returned home. One day, while he was at the foot of the crucifix in prayer, he was reproached interiorly and so harshly for having done wrong in abandoning the new Church he had gone to help found, that he had no rest until, after several requests made to his superiors to send him back to the Indies, they finally did send him back. Once there, he began to work again as earnestly as his infirmity allowed, and finally died as he had lived, in the odor of sanctity. And that, dear Mother, is what has brought me to

⁴Probably Paris, where she was born and spent the first years of her religious life. She remained in Troyes until her death in 1647.

offer God the disposition of your person for the places and in the manner He finds most expedient for His glory.

We have been told that the good Bishop of Troyes⁵ is ill. *Mon Dieu*, dear Mother, how that has touched me and how wholeheartedly I beseech Our Lord to preserve this holy prelate and to sanctify him more and more. I make the same request of Him for you, my very dear Mother, to whom I commend this poor wretch and the greatest of all sinners. I do the same for this poor Little Company, I who am, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, my very dear Mother, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: My very dear Mother de la Trinité, Superior of the Carmelites of the town of Troyes, in Troyes

**556a. - TO SISTER JEANNE LEPEINTRE,
IN SAINT-GERMAIN-EN-LAYE**

November 8, 1641

Dear Sister,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I ask your pardon for having failed to write to you. It was not due to a want of esteem and affection; God knows that I have for you as much as I can of both. But the excessive work I have is partly the cause of this. Also, I did not have your

⁵René de Breslay. He had died on November 2, 1641.

Letter 556a. - Manuscript of the Chambre des Députés, Manuscript 20 (AF, 64), pp. 137-138. This manuscript is now preserved in the Bibliothèque de l'Assemblée Nationale, from which a photocopy was recently obtained. On the copy, the date appears as 8^e 9.^{bre} 1641 or November 8, 1641. Coste evidently misread this by distraction as October 9, 1641. The November date required a repositioning of the letter.

letter in hand, as Mademoiselle Le Gras kept it a long time.

I am, to be sure, quite consoled about the good I am hearing of you and the blessing God is giving your way of acting, for which I thank Him. May it please His Divine Goodness to grant you the grace of preserving and increasing the unity of our Sisters; of encouraging them in the observance of the little Rule, the practice of the virtues, the love of their vocation; and, finally, in serving Our Lord well in the person of the poor! In order to do that, dear Sister, have great confidence in Him. Beseech Him to accomplish those things Himself, and to be always in your heart, your words and your actions [so that you may be in good repute at home and abroad].¹ Ask Him also to let everyone recognize that you are His beloved daughter. This is the grace I ask of Him.

I am, in Him. . . .

557. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ANNECY

November 19, 1641

Here is some news that will sadden you. Our Lord took his servant, M. Lebreton,¹ on his return from the mission in Ostia. He had gone there in the month of October, which is unhealthy for those who leave Rome for Ostia and then return to Rome. Several people have sent me word of the marvelous great works he did in that country, and the blessings Our Lord bestowed on him. Monsieur Le Bret wrote me that Cardinals

¹The bracketed words were omitted by Coste, probably by distraction.

Letter 557. - Manuscript of Lyons.

¹Louis Lebreton died on October 19.

Barberini² and Lenti³ wept for him, as did also the Vice-Gerent of Rome.⁴

He had obtained permission to establish himself in that city in the hope of working with the ordinands there. We still think we should send someone to make the establishment there, and it seems that Providence is looking to you to do it. I say this just between us, without telling anyone else. I shall send you the appropriate instructions. Ah! Monsieur, what good reason there is for hope, if God be pleased to have us entrusted with the tasks promised to Monsieur Lebreton, in whom, according to the world, we have lost much! But, to be sure, I think that holy man will do more in heaven than he was able to accomplish on earth. He will be like a host offered to God and consumed for His Church, who will intercede for us in heaven and obtain the blessings necessary for this undertaking. If I can, I shall enclose in the package a copy of the permission for our establishment. The difficulty will be the language, which he knew as well as French. However, God will give you the grace, if He wishes, to make yourself understood by foreigners, just as he gave it to Saint Vincent Ferrier [sic],⁵ if the sins of the most wicked of the Vincents and of all the men in the world do not hinder this.

²The Barberini family had at that time three of its members in the College of Cardinals: Antonio, a Capuchin monk, brother of Pope Urban VIII; and Antonio and Francesco, his nephews.

³Marcello, Cardinal Lenti, Bishop of Palestrina (1629), of Tusculum (1629-1639), of Porto (1639-1641), and of Ostia (1641-1652). He died on April 19, 1652.

⁴Giovanni Battista Altieri.

⁵Saint Vincent Ferrer, a Spanish Dominican, was born in Valencia on January 23, 1350. He is noted for his labors to terminate the Great Western Schism, a period when there were two lines of claimants to the papal throne (1378-1417). He traveled throughout Europe preaching the need for repentance and reform. By his personal influence and constant direction, he was able to prevent enthusiasm from degenerating into fanaticism. Miracles in the order of nature and grace accompanied his preaching. He died in Vannes on April 5, 1419. Pope Callistus III canonized him on June 3, 1455.

558. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1641 and 1654]¹

Here are our Sister Marie's letters, which I judged advisable to open. After you have read them, please put them in an envelope and write a few lines to the Ladies in your own hand, stating that I opened them because it is the custom for us to see the letters that the Sisters write and that are written to them.

The Lady officers will come on Monday. I shall try to see Madame de la Pompe when I go to the faubourg Saint-Germain this afternoon.

I shall do what I can for that good lady and shall speak to Madame de la Pompe about her, but I do not know how to go about that matter.

Good day, Mademoiselle; take care of your health. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

V.D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

Letter 558. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Dates of the period during which Marie Joly was working in Sedan.

**558a. - TO SYLVESTRE DE CRUSY DE MARCILLAC,¹
BISHOP OF MENDE**

Paris, December 6, 1641

Your Excellency,

I most humbly thank you for the favor you have done your Missionaries in receiving them with so much kindness. I beseech Our Lord to thank you Himself and be your reward. May He make both them and me worthy to serve you according to the extent of your desire.

Your Officialis may have written you that the Chancellor² indicated to me that he was very pleased that you are working with such fervor in your diocese. He said there would be no need, Your Excellency, for you to come back here. He will not grant to those who are trying you anything that might give you cause to have to come to prevent it. In truth, the offer they are making to reimburse the fee in question and to pay the province off in ten years seems reasonable to him, because it is so advantageous to the region. Not having foreseen the response to that, I deferred giving him any until I was more knowledgeable, as I shall be. I shall discuss it with the one you did me the honor of asking me to tell, so that I can attend to it at the proper time and place.

I also purposely visited M. de Vertamont³ concerning the matter of your Officialis. I have not seen the latter since to tell him that the Sieur de Vertamont kindly promised me that he would treat your said Officialis justly and that he wished

Letter 558a. - Signed original, given in 1936 to St. Mary's Seminary, Perryville, Missouri, USA, where it is still preserved in the Seminary Archives, 091 AA-4. A photocopy can be found in the Archives of the Mission, Paris. The text had been published in the *Annales* (1927), pp. 235-236, and was reprinted in *Mission et Charité*, 19-20, pp. 29-30. This edition uses the latter text.

¹Sylvestre de Crusy de Marcillac, born in 1571, was Bishop of Mende from 1628 to 1659, the year of his death.

²Pierre Séguier.

³Probably François de Verthamon, Councillor of State.

to discuss the matter with M. de Morangis,⁴ who gave the indult to his party.

I add to that, Your Excellency, the most humble request I address to you to have five écus given there to M. Savinier,⁵ for clothing for himself and M. Le Sage.⁶ I shall pay them back here to your Officialis. I was not able to deliver them, because I have not seen him for a long time, and I do not know at what other address to send them to you. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: His Excellency the Bishop, Comte de Mende and Comte de Gévaudan, in Mende

559. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ANNECY

December 7, 1641

You sent me word that you are going to place the money in an annuity in the hands of the Comte de N., which gives me cause to tell you, Monsieur, that I am a little sorry about that. I think it would have been more advisable to buy or have a house built with it. I am well aware that there is something

⁴Probably Antoine Barillon, Sieur de Morangis, Master of Requests.

⁵Annet Savinier.

⁶Jacques Lesage was born around 1614 in Auffray (Seine-Maritime), entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 7, 1639, and made his vows on November 26, 1645. He embarked for Algiers in January or February 1648 and gave himself entirely, without regard for hardships and dangers, to ministering to the poor slaves. After a visit to the plague-stricken, he was attacked by the terrible disease, from which he died on May 12, 1648.

to be said against even that but, if you had written to tell me what you meant to do and your reasons, I might have weighed them before God, as I tried to do those of the contract, but too late. It would have been well for you to have sent me both proposals and then the reasons for and against, on which to base my judgment. I had a hard time consenting to a few unduly difficult clauses in the contract. That is why I beseech you, Monsieur, never to do anything like that again without writing to me about it. It would even have been advisable for you to have let me know the way you wished to act with regard to the seminary you have begun. I think you had been advised to send me the draft before signing. That is what everybody in the Company has always done everywhere and what is done in every well-regulated Company. You will object that I take too long, that you sometimes wait six months for an answer that can be given in a month and that, meanwhile, opportunities are lost and everything stands still. To that I shall answer, Monsieur, that it is true that I take too long in answering and in doing things; still, I have never yet seen any affair spoiled because of my delaying, but everything has been done in its time and with the necessary foresight and precautions. Nevertheless, I intend in future to answer you as soon as possible after receiving your letters and weighing the matter before God. He is greatly honored by the time we take to weigh with mature deliberation matters having to do with His service, as are all those with which we deal. Please, then, correct yourself of your hastiness in deciding and doing things, and I shall work at correcting myself of my slowness.

I entreat you once more, in the name of God, to inform me of everything, with the pros and cons of the matters under consideration. Beware of adding, dropping or changing anything in our way of life and of doing anything important without writing to me about it and receiving my reply. Oh! how perfectly good Monsieur Lebreton practiced this and how God blessed his leadership! Shall I dare to tell you something

without blushing, Monsieur? There is no help for it; I must do so. It is that, reflecting on all the principal events that have taken place in this Company, it seems to me, and this is quite evident, that, if they had taken place before they did, they would not have been successful. I say that of all of them, without excepting a single one. That is why I have a particular devotion to following the adorable Providence of God step by step. And my only consolation is that I think Our Lord alone has carried on and is constantly carrying on the business of the Little Company. In the name of God, Monsieur, let us take refuge in this, trusting that Our Lord will bring about what He wishes to be done among us. I hope for this from His goodness and from the attention you will pay to the most humble and most affectionate request I am making of you in this regard for the love of Our Lord. . . .

560. - TO LAMBERT AUX COUTEAUX, SUPERIOR, IN RICHELIEU

December 14, 1641

I think we are rather exact in observing the recommendations from your visitation, to the point that we have read them every month since your departure. I have tried to keep them myself with regard to the language of your native district,¹ although I have failed in that two or three times, as also in going to see two sick men we have in the infirmary. You would not believe how devoted I am in recommending often the obligation we have to be exact to these regulations.

Letter 560. - Reg. 2, p. 98.

¹Lambert aux Couteaux was from Picardy.

561. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ANNECY

Paris, December 16, 1641

Monsieur,

Here is my third letter in about a month. I am writing it to you with the sorrow you can surmise from the esteem and devotion Our Lord had given me for our worthy Mother and about which I have spoken to you. We shall do all we can so that this holy nun¹ may be returned to her monastery. I have already prevailed upon His Lordship de Chavigny, the Secretary of State,² to accept working on it. He is supposed to come to the monastery today for that purpose.³ I beseech you, Monsieur, to assure our dear Mother de Blonay of this, as I have already assured the Bishop of Geneva⁴ in the letter accompanying this one, and all our dear Sisters of both monasteries,⁵ that our dear Sisters from this one will do all they can to the same end. It pleased her worthy goodness, I mean our worthy Mother, on the occasion of the last two

Letter 561. - The original autograph letter was communicated by M. Heudre, a Priest of the Mission. A photocopy of the original is in the Archives of the Mission, Paris.

¹Saint Jane Frances de Chantal, who died a holy death in Moulins on December 13, a month after she had left Paris.

²Léon Bouthillier, Comte de Chavigny and de Besançois, a relative of Jean-Jacques Olier, was born in Paris on March 28, 1608. Although he had been appointed by Louis XIII himself to be a member of the Council of Regency for Louis XIV during his minority, Mazarin pushed him aside. During the troubles of the Fronde, he sided with the Princes against Mazarin. His sincere piety was allied to his love for pleasure. He died in Paris on October 11, 1652. His wife, Anne Phelippeaux, was an ardent Jansenist.

³The body of Saint Jane Frances was embalmed and lay in state for two days in the chapel of the Visitation of Moulins. It was then transferred, secretly, to Annecy and placed near the body of Saint Francis de Sales, according to the wish expressed by the Saint during her lifetime.

⁴Juste Guérin.

⁵The two monasteries in Annecy.

trips,⁶ to grant her heart to this monastery.⁷ Our Mother⁸ is sending His Grace a copy of the will she dictated, fully confident that he will confirm the intention of our worthy Mother,⁹ I entreat you, Monsieur, to speak to him about it.

My two preceding letters will have shown you the need Providence has of you in Rome and how we are disposed to send you there.¹⁰ I shall send M. Dufestel and M. Grimal¹¹ to replace you. I shall have a great number of things to say to you about this, in addition to everything else I have told you; this I will do at the first opportunity. I am, meanwhile, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Annecy, in Annecy

⁶In 1636 and 1641.

⁷Saint Jane Frances had at first refused, out of humility, to give her heart to the first monastery of Paris; she thought her heart was not worth preserving. But when it was brought to her attention that the presence of her heart in Paris and of her body in Annecy would contribute to the union of the two monasteries, she agreed to draw up the act of donation. This document was published by Henri de Maupas, *op. cit.*, p. 240, and appears in this volume as Appendix 1. In 1874, the original belonged to the Comte d'Hauterive, a former department head of a division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (Cf. Mgr. Louis-Emile Bougaud, *Histoire de Sainte Chantal et des origines de la Visitation* [8th ed., 2 vols., Paris: Poussielgue, 1874], vol. II, p. 461 and p. 462, n.)

⁸Louise-Eugénie de Fontaines, Superior of the first Monastery in Paris.

⁹The wishes of the Saint were not carried out. The Duchesse de Montmorency would consent to give the body to the first monastery in Annecy only on condition that the heart remain in Moulins. The precious relic was placed on an altar in the Saint's room, quite near the bed on which she had died. (Cf. Bougaud, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 584.)

¹⁰First draft: "to send you there to represent us in Rome."

¹¹François Grimal was born in Paris on March 6, 1605, began his internal seminary on June 6, 1640, and made his vows on October 9, 1646. He rendered outstanding services to his Congregation, whether as Superior of the houses of Crécy (1645-1646), Montmirail (1646-1649, 1654-1655), and Agen (1650-1651); as second Assistant to Saint Vincent (1652); or in more humble positions in Fontainebleau and elsewhere. The introduction of vows into the Company corresponded to his desires. He willingly accepted this measure and made every effort to have it accepted by those around him. Although he made his vows in 1646, he renewed them on October 3, 1656, in the presence of M. Portail.

562. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ANNECY

[December 1641]¹

Monsieur,

The day before yesterday, I received the letter that responded to what I wrote concerning Rome. I shall tell you in reply that I find the reasons you sent me with regard to postponing the trip until after Easter quite significant; however, there is a disadvantage in putting it off so long. The Pope, Cardinal Lenti, Dean of the Cardinals, and another good and virtuous priest, who is mindful of the ordinands, could die during that time; and, if that were to happen, a good work would be lost or in great jeopardy. I shall try to send you M. Dufestel or M. Grimal as soon as possible, with a second man, so that you can instruct them for a week and a half or two weeks, and I shall have the others leave as soon as possible to wait in Marseilles.

Let me tell you, however, Monsieur, that I doubt the advisability of giving your seminarians handwritten texts to study. There are enough unabridged and abridged books for that purpose. They do not write at all in class in the collèges in Spain. The most important thing is to recite well what has been taught. The best method I have found for that is to take a book of casuistry, explain to them by heart a chapter or two at a time, and have each one repeat a lesson, learnt by heart, to one of the others. When this has been done several times, the matter is firmly fixed in the mind and remains forever, and the difficulties that may come up are explained. We have

Letter 562. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, copy made at the Monastery of the Visitation in Annecy from the original autograph letter, which was exchanged with the Major Seminary of Amiens in 1893 for an autograph letter of Saint Francis de Sales.

¹What is said here of the vision of Saint Jane Frances' heart admits of no other date for this letter.

acted this way here with cases of conscience and controversies; it has been marvelously successful for us. Moreover, written texts are rarely reread. And, the bad thing is that people rely on these written texts and do not train their memory enough to retain things. What use, I ask you, are a doctor's writings to him after he has completed his studies? None, certainly, except to refer to them when necessary. Now, there are so many authors at present who have such well arranged tables of contents, that one need only have a good book of casuistry to consult when needed. Therefore, I entreat you, Monsieur, to see how you can initiate the method I have just mentioned to you.

You can imagine how deeply pained I was by the death of our worthy Mother. Nevertheless, God was pleased to console me by the sight of her reunion with our blessed Father,² and of both of them with God, as soon as I heard the news. This happened following an act of contrition I made immediately after reading the letter in which I was told of the advanced stage of her illness. The same thing was shown to me, I think, at the first Mass I celebrated for her after the news of her death.³ Let this be for good Monsieur Codoing only, please, and for our men. I embrace all of you in spirit with the greatest affection and humility in my power.

²Saint Francis de Sales.

³Saint Vincent left, in his own handwriting, an attestation of the vision that he mentions here (cf. vol. XIII, no. 34).

562a. - TO MOTHER LOUISE-EUGENIE DE FONTEINES, IN PARIS¹

Saint-Lazare, Sunday, at noon [Beginning of 1642]

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Yesterday I wrote to your Mother in the faubourg² that to my mind, although I honor the thinking of the Bishop of Sens³ and have not changed my opinion, it would be well to have a funeral oration given for our worthy Mother,⁴ and that I would be mortified if it were not done.

I think, nevertheless, in order to guard in some way against those who object to it, that it would be good to hold a council meeting about it. However, although we are assuming the opinion of the Bishop of Châlons,⁵ we need to discuss the matter with the Archbishop,⁶ as it should be. Unless his good niece from the faubourg earnestly entreats him, he will refer the matter to his Council; and indeed she may still perhaps write to him about it. Consider, dear Mother, whether there is any danger in having that good young woman write to him about the matter, or whether it is advisable for you and your

Letter 562a. - The original of this letter has been lost; however, an authenticated copy can be found in the Archives of the Visitation, 68, avenue Denfert-Rochereau, Paris. The Archives of the Mission, Paris, also possess a photocopy.

¹Louise-Eugénie de Fontaines was elected Superioress of the first Monastery of the Visitation in Paris on May 16, 1641.

²Anne-Marguerite Guérin was Superioress of the second Monastery of the Visitation, faubourg Saint-Jacques, from May 24, 1640 to May 21, 1643.

³Octave de Saint-Lary de Bellegarde.

⁴Saint Jane Frances de Chantal.

⁵Félix Vialart, Bishop of Châlons, was the son of Madame de Herse, one of the most generous and dedicated collaborators of Saint Vincent. He was born in Paris on September 5, 1613. As early as 1640, when he was still in his twenty-eighth year, he was chosen to succeed Henri Clause in the See of Châlons. He established a seminary, reformed the clergy, organized missions, and went to the aid of the unfortunate. But, like Nicolas Pavillon, he allowed himself to be won over by Jansenist ideas and this was an unfortunate stain on an otherwise full and fruitful episcopate. Félix Vialart died on June 10, 1680. (Cf. *La vie de Messire Félix Vialart de Herse* [Utrecht, 1738].)

⁶Jean-François de Gondi.

dear Mother from the faubourg to ask Monsieur Le Blanc⁷ to speak to him about it and to let you know what you should do. And you must not forget to send word for the same thing to be done in Bourges and Nevers. Nonetheless, I submit my poor thinking to your good judgment and that of our dear Sister . . . , whom I greet, God knows how warmly. In His love and that of His holy Mother, I am, dear Mother, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

563. - TO MICHEL DUPUIS, IN SAINT MIHIEL

Paris, January 12, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Your good man, who delivered your letter of December 30 to me, arrived just yesterday evening. The letter greatly saddened me when I considered your sufferings, and consoled me with the hope of seeing you soon. Everything you told me being taken into consideration, it is expedient for you to come back as soon as possible, whether we send you someone to replace you or you give the order you suggested to me. I shall present the matter to those good Ladies and send the answer back to you by your messenger as soon as possible. Meanwhile, keep your spirits up. Please thank the Rector for the letter he so kindly wrote to me and make my excuses for being so

⁷Denis Leblanc, Vicar General of Paris.

Letter 563. - According to Coste, the original autograph letter was at the house of the Daughters of Charity, 12, rue des Greffes, Nîmes. The Sisters of this house have been relocated at 5, boulevard des Bruxelles, but the present location of the letter is unknown.

wretched that I cannot write to him at present. Oh! if you have any advice to give me about abandoning the city entirely with no one to replace you, do it as soon as possible. What you told me about your absence saving sixty livres a month for the poor, touched me. However, God knows how moved I shall be when I embrace you on your arrival and how I am, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Dupuis, Priest of the Mission, presently in Saint-Mihiel to assist the poor

564. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Are you not annoyed with me because you have not heard from me since your return? The constant pressure of business in which I find myself has prevented me from coming to see you. I had intended to do so today when I went to see Monsieur Villecot, but, as the time was pressing me to go on to Sainte-Marie,¹ I could not do it. Well then, I hope, nevertheless, that you will excuse me and let me know how you are.

I wish you, meanwhile, good day and am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Letter 564. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹Convent of the Visitation.

565. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ANNECY

Paris, January 22, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Here at last is Monsieur Dufestel. I entreat you, Monsieur, to instruct him well and apprise him of everything. God blessed him greatly in Troyes.¹ I hope He will continue His mercies to him in Annecy, if the abominations of my past life, part of which I just mentioned at repetition of prayer, on this feast of Saint Vincent, do not prevent Him from doing so. When that is done, you will leave in seven or eight days at the latest, because Providence is offering you a favorable opportunity to go by sea with the secretary² being sent to the Ambassador in Rome.³ I shall have those who are going with you leave in seven or eight days at the latest. You will have news of them at Sainte-Marie de Bellecourt.

This morning, I sent 350 livres to M. Lumague's⁴ representative in Lyons. He will give you the money; it is for the present quarter in Annecy. Have it picked up. As far as the money for Rome is concerned, I shall follow the method you suggested to me in your last letter, and because I am in a hurry to finish, I shall write to you more fully [later].⁵ I am,

Letter 565. - Original autograph letter, Bibliothèque publique et universitaire, Geneva, Switzerland, Ms. suppl. 360.

¹He had been Superior there.

²Jean de Montereil or Montreuil, Canon of Toul and secretary to the Prince de Conti, had just accepted the duties of secretary to the Marquis de Fontenay-Mareuil, Ambassador to Rome. From there he went to England as ambassadorial secretary and shortly after was appointed resident in Scotland. He became a member of the French Academy. Some of his writings have been published. He died on April 27, 1651, when he was barely thirty-seven years old.

³The Marquis de Fontenay-Mareuil.

⁴A renowned banker.

⁵The original letter is damaged here.

meanwhile, as I most humbly greet the Little Company, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

I shall also write to the Bishop of Geneva. M. Dufestel will deliver to him 140 livres that I have collected for his retreatants. I am in the love of Our Lord.

566. - TO FRANCOIS DUFESTEL, IN ANNECY

January 22, 1642

. . . I embrace the entire house in spirit with a heart filled with the realization of my unworthiness to serve them in the position I hold, and yet, filled with affection. . . .

567. - A PRIEST OF THE MISSION TO SAINT VINCENT

[Between 1639 and 1643]¹

O Monsieur, how many souls go to Paradise by means of poverty! Since I have been in Lorraine, I have assisted at the death of more than a thousand poor, who all appeared to be perfectly well disposed for it. That makes a great many intercessors in heaven for their benefactors.

Letter 566. - Excerpt quoted in the deposition of Brother Pierre Chollier, witness 102 at the process of beatification of Saint Vincent.

Letter 567. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. XI, sect. I, p. 377.

¹It was between 1639 and 1643 that several groups of Missionaries went through Lorraine to seek out the needy and distribute assistance. After 1643, Saint Vincent made use almost exclusively of Brother Mathieu Régnaud to carry the alms. (Cf. Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. XI, sect. I, p. 388.)

568. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Tuesday morning [1642]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Since I was not able to come and see you this morning as I was thinking of doing, here is my reply. I gave Monsieur Portail the responsibility of writing to our Sister Marie Joly in Sedan and to do so in my name. I shall look over his letter this evening and send it to you tomorrow.

The Chancellor's wife² spoke to the Chancellor about the business of Mademoiselle du Mée. He promised her that he would have it mentioned to Monsieur de Chevreuse.³ It would be good for her to see her herself.

I told Mademoiselle de Lamoignon⁴ yesterday that the meeting⁵ would be held today at Sainte-Marie in the city, where I have necessary business.

Letter 568. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Reference to the panegyric preached in honor of Saint Jane Frances enables us to assign the date for this letter.

²Madeleine Fabri, Madame Séguier, was born November 22, 1597, and died in Paris, February 6, 1683. She assisted Saint Vincent and Saint Louise with her influence and her fortune.

³Claude de Lorraine, Duc de Chevreuse.

⁴Madeleine de Lamoignon was born in Paris on September 14, 1608, of Chrétien de Lamoignon, *President à mortier* at the Parlement of Paris, and of Marie de Landes, who initiated her from childhood in the practices of the Charity. Mother and daughter competed in their dedication to the unfortunate. They often went to visit them in their homes, dressed their wounds, cleaned their rooms, made their beds, gave them clothes, linen, food, and money. Saint Vincent used to say of Mademoiselle de Lamoignon that she moved so quickly with her charitable works that nobody could keep up with her. She supported all the works founded by the Saint and took an active part in them. She died on April 14, 1687, at the age of seventy-nine. Her life was written by Père d'Orléans (*Vie de Mademoiselle de Lamoignon*, Bibl. nat., ms. fr. 23895) and by Mademoiselle Louise Masson (*Madeleine de Lamoignon* [Lyons, 1846]). Abbé Carron gave her a place in the *Vie des dames françaises qui ont été les plus célèbres dans le XVIIe siècle par leur piété et leur dévouement pour les pauvres* (2nd ed., Louvain, 1826).

⁵Meeting of the Ladies of Charity at the first monastery of the Visitation nuns.

You will have many other disputes on the part of the officers of the Charity, if you live, as I trust you will. Yesterday, we were told, in the funeral oration of the late Madame de Chantal, that one of her nuns spoke to her in an insulting way for twenty years.⁶ O Mademoiselle, how much it costs to do good in the spirit of Jesus Christ!

Good day. I am your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

569. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ANNECY

Paris, the last day of January of the year 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Since I was not able to write to you fully through Monsieur Dufestel, here is the supplement to that letter by way of special messenger. I asked M. Lumague to send it to you through his representative in Lyons.

So now, M. Dufestel is coming to take over from you, along with M. Guérin.¹ Both are very good servants of God. Please

⁶The orator was Bishop Henri de Maupas du Tour, who had just been named Bishop of Puy and later became Bishop of Evreux. He would later write Saint Jane Frances's life. This same prelate preached a funeral oration in honor of Saint Vincent on November 23, 1660.

Letter 569. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹Jean Guérin was born in Lacelle (Orne) in 1594, and entered the Congregation of the Mission on November 7, 1639. He made his vows in Annecy on August 4, 1642, was named Superior there the following month, and continued to direct this house until his death on March 6, 1653. Some days after his death (March 23, 1653), Saint Vincent wrote: "God has always blessed the leadership and works of this servant of His, to the satisfaction of those within and outside the family." His biography was published in vol. III of the *Notices*, pp. 23-28.

give the former the letters concerning his position as Superior, which I am sending him, and assure the Bishop² that he is a wise Missionary, a good living and pious man, who has a very special attentiveness in the service of prelates and a spirit of obedience toward them. The good late Bishop of Troyes³ honored him with his kindness to an inexpressible degree. In the same way, you will assure the Community that he governs with gentleness, charity, and wisdom, and, nevertheless, with firmness regarding the end toward which we are striving. He has directed the family in Troyes⁴ so well that both at home and abroad he is praised more than I can tell you. And you will tell him, please, that I am asking him to accept your arrangement concerning the seminary, with regard to written texts⁵ and M. Escart, and with regard to all things in general, until he receives some other order from us concerning the difficulties that will arise. I ask him to let me know about such matters and entreat him to change nothing without doing so.

I have considered the reasons for which you told M. Dehorgny you did the things you did. Although I know very well that you did nothing apart from those reasons, I still think it advisable, Monsieur, for you to inform us of the principal matters before you do them, not only with respect to the essentials, but also as regards the circumstances, *ut simus unanimes in eodem spiritu*.⁶ And I entreat you to do this, in the name of Our Lord, and to trust that God's affairs do not usually deteriorate because we take more time to consider

²Juste Guérin, Bishop of Geneva.

³René de Breslay.

⁴From 1639 to 1642.

⁵Dictations in class. (Cf. no. 562.)

⁶*So that we may be unanimous in the same spirit.* Phil. 1:27. "Conduct yourselves, then, in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ. If you do, whether I come and see you myself or hear about your behavior from a distance, it will be clear that you are standing firm in unity of spirit and exerting yourselves with one accord for the faith of the gospel." (NAB)

them and recommend them to Him; on the contrary, everything [only goes better].⁷

I was able to find only forty-six and two-thirds écus for the Masses of the men the Bishop of Geneva wants to send to your house to make retreat. I am sending them to M. Mascar[ini] and M. Lumague⁸ in Lyons. They will give them to you to send to the said Bishop. He will dispose of them as he pleases and we shall see whether we can get some elsewhere to send him. I entreat you, Monsieur, to assure him of m[*y* respect] and that I have followed his orders, which you sent me. I shall support him with our very dear Mother Superior of the Visitation⁹ with regard [to the heart] of our most worthy Mother.¹⁰ I told the Mother Superior here yesterday that she would give more glory to that blessed soul by placing herself in the sentiments of her all-loving and all-lovable heart than by pursuing the possession of that same heart. I shall always speak to her that way, because that is what is in my mind and heart, since the Bishop of Geneva is the interpreter of God's Will in this matter and such is his opinion. Those good Sisters are having a little difficulty accepting this and would like the said Bishop to share this treasure. His all-holy and paternal Providence will know how to attend to that. I trust that, so long as the persons presently in authority hold firm, they will restrain themselves; but I am afraid that, with time, this house will not leave things at that.¹¹

Since I began this letter, Monsieur Lumague has come to inform me that Our Lord has taken our Holy Father the Pope.¹² That news had me perplexed for six hours, wondering

⁷Although the original letter is damaged for a length of several centimeters, there is no difficulty reconstructing the text.

⁸Bankers of Lyons.

⁹Louise-Eugénie de Fontaines.

¹⁰Saint Jane Frances de Chantal.

¹¹We have already remarked that the heart did not leave Moulins where the Saint had died (cf. no. 561, n. 9).

¹²It was a false rumor. Pope Urban VIII died on July 29, 1644.

whether we should have the Company leave for Rome; however, afterwards, we decided to do it. Therefore, the men will be leaving the day after tomorrow, the third of February,¹³ in order to be in Lyons ten to twelve days later and around the seventeenth in Marseilles, where the secretary of the Ambassador in Rome¹⁴ is supposed to be. I earnestly hope that you will arrive at the same time, so that you can leave with him; that would be no small advantage. In the name of God, Monsieur, do your best to get there.

The men we are sending are Monsieur Germain and Brother Martin.¹⁵ Both are very devoted and completely attached to their vocation. The first is gentle, interior, obedient, regular, frank, pleasant, and rather simple; he sings well and has studied only philosophy. The other is candid, simple, gentle, obedient, regular, and has studied philosophy and theology in which he successfully defended his thesis just three days ago. He is good at teaching catechism, preaches well, and has a gift for the ordinands, although he is only twenty-two years old. In addition, we are sending you a Brother, who is good, docile,

¹³The letter is dated January 31. Saint Vincent finished it on February 1.

¹⁴Jean de Montreuil, secretary to the Marquis de Fontenay-Mareuil.

¹⁵Jean Martin, born in Paris on May 10, 1620, was not yet twenty-two years old. He had belonged to the Congregation of the Mission since October 9, 1638. It is written that Saint Vincent had sent him to the mission of Saint-Germain-en-Laye as a catechist and that the Dauphin was among his listeners, but that is not so, because the mission of Saint-Germain took place a few months before he entered Saint-Lazare. He was ordained in Rome on April 25, 1645, and that same year was sent to Genoa to begin a new establishment. Saint Vincent had, perhaps, no Missionary better gifted for drawing crowds and converting souls. In 1654, Jean Martin was recalled to France and placed in Sedan as Superior and Pastor. In 1655, Saint Vincent sent him to Turin to direct a new establishment founded by the pious Marchese di Pianezza, Prime Minister of State. There, as in Genoa and Sedan, the zealous Missionary won over the most hardened hearts. He earned the title "Apostle of Piedmont," and his confreres received the name of "Padri Santi" (Holy Fathers). In 1665, René Almérás offered him the direction of the house in Rome. It was a very painful sacrifice, but Jean Martin resigned himself to it. In 1670 he was sent to Genoa, in 1674 to Turin, in 1677 to Rome, in 1680 to Perugia, and in 1681 to Rome again, each time as Superior. It was in this last-named city that he died on February 17, 1694. We have a manuscript account of his life (Archives of the Mission, Paris), written by a contemporary. It has been published, with some changes, in vol. I of the *Notices*, pp. 269-372.

and regular, although he has not been in the Company very long. I am not sure whether I shall also send you a priest and a cleric, who are likewise of considerable virtue: the first is very interior, a good catechist and a rather good preacher; the second is regular, interior, simple, and philosophical. We shall see whether we can send them to you.

I shall have the January quarter paid to M. Delorme here, if it has not already been done as I ordered. There is some difficulty about the letter; however, we will get around it by means of a receipt from that good man, who is ill and almost paralyzed in his bed.

I am sending you 105 livres—part of which was given to me in alms—which you shall draw from M. Lumague in Lyons and send to M. Dufestel to give to the Bishop of Geneva for his retreatants—and forty livres, which I am also sending to the said gentleman to be delivered to you in Lyons for your trip to Marseilles; you will have to deduct from that what has been given to the express messenger bringing this letter. In Marseilles, you will speak to the Bailiff de Forbin, Lieutenant General of the Galleys, who will send you to where the Company will be lodging. And, if they have departed, because they have found the wind favorable and the opportunity I mentioned, he will help you locate some vessel and, if necessary, give you some money to make the voyage, if you need any.

That, Monsieur, is all I can tell you at the m[om]ent, except that I embrace you, M. [Dufestel] and the whole Little Company as well, with the greatest tenderness and humility in my power. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

I am so rushed that I cannot write to M. Dufestel; he will pardon me, please.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Annecy, in Annecy

569a. - MADAME DE VILLENEUVE TO SAINT VINCENT

Live Jesus Crucified

Reverend Father,

Have you decided before God to let His work¹ perish because of the unworthiness of her who is occupied with it? If God is thus inspiring you and has appointed you for that purpose, I am willing to join you. As soon as His Goodness granted me the grace to begin it, I made your Reverence the proposal of abandoning it if you so commanded me. You did not deem that fitting, but merely ordered me to bring to bear certain circumstances which, by the grace of God, I have observed to the letter while collaborating in this blessed work which has successfully gone along the path laid out for it.

And here we are at the point of its perfection and accomplishment. Will you deny us the favor of crowning the work with your advice, as you began it? No, I do not believe you have the courage to do that. You have always assisted me just at the right moment in my corporal and spiritual extremities. God allowed you to perceive the excess of my sufferings and you were willing to relieve them. Perhaps it will be the same on this occasion. Come then and see, my very dear Father, whether things are as I think. Is it possible that our good God would have allowed me to deceive myself and that, up to now, I have not been working for His glory in the way He would wish?

Letter 569a. - A copy of this letter is found in one of the volumes for the process of the beatification of Saint Vincent de Paul. (Cf. Archives of the Congregation of Rites.) Coste placed it in a supplement in vol. VIII, no. 3298, p. 522, and dated it February 4, 1648. Since he later assigned 1642 as the date in his three-volume *Life and Works of Saint Vincent de Paul*, Eng. trans., vol. I, pp. 311-312, and since the *Annales* (1937) listing of new letters also indicated the date as 1642 and suggested that the letter become no. 569a in vol. II, we have placed the letter here in vol. II.

¹The Society of the Sisters of the Cross.

No, I cannot believe that, unless you absolutely tell me so, after having recommended the matter to God. In His name, I entreat your Reverence to come as soon as possible to assure me of His holy Will and to help me accomplish it to the exclusion of all that is not of Him.

That is the sacred desire, by the grace of God, Reverend Father, of your most humble, grateful, and insignificant servant and daughter in Our Lord.

MARIE LHUILLIER
of the Society of the Cross

From our seminary in Paris, February 4, [1642]

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior of the Reverend Fathers of the Mission, at Saint-Lazare

570. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ANNECY

Saint-Lazare, February 9, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Here is a letter from Cardinal Mazarini,¹ recommending us to Cardinal Antonio,² the nephew of His Holiness. Yesterday

Letter 570. - Original autograph letter, Library of the University of Amsterdam (Schenkings Diederichs, ms. 59 Ap). Coste published a text from a slightly defective copy. The *Annales* (1953), pp. 250-253, published the original, which was later reprinted in *Mission et Charité*, 19-20, pp. 31-33. This edition has used the latter text.

¹At this time, Jules Cardinal Mazarin was residing at the French Court without a well-defined function. After the death of Cardinal Richelieu (December 4, 1642), Mazarin was named his successor as Chief Minister of State (December 17, 1642).

²Antonio Cardinal Barberini, nephew of Pope Urban VIII (1623-1644), was only twenty when he entered the Sacred College of Cardinals in 1627. He had been placed in charge of several legations and had earned a good deal of influence in the Papal Curia.

I received your letter from the mission site where you took your seminarians. Oh! how consoled my soul is by everything you told me about it, as also by the proposal for the purchase of that house, if it is in the town of Annecy, or close enough to town to be used for lodging! But it is impossible for us to help you with those seven thousand florins. M. Dufestel will therefore try to manage with the thousand ducats, which is part of the sum placed in annuity.

You did well to advise me not to go to His Eminence³ about the Bishop of Geneva's⁴ plan; otherwise, I would have written tomorrow to M. de Chavigny⁵ in Lyons to tell him about it. Your presence in Rome will be a great help with the Ambassador⁶ in that regard. I shall have his good friend, M. de Liancourt, write to him about it — and in the best style he can.

Good M. Thévenin, the Pastor of Saint-Etienne in Dauphiné,⁷ has written me several letters, all dealing with working on the creation of a priests' seminary for parishes and other benefices. He beset me with many reasons and even with the judgments of God. He has seen you in Dauphiné⁸ and Annecy, and us here. I would like you to take the trouble of seeing him as you pass through and of delivering my letters to him. Among them is a letter of exchange so that he can draw from Messieurs Mascarini and Lumague⁹ in Lyons 250

When the steps he took to prevent the election of Innocent X (1644-1655) were unsuccessful, he came to France, obtained the bishopric of Poitiers in 1652, and became Archbishop of Rheims in 1657. He died in Nemi, near Rome, on August 3, 1671.

³Cardinal Richelieu.

⁴Juste Guérin. Cardinal Richelieu was not in sufficient favor at the Court of Rome for his intervention to be of any use to the Bishop of Geneva.

⁵Léon Bouthillier, Comte de Chavigny, filled various important administrative and diplomatic posts.

⁶François Du Val, Marquis de Fontenay-Mareuil, was French Ambassador in Rome from 1640 to 1650; he died in 1665.

⁷Doubtless, Saint-Etienne de Saint-Geoirs (Isère).

⁸Bernard Codoing had previously given missions there.

⁹Bankers in Lyons.

livres, which he told me he spent coming to see us. He is urging me to give up our undertaking [of the missions] in order to pursue the one he is suggesting, which I would have no difficulty doing if this were pleasing to Our Lord. But the Company has been approved by the Holy See, which is infallible with regard to the approval of the Orders God has been pleased to institute, according to what I have heard the late M. Duval¹⁰ say; (2) and since it is the maxim of the saints that when a matter has been decided in the presence of God after many prayers and the seeking of advice, we must reject and consider as a temptation whatever is suggested to the contrary; (3) and finally, since God has been pleased to give universal approval to this good work [of the missions], so that everyone everywhere is beginning to take to it and work at it, and since God's mercy is accompanying this work with His blessings, I think it would almost take an angel from heaven to persuade us that it is God's Will for us to give up this work to take up another which has already been undertaken in various places and has not succeeded.

And because, nevertheless, the Holy Council of Trent¹¹ recommends seminaries, we have given ourselves to God to serve Him also in that regard wherever we can. You have begun; the Bishop of Alet¹² is doing likewise; the Bishop of

¹⁰André Duval, renowned Doctor of the Sorbonne, author of several learned works, friend and trusted advisor of Saint Vincent, was born in Pontoise, January 15, 1564, and died in Paris, September 9, 1638. The Saint never made an important decision without having recourse to his learning. He asked his advice before accepting Saint-Lazare (cf. Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. I, chap. XXII, p. 97) and before establishing vows in the Congregation of the Mission (cf. letter of October 4, 1647, to Antoine Portail [vol. III, no. 993]). The humble Doctor got upset one day when he saw his portrait in one of the rooms at Saint-Lazare. He insisted so much that Saint Vincent had to remove the picture. (Cf. Robert Duval, *Vie d'André Duval, docteur de Sorbonne*, ms. [Robert Duval was the nephew of André Duval]; J. Calvet, "Un confesseur de Saint Vincent," in *Petites annales de Saint Vincent* [May 1903], p. 135.)

¹¹The Decree *Cum adolescentium aetas*, published at the twenty-third session (July 15, 1563).

¹²Nicolas Pavillon had begun his seminary a short time after his arrival in Alet in 1639. He received young people and even priests ordained without having learned a word of

Saintes¹³ has the same goal; and we are going to try one in this city with twelve seminarians, with the help of a thousand écus from His Eminence.¹⁴

This good servant¹⁵ of God would like things to move a little more quickly but it seems to me that God's affairs are accomplished gradually and almost imperceptibly and His spirit is neither violent nor tempestuous. I told you above that I was asking you [to see him]; but I have since thought that there is no need; it will be sufficient for you to send him my letters.

I am very glad, Monsieur, that your nature is getting over those strong feelings you had about Rome in the beginning, and that you fear them at present, because it will be the pure love of God that will take you there. Consequently, you have reason to hope that the same spirit of God will animate you and accomplish His work through you. Go then, Monsieur, *in nomine Domini*, in this confidence. Write to me often and about everything. Choose a healthy place for your dwelling. Cardinal Mazarini's letter is very well written.

Latin. (Cf. Degert, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 197.)

¹³Jacques Raoul de la Guibourgère, Bishop of Saintes, had in mind the establishment of a seminary in his diocese as early as 1633, but he was able to realize his project only in 1644. (Cf. Louis Audiat, *Saint Vincent de Paul et sa congrégation à Saintes et à Rochefort* [Paris, 1885].)

¹⁴According to Abelly (*op. cit.*, bk. I, chap. XXXI, p. 146), it was around 1636 that Saint Vincent erected a seminary in the Collège des Bons-Enfants, where young boys studied the humanities. Touched by what the Saint had said to him one day about the necessity of training for a year or two, in the virtues and functions of their state, the students who had already entered Holy Orders or who were ready to do so, Richelieu gave him one thousand écus in 1642 for the maintenance of twelve seminarians. Others, who paid for their own board, came to join these twelve. They became so numerous that Saint Vincent had to withdraw from the Bons-Enfants those who were studying the humanities and transfer them to a building situated at the end of the enclosure of Saint-Lazare. Thus began the seminary of Saint-Charles. The seminary of the Bons-Enfants passed, therefore, through three successive phases: the first from 1636 to 1642, the second from 1642 to 1645, and the third from 1645 to 1791.

¹⁵M. Thévenin.

I am, Monsieur, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble and obedient servant .

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

M. de Montereil, secretary of the Ambassador in Rome, will take a boat to go from port to port. Please go to Marseilles around the twenty-sixth or twenty-seventh.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Priest of the Mission, presently in Lyons

571. - TO PIERRE DU CHESNE,¹ IN CLAYE²

Saint-Lazare, March 2, 1642

Monsieur,

Here is the answer for Madame de Claye and a note to have M. Boudet³ return. *Mon Dieu*, Monsieur, what shall we do about that, and how is M. de Renty?⁴ How is your

Letter 571. - The original of this letter was put on sale by M. Charavay, who published the text in one of his catalogues.

¹Pierre du Chesne entered the Congregation of the Mission in 1637. He became one of the best Missionaries of Saint Vincent who entrusted him with the direction of the houses of Crécy (1641-1644), the Bons-Enfants (1644), the Mission of Ireland and Scotland (1646-1648), Marseilles (1653-1654), and Agde (1654). He also summoned him to attend the two General Assemblies convoked at Saint-Lazare during his lifetime. Pierre du Chesne died in Agde, November 3, 1654.

²In Seine-et-Marne.

³Jacques Boudet, a Priest of the Mission born in Epinay-sur-Seine (Seine-Saint-Denis), was received into the Congregation of the Mission in 1634 and ordained a priest in 1635. He gave missions in Brittany with M. Olier (cf. Faillon, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 219), in the Toulouse area, in Champagne, and elsewhere. Saint Vincent used to say: "He is a holy soul."

⁴Gaston de Renty, born in 1611 at Bény-Bocage (Calvados), was, according to Abelly, "as noble by his virtue as he was by his birth" (cf. Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, p. 365). After fighting in Lorraine at the head of a company of cavalrymen, he settled himself in Paris,

Company? Is Our Lord blessing your mission? I have not been able to see the Bishop of Meaux;⁵ it would be well for you to send him word about the state of the mission and ask him to let you know if he would be pleased to come and bless its work.

I am writing you these lines in haste. I am, for M. de Renty and for you, in the love of Our Lord. . . .

If M. Boudet is not in Claye, direct this bearer to Fontaine.⁶

572. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1639 and 1647]¹

Mademoiselle,

I told the Duchesse d'Aiguillon my thought about that good demoiselle from Bordeaux, which is that I think she is

placed himself under the direction of Father de Condren, and devoted himself to practices of piety and works of charity. The recitation of the Divine Office, prayer and examinations of conscience took up a part of his day, and he would rise at night to recite Matins. One day a week was set aside for visiting the sick of the Hôtel-Dieu, whom he instructed and consoled; another day he visited hospitals. He used to visit the poor in their homes with the Sisters of the parish of Saint-Paul. To the English who had taken refuge in France because of their faith, to the people of Lorraine who fled to Paris to find the security they were lacking in their own country, to the prisoners of Barbary, the galley-slaves of Marseilles, and the Missionaries of the East, he was a generous benefactor. Doctor Burnet, the Bishop of Salisbury, said "that he should rightly be placed among the greatest examples France provided" in the seventeenth century. (Cf. Collet, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 215, n.) Such a man was bound to be in frequent contact with Saint Vincent. We have already said that he was the principal auxiliary of the Saint in giving assistance to the nobles of Lorraine who had taken refuge in Paris. When he met with sinners anxious to mend their ways, he would advise them to make a retreat at Saint-Lazare. The pious and charitable Baron died on April 24, 1648, at the age of thirty-eight. Father Saint-Jure wrote his life, *La vie de Monsieur de Renty* (Paris, 1651).

⁵Dominique Séguier.

⁶Fontaine-Essart, a hamlet in the commune of Courbetaux (Marne), near Montmirail.

Letter 572. - Pémarin, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 314, no. 775.

¹This letter is dated March 1651, which we believe is an addition of the editor. The mention of the meeting concerning Lorraine indicates that it should be placed between 1639 and 1647.

extending herself too soon; she seems to recognize that fact. It appears that Mademoiselle Poulaillon is raising no objection about joining forces with her.

We are holding our meeting about Lorraine tomorrow.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am. . . .

573. - TO THE GOVERNOR OF A LARGE TOWN¹

I shall be of service to you, if I can; however, as far as the matter of Priests of the Mission is concerned, I beg you to leave it in the hands of God and the law. I would prefer that they not be in your town rather than see them there through the favor and influence of men.

574. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Sunday morning [Between 1640 and 1648]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Uncertain as to whether I shall be able to attend the meeting today of the Ladies of Charity, which is supposed to be held at your house, because of another that we are having here concerning Lorraine,² I am sending you the letter the Duchesse

Letter 573. - Collet, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 235.

¹This governor, that of Toul perhaps, had asked the Saint to use his influence at Court to obtain a favor for him; in exchange, he was promising to protect the Missionaries of that place against those who were opposing their establishment.

Letter 574. - The original autograph letter is in the Archives of the Provincial House of the Daughters of Charity in Lille.

¹The meeting concerning Lorraine mentioned in this letter led Coste to assign these dates.

²Most likely a meeting of those charitable persons who, in 1640, had taken on the assistance of the Lorraine nobility taking refuge in Paris, and continued doing so until 1648.

d'Aiguillon wrote me yesterday. In it you will see that she has sent word that the Ladies may begin to collect alms. So, they shall please do this. The obligation of placing into the hands of those gentlemen the money coming from it is not stated.

Show the Ladies the statement they wanted me to draw up to give to the Ladies who will take up the collection, in order to inform people of the affair. Both they and you will add, omit, and change what you see fit and, when that is done, send it to me this very day so that I may put the finishing touches on it. I shall return it to you early tomorrow morning, for you to send it on to Madame Mestay.

I think it would be well for you to tell the Ladies that it is advisable for them not to talk about the objections those gentlemen are raising, and that it would be well for them to get started and to divide up the tasks here this week.

If I can, although I doubt it, I will get away around four o'clock or thereabouts to be present for the end of your meeting today.

Good day, Mademoiselle. I am for the Ladies and for you, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

575. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris, March 17, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Letter 575. - Original autograph letter. We have the rough draft and the final text of this letter, both written in the hand of Saint Vincent. The first document (no. 575), dated

I received your letter of February 23 from Lyons just two or three days ago; I have been very upset about it. We received earlier the one you wrote from Avignon to Monsieur Souffliers. Now, I shall tell you, in answer to yours and then to that of Monsieur Souffliers, that we shall take care of all the sums you withdrew in Lyons. For want of having received your letter in time, we paid only about one thousand livres in two parts, for which we were brought your letters of exchange and not that of Monsieur Morand, the Master of the Horse from Lyons; however, we shall take care of it. From now on, to avoid confusion, I beg you not to withdraw anything there except what you need to live on, in the event that I do not send it to you when I am aware of your need, about which you will have written to me.

I give thanks to God for the grace He has bestowed on you in all that you wrote to me. I beg Him to continue to grant you that grace subsequently and especially to keep you in perfect health. I ask you to take care of it and, with that end in view, to lodge in a place with clean air and to be somewhat attached to the observances of leaving Rome and returning there at the times the common people deem suitable. For want of doing that, good M. Lebreton deprived the Company of his person.

We held a serious consultation with seven men of the Company, six together and the other apart because he was leaving for the country, concerning the dictations about which you [spoke] to M. Souffliers. Having weighed and considered all things, five of us, two of whom are esteemed the most learned men in the Company, were opposed to these dictations. These are our reasons:

The first is from the standpoint of the subject matter one

March 17, is preserved in the Cathedral of Bogotá, Colombia. The second and final version (no. 575a) is dated the following day and belongs to the Archives of the Mission in Turin.

wishes to teach, which will be more reliable when it is that of an approved author rather than the writings of a private individual.

(2) From the standpoint of prelates and the public, who would much prefer an approved author rather than the writings of a young man who has not proven his knowledge at school.

(3) From the standpoint of the Company, in that it has more subjects who could interpret an author profitably than those who could compose and dictate lessons; also, it would not be in danger of censorship of its lessons nor attract as much envy as it might do.

(4) From the standpoint of those who do the teaching, for whom it would be much more useful to interpret an author than to compose writings, unless the teacher takes them, as you have done, from Bonacina¹ or some other author; in that case, when people discover the author, they will make fun of the teacher. If he makes them up on his own, he will have to be a theology professor or have the knowledge of one, and spend a great deal of time consulting authors and doing nothing else. And farewell to the concern of having the seminarians recite well, in which lies the principal fruit; farewell, too, to the care of the spiritual and everything else. If your mind is equal to all this thus far, we would have to see what it would do in the long run. And in any case, even if you can do it, everyone does not have the good mind Our Lord gave you to cope with all that.

(5) From the standpoint of the seminarians, who will either be theologians or not. If they are such, they will not come to

¹Martino Bonacina, born in Milan around 1585, is one of the princes of moral theology. For three years he taught canon and civil law at the seminary in his native city, and was then appointed Rector of the Swiss College. In recognition of his merits, Ferdinand II named him Palatine Count and Knight of the Golden Fleece. Consecrated Bishop of Utica, he died while on his way to the court of Vienna, where Urban VIII was sending him as Nuncio (1631). He composed a manual of moral theology, which had already seen eighteen editions by 1754, and many tracts on law, dogma, and moral theology.

the seminary to learn moral theology, but rather piety and other matters appropriate for them, just as those holding a licentiate in theology from the Sorbonne do not join the ordinands to learn the doctrine taught there, but to become better. If they are not theologians, none will be content with [the dictating of] writings, as is ordinarily done at the Sorbonne. And the teacher who is instructing them will think he has done enough by giving them writings, and that he has worked enough by composing them and giving them; and may God grant that they think about them afterwards! If they are uneducated, as are the majority on that level, alas! Monsieur, of what use will it be to them that you have taken so much trouble for them? Would it not be better for you to use the time in interpreting things clearly for them, having them learn by heart and [then] recite an author, than to waste the time in giving them writings, since the whole advantage for them lies in having them learn by heart and recite?

The objection is made that the disciples will be tempted to leave if they are not given something of one's own invention, and that they will not have such a good opinion of their teacher. That would be true perhaps if there were no other attractions in the seminary; but you have piety, which will be a great attraction if God be pleased that deeply devout men are produced from it. You have chant, the conferences, the ceremonies, instruction in teaching catechism and preaching, and, above all, the fine reputation arising from the good life of those educated in this way, and their being sought after for their services.

The Company of externs² that comes to hold conferences at Saint-Lazare makes profession of dealing with subjects in a simple way. As soon as someone brings forward more doctrine or embellishes his language, people immediately

²Members of the Tuesday Conferences.

complain to me to do something about it. The last person who complained was M. Tristan, a doctor in theology,³ who is a member of the group. And yet Our Lord so permits that everyone wants to be a member. The last man accepted was the Abbé de Saint-Floran, Counselor in the Parlement. Believe, Monsieur, that Our Lord's spirit is not a spirit of doing things in order to be esteemed. I think the spirit of the Mission must be to seek its greatness in lowliness and its reputation in the love of its abjection.

It has been said that it is easier to compose and dictate than to interpret an author. If that is so in your regard, fine; but reason balks at that, I think. It is much more difficult to think up topics, examine authors, organize doctrine in one's own mind, write it oneself, then dictate and explain it, than it is simply to give an interpretation.

It has been said that things are learned by writing. That is to be desired; however, those who write at the Sorbonne reveal just the opposite. It is true that some few [of them *magis afficiunt*; however, many of them *nec afficiunt nec memoria capiuntur*].⁴

The objection is made that the teachers will become more learned in this way, because they will study matters in depth and will examine several authors in order to do so. Yes, but then they will not be able to do anything but study and compose and, that being the case, who will instruct the seminarians about interior matters? Who will have them perform the ceremonies? Who will teach them how to catechize and preach and who will see that regularity is observed? That will require a lot of people for each seminary.

³Claude Tristan, Seigneur de Maisoncelles, Canon, Grand Archdeacon, and Vicar General of Beauvais for forty years. His refusal to sign the formulary (against Jansenism) brought upon him in 1666 exclusion from choir and the loss of the income from his prebend. He died June 29, 1692.

⁴We completed this phrase according to Jean Bonnet, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, who in his circular letter of December 10, 1727, quoted the greater part of this letter.

And who will pay for their upkeep and what will become of the missions? You will tell me that all that is being done in Annecy by a single man. That is true, but all places and all Missionaries are not the same, plus the fact that they are just beginning.

Finally, people cite the example of the Jesuit Fathers and the University of Paris, but that is not the same. They publicly profess to teach the sciences and need a good name, but in the seminary there is more need of piety and passable knowledge with an understanding of chant, ceremonies, preaching and the teaching of catechism, than of a great deal of doctrine. What shall we say about the universities in Spain, where they do not know what it is to dictate in class and where they are content to interpret? Nonetheless, everyone agrees that the theologians there are more profound than [elsewhere]. And then, if this manner of composing and dictating everything were introduced now, in a short while you would see that people would say that, in order to have men capable of doing this, we should have collèges and teach. *O Jésus!* Monsieur, if that were so, what would become of the poor common people?

All these considerations induce us to continue interpreting Binsfeld⁵ as we have begun to do successfully, and I entreat you, Monsieur, to let it go at that, and also to subject your ideas to the decisions made here. I do not mean only with regard to this point but also in every matter. Do nothing of importance without writing to me about it, nor until you have received a response.

You see, Monsieur, you and I allow ourselves to be carried away too much by our own opinions. You, however, are in a

⁵Pierre Binsfeld was born in Binsfeld (Luxembourg) around 1540 and died of the plague on November 24, 1598. He left several works of theology and canon law. Saint Vincent undoubtedly had in mind his *Enchiridion Theologiae Pastoralis*, published in Trier in 1591 and 1602, then in Douai in 1630 and 1636, with notes by François Sylvius. This work merited the praises of the synod held in Malines in 1607.

place where an exceptional reserve and circumspection are necessary. I have always heard that the Italians are the most cautious people in the world and the most distrustful of individuals who act too quickly. Caution, patience, and gentleness resolve everything with them, in time. Because they know that we French act too quickly, they leave us out in the cold for a long time without making friends with us.

In the name of God, Monsieur, be careful about this and about never disregarding the orders you receive from us, as you did with regard to M. Thévenin.⁶ How, in good conscience, Monsieur, could you take what I was sending to him? You say that he is a madman, that he asked for alms on the road and spent little. I hope so; however, you should have considered that I had some special reason for doing what I did, and you should have thought that perhaps the money was not from this house, as indeed it is not. In the name of God, Monsieur, pay attention to this. Let us reflect that we shall always do God's Will and He will do ours when we carry out that of our Superiors, and that we fall into thousands of difficulties and disorders when we act otherwise.

Write to me about everything and I promise to answer you by every regular mail, or at least every two weeks. And what you have to let me know, please tell me personally.

In addition to the letter you will be writing to me about private matters, send me another that I can let people see.

It would also be well for you to write one to Monsieur de Montmaur,⁷ the Master of Requests, who has helped us on this occasion. If the affair succeeds, we have reason to hope that he will continue his charity to us. Your letter will have as its aim to thank him and to ask him kindly to allow you to give him an account of the state of your affairs from time to time. It would also be good for you to write now and then to the Duchesse d'Aiguillon and to Madame de Herse, the

⁶Probably M. Thévenin, Pastor of Saint-Etienne (Dauphiné).

⁷Henri-Louis Habert, Seigneur de Montmaur.

President's wife,⁸ who also helped us on this occasion; however, you will mention none of these to anyone whomsoever, please, and will send me your letters unsealed.

Well now, Monsieur, I have certainly written to you about many things, but to whom can I speak plainly and with entire confidence if not to another self whom I cherish more than myself? Oh! indeed, I shall always open my heart to you and shall not hold back from telling you anything whatsoever, because I know the depth of your heart and the love Our Lord has given you for me. I am, in His love, for you and for your dear Community, whom I embrace in spirit, prostrate at its feet, and I am in the love of the same Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

575a. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

Paris, March 18, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

⁸Madame de Herse, born Charlotte de Ligny, was the daughter of Jean de Ligny, Seigneur de Ranticey, Master of Requests. She was also the mother of Félix Vialart, the Bishop of Châlons, as well as a relative of Jean-Jacques Olier. Her late husband was Michel Vialart, Seigneur de la Forest de Herse, Councillor to the King in his Parlement, President of the Requests of the Palace, then Ambassador to Switzerland. He died in Solothurn, October 26, 1634. Madame de Herse was dear to Saint Francis de Sales, who had consented to being her son's godfather. She enrolled in the company of the Ladies of Charity and became one of Saint Vincent's chief auxiliaries. She gave a great deal to the poor of Paris, Picardy, and Champagne, generously supported the works for ordinands and for abandoned children, and established the Daughters of Charity in Chars (Val-d'Oise). During the wars that ravaged the capital, the Queen Mother entrusted to Madame de Herse and some other ladies the distribution of her personal alms. Madame de Herse died in 1662.

Letter 575a. - Original autograph letter. The previous letter (no. 575) was a draft copy; this is the final text, which is the property of the Archives of the Mission in Turin.

Blessed be God because I think that you have now arrived in Rome; may His Divine Goodness grant that it be for His glory and keep you in perfect health! I beg you, Monsieur, to do all you can in that regard and, with that end in view, find suitable housing in places where the air is good, and even be somewhat attached to observing the times the common people consider it dangerous to leave Rome and come back to sleep there. We lost good M. Lebreton there because he failed to take these precautions.

I paid your letters of exchange from Lyons, except M. Morand's for one thousand livres, because I have only known about it for two days. It is advisable that you not withdraw anything in Rome without letting me know about it and waiting for my reply, unless it be for food.

We had serious consultation with seven men of the Company regarding the matter of dictation. Five of them hold a negative opinion, so we shall continue to interpret an author without dictating, as we have successfully begun to do. These are the reasons:

The first is taken from the standpoint of the knowledge one wishes to impart, which will be more reliable than that taken from the writings of an individual, since it is that of an approved author.

The second, from the standpoint of the prelates and the public, who would much prefer an approved and selected author rather than the writings of a young man who has proven his capabilities only during his studies.

The third, from the standpoint of the Company, because it has more subjects who will be able to interpret an author than men who will be able to compose and dictate; and thus it will be able to serve the Church in more places and be less subject to envy.

The fourth comes from those who will do the teaching, for whom it will be much easier, whatever people say, to interpret rather than to compose and dictate, unless they take their

lessons from an author, for example, Bonacina. When the students discover this, they will make fun of the teacher or hold him in contempt. If he makes them up on his own, he will need the competence of a theology professor. Moreover, he will have to devote a lot of time to consulting authors, and to do only that. In that case, how will he interpret well, have lessons recited well, and take care of the spiritual and all the other exercises? If you have managed all that, not everyone has such strength and perhaps it will fail you in the long run. Again, if the teachers give the same lessons to the second round of seminarians, it will be said that they only know the same old song. And what difference will there be between doing that and always taking the same author? If they are forever composing something new, they will never be able to do anything but that.

The fifth reason comes from the standpoint of the seminarians, who are either learned or uneducated. If learned, they will not be coming into the seminary to learn moral theology, but rather to become better and to learn the other material taught there. That is what the Bachelors of Theology do, who come to the ordinand retreats, and the Doctors who come to the ecclesiastics' meeting at Saint-Lazare, where humility and simplicity are so much a part of the matters treated. If they are uneducated, alas! Monsieur, of what use will writings be to them?

These, Monsieur, are the reasons for which we have made the decision I just mentioned to you, which is to interpret an author. And now, the response to the objections that the letter to M. Soufliers puts forward.

It is said that the seminarians will not have a very good opinion of their teacher and will be tempted to leave the seminary if they are not given writings. Now, our reply is that this would be true if there were no other attractions in the seminary but knowledge, and assuming that all the seminarians were scholars. You have there, however, the attraction

of piety, chant, the ceremonies, the teaching of catechism, preaching, and finally the reputation of those who have been there and who will receive preference in employments, conditions, and benefices. The Penitentiary already has his eyes on our men to make use of them in monasteries and similar employments.

The third objection¹ is that it is easier to compose and dictate than to interpret an author and have others recite. That seems a paradox to me for, in the first case, one must study, examine authors, compose, dictate, and interpret; in the second, one has only to study, interpret, and recite.

The fourth objection is that things are learned by writing them. That I admit, when there is question of just a few things to be retained; but when there are many, experience proves the contrary, [as] at the Sorbonne, where those who have only writings are as ignorant of things as those who have not been there at all.

It is said, moreover, that by this means teachers will become more learned, because they will study subjects in depth and will examine a number of authors. I admit that; however, they will not be able to do anything else but study, compose, and dictate; that being the case, who will teach piety, chant and the ceremonies? Who will give lessons in the teaching of catechism and preaching? This will require almost as many men as there are areas of training in each seminary. And where shall we find as many men as are needed and the funds to maintain them? If people reply that we succeed in doing all that in Annecy, I shall say, as above, that such is good for that place and as a beginning, and that the training of the ordinands causes us to experience the opposite here.

Finally, people raise as an objection the practice of the

¹This objection is, in reality, only the second.

Jesuit Fathers and the universities. I make a distinction among the universities. No dictation is given in the whole of Spain where there are such great theologians. And besides, that is not the same; in France, these institutions make profession of teaching the humanities.

I assure you, Monsieur, that if we enter into that spirit, you will soon see proposals in the Company for us to take on collèges and teach publicly so as to have more learned men to teach the seminarians. And if that were so, alas! Monsieur, what would become of the poor people in the [rural areas],² and into what sort of spirit would we enter were we to wish to be on a par, as far as knowledge is concerned, with those great institutions? Where would holy humility be, in which God has been pleased to conceive, bring forth, and raise this Little Company up to the present?

Now, all this being said, Monsieur, in the name of God, never make that suggestion again. Hold firmly to the decisions made here in all matters; do nothing without writing to us about it, nor until you receive our reply; I mean: nothing that is of any importance. Remember, please, what I wrote to you about this in Annecy.

I have many things to say to you concerning what you did with regard to that good priest from Dauphiné.³ That will be for another time, God willing.

Write to us often, and every three months to M. de Montmaur, the Master of Requests, who is helping us with your maintenance, and the Duchesse d'Aiguillon and Madame de Herse as well. To us you will write one letter referring to private matters, and another with things we can allow to be

²The word used in the original was "company," obviously the result of a distraction.

³Probably M. Thévenin, Pastor of Saint-Etienne in Dauphiné, a section of Southeastern France whose chief city is Grenoble. Charles de Valois, who became Charles V of France in 1364, had been sold this territory in 1349. During the period of the Valois monarchy (1364-1589), the eldest son of the King was sent there to govern, hence the title *Dauphin*. Dauphiné was a stronghold of Protestantism.

seen. As for the letters to M. de Montmaur and the Ladies, they will be to thank them for their assistance, to assure them of your prayers, to tell them briefly the state of the Company, what is to be hoped for with regard to the ordinands, and to ask them to continue their good graces toward that establishment. None of them wishes us to mention the assistance they have given us.

I hope to write to you every two weeks and perhaps by every regular mail. If you write to me and the matter requires it, write everything directly to me, please, and not to others to pass it on to me.

That is all I shall say to you for the time being. All that remains is to embrace your dear Company, as I do, prostrate at their feet and yours. I am, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

576. - TO JACQUES BOUDET, IN FONTAINE¹

Saint-Lazare, March 25, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I most humbly entreat you, Monsieur, to return to Saint-Lazare as soon as you receive this letter. We need you here and await you with affection.

Letter 576. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹Fontaine-Essart.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Boudet, Priest of the Mission, in Fontaine

577. - BERNARD PREVOST, SEIGNEUR DE SAINT-CYR-
LES-COLONS,¹ TO SAINT VINCENT

1642

The attentions of your priests, coupled with the example of their piety, have brought about such a change in the lives of my country people that they are scarcely recognizable to their neighbors. As for me, I confess that I no longer know them, and I cannot help but be convinced that God has sent me a new colony to populate my village. These Gentlemen found only rough people whose change could be accomplished only by the grace which accompanies your workers, and particularly those to whom you gave the task of coming to convert these people and me. It is a consequence of God's mercy and a result of your prudence that we were sent men suited to our needs. And after the thanks I extend to you for this, all that remains for us is to offer ardent prayers to God that He might shower your Company with His blessings; I consider it one of the most useful to His glory in His Church today. However, I remain fearful that these poor people, lacking a virtuous pastor to maintain them in the good resolutions they have made during this mission which has been so beneficial for them, may easily fall into the sin of omission by forgetting or neglecting to put into practice what has been taught them with such discernment.

Since you were unwilling to give them a parish priest, I think that,

Letter 577. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. II, p. 45.

¹In the locality of Yonne. Bernard Prévost was a Councillor of the Great Council.

as you have begotten them anew in Our Lord, you are at least obliged to procure one for them by your prayers; this I entreat you to do, with all my heart.

578. - MADAME DE SAINT-CYR-LES-COLONS¹ TO SAINT VINCENT

1642

Although I recognize that I am incapable of thanking you worthily for the great honor and the many benefits we have received in our parish through you, still I cannot keep to myself this truth that, after God, you are in some way our savior, through these good Gentlemen you have sent us; they have done marvels in this place. They have so thoroughly won the affection of Monsieur de Saint-Cyr that I fear he will be ill when he is separated from them. As for myself, I am not going to tell you how I feel about the matter, since I am too sad to be able to say anything else.

579. - PIERRE DE NIVELLE, BISHOP OF LUÇON,
TO SAINT VINCENT

1642

If it should please God that the Institute of the Gentlemen of your Congregation continue for a long time in His Church, she ought to expect very great fruit from them. The diocese of Luçon, in whose territory they have been working for three or four years under your mandate, has already received from them such considerable benefits, particularly the town of Luçon itself in which their mission has been most fruitful, that I am infinitely obliged to Cardinal Richelieu for having procured them for us and to you, Monsieur, for having sent

Letter 578. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. II, p. 46.

¹Marie de Moncy, daughter of Claude de Moncy, comptroller, was the wife of Bernard Prévost.

Letter 579. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. II, p. 50.

them to us. Their Superior,¹ in particular, is laboring there unceasingly with admirable solicitude; he possesses talents well suited to the performance of his task and his zeal causes him to be esteemed by everyone. He is praiseworthy in all, except that he is excessive in his labors, if, however, there can be any excess in works undertaken to win souls to God.

580. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

Saint-Lazare, April 1, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am telling you these things in great haste: that I received your two letters from Marseilles and took care of the bill of exchange, and that we had agreed upon the union and M. Authier's¹ conditions four or five years ago, and when he came

¹Jacques Chiroye.

Letter 580. - Original autograph letter made known by M. Guy de Cassagnac.

¹Christophe d'Authier de Sisgau, born in Marseilles on April 6, 1609, obtained, while still young, the benefice of the Abbey of Saint-Victor. He was ordained a priest in June 1633, and a few days later received his doctorate. In 1634, the Archbishop of Aix entrusted to him and to all those who joined him in giving missions, the chapel of Notre-Dame de Beauvezes. A year later he approved the new Institute under the title of *Congrégation des clercs de la Mission*, which he replaced in 1638 with *Congrégation des missionnaires du clergé*. They established themselves at Brignole and Marseilles and were requested for Valence (1639) to direct the major seminary. In Senlis they were entrusted with the parish of Sainte-Geneviève (1640). Urban VIII recognized the Society by a brief of June 4, 1644. November 20, 1647 Innocent X changed its title to *Congrégation du Saint-Sacrement pour la direction des Missions et des Séminaires* and its members were called *Prêtres missionnaires de la Congrégation du Saint-Sacrement*. In 1644 Christophe d'Authier was appointed Director of both apostolic colleges of Avignon and later titular Bishop of Bethlehem. He was consecrated in Rome on March 26, 1651 and lived there during 1652, 1653 and part of 1654. He returned to France where he continued to direct his Congregation. He died in Valence on September 17, 1667.

On the efforts of union of his Institute with that of Saint Vincent, the *Annales des prêtres du Saint-Sacrement* (manuscript preserved in the library of the Benedictines of Marseilles, before their expulsion) state: "On the return of M. de Sisgau from his first

back from Provence, he sent me word that these Gentlemen² disapproved of the matter. If they have changed their minds and communicated the conditions to you, you can be sure that we shall be ready to do what is reasonably possible. Please let

journey to Rome, when his Congregation was only an idea, some devout persons inspired him to go to Paris to see if he could join up with M. Vincent de Paul who had just established an almost similar one, under the name of the Mission. To this end, he went and lived incognito for several months in their house in Paris, called the Bons-Enfants, to see if they could come together to see if their goals were similar. Since the Will of God was not yet clear, however, the subject was taken up again (1642) because of a very virtuous girl. The life of this saintly girl from Valence, known as Sister Marie, was written by the Minim, Father de la Rivière, (cf. *Histoire de la vie et moeurs de Marie Tessonnaire* [Lyon: n.p., 1650]) on the express order of the Queen Regent, Anne of Austria, and with the approval of several Doctors of the Sorbonne. It displeased the Bishop of Valence, however, who censured the book and had it condemned by the Assembly of the Clergy of France who likewise forbade devotion to her. Sister Marie told M. d'Authier that he should join up with M. Vincent de Paul and make one Community out of two the better to carry out in the Church the holy designs God was giving them. She was so insistent and produced such irrefutable proofs that God wanted it thus that M. d'Authier, who professed to practice great detachment, allowed himself to be persuaded. The better to try his disinterestedness, Providence allowed that at that time four or five Missionaries of M. Vincent should pass through Valence, returning from a mission they had just given, and they went to greet him in the seminary and to discuss this matter. M. d'Authier received them very cordially and, having had a conversation with the head of the group, called Codoing, gave him to understand that it would be better to have no union if it were not for the greater glory of God and the good of the Church. Arriving in Paris, M. Codoing recounted his conversation to M. Vincent who, on April 22, 1642, wrote M. Sigau a letter to assure him that he was equally interested in this union. A short time after, M. d'Authier came to Paris to discuss this. What stopped negotiations was that M. Vincent did not want to take on parishes, nor run the seminaries of our Congregation, nor would he allow his Missionaries to wear cuffs and collars similar to priests living in the world."

This narration appears to be correct except on two points: Bernard Codoing did not go to Paris, and obstacles did not so much arise from cuffs and collars as from what M. d'Authier was requiring in the fusion of Rules and Constitutions and his request to become Saint Vincent's Assistant with right of succession.

Both Congregations worked together in 1643 on the galleys in Marseilles. Later, a certain coldness arose between them. The priests of M. d'Authier tried to prevent the establishment of the Congregation of the Mission in Rome. On the other hand, the similarity of their names gave rise to unfortunate misunderstandings, so much so that Saint Vincent took steps to see that the Missionaries of the Blessed Sacrament would no longer bear the name of Missionaries.

The life of Christophe d'Authier de Sigau was written by Nicolas Borelli, a priest of his Congregation: *Vie de Mgr. Christophe d'Authier de Sigau, évêque de Bethléem* (Nouv. ed., Lyon: 1703).

²The priests of Christophe d'Authier.

me know the proposals they have made to you and who made them; then, accordingly, we shall consider the matter before God and write to you about it.

In the meantime, continue working on our establishment along the lines set up by our good M. Lebreton, without committing yourself to anything. I entreat you, Monsieur, in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to be on your guard against natural ardor in the situation you describe to me. The spirit of God proceeds discreetly and always humbly. Remember that you and I are subject to a thousand outbursts of nature and recall what I told you about finding myself, in the early stages of the project of the Mission, with it constantly on my mind. That made me wonder whether the affair sprang from nature or from the evil spirit, and I purposely made a retreat in Soissons so that God might be pleased to remove from my mind the pleasure and eagerness I was experiencing in this matter. God was pleased to answer my prayer in such a manner that, by His mercy, He took them both away and allowed me to be in the opposite dispositions. I think that, if God is granting some blessing to the Mission and I am less a subject of scandal to it, I attribute it after God to this fact. I wish to remain in this practice of neither concluding nor undertaking anything while I am caught up in these ardent hopes at the prospect of great benefits.

I close, meanwhile, by greeting the Little Company; I am your servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Priest of the Mission, in Rome³

³Bernard Codoing was not yet in Rome when Saint Vincent wrote this letter; he arrived there on April 8.

581. - TO JACQUES CHIROYE, IN LUÇON

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Monsieur Dehorgny is going to make a visitation of your house. I hope that in your goodness you will receive him with all the affection and tenderness Our Lord has given you for all the members of the Company. I shall say nothing about his integrity, zeal, and the experience he has in matters concerning our Institute, nor about the other virtues that make him worthy of commendation, since they are familiar enough to you: that is what has prompted me to send him to you, since I cannot come myself. I am relying on the grace Our Lord has given him that his visit will be a source of consolation and edification for you. So, I shall see you through him and embrace you with him, in the love of Our Lord, whom I beg with all my heart to bestow on you the dispositions of Saint Zachary and Saint Elizabeth for the reception of the graces the Blessed Virgin's visit brought them. I beg Him also to animate M. Dehorgny with the spirit with which He had filled His holy Mother, so that you will receive everything he tells you as coming from His mouth or rather from His all-holy, all-divine heart, in which I am entirely, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

April 19¹

Addressed: Monsieur Chiroye, Superior of the Mission, in
Luçon

Letter 581. - Archives of Turin, original signed letter.

¹Someone other than the secretary wrote on the back of the letter: "April 19, 1640." This is the date followed by Reg. 2, p. 98. We do not agree with this date because Jacques

582. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

Paris, April 25, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

These lines have only two purposes: one, to send you two letters, one to you and the other to M. de Montereil, the Ambassador's¹ secretary. We are very much obliged to M. de Saint-Aignan because he has relinquished to us for the ordinands a priory with two thousand livres income and is having another one given over, worth four hundred livres more.² I shall send you, at the first opportunity, the consent of the abbots on whom they depend, one of whom is His Eminence.³

Good M. de Saint-Aignan has looked after a monastery of women in this diocese⁴ in which great abominations occurred. The King took it away from the Franciscans and placed it once again under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Paris. M. Lebreton worked hard on the affair; you will find some reports of it among his papers. I beg you to act in conformity with them.

You cannot imagine how important this affair is. Please write to me about it, and to him also, and send his letters to me unsealed.

Moreover, please obtain from the Office of the Penitentiary a dispensation for an individual to enter religious life, accord-

Chiroye was named Superior of the establishment only later, on October 6, 1640 (cf. no. 488). Jean Dehorgny was sent on a round of visitations in Lorraine in 1640. He may have visited other houses in the course of 1641 or 1642. In April 1643 he left for Italy and did not return from there until 1653.

Letter 582. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹François du Val, Marquis de Fontenay-Mareuil.

²Perhaps the priories of the diocese of Langres mentioned in other letters.

³Cardinal Richelieu.

⁴The monastery of Saint-Eutrope (cf. no. 594).

ing to the statement of the case I am sending you. It is called a *discreto viro*; and I recommend this to you as ardently as I can. It concerns a woman who is a great servant of God.⁵

M. Authier has recalled his closest friend, the one most in harmony with his own way of thinking among these priests in Senlis,⁶ so they say, in order to send him to Rome. The Superior of Senlis has sent us for the ordinands a young priest from his house and has written me that he would see me the first chance he gets to discuss a matter of importance requiring my time and that he would do so before his departure on a long journey. I replied that he would be welcome and that we would take all the time he wanted. Since then, he has sent me word that he would not be taking his journey and said nothing of the matter which he wanted to discuss with me. That did not prevent my writing to M. Authier to say that I had gladly accepted the tentative offer of union which had been made during your interview, about which you wrote to me, and that he will find us still willing for it. I wrote the same thing to good Sister Marie⁷ and her companion, who took the trouble to write to me about it. We do not know if this change in M. Le Bégue, who is the Superior of their house in Senlis, stems from the fact that he has seen his way to becoming established permanently in Senlis in spite of the objection we are making to the Bishop of Senlis⁸ about accepting the best parish in his diocese,⁹ which he is offering us for our residence. He spoke

⁵This person had made a vow to become a Carmelite. A vow to enter a religious institute which had solemn vows was a reserved vow, i.e., one whose dispensation was reserved to the Holy See.

⁶Jean-Jacques Lafon. He died in Senlis where he was the Pastor of Sainte-Geneviève.

⁷Marie de Valence (Marie Tessonnière) was a holy widow with a very special devotion to the Blessed Trinity (cf. no. 580, n. 1). Saint Francis de Sales called her a living relic. Jean-Jacques Olier made a journey from Paris to Valence to consult her. Cardinal de Bérulle, Saint Vincent and Father Coton, her director, had the deepest respect for her. After her death, she was given a sort of public veneration.

⁸Nicolas Sanguin.

⁹The parish of Sainte-Geneviève in Senlis. It had been given to the priests of Christophe d'Authier.

to me about it so earnestly that he said he would get down on his knees to beg me to accept, if that is what it would take. Now, our problem comes from the difficulty you know we have always had in accepting parishes, except for the one in Richelieu.¹⁰ All this shows you that you should use circumspection in this matter.

I wrote to tell M. Germain to leave at the first opportunity. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

**583. - TO MOTHER FRANCOISE-ELISABETH PHELIPPEAUX,¹
IN SAINT-DENIS**

Saint-Lazare, May 1[1642]²

My very dear Mother knows that I am entirely at her service and at that of Sainte-Marie; but I am not her spiritual Father, except insofar as she is from the house in Paris. And then, I am very much afraid that I shall not be back from a journey I intend to make, with God's help, if a slight indisposition I have allows. If I am back or do not take this trip, and my dear Mother has the permission, I shall try to render her this small service. God knows with what pleasure I shall do so and

¹⁰Cardinal Richelieu had to use his influence to make him accept it.

Letter 583. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, copy made from the original autograph letter made known by Baron de Bich of Aosta.

¹Mother Françoise-Elisabeth Phelippeaux Pontchartrain.

²This letter probably belongs near no. 585.

how much I am, in the love of Our Lord, very dear Mother, her most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Mother Superior of Sainte-Marie de Saint-Denis, in Saint-Denis

584. - A PRIEST OF THE PONTOISE CONFERENCE
TO SAINT VINCENT

May 1642

The little company of the Pontoise conference of priests has urged me to write to you to express the satisfaction we all feel about our little meeting. I must confess that, in the beginning, we did not yet understand what it was all about, but now we are enjoying more and more each day the graces and blessings Our Lord has been pleased to shower on it. We all see what benefit can come to us from it individually and for the whole body of the Church. After God, it is to you we are obliged, Monsieur, for having welcomed us to be associated with your good and virtuous company from Paris. We received from you the first instructions for this little company, which have served us as the seed to produce many good works presenting themselves to be done each day, and to which God grants increase and blessing. We are asking a favor of you, which is that, since we are still only children in virtue, not having sufficient strength to sustain and guide ourselves, you might be so kind as to grant us from time to time the visit of one of the priests of your company in Paris to teach us how to walk more steadfastly in the exercises we have all begun so courageously. We are exposing our weakness to you in this way so that you will do us the good of consenting to help us.

585. - TO MOTHER FRANCOISE-ELISABETH PHELIPPEAUX,
IN SAINT-DENIS

Paris, May 8, 1642

Dear Mother,¹

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter with an inexpressible feeling of tenderness, seeing in it a perfect outpouring of the heart of our blessed Father and our worthy Mother. Were it not for the difficulty I have with the matter you propose,² which enters into the realm of impossibility, I would have devoted myself to you in the way you and your holy Community do me the kindness to request of me. The concerns I have, which are increasing each day, and the indispositions that assail me, along with my age, cause me to entreat you most humbly, dear Mother, to excuse me if I am unworthy of the grace you and your holy Community are offering me. I assure you that, although I cannot serve you in the manner you suggest, I shall do so in any other way you direct. I am your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Reverend Mother Superior of the Visitation
Sainte-Marie, in Saint-Denis

Letter 585. - Original autograph letter at the Bibl. Nat., n.a.f. 22.819.

¹Saint Vincent had first written "Monsieur"; this word is scratched out.

²It would seem that this is the suggestion to which the Saint was also responding in no. 583.

586. - TO MONSIEUR N.¹

[Between 1640 and 1648]²

Your Lordship,

Our Lord has turned to you for the sustenance of the poor nobility of Lorraine and His Divine Goodness has blessed the charity He bestowed on you in their regard. He is turning to you once again to tell you that there is not one sou for next month and that if your providence does not cast eyes of compassion on them, those poor people will necessarily have to

587. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[Around May 1642]¹

Monsieur,

Maître Belot foresees that the business concerning Sister Anne will be disagreeable and fears that there will be a lawsuit because it seems to be Monsieur du Ruisseau and the leading citizens² who wish to keep her there. She really thinks that her brother who is the executor

Letter 586. - Reg. 1, f^o70.- The copyist notes that the original was in Saint Vincent's own handwriting.

¹Most probably the Duc de Liancourt, who was a member of the society formed for the assistance of the poor aristocracy of Lorraine who were refugees in Paris, and he had the right to be called "Your Lordship."

²The work for the nobility of Lorraine, founded in 1640, lasted about eight years. (Cf. Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. I, chap. XXXV, p. 168.)

Letter 587. - Archives of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter was written shortly before the letter Saint Louise wrote on July 5, 1642 to Sister Jeanne Lepointre (cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 64, p. 77).

²Of Fontenay-aux-Roses (Hauts-de-Seine). Although the Daughters of Charity were established in this place in 1642, the act of foundation dates only from 1650. (Cf. Arch. Nat. S 6.187.) An important legacy given by M. Béguin for the foundation of two Sisters assured the work begun there.

of the will of the woman who made the foundation, and her heirs will be against it, and that this point of honor will put them on bad terms with one another. Would it not be possible, Monsieur, for you to have someone speak to the pastor whom she told that I did not approve of his going to her house and of her speaking to him and Monsieur du Ruisseau? I do not think they would wish to do anything contrary to what you suggest to them. I am greatly distressed that I was not sufficiently on my guard against this troublesome spirit.

Our Sister Anne, from the parish of Saint-Sulpice, another young woman from Lorraine, came to see me the day before yesterday to ask me to remove her from that place for these reasons: she is encountering too many difficulties and contradictions there. It is true that those gentlemen who are meddling in that Charity hold them in great contempt. I wonder if that good young woman from Fontenay has spoken to her or had someone speak to her, for she is intent on having someone leave with her.

Madame d'Humières³ is determined to await your convenience to make her confession. I told her that you were ill. She hopes all the same that it can be one day next week. She would like to know for sure tomorrow.

Please let me know what to do about Sister Anne from Saint-Sulpice. She seemed quite anxious to me. We are most fortunate that our good God has given you a paternal heart to put up with us, and especially with me. I am, Monsieur, your most humble daughter and most grateful servant.

L. DE M.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

³ Probably Isabelle Phelippeaux, daughter of Raymond, Seigneur d'Herbault, and of Claude Gobelin, married in July 1627 to Louis de Crevant, Seigneur d'Argy, Marquis d'Humières.

588. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around May 1642]¹

I am thinking of sending Monsieur du Coudray to Fontenay tomorrow to that Sister² and, if need be, to the pastor and M. du Ruisseau.

I began to take some purgative tisane this evening. It will take me a few days to be purged; after that, we shall see about the day we can render that little service to that good lady.³

Good evening, Mademoiselle. I am your servant.

V. D.

589. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

May 25, 1642

I can explain the consolation your two letters gave me only by telling you that since I have been in the Company I am not aware of having received a single one as moving as this one, so much so that I am afraid I allowed it to pervade my mind too much on two or three separate occasions, for a quarter of an hour each time. O Monsieur, how the abominations of my life grieve me at the sight of this mercy from God on the Company!¹

I very much approve of your having told Bishop Ingoli that the small number of workers we have and the obligation we

Letter 588. - Archives of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter answers the preceding one; it was written on the side reserved for the address.

²Sister Anne of Fontenay.

³Madame d'Humières.

Letter 589. - Reg. 2, pp. 33 and 76.

¹The first fragment ends here.

are under to the Bishops *circa missiones faciendas*² deprive us, for the present, of the means of taking advantage of his kind favor in offering to mediate with the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide for its protection for the Company. I think, Monsieur, that you would do well to let it go at that and regulate your conduct toward him on that basis. Assure him, as I informed him through M. Lebreton, that I believe that, since His Holiness is the only one who can send persons *ad gentes*, all priests are obliged to obey him when he orders them to go. This Little Company is established in this disposition that, when His Holiness chooses to send it *a capite ad calcem*³ to those countries, it will drop everything and go most willingly. Would that God, Monsieur, had rendered us worthy of spending our lives, as Our Lord did, for the salvation of those poor souls so far removed from all assistance. Take care of this matter with your usual prudence.

590. - A PASTOR FROM THE ENVIRONS OF PARIS
TO SAINT VINCENT

1642

The fruits reaped by those who have made the spiritual retreat exercises at your house are diffusing such a fragrance wherever they pass, that they are awakening in the spirit of many the desire to go themselves and pick fruit from the tree. Seeing, therefore, one of my close relatives in this good disposition, I thought I could do nothing better for him than to entreat you most humbly to be so kind as to receive him in your house to make the spiritual retreat exercises, from which he hopes to receive light and grace to guide the rest of his life.

²About missions to be given.

³From head to toe.

591. - THE TOWN MAGISTRATES OF LUNEVILLE
TO SAINT VINCENT

1642

Monsieur,

For the number of years that this poor village has been afflicted by plague, war, and famine, which have reduced it to its present extremity, instead of consolation, we have received only severe measures from our creditors and acts of cruelty on the part of the soldiers, who forcibly deprived us of what little bread we had. Because of this it seemed heaven no longer had anything but harshness for us, until one of your children in Our Lord who arrived laden with alms, greatly mitigated the excess of our misfortunes and revived our hope in the mercy of the good God. Since our sins have provoked his anger, we humbly kiss the hand that is punishing them and receive as well the effects of His divine gentleness with sentiments of extraordinary gratitude. We bless the instruments of His infinite clemency, both those who relieve us with their well-timed alms, and those who procure and distribute them, and we bless you, particularly, Monsieur, whom we believe to be, after God, the principal author of so great a good. To tell you that it is well applied to this poor place, where the leading citizens are reduced to nothing, is what the Missionary you sent will do for you in detail more disinterestedly than we. He has seen our desolation and, before God, you will see the everlasting obligation we have toward you for having assisted us in this situation.

592. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[June 8, 1642]¹

Mon Dieu, Mademoiselle, how shocked I was this morning when Monsieur Portail told me about the accident that

Letter 591. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. XI, sect. I, p. 385.

Letter 592. - Archives of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹On the eve of Pentecost 1642, the ceiling fell in (cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 102 [1642] and L. 120 [1646]; also, Conference of Saint Vincent to the Sisters, June 20, 1642).

happened at your house yesterday. I told the Company about it² and mentioned to them what Our Lord said to those who were questioning Him about the people who had been crushed under the ruins from the fall of the tower of Jericho. That did not happen because of the sins of those persons, nor those of their fathers and mothers, but rather to manifest the glory of God. And, to be sure, I say the same to you, Mademoiselle: this accident has not been sent to you because of your sins nor for those of our dear Sisters, but to alert us, who understand such things, to live so well as not be caught unawares by death. You have in this encounter a new reason to love God more than ever. He has preserved you as the apple of His eye in an accident in which you ought to have been crushed under the ruins, had God not averted the blow by His gracious Providence. We have given thanks to God for doing so, and this afternoon, God willing, I hope to have the happiness of seeing you here, if you come to Vespers, or at your house. I am sending you these lines, meanwhile, to greet you and to wish you good day in advance. I am your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

**593. - RESPONSES OF SAINT VINCENT TO SOME QUESTIONS
OF SAINT LOUISE**

[Around June 1642]¹

Q. - Shall Sister Henriette go to Sedan before you return and shall

²Later, Saint Vincent recounted this accident to the Sisters (cf. Conference of February 13, 1646). Saint Louise wrote down the thoughts that occurred to her concerning this accident (cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, A. 75).

Letter 593. - Archives of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter was written shortly after no. 587 and probably on the eve of the journey

we have Sister Gillette² come back, and in that case, will we have to send two of them?

A. - I think so.

Q. - Shall Sister Barbe³ remain with the galley-slaves, to whom I have had to send a third Sister because Sister Barbe is weak and infirm?

A. - I think that would be a good idea. In a few days you will be needing only two of them. The galley-slaves will soon be leaving.⁴

Q. - Should we not speak to the Attorney General⁵ about his having forbidden Sister Henriette to leave?

A. - Yes.

Q. - Would there be any way to give some directive that our Sisters from Saint-Sulpice not be so overburdened with the remedies they have to take to people who are not under the care of the Charity, since five or six people are giving them orders? That discourages all of them, as does the contempt and the continual suspicions they endure; also, would there not be some way for them to change their room?

A. - I shall tell the Duchesse⁶ about this when I return, unless you prefer to speak to her about it yourself.

Q. - How shall I go about removing Sister Anne?⁷

A. - You take care of that.

Q. - When shall the Chancellor's wife⁸ go to Fontenay; should she not be told, and how am I to speak to Sister Anne; if this takes place when I am at the Foundlings, would it not be more advisable for her to be there than to remain in the house, for fear that she might cause some disturbance there?

the Saint made to Richelieu around June 10. Between each question Saint Louise left an empty space for the answers, which Saint Vincent preferred to write in the margin of the first two pages. The initials "Q" and "A" were added to make the letter more understandable.

²Henriette Gesseume and Gillette Joly, sister of Marie Joly.

³Sister Barbe Angiboust.

⁴After a short sojourn in Paris they left for Marseilles.

⁵Blaise Méliand (1641-1650).

⁶The Duchesse d'Aiguillon.

⁷Sister Anne of Fontenay-aux-Roses.

⁸Madame Séguier.

A. - The Chancellor's wife should be reminded of this trip and, as you say, have that Sister brought to the Foundlings.

Q. - *Whom shall we put in her place; should it be Jeanne Lepeintre?*

A. - We will have to send J[eanne] Lepeintre, etc.

Q. - *Shall we not speak to her about the headdress and, if she does accept, provided she can wear a coiffe because of a bad eye, may she do so and may she wear one of black butter-muslin; or shall we send for Sister Perrette, from Saint-Germain,⁹ because of the encounter with the Pastor, which we need to discuss?*

A. - Suggest that type of headdress to her. Meanwhile, do not touch Saint-Germain so soon.

Q. - *How does one deal with Sisters who, at the slightest dissatisfaction they experience, speak of leaving?*

A. - At the first conference¹⁰ I give them, we shall try to remedy this fault, please God.

Q. - *Shall I speak to Madame Lhoste about the need we shall have for her room, if all the children and wetnurses come here? She has not lived in it for almost a month because no shutters have been made for her windows.*

A. - That would be a good idea.

Q. - *Shall the Ladies decide upon the purchase or rental of a house for the children in your absence?*

A. - Let them do as they please.

Q. - *Should I assemble all our Sisters so that, by speaking familiarly together, they might encourage one another and recognize the faults being committed both in the service of the poor as well as in their behavior towards the Ladies and their cordiality with one another?*

A. - Please try to do this.

Q. - *Shall I receive the two young women who are presenting themselves, especially the one from Madame Henriette? If so, when?*

A. - When you see fit.

Q. - *The foundlings have too much bread at the moment; can we take some and should we not mention this to the Ladies or at least to the Duchesse?*

A. - It's up to the Duchesse.

⁹Perrette Chefdeville was stationed at Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

¹⁰Perhaps the Conference of June 1642 on Obedience.

Q. - If the wetnurses and children come here, will they be responsible for their own expenditures or shall we do as at La Chapelle in order to avoid the complaints about what might be taken by one or the other?

A. - I think they should be responsible for their own expenses.

Q. - Some repair work will be needed on the fireplace that Monsieur Portail has already seen; shall we have it done?

A. - Yes, please; we shall see that it is paid for.

Q. - To whom shall I go if some difficulty arises? And he should be told not to condescend to my ups and downs, but entirely to the guidance of God in the person of our most Honored Superior.

A. - M. Portail, and I shall tell him.

Q. - The Comte de Lannoy¹¹ would like to be assured that we will give him the help he has requested.

A. - Present the matter to Madame de Herse, please; I forgot to speak to her about it.

Q. - Madame de Beaufort¹² is asking how she ought to behave toward the churchwardens from Saint-Etienne; they want to assist in a body at the treasurer's report and at the election of new officers, or at least have a procurator of the Charity named by them who will be present.

A. - She will do well to delay matters, if she can, until that churchwarden is no longer in office.

Q. - I most humbly entreat you, Monsieur, if possible, that I may have the honor of speaking to you here so that all the Sisters in the house may be encouraged to do well through the happiness of your holy blessing. I assure you that we are greatly in need of it and I would be pleased to know when it would be convenient for you and

¹¹Charles de Lannoy, governor of Montreuil-sur-Mer (Pas-de-Calais), was importing Saint Louise for Sisters for Montreuil. He had to wait a long time since Sisters did not go there until 1647. He died in 1649.

¹²President of the Confraternity of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont, a parish in Paris.

that you know also how I fear your trip, so that before God you might console the heart of your poor daughter and most grateful servant.

L. DE M.

Tuesday evening

A. - It will be late in the day when I shall try to come to your house, telling you meanwhile that you are a woman of little faith and that I am your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent* - Mademoiselle Le Gras

593a. - *LAMBERT AUX COUTEAUX, SUPERIOR IN RICHELIEU,
TO SAINT VINCENT*

Richelieu, June [1642]¹

We have only forty-three ordinands, but their modesty is beginning to give marvelous edification, so that the people who see them at Divine Office cannot hold back their tears of emotion, seeing the order, propriety and devotion with which they assist at it. It seems to these good people that they are seeing not men but angels of Paradise. To God alone be the glory for this, to Cardinal Richelieu who has established us here be the merit and the recompense, and to us shame and humiliation before heavenly and earthly powers, for being employed in such a lofty ministry!

Letter 593a. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. II, sect. V, p. 234. Coste originally placed this in his supplement, vol. VIII, no. 3299, p. 523; the editors have assigned it this position for chronological reasons.

¹Abelly's text read 1649. This must surely be a printing error because further on he states that the following year was 1643.

594. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

Saint-Lazare, June 20, 1642

Monsieur,

I think it inadvisable for you to consider the proposal concerning Saint-Yves¹ for the time being. Here are the reasons. The spirit of that country is reserved; it temporizes and ponders, loves and esteems people who proceed *piano piano*, and is extremely wary of those who move quickly. The result of this union would be that within four years we could not be certain of our spirit. Those who govern have an aversion for any kind of union. Some time ago, the Datary² said to a Jesuit Father who was speaking to him about the union of a benefice: "Father," he said, "it is not right for me to dip my bread into my neighbor's pot." And we ourselves were refused the union of two priories for the ordinands.³ Here we have the same difficulty; I mean those who govern.

Letter 594. - Pémartin, *op. cit.*, vol. I, no. 355, p. 408; he consulted the original which Charavay subsequently put on sale.

¹Two centuries prior to the time of Saint Vincent, the people of Brittany had obtained in Rome a parish church and a hospital that they dedicated to Saint-Yves. Because of the lack of funds, the Confraternity of Saint-Yves, which was the administrative body, merged with the Confraternity of Saint-Louis des Français, on which the church and hospital depended. From this fusion the *Congrégation de Saint-Louis et Saint-Yves* came into being. The hospital of Saint-Yves was soon suppressed. The parish functioned until 1824, governed by a titular who was appointed by the Congregation of Saint-Louis. The church of Saint-Yves, situated at Campo di Marte, was the old church of Sant' Andrea de *Monteraris* that went as far back as the eleventh century. (Cf. Mgr. Pierre La Croix, *Mémoire historique sur les Institutions de France à Rome* [Paris: Victor Goupy, 1868], p. 58.) Bernard Codoing would have liked to see the church detached from Saint-Louis and assigned to the Congregation of the Mission.

²The Cardinal Datary who presided over the Apostolic Datary, an office in the Roman Curia which investigated the fitness of candidates for non-consistorial benefices reserved to the Holy See. At the time of Saint Vincent, the competence of the Datary was extensive, including, besides benefices, the treatment of questions pertaining to ecclesiastical inheritances, the approbation of the constitutions of lay religious congregations and of confraternities, dispensations in the external forum from irregularities and excommunications, and the drawing up of specified pontifical documents.

³The two priories of Langres.

The Congregation of Saint-Louis would raise a storm against you. Let us seek the glory of God; He will see to our affairs. So, thank those gentlemen, please, with all possible gratitude. I have such a soft spot in my heart for them that I cannot put it into words for you. O Monsieur, how wholeheartedly I beg God to fill them with His richest graces!

Put on the letter the name of the person who wrote to me.

The Abbé de Saint-Denis, the Queen's chaplain, who belongs to our assembly at Saint-Lazare, one of the most capable and virtuous priests in this kingdom,⁴ was appointed to the bishopric of Le Puy in Auvergne seven or eight months ago. I entreat you, Monsieur, to do what you can to hasten the sending of his Bulls.

M. de Saint-Aignan, our benefactor, will recount to you one of these days that the trouble at Saint-Eutrope is worse than the document states. Please continue working on this secretly and efficiently; do the same to have the dispensation expedited; since the vow is simple and *in foro interno*, it is not necessary to have public attestations.⁵

M. Germain did not give you enough money to live on and get settled. While waiting for me to send you some, get some at the lowest rate you can from M. Marchand; he has kindly sent me word that he would give you what you need.

I embrace MM. Germain and Ploesquellec,⁶ all our

⁴Henri Cauchon de Maupas du Tour, a member of the Tuesday Conferences, occupied the diocese of Puy from 1641 to 1661 and that of Evreux from 1661 to August 8, 1680, the day of his death. A renowned orator, he preached the funeral panegyrics for Saint Jane Frances de Chantal and for Saint Vincent. He wrote the life of Saint Francis de Sales and that of Saint Jane Frances. He was one of the two bishops who approved Abelly's biography of Saint Vincent.

⁵A reference to the dispensation needed for the person who had vowed to become a Carmelite (cf. no. 582).

⁶Guillaume de Ploesquellec, born in Plourivo (Côtes-du-Nord), was received into the Congregation of the Mission on July 13, 1641, and made his vows in Paris in 1647. He remained in Rome a very short time. Perhaps he had been sent there to serve the parish of Saint-Yves.

Brothers,⁷ and you Monsieur, with unimaginable affection. I am for all, in the love of Our Lord. . . .

595. - TO A BISHOP¹

Saint-Lazare, June 22, 1642

I received in Richelieu, where I had gone on a journey and whence I have just returned,² the letter with which you were pleased to honor me. Although, before leaving, I had given instructions to obtain a letter M. Liancourt had promised me, to be sent to you, in addition to the one he had already sent to the Ambassador,³ I decided that on my return I would ask the Duchesse d'Aiguillon to write herself, and did in fact ask her. But she excused herself, so I wrote to M. de Chavigny, the Secretary of State, who heads the department in Rome and is at Court and I used the precaution that you, Excellency, had desired, namely, that he should not speak of it. I am awaiting his response. The confidence with which he favors me causes me to trust that he will honor the silence of Our Lord and that if there is reason to write, he will do so. As soon as I receive his answer, I will let you know, Excellency. I am very sorry that I still do not have the happiness of serving you more promptly and effectively. Alas! Excellency, how fortunate I would consider myself if God were pleased to grant me the grace of being able to render you some small service during my life time in recognition of the infinite obligations

⁷Brother François and Jean Martin, who was at this time a clerical student and thus called "Brother" (cf. no. 569).

Letter 595. - Archives of the Mission, Florence, (Italy), original signed letter.

¹Perhaps this letter was written to the Bishop of Puy, Henri de Maupas du Tour.

²This journey to Richelieu should be placed between June 8 and 20. The Saint had gone to make the visitation of the Community house there.

³The Marquis de Fontenay-Mareuil.

we have toward your goodness, unequalled on earth! I am unworthy of this grace from God. Still, I shall not cease to ask it of God and shall beg Him all my life to preserve you many years for the good of His Church and to make me worthy of being, in His love and that of His holy Mother. . .

596. - A PRIEST OF THE MISSION TO SAINT VINCENT

1642

God has blessed the mission given in Les Essarts:¹ seven heretics were converted; the nobles and the officers of the law have greatly benefited from it.

**597. - JACQUES-RAOUL DE LA GUIBOURGÈRE,
BISHOP OF SAINTES, TO SAINT VINCENT**

1642

The labors of the Missionaries were so successful that the people themselves went to thank them.

**598. - SYLVESTRE DE CRUSY DE MARCILLAC,
BISHOP OF MENDE, TO SAINT VINCENT**

1642

I assure you that I value the work your men are presently doing in my diocese more than if I were given a hundred kingdoms. I am

Letter 596. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. II, p. 50.

¹In Marne.

Letter 597. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. II, p. 30.

Letter 598. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. III, p. 31.

perfectly satisfied at seeing all the people in my diocese disposed toward what is good and my pastors profiting greatly from the conferences your priests are establishing with success and with blessings.

**599. - JACQUES-RAOUL DE LA GUIBOURGERE,
BISHOP OF SAINTES, TO SAINT VINCENT**

Saintes, 1642

I have had your Missionaries come to this city for a few days' rest. Indeed, they have been working for six months with such diligence that I am amazed they were able to keep it up. I myself went to the locality to get them.

599a. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

*[July 4, 1642]*¹

Monsieur,

Madame Traversay forgot to ask you whether we should have another decree² drawn up, because this one applies only to the Foundlings and is not in line with the proposal of the Duchesse.³

Letter 599. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. II, sect. II, p. 30.

Letter 599a. - Archives of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter. Coste placed it in his supplement, vol. VIII, no. 3300, p. 523. The editors have relocated it here for reasons of chronology.

¹The contents of this letter necessitate this date.

²A postscript added by Saint Louise on the back of the original informs us that the judgment obtained concerned the "income from Gonesse." By this judgment of July 1642, an annual income of four thousand livres, to be drawn from the castellany of Gonesse, had been applied to the work of the Foundlings. At the request of the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, one thousand livres of this sum were assigned for the upkeep of the Sisters in the establishment.

³The Duchesse d'Aiguillon.

Although I told her that you had taken a good look at it, she still requests that you let me send it to her tomorrow morning.

I also most humbly ask you for a little time to talk with you before you leave;⁴ otherwise I shall really be at a loss.

We have a Sister here who has almost made up her mind to leave. She has been in this house for more than a year. I met her this evening on her return from the Foundling home and advised her to go to confession tomorrow. Since Monsieur Portail is still sick, could she go to Monsieur Guérin?⁵ And could it be in the morning, because she seems to be the only one I can send to relieve our Sisters at Saint-Sulpice, where they tell me that one of them is at death's door.

I feel a little overwhelmed by the manifold problems arising from the frame of mind of so many of our Sisters. I assure you, Monsieur, that this is for me cause for shame before God and before the world, because of my own inadequacy in helping these girls do good.

I beg the goodness of God to make this clear to you and to provide for it. I am, Monsieur, your most humble and grateful daughter and servant.

L. DE M.

Friday

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

599b. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[July 4, 1642]

You are right to ask Madame Tra[versay] to include the Sisters¹ in the decree, according to the desire of Madame

⁴Saint Vincent was supposed to go to Beauvais, where he was present on Friday, July 11.

⁵Jean Guérin the younger.

Letter 599b. - Archives of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter. Coste placed this letter in his supplement, vol. VIII, no. 3301, p. 524. Since it is the response to the previous letter, the editors have placed it here.

¹The Sisters working at the foundling home.

d'Aiguillon. I am going to tell M. Guérin to go and hear that Sister's confession, and I shall see you before I leave.

600. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

Our Sister Françoise¹ appears to me quite indifferent about going to Liancourt or remaining. She forgot to tell you that she is free to dispose of the property of her deceased mother and that she rented out part of the house three or four years ago and nothing has been received from it. She would also like to sell what she owns in the region. That made her think that she might be able to put her little affairs in order if she were to come with me. I most humbly entreat you to take the trouble of letting me know what I should do and if there is anything to fear in leaving her, because of the proposal that good priest made to her, although her spirit seems greatly strengthened in her vocation.

I am still somewhat afraid that our Sisters think I do not wish them to talk about their difficulties. When I examined myself on the subject, I was able to come up with only two occasions of that: one, when M. Thibault² came here and asked for three or four of them whom he knew, including little Sister Claude, who at the time could not get her fill of talking about the anxiety she had regarding a sin she had confessed. I cautioned her against speaking to him about it. Another time, I told our Sister Louise,³ who loves to talk at length and often of her austerities, not to say anything about them but to confine herself to the practice of those permitted to her, and that when she discontinued them, she could resume them without mentioning it. Except for those instances, Monsieur, I am unaware of having given anyone reason to say that I do not approve of their talking. If they have complained about anything else, I think you should get some clarification on the matter, so as to understand better the mind of the Sisters.

Letter 600. - Archives of the Mission, original autograph letter.

¹ Françoise Noret.

² Jean Thibault, Priest of the Mission.

³ Louise Ganset.

It seems to me, Monsieur, that what I requested of you so that our Sister Turgis might effectively take my place with the Sisters came to my mind from a slight remark about this need, the details of which I do not recall, and also because Monsieur [Portail] has been speaking to several Sisters at the same time, to almost all of them of v[ows], about making a retreat. Those Sisters who are weak-minded and impatient are having no rest until this is done and are putting off doing good.

I think that in order to be disposed to make a good retreat they should begin anew to do better beforehand, after being a little disturbed, which often happens and, only when the time draws near, should it be proposed to them that they might make it. That is a little more difficult for us than for religious because we have to get replacements for the Sisters we withdraw.

I wonder, Monsieur, in order to remedy promptly the confusion of the Sisters of Saint-Sulpice, if it is better to send Sister Henriette⁴ right now, have Sister Catherine come to make her retreat, keep her here in this house and postpone Sister Henriette's retreat; because I am afraid their little disorders will continue

Please give me an answer, pardon me all that I have written you, perhaps inopportune, and give me your holy blessing. For I am, Monsieur, your most humble and most grateful daughter and servant.

L. DE M.

July 6, Sunday evening [1642]⁵

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

601. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[July 6 or 7, 1642]¹

Like you, Mademoiselle, I think there is nothing to fear

⁴Henriette Gesseume.

⁵The words "Sunday, July 6" and the contents indicate with certitude the year 1642.

Letter 601. - Archives of the Mission, original autograph letter.

¹This letter is an answer to the preceding one and thus this date has been assigned.

about our Sister Françoise;² deal with her as you see fit.

I am not aware that the Sisters have complained that you do not allow them to speak to spiritual persons.

I shall notify M. Portail regarding the point we mentioned yesterday and those retreats, and we shall discuss all that on the return, God willing. Write down everything he needs to know.

It would be better if you sent Henriette off as soon as possible and summoned Catherine.

Be at peace concerning the little difficulties you mentioned to me yesterday. I have about twenty-five years' experience regarding the extent to which interior and exterior direction should go and the difficulties of both. I shall acquaint you with all that.

Take care of your health and remain cheerful. Pray for me, who am

V. D.

602. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

Beauvais, July 11, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter of June 15 in this town of Beauvais,¹ where I had given instructions that it be sent to me by express messenger as soon as it was received .

²Françoise Noret.

Letter 602. - Original autograph letter. The first page of the original can be found in the Motherhouse of the Priests of the Mission; the second sheet is in the British Museum: Foreign Private Letters, 22.488 f° 14.

¹The Saint was making the third visitation of the Ursuline convent in that town. (Cf. Collet, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 358.)

I have written to you by all the regular mails, I think, since my return from Richelieu and some time before that; I think I have missed only two since your arrival.

I was very pleased to learn, from the letter you wrote to M. Soufliers, your way of giving orders. Speaking of M. Soufliers, please write everything to me alone and to no one else about matters. You told him something about Messieurs G[ermain] and P[loesquelles] that is not proper for anyone but me to know, nor, if possible, should any fault of anyone in the Company, according to the rules of true charity. What you write to someone else to be relayed to me will not hasten my reply any sooner.

I wrote you that I hoped Our Lord would grant me the grace to mend my ways,² and I am working at it, as a matter of fact, through His goodness. And as for Messieurs G[ermain] and P[loesquelles], set them to work; you will see that they will adapt themselves, at least M. G[ermain], who attentively and skillfully accomplished very well what he was doing. He will have more difficulty with the language than the younger men. He will get used to it little by little. And M. P[loesquelles] has a talent for speaking in public; he will be a source of edification and blessing, I hope, as he has always been everywhere. Should things turn out otherwise, do not hesitate to let me know, please; do not hold back on their account. If need be, we can replace them with others.

Here are the answers to the questions you asked:

Primo, concerning the house at forty pistoles rent, I think you did very well, considering the plans for the ordinands. I think you would do well to board the ordinands and retreatants free of charge; this is the wish of the foundress.³

²In no. 559, in reply to complaints about his slowness in responding to requests, Saint Vincent told Bernard Codoing, "I intend in future to answer you as soon as possible after receiving your letters and weighing the matter before God. . . . I shall work at correcting myself of my slowness."

³The Duchesse d'Aiguillon.

If you can feed them for a jule⁴ a day, that amounts to about one hundred francs for each ordination and four hundred francs per year, assuming that you have four ordinations a year and thirty ordinands at each ordination. Moreover, you will be able to use another two hundred francs for the retreatants at the rate of two per day all through the year. That makes six hundred livres for that purpose. Your revenue here amounts to twenty-five hundred livres at present. I do not know what those fifteen or sixteen hundred livres will be worth in Rome in the future.

I sent you the letter of exchange from the Duchesse d'Aiguillon for sixty-nine hundred and some livres that you could place in some credit bank⁵ as I mentioned to you, unless there is some house you can rent so as to remodel it for our use, or that the business concerning Saint-Yves is settled with time. Look into it and keep me informed of everything, please. Secrecy is necessary with regard to this money, for fear that they. . . .⁶ I also think it inadvisable for you to make the foundation known yet, if you feel that, because of the prejudice they might have against that Lady,⁷ they would object to sending ordinands. This is a matter of great importance. M. du Coudray thinks that will not be a hindrance. You could find out secretly how our close friends feel about it and write the Lady a letter of thanks and deep appreciation. This foundation is the result of a vow she made for the preservation of His Eminence who is ill.⁸ From that you may assume that you will not be lacking the recommendation of the Nuncio⁹

⁴A coin worth thirty centimes. A centime is a hundredth part of a franc.

⁵An institution of public credit founded by Sixtus V, Pope from 1585 to 1590. His reforms of the College of Cardinals lasted till the pontificate of Pope John XXIII (1958-1963).

⁶The sentence ends the page and is incomplete in the original letter.

⁷Because of her uncle, Cardinal Richelieu.

⁸The Cardinal was suffering from the illness that was to end his life on December 4, 1642. After an ulcer on his arm had closed, two abscesses formed at the top of his lung.

⁹Gerolamo Grimaldi, Archbishop of Seleucia, was born in Genoa in 1597 and named

when he returns, for the purpose that you wrote about and for the Saint-Yves affair. Perform some devotion there to thank God for the grace He has granted your establishment. Be careful, nevertheless, about expenditures and plans. This is all you can expect. She has made other foundations in several places and neither she nor His Eminence ever adds anything to what they have given. And as for any mention of putting up his coat of arms, you may rest assured that the vanity of that will not affect him at all.

You could take on the duty of examining the priests and of giving them a short retreat. If, with time, it is evident that the small income you have does not allow this, *in nomine Domini*, beseech the One who provides for the needs of gnats to cast the eyes of His Providence on you and then seek advice as to what you should do. You could likewise take care of visiting the poor. This Company, like Our Lord, takes spiritual and temporal care of the sick poor.

I have written you many times that you would do well to get an Italian priest; and the one who worked with M. Lebreton seems to me better suited than any other. I also wrote you that it would be a good idea to engage that good Breton to whom I have written. Oh! how fine he seems to me and what a good spirit he has! I embrace him in spirit with very great affection as the first fruits of God's blessing on your establishment. I would be greatly consoled also if that other man of M. Lebreton had a vocation for this. It will also be beneficial to you to get an Italian Brother, and, if necessary, I shall send you another from here instead of François,¹⁰ or together with him.

Give me a little time [to consider]¹¹ whether we should dress

Vice-Legate of Romagna in 1625, Governor of Rome in 1628, and Nuncio in France on March 2, 1641. He became a Cardinal in 1643 and Archbishop of Aix in 1648. He died in that town on November 4, 1685.

¹⁰We do not know who this coadjutor Brother is; several had this first name.

¹¹The sentence in the original is incomplete.

as the Italians do there. There are pros and cons, and many of them. We shall see.

I see no hope of union with the Gentlemen from Provence,¹² if it does not come from His Holiness when they request their approbation.¹³ He ordered the reformed Benedictines of Brittany¹⁴ and those of Lorraine¹⁵ to unite with the Congregation of Saint-Maur, the one in France;¹⁶ and that turned out very well. The Holy See knows from experience the extraordinary happenings that occur between two [Orders]¹⁷ that bear the same name and those that have the same¹⁸ means of arriving at the same end. At the very time I am speaking to you, Monsieur Portail, who represents the Superior in Paris, sends me word that a very good and excellent priest, who has presented himself at our house in Paris, told him that if we do not accept him because of the Bishop of Le Puy,¹⁹ to whom we gave him and for fear of displeasing him, he would go to

¹²The priests of Christophe d'Authier.

¹³They obtained it on June 4, 1644.

¹⁴The reform was introduced into the Benedictine convents of Brittany at the beginning of the seventeenth century, at the instigation of a few monks of Marmoutiers who had withdrawn to the priory of Lehon-sur-Rance, near Dinan. The ten monasteries which had adopted the reform merged with the Congregation of Saint-Maur in 1628 by order of Pope Urban VIII.

¹⁵The Congregation of Saint-Vanne came into being as a result of the reform introduced into Lorraine by Cardinal Charles de Lorraine, legate *a latere*, and was solemnly approved by a brief of April 7, 1604.

¹⁶In 1650, the Congregation of Saint-Maur possessed almost all of the great abbeys of the Order of Saint Benedict. It had developed from the Congregation of Saint-Vanne, especially under the inspiration of Grégoire Tarrisse, and was approved by the brief of May 17, 1621. (Cf. Dom Paul Denis, *Le cardinal de Richelieu et la réforme des monastères bénédictins* [Lille: Désclée, 1913].)

¹⁷We believe this was the word used in the original letter which is damaged at this point.

¹⁸The part of the letter preserved in the Archives of the Mission ends here. The word *même* [same] is repeated at the top of the second page.

¹⁹Henri de Maupas du Tour.

the seminary that the Abbés Olier,²⁰ de Foix,²¹ Brandon, and some others²² are beginning in Vaugirard,²³ from which they are going to Saint-Sulpice, whose parish they have accepted.²⁴

²⁰Jean-Jacques Olier, the celebrated founder of the seminary of Saint-Sulpice, whom Saint Vincent calls "a wholly apostolic man, open to the grace of God," was one of the principal restorers of ecclesiastical discipline in the seventeenth century. He was born in Paris, September 20, 1608. After a few hesitations, which Saint Vincent succeeded in dissipating, he entered Holy Orders and was ordained a priest on May 21, 1633. The first years of his priestly career were consecrated to the work of giving missions. He participated in the labors of the priests of Saint-Lazare whom he edified by his zeal and humility. For reasons still unexplained, perhaps, as has been said, because of a divergence of views on the question of whether he should agree to become a bishop, Olier passed from the direction of Saint Vincent, who had been his confessor for three years (1632-1635), to that of Father de Condren. This was not a desertion — far from it. In 1649 he wrote: "For extraordinary affairs, we do not fail to see Monsieur Vincent, and for ordinary matters, all our brothers assembled." He did not begin the seminary of Vaugirard nor accept the parish of Saint-Sulpice until he had consulted the Saint. "M. Vincent is our father," he often used to say to the students in his seminary. Jean-Jacques Olier died April 2, 1657, assisted by his holy friend. The latter consoled the priests of Saint-Sulpice in their affliction and it is believed that we still have a fragment of his address to them on that occasion. (Cf. Faillon, *op. cit.*; Frédéric Monier, *Vie de Jean-Jacques Olier, curé de la paroisse et fondateur du séminaire de Saint-Sulpice* [Paris: Poussielgue, 1914].) For Saint Vincent's address, mentioned above, see vol. XIII, no. 51.

²¹The Abbot of Saint-Volusien in Foix, François-Etienne de Caulet, who became Bishop of Pamiers. Born in Toulouse, May 19, 1610, he was endowed with the Abbey of Saint-Volusien in Foix in 1627. He became attached to Jean-Jacques Olier and followed him in his mission in Auvergne, in the diocese of Chartres and in other places in the kingdom. He supported him in his parochial ministry and, together with him and M. du Ferrier, founded the seminary of Vaugirard. Saint Vincent, who knew the Abbot of Saint-Volusien, thought that he would do well at the head of a diocese. Thanks to him, François de Caulet was consecrated Bishop of Pamiers, March 5, 1645. In 1638 he testified against the Abbé de Saint-Cyran. As bishop, he continued to combat Jansenism for a long time, forbade in his diocese the reading of books by adherents of the movement, and made every effort to bring back those who had strayed from the path of truth. His association with Nicolas Pavillon, Bishop of Alet, succeeded in winning him over to Jansenist ideas. The Bishop of Pamiers died August 7, 1680 without having made the act of submission to the Church. (Cf. Jerome Besoigne, *Vies des quatre évêques engagés dans la cause de Port-Royal* [2 vols., Cologne: n.p., 1756]; Georges Doublet, *Un prélat janséniste, F. de Caulet, réformateur des chapitres de Foix et de Pamiers* [Paris: A. Picard, 1895].)

²²Du Ferrier, de Bassancourt, Amelotte, and Houmain.

²³At that time it was a part of the suburbs of Paris. Jean-Jacques Olier had retired there in December 1641 with his first two companions, Caulet and du Ferrier, and had begun his seminary there, at first in a poor house situated near the church, then in a more commodious building.

²⁴At the time, the parish of Saint-Sulpice was quite large. It was heavily populated and was considered one of the less religious parts of the city. The parish of Saint-Sulpice was

And another man from here, who has presented himself, told me quite simply that, if we do not take him, he will go and see those missionaries from Provence who are in Senlis. You can imagine in what spirit I am saying this to you, telling you that I beg God several times a day to bless them and increase their number, and to reduce us to nothing if we do not serve Him according to the plan He has for us. Alas! Monsieur, how little it will matter to us when we are in Heaven—if God be pleased to grant me the grace of going there—by which Our Lord will be glorified, provided that He is glorified! Oh! to be sure, there is no *meum* and *tuum*²⁵ there.

I do not know if M. Lucas²⁶ has done what you wrote him. He is giving a mission. On his return and mine, which will be in four or five days, I shall speak to him about it, please God.

You could budget your expenditures at the rate of five hundred livres per quarter. I doubt that the twenty-five hundred livres furnished you each year from the Soissons coaches will be provided²⁷ for very long. The income from these types of holdings is diminishing appreciably; the income we get from Chartres will be worth less this year, nearly half. The afflictions of the people and a smaller clientele are causing this loss.

I have written to you at sufficient length about the Saint-Yves affair.²⁸

I think it would be proper for you to give the mission in

offered to Jean-Jacques Olier by Julien de Fiesque, his predecessor, and was accepted on June 25, at the insistence of Saint Vincent. The new pastor took possession only after he received his brief from Rome.

²⁵*Mine and yours.*

²⁶Antoine Lucas.

²⁷Probably with the revenues of the Soissons coach line, which the Duchesse d'Aiguillon intended to furnish as part of the sum promised to the house in Rome by the contract of July 4, 1642.

²⁸Cf. no. 594.

cathedral towns, for the reason which I wrote to you formerly in Geneva,²⁹ namely, that when we made the decision for our first foundation, that we would not work in cathedral towns, except to preach and hear confessions as the other Orders do in their own and other churches, we were not thinking then of excluding the giving of missions in them. It has just been done in Alet and Luçon.

You will do well to buy a silver chalice and honor the poverty of Our Lord in the vestments, as we do at Saint-Lazare.

We shall continue to pay for all the letters here and we shall look into this as time goes on.

So, this is the precise answer to all your questions and my very humble entreaty that you take care of your own health and that of the Company. I embrace one after the other in spirit, prostrate at the feet of each with inexpressible tenderness of heart, increased in me by your saying that you will do nothing without an order and that you intend to proceed *piano, piano*. O Monsieur, how that consoles my heart! Remember, Monsieur, that the way to make a tree grow very tall is to lop off its branches, and that animals that eat too much when young, wear themselves out. Oh! what a great lesson Our Lord gave us of not being in a hurry in the little He willed to do in comparison with the Apostles and what He could have done, and when He went off to hide when the throngs following Him were at their thickest! In the name of God, Monsieur, if necessity urges us to make haste, then let it be slowly, as the wise proverb says. I also think that we should be especially devoted to not publicizing ourselves so much in writing, through printed matter and reports (I mean with regard to outside, never mind within the Company!), as

²⁹Or rather, in Annecy, a town in the diocese of Geneva.

we should by good works, which sooner or later speak a much more favorable language than anything done for one's own ostentation and show.

I could not help but mention this to you in view of how you said you were thinking of having printed the report of the Bishop of Bayonne³⁰ concerning his type of seminary.

I conclude by recommending myself to your prayers. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Rome, in Rome

603. - TO PIERRE DU CHESNE, IN CRECY

Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris, July 24, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Here is the response from the Bishop of Meaux;¹ he sent it to me yesterday with his footman. Having given more thought to the difficulty of your giving lunch to those Gentlemen,² I find myself more at a loss, in a quandary: when they are at the mission, the Brothers would have to come back for this lunch. I fear that in the long run, this would become very burdensome. The remedy would be if those Gentlemen were to agree to take turns serving at meals, as the ordinands do

³⁰Bishop François Fouquet.

Letter 603. - Archives of the Mission, a copy made from the original autograph letter in 1854, at that time in the possession of M. Laverdet.

¹Dominique Séguier.

²The ordinands.

here, and to read at table, each one in turn. The expense seems to me of small account in comparison with this situation. Think it over and if you judge the reasons important, I think there would be no objection to our meeting and to your coming to spend a night in Paris to get the advice of some members of the Company.

I have not been able to see His Lordship to tell him about the conduct of that minister, which is disapproved of by the edicts. I shall let His Lordship know about it.

I do not quite understand what you told me about one of those two young men having his ankles turned inwards. Is it his toes, his toenails? Does he limp? Are the feet badly deformed? Does this prevent his walking a long distance? As for the second man, the shoemaker, it seems to me that there is no risk in accepting him except for his poor mother. What will she live on?

I am consoled by what you told me about M. Obriot and I greet him again most humbly.

Meat is not dressed in this house and possibly candles will not be made. If they are, I shall tell them to do one hundred livres for you, if I do not forget.

Mademoiselle Poulailion would not be able to take those poor women.³ She takes those who are in danger of being lost and not those who have already gone astray. I find myself at a loss in this situation. I shall try to see if a mistress can be found for her; which is not without difficulty. I am purposely sending our Brother Pascal⁴ back to you and am your servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

I think it would be better for you to write to the Bishop of

³In the house directed by the Daughters of Providence.

⁴Jean-Pascal Goret, born in Angers in 1613, was received into the Congregation of the Mission as a coadjutor Brother on November 21, 1641. Saint Vincent made use of him to relieve the poor of Picardy, as he had sent Brother Mathieu Régnard to Lorraine.

Meaux that you thank him for what he wrote to you with such goodness and encouragement and that you will let him know about that minister. Send the letter to me; I shall forward it to him.

Addressed: Monsieur du Chesne, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Crécy, in Crécy³

604. - TO FRANCOIS DE SAINT-REMY¹

Paris, July 27, 1642

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Just an hour ago I received your letter from Nevers. It comforted me, seeing that you are feeling better; it also troubled me because I do not know what to tell you concerning the proposal about a change of establishment you do me the honor of mentioning. I do not remember the pros and cons of either one, and so I beg God to make known to you Himself

³The Priests of the Mission were sent to Crécy in 1641 by King Louis XIII. He gave them the château in perpetuity and eight thousand livres in revenue, half to be collected from the five farms, half from the salt gatherers of Lagny-sur-Marne. Should these offices be suppressed, the house of Crécy had the right in compensation to the sum of 31,600 livres from special funds. There was to be a Community of eight priests and two Brothers to give missions in the diocese of Meaux; to distribute each year four thousand livres in alms; once each year to receive in their house, free of charge, the ordinands of the diocese of Meaux, admitted to ordination by the Bishop, for a pre-ordination retreat; to say each day, in perpetuity, two Masses in the church of the château, one for the King and the royal family, the other for the Seigneurs of Crécy, while adding five others each day during the ten days following the death of Kings and Queens of France and their children, and likewise for the Seigneurs of Crécy for five days after their death. The Bishop of Meaux approved the contract on April 12, 1641. But the King, who had promised to guarantee the entire venture and to reimburse the Seigneurs of Crécy, did not keep his word. The result was that the revenues were considerably reduced, the Seigneurs again took possession of the château, and the number of priests was reduced to three.

Letter 604. - Archives of the Mission, copy made from the original letter in possession of M. Charavay.

¹Archdeacon of Langres.

the place to which He has called you from all eternity. That is what I hope His Goodness will do, and what I beg of Him with all my heart. I intend to offer Him the adorable Sacrifice for this purpose, some day this week, which I hope will be next Thursday, God willing. In His love, I am, Monsieur, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

605. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

Paris, July 28, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am anticipating you by writing to you for the second time without having received any of your letters from earth, while in your retreat you have sent several of them to heaven to obtain mercy for me for the abominations of my life. This letter is to tell you what I have just learned, that the Company has made public in Rome that you were sent there to reform the priests who have the right to form and reform every priest, and this talk is doing a lot of harm. Someone who returned from there mentioned it here.

For this reason, after greatly humbling ourselves, we must pray much and stay out of sight until God grants us to be purged of the satisfaction we have taken in this venture.

This, Monsieur, is what the pressure of my little occupations allows me to say to you for the moment. I add to it that God

knows my feelings and I am, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Rome, in Rome

606. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

[August 5, 1642]¹

The plan that you put before me of going to begin your mission on the estates of the Cardinals seems a human one to me and contrary to Christian simplicity. O Monsieur, may God preserve us from doing anything from such base motives! His Divine Goodness asks that we never do good in any place to make ourselves look important, but that we always consider Him directly, immediately, and without intermediary in all our actions. This gives me the opportunity to request two things of you, prostrate in spirit at your feet and for the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ: the first, that you avoid as far as possible putting yourself forward; and the second, that you never do anything out of human respect. In conformity with this, it is just in every way that you should honor for some time the hidden life of Our Lord. There is a certain treasure enclosed therein, since the Son of God remained thirty years on earth as a poor artisan before He manifested Himself. He also always blesses humble beginnings much more than those accompanied by a lot of show.

You will say to me perhaps: what will this court think of

Letter 606. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, (second edition), bk. II, p. 16.

¹ The date is given by Collet, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 538.

us and what will they say about us in Paris? Monsieur, let people think and say whatever they wish. Rest assured that the maxims of Jesus Christ and the examples of His life are not misleading; they produce their fruit in due time. Anything not in conformity with them is vain and everything turns out badly for one who acts according to the contrary maxims. Such is my belief and such is my experience. In the name of God, Monsieur, hold that as infallible and keep yourself well hidden.

607. - A CANON¹ TO SAINT VINCENT

1642

Here in this diocese the clergy are undisciplined, the people without fear and the priests without devotion and charity, pulpits without preachers, knowledge without honor, vice without punishment. Virtue is persecuted, the authority of the Church hated or held in contempt. Private interest is the ordinary shekel of the sanctuary;² the most scandalous are the most powerful, and flesh and blood have, as it were, supplanted the Gospel and the spirit of Jesus Christ. You will, I am sure, be impelled sufficiently on your own to come to the assistance of this diocese, having heard of its need. Quis novit utrum ad regnum idcirco veneris, ut in tali tempore parareris?³ The situation is worthy of your charity, if the most humble request I make you to consider this seriously before Our Lord is pleasing to you, since it comes from one of your first children.⁴

Letter 607. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. II, sect. I, p. 213.

¹"A priest of noble birth and of well-known piety, who was Canon of a cathedral church," stated Abelly.

²The shekel of the sanctuary was the official Temple standard against which the purity (and legality) of all other coins was judged. Thus, according to this Canon, private interest was the normal criterion of behavior or action in the diocese.

³"Who knows but that it was for a time like this that you obtained the royal dignity?" Est. 4:14. "Even if you now remain silent, relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from another source; but you and your father's house will perish. Who knows but that it was for a time like this that you obtained the royal dignity?" (NAB) This is an allusion to the influence Saint Vincent had on Anne of Austria, Queen of France.

⁴One of the first members of the Tuesday Conferences.

608. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Madame de Souscarrière's house, Wednesday, at two o'clock
in the afternoon [Between 1639 and 1644]¹

Mademoiselle,

I sent word last evening to Madame de Souscarrière asking her to advance to today the meeting set for tomorrow, Thursday. The person I told to do this did not tell her, so it has to be tomorrow. This is the meeting of the fourteen,² which cannot be postponed because the Ladies going off duty and the new ones are supposed to meet and have been notified to this effect. So then, Mademoiselle, you realize that since I cannot be in two places, I am obliged to give preference to the first meeting indicated, that of the fourteen. Therefore, I most humbly request that you put off yours until next Friday and notify your Sisters³ of the change.

I would also like to know if your fever has left you. Oh! what great treasures you are storing up in heaven both by suffering and by action!

I wish you a good afternoon and a good night and I am, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

Letter 608. - Archives of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Time during which Madame de Souscarrière was President of the Ladies of Charity.

²Fourteen Ladies were particularly responsible for the spiritual works of mercy with the patients of the Hôtel-Dieu. They visited them to console and instruct them. They were elected every three months, in full assembly, on the Ember Days. Abelly (*op. cit.*, bk. I, chap. XXIX, p. 138) stated: "M. Vincent assembled in their meeting room near the Hôtel-Dieu those who had finished their turn and those who were starting, as well as the officers of the company. At this meeting, those who had finished gave a report of their manner of proceeding and the fruits God had allowed them to reap. . . . M. Vincent gave his advice as to what should be done, when he saw fit. . . ."

³When Saint Vincent gave conferences at Saint Louise's house, a few Sisters from

609. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

Paris, August 19, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am troubled because I did not receive any letters from you in the last mail. I fear that you are ill. In the name of God, Monsieur, take care of your health, especially during these dog days. I am not commending the care of the Company to you; you do not fail in that, thank God.

I was quite consoled by all that each of those Gentlemen wrote to me after their retreat and beg God to grant them all the grace of being faithful to the holy resolutions they made. Their goodness will forgive me for still not writing to them on this journey.¹

I wrote you that it would be good for you to devote more time to the ordinands' retreat so that you and the Company will be ready to give the conferences and hold the repetitions and not use anyone else for that purpose; I know the consequences of that from experience.

Besides the foundation for Rome, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon has set up another for one thousand livres revenue from the Orléans coach line, for the maintenance of three Missionaries at Notre-Dame de la Rose who are to serve in the diocese of Condom, where she owns the estate, as she also does in the region of Agen.² We sent off the three Missionaries for this

other Paris houses and the surrounding areas always came.

Letter 609. - Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Île-de-France (September - October 1883), p. 141. The original autograph no. 14315 is in the library of the late Sir Thomas Phillipps Bt., Cheltenham, England. Archives of the Mission, Curia Generalitia, Rome, photocopy.

¹By this messenger.

²The foundation contract was signed July 4, 1642. The Duchesse d'Aiguillon, Comtesse of the regions of Agen and Condom, gave 13,500 livres tournois and asked in return

foundation, under the direction of Monsieur Souffliers, two days ago.

Monsieur de Saint-Aignan is worried about the Saint-Eutrope affair.³ Could you obtain a brief to commission the judges *in partibus* without its being made known? If that is possible, have the Bishop of Beauvais,⁴ the Bishop of Meaux,⁵ and the Bishop of Senlis⁶ appointed. Do it in such a way that you do not appear openly involved in it.

I again recommend to you the dispensation from the vow of the Carmelites⁷ and the matter of the Bishop of Le Puy.⁸

I fear that envy is beginning to make its appearance here with regard to the work you have been led to hope for there,⁹ and I do not know what motive to attribute to the complaint that certain religious are making about us. Charity, humility, and patience will dissipate these clouds, I hope.

Please address to me the letters of the men of the house who write to anyone in the Company in France; say nothing about this to anyone at all, please.

I embrace your Company with all possible affection and

that: (1) the missions, limited up to that time to the Duchy of Aiguillon, be extended to all the lands belonging to her in the region of Agen and Condom; (2) the ordinands of these same places be lodged with the Priests of the Mission, in order to receive there the necessary instructions; those of the region of Condom, at the expense of the Bishop of Condom, until the Missionaries would have in that diocese a foundation, house and furnishings; (3) every year, in perpetuity, a complete Divine Office or a Mass be offered for her and her uncle, Cardinal Richelieu. (Cf. Arch. Nat. MM 534.) This foundation raised the number of Missionaries to seven.

³The disorders in the monastery of Saint-Eutrope in Paris engaged Saint Vincent to work with Paul Chevalier, Canon of Saint-Aignan, for its reform.

⁴Augustin Potier.

⁵Dominique Séguier.

⁶Nicolas Sanguin.

⁷This dispensation had been requested previously in a letter of June 20, 1642 (cf. no. 594).

⁸Henri de Maupas du Tour.

⁹The functions of the ordinands.

humility. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Rome, in Rome

610. - TO FRANCOIS DUFESTEL, IN ANNECY

Paris, August 26, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Just seven or eight days ago I wrote to you by way of Sainte-Marie¹ in the city and directed my letter to the Bishop of Geneva.² I am now writing through Sainte-Marie in the faubourg, which will forward the letter to the Reverend Mother Superior of the first monastery of Annecy.³

I have sent you ratification in proper form, of the gift of the Commander of Geneva,⁴ and wrote that I thought you would do well after all to buy a house and use for that purpose the two thousand livres the Commander intends to give you. I also mentioned the reasons I have had up to now for my

Letter 610. - Archives of the Mission, a copy made from the original letter which was written entirely by the Saint. At some point, the letter was sent from Annecy to the Archbishop of Edinburgh.

¹The Visitation nuns; during the lifetime of Saint Vincent they had three monasteries in Paris: rue Saint-Antoine, the faubourg Saint-Jacques, and rue Montorgueil.

²Juste Guérin.

³Mother Marie-Aimée de Blonay.

⁴Jacques de Cordon, Commander of the Geneva region and Compaisières, had given to the Missionaries of Annecy, by a contract of August 6, 1642, the sum of forty-two hundred florins for the endowment of a daily Mass in perpetuity.

misgivings as to whether you should buy a house before being approved in that State at the Parlement of Chambéry.

I am worried because two mails have now come without bringing me any letters from M. Codoing. I fear he is ill.

Here is a little news from us. M. Louistre and M. Fourdim⁵ have withdrawn from the Company, as also M. Lescuyer⁶ and another cleric, in addition to two or three men whom we have dismissed; and I think M. N.,⁷ who was in Luçon, may leave at the first opportunity. You can imagine my sorrow, not so much because of the departure of any one of them but because nature so gained the upper hand in them that there was no way of bringing them to revive their attachment to the spirit. After M. Louistre left, I began to say the Office in my sorrow; however, God was pleased to console me by the thought He gave me of what He had caused to be trumpeted abroad in the armies as they were about to go into combat: namely, that those who were afraid, or who had married a wife, planted a vineyard or had a house built that year, had to withdraw, since He felt that persons of this sort would do more harm than good in battle. Then, it came to my mind that since some of them had been troubled in their vocation by only one person who had that problem, they will not do any harm in the Company, [as] they might have done had they remained in it their whole life. In that way, Monsieur, God was pleased to give me extraordinary consolation. Perhaps He took into consideration that one of them saw me at his feet for half an hour trying to dissuade him and I could not. *In nomine Domini*, we must honor the great multitude and the small number of those who followed and persevered in the company

⁵Gabriel Fourdim was born in Fressenneville, near Abbeville in the diocese of Amiens. In January 1639, as a subdeacon, he was received into the Congregation of the Mission in Paris.

⁶Pierre Lescuyer, born in Paris in 1618, was received into the Congregation of the Mission in Paris on October 9, 1638.

⁷Jean Thibault.

of Our Lord; I mean that we must honor His interior state in these events.

It has pleased God to send us the King's attorney from Amiens,⁸ a fine young man, well-educated, even in theology, and a rather celebrated professor of philosophy;⁹ he is supposed to come around Saint Martin's day. Please treat this news with your Little Company according to your usual prudence. Take care of your health. Monsieur Lambert is not back yet.¹⁰

Our seminary in Paris is doing so well that I do not think I have ever seen anything that consoled and edified me more. The Bishop of Sarlat¹¹ went to spend the day there four or five days ago. He followed all their exercises, which they fulfilled so well that he went away quite touched. I confess that I can still feel that consolation now as I speak to you and hope that God will be pleased to grant me the grace to see yours.

I embrace the Company with all the affection and humility

⁸Guillaume Delattre, born in Amiens, was received into the Congregation of the Mission on August 10, 1642, at thirty-two years of age; he was Superior in Cahors (1644-1646), La Rose (1646-1648) and Agen (1648-1650). He died in Bordeaux in 1650.

⁹Jean-Baptiste Gilles, of the diocese of Avranches, principal and professor of philosophy of the Collège de Lisieux, on the rue de Beauvais, Paris, was received into the Congregation of the Mission on November 28, 1642, and made his vows on October 11, 1645. After employing him in the seminary of Cahors for some time, Saint Vincent entrusted to him the chair of moral theology at Saint-Lazare. When Saint Vincent was requested by the Nuncio to present a candidate for Coadjutor Bishop of Babylon, he thought of Jean-Baptiste Gilles. At the second General Assembly (1651), of which he was a member, he took part in the debate on the vows and requested that they be retained. His ardent opposition to the Jansenists was mainly manifest in his lectures and in his conferences to the ordinands. However, his insistence in attacking them ran the danger of producing the opposite effect. The Saint understood this and sent him away from Saint-Lazare in 1651. Jean-Baptiste Gilles was for a short time at the head of the house of Crécy where he died on August 22, 1652. He received a well-deserved place in *Notices* (vol. III, pp. 110-114). His will, drawn up on April 30, 1643, showed the high esteem in which he held Saint Vincent. (Cf. Arch. Nat. M 211, folio 1.)

¹⁰He was making visitations in Lorraine.

¹¹Jean de Lingendes (1642-1650).

in my power. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Monsieur Dufestel, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Annecy, in Annecy

611. - TO SAINT LOUISE ¹

[September 1]²

Thank you for sharing in the devotion to my holy patron.³ I beg God to grant to your faith what my wretchedness is unworthy of obtaining for you. Ask His pardon, please, for my lack of devotion, caused by a want of preparation. I have been involved in business matters this whole morning, able to make only a little prayer and that with many distractions; judge what you should expect from my prayers on this holy day. Still, this does not discourage me, because I place my confidence in God and not, indeed, in my own preparation nor in all my efforts, and I wish you the same with all my

Letter 611. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. III, chap. III, sect. III, p. 23.

¹Abelly did not give the name of the person to receive this letter; he simply stated that letters 32, 53, and 611 were all addressed to the same person. Coste states that the tone and content of these letters show that they could be addressed only to Saint Louise.

²Reference to the patron saint of Saint Vincent leads us to speculate as to this date.

³Very probably when Saint Vincent's parents had him christened, they meant to give him the name Vincent to put him under the patronage of the first bishop and patron of the diocese, Saint Vincent of Xaintes, martyr, whom the Church honored on September 1 and to whom the diocese and especially Dax, about three and a half miles (6 kilometers) from Pouy, had great devotion. Abelly states (*op. cit.*, bk. III, chap. IX, p. 94) that Vincent de Paul, curious to know the details of the life of his patron saint, had research done in Spain. The biographer believed, perhaps based on the Roman Martyrology, that Saint Vincent of Xaintes died there, contrary to the tradition of Dax which set the place of his martyrdom in Xaintes, a small locality which today is incorporated into Dax. Saint Vincent considered Saint Vincent Ferrer as his secondary patron.

heart, since the throne of God's goodness and mercies is established on the foundation of our miseries. Let us trust then in His goodness and we shall never be put to shame, as He assures us by His word.

612. - TO FRANCOIS DUFESTEL, IN ANNECY

Paris, September 1, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Jesus Christ Our Lord be with you forever!

I wrote to you recently, a week ago, and sent you the ratification of the gift of the Commander of the Geneva region,¹ and some time before, I sent the Bishop of Geneva² the letters he wanted. All that remains now is to tell you that I still have not heard from M. Lambert, since he wrote me from Toul. I am worried about this because he was supposed to go to Saint-Mihiel and those roads are dangerous. Consequently, I cannot yet congratulate you on the good order I am sure he found in your Community. I do so, nonetheless, perfectly confident that everything is in conformity with God's plan for it.

I am also concerned about M. Codoing. Three mails have now come without bringing me any word from him. He is probably ill and critically so; may God's holy name be blessed! I recommend him to the prayers of the Community every day. Please do the same with yours.

I wrote you that, although there are many arguments against it, nonetheless I think you would do well to buy a house and, at the same time, to find some means of obtaining

Letter 612. - Archives of the Mission, original autograph letter.

¹Jacques de Cordon.

²Juste Guérin.

the necessary permission from His Royal Highness³ to exercise ownership on his estates.

The pen is being taken from my hand. Please send the letters in the enclosed packet to the persons to whom they are addressed, and embrace for me, who do it with all the humility and affection in my power, your small but most amiable Community. I make this request, prostrate in spirit at the feet of all, even to the least of the Brothers who serve Our Lord in His servants. I am, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Dufestel, Superior of the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission of Annecy, in Annecy

613. - TO JACQUES CHIROYE, SUPERIOR, IN LUÇON

Paris, September 6, 1642

Monsieur,

I received your letter and the one you wrote to M. Thibault; I most humbly thank you for the information. I give thanks to God for the practice of visiting each man in his room every week, and the rest. O Monsieur, how consoled I am by this! Keep that up, please; and before introducing any important practice, please let me know about it, in accordance with the order I just gave someone in the Company, who had to change something in the custom of visiting the church. I cannot refrain

³Charles-Emmanuel II, Duc de Savoy (1638-1675).

Letter 613. - Archives of the diocese of Luçon, original autograph letter. In 1935, Bishop Garnier of Luçon showed this original to the archivist of the Congregation of the Mission. It was published in *Annales CM* (1938), pp. 606-607. The differences between the original and the Pémartin-Coste text are insignificant and need no notation.

from telling you again that I am quite consoled by this practice you mention.

I am extremely astonished by what you told me about M. T[hibault]. Yesterday morning he entreated me to allow him to make a journey to Luçon.¹ I do not know what to do with him. He has neither the spirit of obedience nor of leadership, and he has an unimaginable passion for being in charge. Last night, during the time of silence, he was complaining to me that I did not entrust any duty to him. I told him that this frame of mind frightened me, that only the wicked spirit would suggest it, that he was just the opposite of others in the Company in which those who hold office are asking to be relieved, and that I am having a hard time finding anyone among the others willing to be a Superior in certain circumstances. Given all this, I imagine he will follow M. N., who has finally left the Company, as did some others whom you do not know. Two of them are asking to return, but this is inadvisable: a single one has spoiled three or four others. One thing consoles me, namely, that only with great difficulty can a proud spirit survive in the Company. The faults committed by the man in question, M. T[hibault], are considerable.

I shall try to send you at the first opportunity the board you requested. I entreat you to let me know whether you are trusting in God to bless the work of you three while you wait for us to send you help. I beg you not to commit yourself to large places, and embrace for me good Monsieur Le Boysne²

¹M. Thibault was in that town before he was called to Paris.

²Léonard Le Boysne, born in La Chapelle-Janson (Ille-et-Vilaine), was received at Saint-Lazare on May 6, 1638. From Luçon he went to Richelieu, then, in September 1645, to Saint-Méen, where he died on February 25, 1670. He was a very edifying priest and Monsieur Alméras, Superior General, praised him highly in his circular of March 13, 1670: "We have just lost a hidden treasure of grace and holiness. . . . He excelled in piety, meekness, mortification, regularity, obedience and good example, but especially in humility and charity. I consider myself fortunate to have made my seminary with him.

and M. Bonaflos³ whom I embrace, prostrate in spirit at their feet and yours, for whom I am. . . .

God is blessing the mission in Rome. They are beginning again to prepare some clerics receiving orders *extra tempora*.⁴

614. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[1642]¹

Mademoiselle Le Gras will please take the trouble of letting me know whom she is sending to Saint-Germain,² if she is taking our Sister Perrette from there for Fontenay.³

I told Jeanne⁴ from Saint-Germain to ask pardon of the Community for having come away without permission.⁵ She is asking to make her retreat; I think it would be well to let her.

They are requesting a Sister at Saint-Sulpice to replace our Sister from Champigny,⁶ who is ill. The other two cannot cope with forty patients so far apart. The patient is beginning to feel better, so the Sister will be there for a short time. They

. . . He was a very virtuous Missionary and one of the most talented in the Company." His biographical sketch is extant in the manuscript of Lyons, pp. 234-237.

³Jacques Bonaflos, born in Saint-Flour in 1611, was received into the Congregation of the Mission on August 22, 1639. This is the first and last time his name is mentioned.

⁴*Outside of time.* Church law stipulated that Major Orders were to be conferred only during Mass on Ember Saturdays or on the Saturday before Passion Sunday or on Holy Saturday. For a grave reason, the bishops might confer them on a Sunday or holyday of obligation. Saint Vincent was asking for permission to have Orders conferred outside of this prescribed time.

Letter 614. - Archives of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter appears to precede no. 615 by a few days.

²Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

³Saint Louise was considering sending Perrette Chefdeville to Fontenay-aux-Roses.

⁴Sister Jeanne Lepeintre.

⁵In Saint Louise's letter of July 5, 1642, we read that Jeanne Lepeintre was most anxious to come to Paris. (Cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 64, pp. 77-78.)

⁶Probably Champigny-sur-Marne (Val-de-Marne).

also suggest bringing her to get some fresh air to complete the cure of the diarrhea she has.

Next Thursday, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon will be coming to your house where we must call together our three widows.⁷ I have to speak to Madame Traversay beforehand.

I have lost your letter and do not know if I am supposed to answer anything else for you.

615. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[1642]¹

Since you have reason for placing Perrette in Fontenay, do so, please, and send the one from Normandy to Sister Henriette, and the other one you mentioned to Saint-Sulpice, and the one from Le Mans in Perrette's place. Have you no one else but the one from Saint-Etienne to send to Saint-Sulpice? However, do as you wish.

Please write and tell Madame Traversay that I entreat her to take the trouble of coming here tomorrow or the day after and we shall discuss with her what will have to be done to put off Madame de Souscarrière Thursday. We shall talk about visiting the foundlings.²

Good evening, Mademoiselle. I am your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

⁷It could be Mesdames de Herse, de Souscarrière, and de Romilly.

Letter 615. - Archives of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter appears to belong near nos. 614 and 617.

²Those placed with the wetnurses.

616. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Tuesday, at one o'clock [September 1642]¹

I think, Mademoiselle, that there is no reasonable motive for you to lose the opportunity of taking the waters that will rise the day after tomorrow. You say that you will do so at Liancourt, and what possibility will there be for you to do so profitably while you are going to visit the Charities in those villages, as Madame² has asked you? Suffice it that you go there afterwards, unless you see fit to go and take the waters there on condition that people do not speak to you about business matters.

It is inadvisable for you to allow the departure of M. Thibault's³ good sister, who intends to leave, nor for us to dismiss her, for a certain reason that I shall tell you one of these days.

617. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[September 1642]¹

So then, you are just about ready for your departure. I was unable to have the pleasure of seeing you last evening; I came back too late, through my own fault. Well then, Mademoiselle, I beg Our Lord to bless your journey² and to grant you His spirit, so that you may act in His spirit.

Letter 616. - Archives of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter should be placed a few days before no. 617.

²Madame de Liancourt.

³Jean Thibault.

Letter 617. - Original autograph letter communicated by Fr. John Moore, C.M. (1859-1925), a priest of the Eastern Province of the Congregation of the Mission, after the split of the American Province into Eastern and Western Provinces (1888). It is now in the Archives of the Curia Generalitia, C.M., Rome.

¹This letter seems to precede no. 620 by a few days.

²To Liancourt.

There is nothing relative to the company of the Ladies worth telling, except that it seems that Providence is causing them, some, at least, to turn their eyes towards this faubourg for a house,³ and Mademoiselle du Mée intends to go and visit the children⁴ in the Normandy area. Whom shall we give her in this event? Should we not give her someone? She is rather indifferent about it. Nevertheless, look among the Sisters; there does not seem to me much that should cause you worry. The concerns there will suffice for you. In the name of God, Mademoiselle, do not be in a hurry. If Madame⁵ approves and you can go and visit the Charities in those villages, do not talk much there; it is all the speaking that I fear for you during these visits.

In the name of God, Mademoiselle, take good care of your health and live contentedly. I beg Our Lord to give you His holy blessing Himself while I give it to you on His behalf at Holy Mass. I would have difficulty seeing you because of the many letters I have to write to a great number of places.

Good day, Mademoiselle. Pray to God for me who am, in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

V. D.

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

³In order to lodge the foundlings.

⁴The foundlings placed with wet-nurses.

⁵Madame de Liancourt.

618. - TO FRANCOIS DUFESTEL, SUPERIOR, IN ANNECY

Paris, September 20, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

No one but God can express to you how consoled I was about the good condition in which M. Lambert¹ found your Community in general and each member in particular, and for the blessing Our Lord is pleased to bestow on your missions and on your seminary, for which I thank God. I beg Him to bless His work more and more and to sanctify your dear soul, as well as all those of the Little Company and, through you, all those whom He has determined to save by means of you.

And because you requested that I introduce into the Company the deposing and changing of Superiors more frequently than we have done up to the present, and entreated me to begin with you by letting you practice obedience in the same house which you have directed, I thank God, Monsieur, for the light He has given you in that regard and I give myself to His Divine Majesty to act in that way with His grace. As you desire, we shall begin with you. Step down then, please, at the first chapter you hold, and entrust your office to M. Guérin.² I beg him to accept it, and I beg the Company to regard him in God and God in him, and to obey him in the same way. And because he will be new at this work and will

Letter 618. - In 1931 the original autograph letter was discovered in the private collection of Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands. Coste published only part of this letter because the copy of Reg. 2., p. 258 was defective (cf. vol. II, no. 618, pp. 297-299). The *Annales CM* (1931, pp. 693-696) published the text of the original, and *Mission et Charité*, 19-20, reprinted it (no. 31, pp. 34-36). This edition has used the latter text.

¹Lambert aux Couteaux was at the time Superior of the house in Richelieu. He must have been sent to make an extraordinary visitation at the house in Annecy in order to acquaint Saint Vincent with the situation there.

²Jean Guérin.

need to be assisted by your good counsels, I ask you to do him this charity, and I ask him to take your advice in all matters. It would be good, before you come to that point, for you to tell him the little maxims of the Company and the spirit of direction here, and tell him especially this maxim: that one must be firm and unchanging with regard to the end but gentle and humble as to the means, although I practice this so poorly.

And because the evil spirit sometimes plays his pranks when the officers of a Company are changed, upsetting some because of the deposition of the former one in whom they have confidence, some because they themselves were not chosen, and others because of the person who was chosen, I beg you, Monsieur, to hold a conference on this subject. The first point would concern the indifference Missionaries should have with regard to the passing of leadership from one officer to another; (2) how Missionaries ought to behave among themselves when some officer is changed; (3) how the man deposed should behave toward the one elected and the latter toward the one deposed. I cannot help telling you that I think one of the best means with regard to the second point is not to talk about it at all among themselves. *Mon Dieu!* Monsieur, how consoled I shall be if you send me what has been said on each point! I entreat you to take it down.

I hope that He who has suggested to you the thought of the change will give you some thoughts useful to the Company, about the way one should act during this change.

I ask you to let me know if what you tell me in your letter of August 29, namely, that on October 1 twelve pistoles³ will be due you, means in addition to what has been paid and your payment to that upright woman of this city, whom you have notified us to pay what you borrowed from her.

³The pistole was worth ten livres.

It is rumored here that the Bishop is taking as his successor the Archbishop of Maurienne.⁴

I forgot yesterday to ask M. Codoing not to interfere in the matter of the Visitor of Sainte-Marie.⁵ *O mon Dieu*, Monsieur, how good it is to take a hand only in what we have been commanded! God is always in the midst of that and never or rarely elsewhere.

I do not understand clearly the dimensions of the house that the good Sisters of the Visitation are offering you. You say that it is fifty-three *pieds*⁶ long, forty-three *pieds* wide and one hundred fifty *pas*⁷ facing the street. For the front of the building, is that its width or its length? A word about that, please.

There is a difficulty with purchasing an estate in a State where one does not have the prince's permission to take up residence. If, without taking that into consideration, the advice you have been able to get from competent persons in Chambéry⁸ concurs with this, you would do well to buy that house, provided the air is good there. I beg you, Monsieur, in the name of God, to consider above all else the fresh air in the purchase you will make.

That, Monsieur, is all I have to say to you for now, except that I greet your Community with all possible respect,

⁴Paul Millet de Châles (1599-1656), Bishop of Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne. He assumed possession of his diocese on September 17, 1642. It is by error that Saint Vincent gave him the title of Archbishop.

⁵The discussion about an Apostolic Visitor for the Visitation Order was not yet over. Saint Vincent did not want Bernard Codoing to meddle in this long-standing and thorny question. (Cf. vol. I, nos. 258 and 388a.)

⁶A *piéd* equals one foot.

⁷A *pas* equals two and one-half feet.

⁸Chambéry was the ancient capital of Savoy. After the transfer of the court and the government to Turin, Chambéry remained the central administrative center of the regions beyond the mountains.

prostrate in spirit at its feet, and I am to you and to it, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Dufestel, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Annecy, in Annecy

618a. - MADAME DE VILLENEUVE TO SAINT VINCENT

Long live Jesus Crucified!

My Most Honored Father,

Your Reverence, you are well aware that, knowing your important and necessary occupations, it is only as a last resort that I turn to you to console or counsel me in my affairs concerning the glory of God in this house. But please, you really must come to the rescue against the attacks of Satan and his devils, who have vowed its ruin. I do not know what God wants of me, a poor reed agitated by winds of persecution, none of which, up to the present, has been able to knock it over or even to shake it. He must want something in this situation that the devil and the world do not want, for why use a squadron of armed men to subdue one puny little soldier, unless nothing can harm him whom God protects and who has no more faith in secondary causes than in the devil? Your Reverence, you taught me this lesson about four years ago, and I have tested it, so I am sure of it now. May God grant me the grace of serving Him in accordance with this knowledge!

I ask Your Reverence to offer Masses and prayers for me, in order to render this knowledge efficacious for eternity, to His greater glory

Letter 618a. - A copy of this letter is found in one of the volumes for the process of beatification of Saint Vincent de Paul. (Cf. Archives of the Congregation of Rites.) Coste placed it in a supplement, vol. VIII, no. 3302. The editors have placed it in its correct chronological order.

and the stability of this house, if it is His; and I shall remain, Reverend Father, your most humble and obedient servant and daughter in Our Lord.

MARIE LHUILLIER
of the Society of the Cross

From our seminary in Paris, September 21, 1642

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior of the Mission, at Saint-Lazare

619. - TO JEAN GUERIN, IN ANNECY

Paris, September 24, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I cannot tell you how consoled I am at all the good M. Dufestel has told and written me about you and which M. Lambert has confirmed. I give thanks to God for this and beseech Him to sanctify your dear soul more and more and, through it, those whom His Divine Providence wills to save and bring to perfection through you.

M. Dufestel has asked me several times to remove him from office and put someone else in his place. The testimony that he and M. Lambert have given me concerning you brings me to ask you, in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to serve the Community in his place. God has blessed his leadership wherever he has been Superior. I beseech you to take him as your counselor and to follow his advice in all matters of

Letter 619. - The original autograph letter was in the house of the Daughters of Charity in Teano (Italy). This house closed in 1911; the letter is now in the Archives of the Provincial House of the Daughters of Charity, Naples.

importance. I beg him to extend this charity to the Company. I hope he will do so and in a beneficial way. And because it is advisable to constitute two people to serve as a council for Superiors, you will take M. Escart for that purpose this year. And although, according to the Rules of the Company, the Superior is not obliged to follow the majority opinion, and matters brought up are to be resolved between God and himself, except that he must answer at the visitation for the outcome of what he does contrary to the opinion of his council, you will nevertheless have very great respect for M. Dufestel's advice, as I am sure you will.

And because I am in a hurry to finish and cannot give you detailed instructions myself as to the leadership role you are to hold, I am asking M. Dufestel to do this. Here is just one, which is that a Superior must be firm as to the end and humble and gentle with regard to the means, steadfast in the observance of the Rules and holy customs of the Company but gentle in the means of seeing that they are observed. And because only the Spirit of Jesus Christ Our Lord is the true director of souls, I beseech His Divine Majesty to grant you His spirit for your own guidance and for that of the Company. I am, in His love and that of His holy Mother, Monsieur, your most humble and most obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Guérin, Priest of the Mission, in
Annecy

620. - TO SAINT LOUISE, IN LIANCOURT

Saint-Lazare, September 28, 1642

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I beseech you to ask God to pardon me the fault I commit by not answering as soon as I should the letters written to me.

Our Lord is relieving you of the care of your occupations here, since you are far away, so that you may better attend to whatever comes up where you are.

You would do well to bring back some girls, if any come forward who have a vocation and you judge them suitable.

We would not be able to send you anyone at present for the visitation of the Charities since our Company is on retreat. That will be for another time, if it is necessary, after good Madame¹ has taken you to the villages and you have done what your health will allow. I entreat you not to talk beyond your strength.

Madame Turgis has not mentioned what you told me about giving Sister Jeanne² of Saint-Germain to Mademoiselle du Mée to visit the children. I think she would do it well. In any case, I shall tell her not to send her back so soon, if she has not done so already.

Assure Mademoiselle de Ligny that I shall pray for her late mother's soul and for her.

Do not be in such a hurry, if your health is better there.

I shall tell M. Vacherot(?)³ what you told me.

Letter 620. - Archives of the Mission, a copy made from the original in the possession of Abbé Dufourny, Pastor of Ponthoile (Somme).

¹Madame de Liancourt.

²Jeanne Lepeintre.

³He was a learned doctor of medicine, known mainly for his attachment to Cardinal de Retz, whom he helped escape and followed to Rome (1654). During the years 1646 to 1648 he was doctor for the Motherhouses of the Priests of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity. He died at Commercy in the month of May 1664, at sixty-two years of age.

I most humbly greet Monsieur and Madame de Liancourt, and I am, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your servant.

V. D.

621. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Monday morning [Between 1642 and 1644]¹

Mademoiselle,

Here is a young woman whom M. du Chesne has referred to me from Crécy in order to find her work as a chambermaid or something similar. I do not know to whom to send her. Please give her some guidance in that regard. It is to be hoped that she will be among good people.

I wish you good day and I am, in the love of Our Lord, your servant.

V. D.

622. - TO JEAN BRUNET¹ AND ETIENNE BLATIRON, IN ALET

Paris, October 8, 1642

Messieurs,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have already written you that God's Providence is calling

Letter 621. - Archives of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹The dates between which Pierre du Chesne stayed at Crécy.

Letter 622. - Gossin, *op.cit.*, p. 450. He used an original letter sent by the Abbé de Labouderie.

¹Jean-Joseph Brunet was born in Riom in 1597, joined the companions of Saint Vincent in 1627, gave missions in Bordelais, and was stationed in Alet, Genoa, and Marseilles where he died August 6, 1649, a victim of his dedication to the plague-stricken. (Cf. *Notices*, vol. I, pp. 147-151.)

you to Rome for a new establishment being made there of a house of the Company, and I requested you to go there, departing the day after you receive this letter, as I do again. I have most humbly entreated the Bishop of Alet² to approve and to lend you twenty écus for your journey.

You will go straight to Marseilles where you will meet M. Roze³ and our Brother Pascal⁴ of the Company; they will set out the day after tomorrow and will be in Marseilles around the twenty-sixth. I shall recommend them to Commander de Forbin who is in charge of the galleys, and request him to take you on board one or two of the galleys he is taking to Rome, a very favorable opportunity in every way. You will also present yourself to the Commander. I think someone told me that the two galleys are in the port of Toulon, ten leagues beyond Marseilles. I shall direct M. Roze to go there if he does not find them in Marseilles. You will please do the same after speaking to the Commander, who will give you some money, if perchance you need some, unless the Bishop gives you one hundred livres as I am most humbly asking him to do.

I shall write to you by way of M. Roze. I cannot do so now because they are hurrying me to go and preside at good M. Pillé's funeral.⁵ He lived as a holy man and died in the same way, in the dispositions of our vocation, beyond all that can be said. I asked him many times for a blessing for you and for me. We shall send you a more detailed notice following the conference that will be held [about him].⁶ I commend him

²Nicolas Pavillon.

³Nicolas Roze, born in Transloy (Pas-de-Calais) in 1616, as a priest was received into the Congregation of the Mission on December 7, 1641. He was Superior in Troyes (1653-1657).

⁴Jean-Pascal Goret.

⁵Jean Pillé, a priest of the diocese of Sens, was received into the Congregation of the Mission around October 1631. He was Superior of the Collège des Bons-Enfants from 1635 to 1638 and died in Paris on October 7, 1642. Saint Vincent related his life and praised his virtues in a long circular letter (cf. no. 634). There is a copy of his will in Arch. Nat. M 211, file 1.

⁶Gossin read: "for his salvation," but this phrase would make no sense.

to your prayers and I am, in the love of Our Lord, Messieurs,
your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

623. - NICOLAS PAVILLON TO SAINT VINCENT

[October 1642]¹

Monsieur,

I received just one letter from you in the past six or seven days that mentioned your order concerning the departure of Messieurs Brunet and Blatiron for Rome, which, at the same time, they carried out punctually.² I must admit, Monsieur, that I was rather sorry about their leaving, seeing myself deprived of such excellent workers at a time when they were more than needed. However, since Providence is making use of them for the good of the universal Church, I acquiesce to this with all my heart. Moreover, Monsieur, I most humbly thank you for having lent them to me until now and I beg you to pardon the faults I have committed in their regard as well as my lack of fidelity to the promise I made you to place them on their own immediately so that they might live in a more exact observance of their Rules. Although there may have been some reasons, they were not important in comparison with the directive you had given. I hope that, when I have done penance for this fault and for all the

Letter 623. - Archives of the Mission, original autograph letter.

¹In no. 622 Saint Vincent stated that he had written to the Bishop of Alet. The date of that letter is certain. This response, then, would most probably have been written in October 1642.

²The unnamed Jansenist author of *Vie de M. Pavillon* (published in 1738) claimed (vol. I, p. 40) that the Bishop of Alet personally requested that Etienne Blatiron and Jean Brunet be recalled because he considered them incapable of teaching theology to the clerics of his diocese. Raymond Bonal gives another reason, namely, that Saint Vincent could not supply Nicolas Pavillon with the two extra Missionaries that he was requesting. (Cf. Abbé Benjamin Mayran, *Raymond Bonal dans les diocèses de Pamiers et d'Alet* [Foix: Ponies, Fra et Cie, 1914], p. 34.) This letter of the Bishop of Alet helps to establish the truth.

others, you will have compassion on our necessity, in conformity with the promise you were pleased to make me.

Any day now we are expecting the good Bishop of Angers³ here to console us for this loss by his presence and the hope you so kindly give me. These are added obligations on my part that you are accumulating, after so many others, which oblige me more and more to remain, in the love of Our dear Savior and His holy Mother. . . .

The Bishop of Alet

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior General of the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission

624. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1641 and 1643]¹

Blessed be God, Mademoiselle, for what you have found in your son! I beg Him with all my heart to fashion his heart according to that of His Son, and your heart, with respect to your son, according to His own, with respect to His Son Our Lord.

Since you are well paid by Monsieur Dandilly, I see no objection to your giving him the two thousand livres. Perhaps, if you cannot manage to give him the difference, we could draw it from each of our properties and assign to you the current payment of revenue on a house here, almost opposite your house, which is rented for one hundred écus; I mean in case you do not find a place to invest it and you see fit to do

³Claude du Rueil (1626-1649).

Letter 624. - Archives of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter was written after the transfer of the house of the Sisters opposite Saint-Lazare (1641). Jean Dehorgny was in Paris in 1641-1643 and 1653-1660. What is said of Michel Le Gras leads us to choose the period 1641-1643 since he does not seem to have been married at the time of this letter; he married in January 1650.

this. It is to reimburse a man who is holding this house for us.

As for the exercises you mentioned, we shall talk about them, and Monsieur Dehorgny will soon be coming to bring you news of your Sisters from Saint-Cloud.²

Adieu, Mademoiselle. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

625. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

Paris, October 24, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

This is just to tell you that I did not receive any letters from you in the last mail and to answer your last letter.

I see no way to increase your revenue beyond 2,500 livres and 250 livres return from your money, which we invested

²In no part of the correspondence of Saint Vincent and Saint Louise do we see any sign of an establishment of the Daughters of Charity in Saint-Cloud. Perhaps it refers to members of the company of the Charity established at Saint-Cloud or of Sisters native to that place.

Letter 625. - Archives of the Daughters of Charity, Marillac Provincial House, St Louis, Missouri, original autograph letter. The original was stolen from the house of Saint-Lazare in 1789 when the place was pillaged at the outset of the French Revolution. It became part of the collection of Boissy d'Anglas. (Between 1794 and 1795 Francois Antoine, formerly Comte de Boissy d'Anglas, was President of the National Convention, the Assembly which governed France from 1792 to 1795.) On June 13, 1914, M. Kra, an appraiser, put it on sale in Paris at the Drouot auction house. The present archivist at Marillac Provincial House could provide scant information concerning the history of the possession of this original letter.

here at a profit. You will please budget your expenses on that amount until God is pleased to give you more.

The proposal for the seminary in Brittany is much to the liking of a person who is able for it, but we lack qualified personnel for it and the means to support the seminary.¹

Monsieur Skyddie² has left with our Brother Pascal³ to go and meet you. I had written to Messieurs Brunet and Blatiron to do likewise.⁴ I revoked the order because you do not appear to have enough money and we have great need of them here.

So you are now on a mission. Oh! how I wish you could give one among the poor shepherds! They are Our Lord's favorites since He chose to give them the first news of His birth, to the exclusion of Jerusalem and even Bethlehem where He was born. Look into this.

I have sent you some letters from the Nuncio.⁵

We have just held an assembly of a few neighboring Superiors and the older men of the house, the Superiors from Richelieu,⁶ the Bons-Enfants,⁷ Troyes,⁸ Toul,⁹ and Crécy,¹⁰ together with Messieurs Portail, du Coudray, Lucas,¹¹

¹Probably the seminary of Vannes (cf. no. 660).

²Jean Skyddie, born in Cork (Ireland), received into the Congregation of the Mission on October 9, 1638, at twenty-nine years of age, was ordained a priest in December 1640, and died before 1646.

³Jean-Pascal Goret.

⁴Cf. no. 622.

⁵Gerolamo Grimaldi.

⁶Lambert aux Couteaux.

⁷Jean Dehorgny.

⁸Jean Bourdet. Born in Saint-Babel (Puy-de-Dôme), May 14, 1614, he entered the Congregation of the Mission at the end of 1636, was ordained a priest in 1640, and made his vows in 1643. He was Superior in Troyes (1642-1644) and in Saint-Méen (1645-1646).

⁹Jean Bécu. Born in Braches (Somme) on April 24, 1592, he was ordained a priest in September 1616 and in September 1626 came to join the first companions of Saint Vincent. Two of his brothers, Benoît and Hubert, followed him into the Congregation, the latter as a coadjutor Brother; one of his sisters became a Daughter of Charity. He was Superior of the house in Toul (1642-1646). Returning to Paris, he spent the rest of his life there. He died January 19, 1667, having been Vice-Visitor, then Visitor of the Province of France. (Cf. *Notices*, 1st series, vol. I, pp. 125-133.)

¹⁰Pierre du Chesne.

¹¹Antoine Lucas.

Alméras,¹² and Boucher. It lasted ten days.¹³ We reviewed the Rules we had drawn up, established the principal ones and appointed Messieurs Portail, du Coudray, Dehorgny and Lambert to examine and decide on the rest.¹⁴ We set the procedure to be followed at general assemblies and put into practice what remained to be done in the Company. I shall send you all this so that you may give us your opinion of it. We did not introduce anything new, or very little, except to give some Assistants to the General,¹⁵ so here I am, ready to die, whenever God chooses to put up with the abominations of my life no longer. We did not summon you, nor Monsieur Guérin, Superior of Annecy, nor Monsieur Soufliers,¹⁶ because you have just been assigned to the places and duties you have, besides which we made this decision within three days, because

¹²René Alméras, Madame Goussault's nephew, was born in Paris on February 5, 1613. A Councillor in the Great Council at the age of twenty-four, he left everything—family, position and hopes—in spite of the opposition of his father (who was to follow him later), to enter the Congregation of the Mission, where he was received December 24, 1637. He was ordained a priest at Easter 1639. St. Vincent entrusted important positions to him, such as Director of the Seminary and Assistant of the house. He admitted him to his council and often relied on his prudence to deal with people outside in delicate matters; he also gave him charge of the retreatants. So much work ruined René Alméras' health. The Holy Founder, convinced by personal experience that a change of air could contribute to restoring a person to health, sent him in 1646 to visit several houses in France and Italy. When he reached Rome, René Alméras was notified that he had been appointed Superior of the house. He stayed there until 1651. On his return to France, he took over the direction of Saint Charles Seminary. In 1654 we find him engaged in distributing relief to the poor of Picardy and Champagne. He again visited several houses of the Congregation and once again became Assistant of the Motherhouse, in which position he remained until the death of Saint Vincent. He was also Visitor of the Province of Poitou. He was in Richelieu when the Saint, realizing that his death was near, begged him to return to Paris immediately. René Alméras was ill but he came, carried on a stretcher, and had the consolation of receiving a last blessing from the Saint. Appointed Vicar General by Saint Vincent, then Superior General by the Assembly of 1661, he wisely governed the two Communities of the Congregation of the Mission and the Company of the Daughters of Charity until September 2, 1672, the day of his death.

¹³This first General Assembly in the Congregation of the Mission lasted from October 13 to October 23. The minutes of the sessions have been published in vol. XIII, no. 89.

¹⁴René Alméras was to be substituted for the one among them who left Paris.

¹⁵Antoine Portail and Jean Dehorgny.

¹⁶Superior in La Rose.

of the presence of these Gentlemen, who met here. You are the first and the only one I have told about this; please honor Our Lord's silence in this matter with regard to anyone whomsoever, for a particular reason I have.

Prostrate in spirit, I embrace your Little Company and beg you to embrace them all on my behalf. Ask their pardon for my being so despicable that I was unable to write to them. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Rome, in Rome

626. - JEAN - JACQUES OLIER TO SAINT VINCENT

[October 1642]¹

He who has Jesus has everything!

I would like to entreat you in Our Lord to allow M. Lucas to come here today, because a heretic is supposed to be here and he is asking me things in which I am not well versed. I hope for this favor from you, for the love of Our Lord. It will be useful for two purposes: both for the edification of the Huguenot² people and also for my own instruction. I am very ignorant and unfit for the responsibility I bear and for which I would like to render myself less unworthy in Our Lord through your instrumentality. I had asked him not long ago to represent to you that, for the short time remaining to him of

Letter 626. - Archives of Saint-Sulpice, a copy made by M. Leschassier.

¹Antoine Lucas was then in Paris for the Assembly of Superiors (First General Assembly); he did not return there until much later.

²Huguenot was the name given to the Reformed Church in France, a Protestant sect which espoused the spiritual and political tenets of John Calvin.

his stay in this city, I would greatly need his conversation for two weeks in order to instruct me in this kind of doctrine that few people know as he does, according to the late Father de Condren,³ who thought highly of him and had given him insights that would be very useful to me for Our Lord, in whom I am all yours.

OLIER

627. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[1642 or 1643]¹

Monsieur,

Our Sister Jeanne Dalmagne² has arrived from Nanteuil. The coach that brought her is going back at eight o'clock tomorrow morning. I do not know if she will go back also, or whether you think it advisable for her to stay here for a few days. She has gone

³Charles de Condren, born in Vauxbuin, near Soissons, December 16, 1588, entered the Oratory on June 17, 1617, after receiving his doctorate at the Sorbonne. He founded the seminary of Langres in 1619 and that of Saint-Magloire in 1620; then he established a house of his Congregation in Poitiers, where he remained for over a year. On his return to Paris, he made a fine reputation for himself as a director of souls, which attracted to him Gaston, Duc d'Orleans, brother of the King; Olier, Meyster, Amelote and other eminent persons of rank. He governed the Oratory from October 30, 1629 to January 7, 1641, the day of his death. (Cf. Denis Amelote, *La vie du P. Charles de Condren* [Paris, H. Sara, 1643].) Saint Vincent held him in high esteem. "He spoke to me about him in terms that might seem unbelievable," writes Jean-Jacques Olier (cf. *Mémoires autographes*, vol. II, p. 225), "and I remember that he said to me concerning him: 'There has not been found a man like him, *non est inventus similis illi*;' and a thousand other similar things, going even so far as to fall on his knees and strike his breast when he learned of his death, and accuse himself, with tears in his eyes, of not having honored the holy man as much as he deserved."

Letter 627. - Archives of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹The information known about Sister Jeanne Dalmagne requires that these dates be assigned to this letter.

²Jeanne Dalmagne, at first an extern sister at Carmel, was admitted to the Daughters of Charity in 1639. Placed at Nanteuil-le-Haudouin (Oise) in September 1641 and admitted to vows March 25, 1643, she was recalled to Paris the same year for reasons of health. She died March 25, 1644, in the thirty-third year of her age. (Cf. Conference on her virtues, vol. IX, no. 19.)

to our Sister's funeral, which is why I do not know what she has to tell us. Perhaps you will find out from the letter she brought you, and you can send me word about her stay. I most humbly beg you to do this and to consider me before God tomorrow at the holy altar, Monsieur, as your most humble and most grateful daughter and servant.

L. DE M.

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

628. - TO ANTOINE LUCAS, IN VARIZE

Paris, November 20, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Mon Dieu, Monsieur, how consoled my soul is by the blessing His Divine Majesty has been pleased to bestow on your mission, the strength He has given you to sustain such a great work, and the angelic life being led by Monsieur and Madame de Varize!¹ I thank God for all this and beseech Him to strengthen you still more and to be the sanctification and glory of Monsieur and Madame de Varize. But alas! Monsieur, this consolation is tinged with affliction because of M. Roussel's² illness. Oh well! blessed be God, *cui sic placuit!*³ There is no possibility of bringing him back here in this state, considering the nature of his illness, the season and the distance of the place. I shall send you our Brother Arnaud,⁴

Letter 628. - The original autograph letter is in the house of the Priests of the Mission at Oria (Italy).

¹Varize was a small commune in Eure-et-Loir. Madame de Varize called the Daughters of Charity there in 1651 or 1652.

²This name is not found in the old personnel catalogues.

³*Who is thus pleased.*

⁴Guillaume Arnaud, born in Embrun (Hautes-Alpes), was received at Saint-Lazare on April 27, 1642, at the age of twenty-seven.

if his indisposition permits. I cannot send you Brother Alexandre⁵ because we have M. Bécu and M. Prévost⁶ sick here, nor is there any possibility of your going alone to begin the mission in Marchenoir;⁷ that would wear you out. *O Jésus!* Monsieur, it is much better to postpone it until a time when we can give you some assistance, which we do not have for the present because everyone who could help you is on a mission. If the Archdeacon de Dunois could perform this good work, *in nomine Domini*, you could go with him. Otherwise, I beseech you, Monsieur, to defer things and to spare nothing during M. Roussel's illness. I greet him most humbly and beseech him, in the name of Jesus Christ, to do all he can to get better. I shall not thank Monsieur and Madame de Varize for the incomparable charity they are exercising towards Monsieur Roussel; God alone is worthy of this thanks and of being their reward. I renew for them here the offers of my obedience, I who am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Lucas, Priest of the Mission, presently in Varize

⁵Alexandre Véronne, a coadjutor Brother, born May 15, 1610 in Avignon, was received into the Congregation of the Mission on July 22, 1630. He was infirmarian at Saint-Lazare and was so dedicated and capable that he won the esteem of all, particularly of Saint Vincent. His death on November 18, 1686 was announced to the whole Company in a circular from the Superior General. Brother Chollier wrote his life, which was published in the *Miroir du frère coadjuteur de la Congrégation de la Mission* (Paris, 1875), pp. 145 ff., and which also served as the basis for his biography which appeared in the *Notices*, vol. III, pp. 528-548.

⁶In another place (no. 631) Saint Vincent remarked of M. Prévost that "he was a learned and astute businessman." In the old personnel catalogues, the only Prévost is Nicolas, who entered the Congregation in 1646 and died in Madagascar in September 1656.

⁷Chief canton town in Blois (Loir-et-Cher).

629. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

Saint-Lazare, November 21, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have not written to you for two weeks. Since then, I have received two letters from you from the place where you gave the first mission. They gave me reason to thank God for the blessing His Goodness bestowed on it and I could not refrain from telling the little family about it at the repetition of prayer, especially that reconciliation, which seems to me a miracle, considering the temperament of the region. I have a little less facility understanding Italian; nevertheless, since that facilitates your style, *in nomine Domini!* I do not know if the Duchesse,¹ your foundress, understands it. I console her now and then by letting her see your letters. If there is anything private, particularly what has to do with individuals in the Company, put it in a separate note.

I sent you some letters of recommendation from the Nuncio² to the Cardinal of Sant'Onofrio³ and the Vice-Gerent; please let me know the outcome of them.

Your next-to-last letter, as the one that preceded it and the latest one, revealed to me some change in your dealings with the ordinands and retreatants, on the pretext that those Gentlemen left each man free to go or not to go. Whereupon

Letter 629. - Original autograph letter, in the public and university library of Geneva (Ms. fr. 197 f.), which acquired it in 1824 in exchange for an autograph of John Calvin.

¹The Duchesse d'Aiguillon.

²Gerolamo Grimaldi.

³Francesco Antonio Barberini, of the Capuchin Order, brother of Pope Urban VIII, was born in Florence in 1569. Created Cardinal in 1624, he was a friar exemplary for piety and charity. Although some time previously he had exchanged his title to Sant'Onofrio for that of Santa Maria in Trastevere, he was still being called Cardinal Sant'Onofrio. He died in 1646.

I shall tell you that I think you would have done well to continue in the way God's Providence was arranging things, which was perhaps requiring this act of patience and submission to draw down the abundance of His grace on you. It would have been better, I think, to undertake missions in less important places, and perhaps a mission for the shepherds would have been conducive to that. I have two or three reasons for this: first, that Our Lord humbles in order to raise up, and allows the suffering of interior and exterior afflictions in order to bring about peace. He often desires some things more than we do, but wants us to merit the grace of accomplishing them by several practices of virtue and to beg for this with many prayers.

The second reason is that it is fitting that your principal plans, which deal with Rome, be carried out with patience and forbearance in Rome. The people there are patient and observant of the conduct of men. Because they are stable, it is hard for them to entrust matters of importance to persons who pursue and become attached to secondary ideas, and this sometimes to the detriment of their primary goals. Oh! how patient and forbearing they are, and how they delight in patience and perseverance in the original plans!

The third reason comes from here, where the person I mentioned to you by name and one of our prelate friends found something to think about in this change of behavior. And then, while we go from one thing to another in our plans, God raises up others to do what He first asked of us. Allow me to tell you, Monsieur, that I have always recognized in the two of us this fault of pursuing our new ideas too readily and becoming at times too strongly attached to them. This has made me impose on myself the yoke of doing nothing important without seeking advice. That is why God gives me new insights every day on the importance of acting this way, and more devotion to doing nothing except in this way. In the name of God, Monsieur, do nothing important, or above all

nothing new, without notifying me beforehand, so that I may give you my advice. I see a number of reasons you can offer me as objections to this. But believe, Monsieur, that I see all of them from here, that I have answers for all of them and experiences which sixty-two years and my own faults have acquired for me,⁴ and which will not be unprofitable for you.

The two main reasons that led you to act that way are: first, the one I mentioned to you, namely, that you could not do both things at the same time, give the mission and leave a sufficient number of men for the ordinands. That is why I have already told you that it would have been better to give less important missions, such as the one for the shepherds, added to the fact that God always gives greater blessings to more humble beginnings than to those that make a clatter and proclaim our *committimus*.⁵ The other is that, if we gave the missions and took care of the ordinands of Velletri⁶ successfully, Cardinal Lenti would find reason in this to put the Company forward and to have the decree concerning the ordinands settled. To this I shall reply that this may well be, but since it seems to me contrary to Christian simplicity and [what] I think God is asking of us, I have always avoided performing acts of piety in one place in order to render myself worthy of esteem in another, except for one time when we gave a mission in a place to make ourselves look important to the late Chief Justice of Paris,⁷ with whom we had business to transact. God allowed the result to be just the opposite, because the Company made apparent in more than one instance the poverty and wretchedness of some of its spirits

⁴In the first place Saint Vincent had written: "which sixty-two years have acquired for me." He crossed out "have acquired for me" so as to add, "and my own faults."

⁵A privilege granted to certain persons or entities whereby they could only be subpoenaed before the Parlement.

⁶A town situated a few leagues from Rome.

⁷Nicolas Le Jay, baron de Tilly, named Chief Justice of the Parlement of Paris in 1630, died in 1640.

and I had to go back after the mission to ask pardon of a priest, on my knees, for some offense that a member of the Company had given him. So, Our Lord has made me understand clearly through experience what I had believed up to then in theory: God asks that we never do good in one place to make ourselves look important in others but, rather, that we always regard Him directly, immediately, and without intermediary in all our actions and allow ourselves to be guided by His paternal hand.

I wrote to you about our vows and forgot to tell you that those already in the Company are free to make them or not make them. What I wrote concerns those who will come in the future and, since the majority of the men who are with you have already made them, there is no need for you to talk to them about it. I think that only M. de Ploesquellec has not made them.⁸ Handle the matter according to your usual prudence, with those who present themselves in future.

I do not know if those six clerics you mentioned, the ones who have presented themselves, are priests, or if they are ready to be. If so, *in nomine Domini*. However, if they are children, remember, Monsieur, that we can expect from here only what has been promised to you by the foundation, and calculate your expenses on that.

I received the indulgences and the privileged altar⁹ for La Rose.

I am worried about the large amount of work you have and am afraid that you are taxing your mind and body beyond

⁸He made his vows in 1647.

⁹An altar at which a priest can gain a plenary indulgence for a soul in Purgatory for whom he says Mass there.

their strength. In the name of God, Monsieur, take care of yourself.

I am, in His love, your servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Rome, in Rome

630. - TO JACQUES CHIROYE, IN LUÇON

Paris, November 22, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter, which let me see that your illness is continuing and that nonetheless there is an indication that Our Lord will soon deliver you from it. I most humbly thank Him for this and beseech Him to see fit to restore you to perfect health for His glory, the good of the Company, and the salvation of souls.

I asked Monsieur Lambert to write and tell you that I have asked M. Colée to go back to Richelieu, and also M. Durot, to whom I am writing.

He promised to send me five hundred livres, or whatever, to forward to M. Perdu to be sent on to you, and I shall try to send you two or three hundred in ten or twelve days for the repairs and furniture to be taken care of. I think it would be well for the Bishop of Luçon¹ to be so kind as to write to the Cardinal² for his assistance and some resources for

Letter 630. - The original signed letter is the property of the Prince de Ligne and is kept in his château in Beloeil, Belgium.

¹Pierre Nivelles (1637-1661).

²Cardinal Richelieu, formerly Bishop of Luçon.

furniture and food for the ordinands.

There you have, Monsieur, what I shall say for the present, except that I greet your Little Company, prostrate in spirit at their feet and yours. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Chiroye, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Luçon, in Luçon

631. - TO FRANCOIS DUFESTEL, IN ANNECY

Bresle, November 28, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Only in heaven will you be able to know what joy my soul received from your last letter, in which you reported to me in such a contented manner how you delivered the letter I sent to M. Guérin to succeed you, and the use you wish to make of this. O Monsieur, how wholeheartedly I beseech God to bless you and to grant the entire Company a share in the disposition He has bestowed on you, now and always!

What shall I tell you about the seminary in Belley? I do not really understand what is in question: whether the Bishop¹

Letter 631. - The original, written entirely in the hand of Saint Vincent, had been put on sale in London on March 8, 1858, then, in Paris, in December 1865, by M. Charavay, and finally, by the bookseller Miard, who had permitted M. Rochebilière to make a copy. This copy, now preserved in the Bibl. Nat. (n.a.fr. 22129), is incomplete. In his vol. VIII, pp. 552-555, Coste published an edition in which he used this last as his basic text. He added to it those segments both found in Charavay's catalogue and in Reg. 2, p. 32 and p. 49. The editors of this edition have substituted this compilation (vol. VIII) for the letter published by Coste in vol. II.

¹Jean de Passelaigue.

has some suitable men he would like you to form for that purpose or whether he would like to establish the Little Company in his diocese. Please [tell me] which it is. If it is the first, when and how and for [how long] a time; if it is the second, when and what funds are available to do this: I entreat you, in the meantime, Monsieur. . . .

I did not give your letter to the Duchesse d'Aiguillon . . . that is why they would not approve of the Missionaries' . . . attention. If you write to me again, do not make any mention at all of the town about which you were writing to me. Someday I will tell you the reason for this.

I think it is fitting that we not change the name which the Holy Father gives to our houses, *of the Mission*, in order to call them *Seminaries*. I beg you, Monsieur, to see to it that there be no innovations in terms or in things practiced in the Company, in order to preserve unity in all things. You cannot imagine the difficulties arising in a Congregation from not being uniform.

Here is a little news from us. Monsieur du Coudray is setting out for Barbary for the release of about eighty slaves, and he plans to give the mission to the others, who number about ten thousand in Algiers. If it is praiseworthy, I entreat you, Monsieur, [to recommend this] good work to God, as well as the persons destined for it, the above-named Monsieur du Coudray, M. Boucher, and Brother. . . .

Our Lord has attracted to the Company M. Gilles, headmaster and philosophy professor at Lisieux,² and M. Prévost who likewise is a learned and astute businessman, and also a few others who have taken the place of those who have left.

Do not be surprised at these departures. Our Lord was followed and abandoned by several thousand persons and reduced to 120 faithful at his death. Saint Ignatius (Loyola),

²The Collège de Lisieux in Paris.

at the beginning of the holy Company that Our Lord instituted through him, dismissed twelve men at one time.³ And you know that we have not dismissed a single one of those who were priests, nor anyone else except M. N., to whom I wrote a few days ago and asked to withdraw, for a number of weighty reasons. God knows and has made known to men how much more He blesses a small chosen number than a large number among whom there are those who fear hardship and who are attached to their wives, vineyards or houses.

I conclude this letter by recommending myself to your Holy Sacrifices and to those of the Gentlemen, whom I embrace, prostrate in spirit at their feet and yours, I who am your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Dufestel, Priest of the Mission of Annecy, in Annecy

632. - BERNARD CODOING TO SAINT VINCENT

Rome, 1642

We gave a mission in a locality whose name we shall omit, a small, closed market-town made up of three thousand souls or thereabouts, on the way from Rome to Naples. During the month that the mission lasted, we discovered some frightful miseries and disorders. Most of the men and women knew neither the Pater nor the Credo, and still less the other matters necessary for salvation. There were a great

³Luis Gonzalez, Provincial of Portugal, dismissed from the Society of Jesus several of his conferes who complained at being used to build the Collège of Coimbra (Cf. Daniel Bartoli, *Histoire de Saint Ignace de Loyola et de la Compagnie de Jésus* [2 vols., Paris, 1844], p. 85). Was Saint Vincent alluding to this episode?

Letter 632. - Abelly, *op.cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. III, p. 58.

number of deeply rooted enmities; blasphemies were quite common, and they were horrible blasphemies. A number of individuals from all sorts of conditions were living together without the benefit of marriage; there were several prostitutes and wanton women who were corrupting the young. And with all that, we met with great opposition and resistance, and the evil spirit subjected us to violent attacks, even on the part of those who should have given us more support. In short, this mission was an almost continual suffering for us. There was no humility that could win the hearts of those people, for they thought their honor was at stake if they allowed themselves to be instructed and converted; and there was no way to make peace with them except to stop preaching and hearing confessions. Nevertheless, after two weeks of patience and perseverance in our usual mission exercises and functions, these people began to open their eyes and recognize their disorders and, in the end, the grace of God brought about much good. A great many reconciliations were effected, enmities were ended and the blasphemies ceased. Four prostitutes were converted, and, among those living together out of wedlock, one of the most obstinate, who had been living openly for twelve years in adultery and had been causing great disorder in his family and scandal in the town, was converted, gave up his sin, and cut off its cause. Another great fruit, among all the others usually obtained at missions, is that of having brought them to give up an abominable sin, not to be named, to which they were extraordinarily prone.

General Communion was made with good dispositions and all were deeply moved at hearing the weeping and groaning and seeing the tears of the converted souls. In a word, despite all the efforts of the evil spirit, this mission came to a close with great blessing.

633. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

Paris, December 25, 1642

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The day before yesterday I received your letter concerning

your third mission, as well as the decision of the Vice-Gerent with regard to the ordinands. I shall reply to it broadly, not being able to do so in detail because I gave it to the Duchesse d'Aiguillon the same day, along with the one you wrote to her.

I shall begin then by telling you that I was more touched than I can express by the way you risked your life and by the harm those brigands did to you. O Monsieur, how I have thanked and have had others thank God for preserving you! In the name of God, Monsieur, see that you take care of your health. What you told me about your illness has also grieved me very deeply.

I praise God that you are now occupied completely with the ordinands. There is no capital at all to be found. I shall do what I can but the misery of the war is really cooling the enthusiasm of those who could make a contribution. Providence has permitted that Richelieu not be funded. The late Cardinal¹ had sold the record-offices of Loudun, intending to put the price into real estate, which he did; however, he died before relinquishing it to us. Two or three days before

Charavay. Since we were not able to recover it, we took our text from Pémartin, *op.cit.*, vol. I, no. 373, except for the part comprised between the words: "I have made an important proposal" to "who lived in it as he did." This fragment of the original is preserved by the Vincentian Fathers in Louvain, Belgium. The Motherhouse of the Priests of the Mission in Paris has a facsimile of the original. They also possess in their archives a separate sheet which we think belonged to that letter on which we find:

(1) a note on the contents of the letter: "the importance of ridding the Company of undesirable elements. M. Vincent prefers to expose himself to divers risks rather than tolerate such persons. Excellent for its firmness, wisdom and detachment, etc.;"

(2) the address in the hand of the Saint: "to M. Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission of Rome, in Rome;"

(3) an addition to the letter, also in the Saint's handwriting: "The dispensation from the vows which you sent me is not in order because it states that the person's age is fifty, whereas it is only thirty-six. Please, Monsieur, get another one. She is firmly resolved never to marry; and if they wish to grant it on this condition, she is willing to accept it. I beg you, Monsieur, to work on this; it is important."

¹Cardinal Richelieu died on December 4, 1642. He had drawn up an irrevocable contract of foundation, based on the revenues of Loudun, and this money maintained the Missionaries of Richelieu.

his death, he sent me the rough draft for it, which he did not sign. We must praise God for this. We shall see what his heirs will choose to do.

The funding for Crécy is not assured either,² nor does it exceed what is indispensable for maintaining the people we would have to keep there. That is why, with no help from there nor from here either, we are powerless, because the King is taking, this year and a quarter of the next, our revenue from Angers,³ and from Les Ponts-de-Cé which belong to the house of Troyes,⁴ plus about twenty thousand livres; and we do not know *quid futurum sit*⁵ for the following years. Blessed be God!

We have not yet received payment from your coaches in Soissons, although they are requested every day. That is due to some obstacles encountered in your affair. We withheld your money because of some other difficulty that has come up. We gave 1005 livres of it for the money of a letter of exchange for that sum to M. Boice, according to M. Marchand's order and your June letter. Let me know, please, how much money you had withdrawn there from the amount the Duchesse⁶ had sent and that you sent back to us, and how much you still have here.

I have made an important proposal to a certain person concerning that work, I mean the work in Rome; we shall see what comes of it. It was to the Duchesse d'Aiguillon herself. We shall see what comes of it and I will send you word by the next mail. And, if Our Lord grants success to this or makes provision there, we shall send you M. Brunet and M. Blatiron.

²Cf. no. 603, n.5.

³Commander de Sillery gave the income to Saint-Lazare on August 20, 1640.

⁴By virtue of a contract of June 19, 1638.

⁵*What the future will bring.*

⁶The Duchesse d'Aiguillon.

I had assigned the latter to Saintes,⁷ but shall detain him until we have seen what can be done. He is leaving in two days to enter the seminary.⁸

We have two other well-educated priests⁹ who have adapted themselves quite well to both the interior and exterior practices, even to our way of preaching, according to the report M. Alméras gave me on the mission they are giving in Clichy. One was an excellent professor of philosophy at the Collège de Lisieux. If they were a little better prepared, I would send them, or one of them, to you.

We have twelve to fourteen students, some in philosophy and some in theology, which they study here in the house. You could not imagine, Monsieur, the blessing Our Lord is bestowing on them through the method He has given the Company. When they are qualified, we shall have the means, God willing, of giving you more assistance. They have all made their seminary well, thank God. We are going to dismiss one of them, nonetheless, because he has very little aptitude for the humanities; he understands only with difficulty.

Our seminary is fairly full, by God's mercy; there are thirty-six or thirty-eight seminarians. We accepted seven last month,¹⁰ all of whom show promise, by the mercy of God. I

⁷Although the Priests of the Mission had no establishments as yet in the diocese of Saintes, they had been working there continuously since 1640, to the great benefit of the faith. (Cf. Abelly, *op.cit.*, bk. II, p. 36.)

⁸The internal seminary was for the Congregation of the Mission what the novitiate was for Religious Orders. All new applicants were received there to be formed to the practice of the virtues of their state and to be trained for the life style and duties of the Missionaries. When they requested it, Saint Vincent readmitted the priests of the Congregation who felt the need to withdraw for a month or two from exterior occupations so as to recapture the first fervor of their vocation.

⁹Jean-Baptiste Gilles and possibly M. Prévost, who were mentioned in no. 631. This letter, the next one and several others, again prove that Saint Vincent was happy to receive into his Congregation well-educated priests and that he did not retain those he judged inadequate. The legend that he gave little importance to knowledge is of Jansenistic origin.

¹⁰MM. Blondel, Gilles, Prévost, Cuissot, Mugnier, and Dunots. The catalogue of personnel does not mention the seventh.

think Our Lord is granting this because of a certain faithfulness to getting rid of incorrigibles that He sees in the Company. Just recently, one of the men of the house said to me on this subject that six of the best men did not do as much good in the Company as one single incorrigible did harm. One of those whom we put out wrote to me four or five days ago that unless we took him back he would kill me and several others in the Company, or would set fire to this house so as to be hanged at the entrance. Our Lord has granted me the willingness to run this risk rather than accept into the Company an individual who lived in it as he did.

We are being threatened that M. N., to whom I have written twice asking him to withdraw from the Company, will write something against us. *In nomine Domini*, it is better to submit to the slanders of a man than to keep him such as he is. Alas! Monsieur, what did we not do to make him conform to the others? He himself told a lady of remarkable piety that he had done me more harm than all the rest. What he did to me is nothing, but it is true that he has done a great deal of harm to the Company. Our Lord will draw glory from it, if He pleases. If M. N. does not fit in here, how will he be suitable there? The Company must be purged. Ten men who are what they should be, are worth a hundred; and a hundred who are not really called, or who do not correspond to God's designs, are not worth ten. Oh! God Himself wanted to point that out when He ordered that, before joining battle, it should be proclaimed that the timorous and those who had married a wife that year, or planted a vineyard, or had a house built, had to withdraw, because He knew very well that they would do more harm than good in the combat!

You sent me word that it would be desirable for the General's residence to be in Rome; that is an important issue. If Our Lord gives me the strength to go and visit you (this is just between us), *in nomine Domini*, we shall look into it. Recommend this matter to God; I must not rely on myself.

The desire I have of seeing you and all your Company could be coming from nature.

Marshal de la Meilleraye¹¹ is the Governor of Brittany and is leaving in ten days to hold the meeting of the Estates. The Duchesse¹² will talk to him about Saint-Yves and will give him your report.¹³ She told me that the Cardinal¹⁴ was delighted to. . . . Blessed be God that Providence arranged things otherwise! We held two solemn services and said several Masses for him. Celebrate a large number there, please. I recommend likewise to your prayers the late Cardinal de Gondi.¹⁵ Oh! what a loss we have also had in him.

I am afraid I shall forget to repeat a caution to you and to recommend that you never write from there about affairs of State, because I can assure you that besides its being contrary to our spirit and, as I see it, to that of Our Lord, all the letters are in danger of being read. Moreover, we must be very faithful to the practice we have of not conversing about those matters nor about news of the world.

This, Monsieur, is almost all I can tell you at the moment. I embrace you and your Company, prostrate in spirit at their feet and yours and I am, in the love of Our Lord. . . .

¹¹Charles de la Porte, Duc de la Meilleraye, was born in 1602 and he owed his rapid advancement as much to the protection of Cardinal Richelieu as to his personal valor. He was appointed Grand-Master of Artillery in 1634, Marshal of France in 1637, Superintendent of Finance in 1648, and Duke and Peer in 1663. He was the one who gave Saint Vincent the idea of sending Missionaries to Madagascar. He died in Paris on February 8, 1664.

¹²The Duchesse d'Aiguillon.

¹³The Governor of Brittany had the right of commendation for the church of Saint-Yves.

¹⁴Cardinal Richelieu.

¹⁵Henri de Gondi, Bishop of Paris (1598-1622), first Cardinal de Retz and head of the King's Council, died in the camp of the King before Béziers in August 1622, at age fifty-two. The second Cardinal de Retz, Jean-François-Paul de Gondi, did not receive the cardinalate until 1652. Why was Saint Vincent commending Henri de Gondi to the prayers of M. Codoing on December 25, 1642? The fact is so strange that we question whether this sentence really is a faithful rendering of the original. Perhaps the Saint meant to refer to the recently deceased Cardinal Richelieu but wrote Gondi because of some distraction.

I forgot to tell you that it is good and it is the custom in all well-regulated Communities for individual Superiors to allow their subjects the freedom of writing to the General, without reading their letters or the replies of the Superior General. Please, Monsieur, tell this to the Community as I am telling M. Germain, who told me good things about you that I would not have known otherwise.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission of Rome, in Rome

634. - TO PIERRE DU CHESNE, IN CRECY

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have no doubt that the subject of the present letter will at first cause you regret and sadness, since its purpose is to notify you of the loss we have suffered of our good M. Pillé, a loss I have felt as keenly as any I am aware of having sustained, because I regarded him as the happiness and blessing of the Mission. Nevertheless, we have reason to be consoled in the conviction still remaining to us that we have lost him only from sight. The holy life he led and the happy death he experienced bear witness to the fact that he is now in heaven and, consequently, we can count on him more, and he is more capable of doing good for the Company than he has ever been. The two conferences we held on his virtues give sufficient testimony of this, as you will be able to see from the summary we are sending you.

However, before beginning the account, I beg you to bear

in mind that, although I am setting down here in full what has been reported to me either by word of mouth or in writing, you could not know, with all that, the entire life of this great man. We have not yet been able to make inquiries concerning a great number of remarkable things that could be said of him, particularly what happened before he was a member of our Company. All his actions are so many precious stones that deserve to be gathered up and preserved with care, and that is what we hope to do, God willing, with time and the divine assistance. For the present, I shall be content with giving you a sampling of them, so that from the part you can judge the whole.

So as to proceed with order and with the customary simplicity of the Mission, I shall begin by telling you that M. Pillé's name was Jean and that he was a native of Ferrières in the diocese of Sens.¹ His father and mother were virtuous and God-fearing, which was quite apparent in the special care they took to bring him up in virtue and in the fear of God. From his childhood, he gave evidence of the choice Divine Providence intended to make of him. From that time on, feeling his heart inflamed with the desire to consecrate himself to God's service in a special way, he tried to find the means of doing this and, realizing that knowledge was no small help to virtue, he determined to lay in a good store of it. And because his parents did not want him to study, he decided to go and live in Paris for a better opportunity to do this. One day, he saw his father going off with a cart loaded with merchandise, so he slyly climbed up on it and hid under the hay for fear that he might be seen and sent back. Thus, he made his way to Paris, where he found the means of devoting himself to study. He faithfully used for study the time that was given to him and he grew in knowledge and in virtue. He

¹Ferrières-Gâtinais, today chief canton town in Loiret.

frequented the sacraments, avoided bad company, and found his pleasure only in God, who destined him to be His minister. God gave him very lofty sentiments concerning the priesthood, which he entered, burning with the desire to work for the salvation of the neighbor. He was made a priest in residence at Saint-Nicolas-des-Champs,² where he gave great edification. Monsieur Gallemand,³ a Doctor of the Sorbonne and a man of holy life, having learned of the zeal with which this good servant of God was dedicating himself to the salvation of souls and that he asked nothing better than to work, made him his assistant at Notre-Dame des Vertus,⁴ where he worked no less than before, carrying out the duties of pastor. Monsieur Gallemand, who was unable, for very justifiable reasons, to be in residence all the time, relied on him completely. However, it pleased God to take his uncle, the Pastor of Ferrières, whom he succeeded. Oh! it was there that this good servant of God came to realize a pastor's obligation to procure the salvation of the souls in his care. Who could describe the devotion and fervor with which he performed the duties of pastor? He spared himself in no way, whether in the pulpit, or in the confessional, or elsewhere, and in all things God bestowed grace and blessing on him, especially in the direction of consciences. And when his illness, which was beginning at that time, would not allow him to preach or teach catechism, he had it done by the good Recollect Fathers or other religious, whom he discreetly informed of everything that had to be done for his parishioners. All his paternal care and extraordinary example did not prevent his being calumniated, tried, and persecuted by his own flock, in the early years, particularly

²A parish in Paris.

³Jacques Gallemand, Doctor of the Sorbonne, first Superior of the Carmelites in France, Pastor in Aumale, then in Aubervilliers near Paris. He died in Besançon on December 25, 1630, at the age of seventy-two. Father Placide Gallemand published his life in 1653.

⁴At Aubervilliers (Seine-Saint-Denis).

by a certain judge of the locality, and by the religious themselves, who instituted proceedings against him because he had established the Confraternity of the Rosary there. In that affair it is unbelievable how much trouble he had and, at the same time, how much constancy. Someone else of lesser virtue would undoubtedly have abandoned everything, but he, like a good shepherd, always stood his ground and was at last victorious over his enemies. What is more, he then won their hearts so well that there was no one afterwards who did not love and esteem him as a man of God. It is true that in winning them over he lost his health and gained a bodily infirmity that caused him to suffer and languish right up to his death, but in return he had better health and strength of soul. This was apparent in the exceptional virtues he was seen to practice afterwards with greater perfection.

Among other things, he was a great lover of cleanliness in the church and could not bear any dirt in it. He was seen spending the afternoons looking after the church and the vestments. He also took great care that the divine service be carried out with the requisite decorum. He himself would take the trouble to teach the chant. He could not tolerate any immodesty in church. As soon as people saw him coming, everyone attended to his duty. In short, he could say with good reason: *Zelus domus Dei comedit me.*⁵

His house was an inn for poor passersby, whom he lodged there. It was his greatest pleasure to see religious in his house, especially the Recollects, whom he welcomed as angels sent to him by God. It was beautiful to see him go out to meet them, receiving them with open arms and such an outpouring of affection that one could say he carried them in his hands. In a word, he performed in their regard all the duties of a most courteous and extremely charitable host. He usually gave them

⁵*The zeal for the house of God devours me.* Jn. 2:17. "His disciples recalled the words of Scripture: 'Zeal for your house consumes me.'" (NAB)

a man to escort them to the houses to take up their collection, and he had provisions sent to their home, serving them like a real father.

Our Lord had bestowed on him a marvelous love for the poor. He distributed general alms twice a week, but he never gave material alms without joining to them spiritual ones, in the form of some good word of edification. As soon as he heard about some sick person, this charitable shepherd would be seen dropping everything and even leaving his meal to go and assist him. And because his illness made him fear that he could not carry out his duty well, since he had only one curate, he took on a second one, although he was not obliged in any way to do so and even though one was enough, because he never stopped working at anything he could do himself. In short, if by the work one recognizes the excellence of the worker, one need only consider that the parish of Ferrières was like a wasteland in the beginning and, by the time he left it, it was so well cultivated that I do not know if there were any better at that time. In a word, we can say that he was a *pastor bonus*.

I would be too lengthy if I tried to relate to you here the details of the holy life he led while he was pastor. Nevertheless, he always considered himself a useless servant, believing that his shoulders were too frail to carry a burden as heavy as that of a parish, so he gave it up in the end, fearing the judgments of God. But before leaving, he did two things: the first was that, although he could say: *quid potui facere vineae meae et non feci?*⁶ nevertheless, he had a mission given there in which all the parishioners made general confessions. The Confraternity of Charity was established there and all disputes were settled. Even a large number of the former religious made

⁶*What could I have done for my vineyard, and did not? Is. 5:4. "What more was there to do for my vineyard that I had not done? Why, when I looked for the crop of grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes?" (NAB)*

general confessions. Secondly, he provided the parish with a very good successor: his own brother whom he had brought up and sent to study for that purpose. So he had reason to live in peace, because, as a matter of fact, he was and still is one of the best pastors I know.

When M. Pillé had thus provided for his parish, he decided to enter our Company. Although he was advanced in years and ailing, and even though I scruple receiving among us pastors who were doing well in their parishes, his virtue and holiness, together with his earnest insistence and perseverance in asking, had such power over me that, after having him postulate for a long time, I finally received him among our Missionaries. He entered our Company in September 1630, with the desire of living out the rest of his days in the work of the Mission. However, it pleased the Divine Wisdom, who wished him to preach to us by his patience, to impede the course and impetuosity of his zeal by his infirmity, which was always with him, preventing him from carrying out the functions of the Mission as he would have liked. Nevertheless, he did give a few missions, as we shall mention when we speak of the virtues we saw him practice since we had the happiness of having him with us. These virtues were exceptional and outstanding. Among others we have remarked the following.

The first is the love he bore for God which was such that it always thrilled him, making him seem out of breath, longing for Him night and day. He never ceased talking about His grandeur and the privileges attending those who serve Him; how faithful He is to those who have no other care than that of pleasing Him and how much He loves those who love Him and glorifies those who glorify Him. Anyone who wished to give him joy had only to speak to him of God. This love made him very attached to things concerning the divine service. He had a very lofty opinion of all the orders of the Church and took particular pleasure in ceremonies, rubrics, plainchant, music, etc. He could not sufficiently deplore the ignorance and scandal of priests and their negligence in observing the

rubrics, in carrying out the ceremonies, and in keeping the churches clean. He would often say: "I think that there is no longer any faith in the world; preachers are not preaching the truths of the Gospel; the poor common people are starving for the word of God and are being allowed to die of hunger, for want of assistance." *Parvuli petierunt panem, et non est qui frangat eis.*⁷

He was very exact in reciting his breviary, to the point that when he was ill, he could not rest content if he did not say it. Although his infirmity was such that it could well have dispensed him from it, he still said it, frequently to the prejudice of his health, and with so much devotion that he would often weep. He always had some verse of David on his lips, mostly this one, which he was very often heard to utter: *Domine, dilexi decorem domus tuae;*⁸ this indicates how much he had these elements of our religion at heart. When he performed the principal one, which is Holy Mass, it was with such devotion that he communicated the love of God to all who saw him. He was also often seen to weep while celebrating. He did not fail to say Mass except when illness prevented him. He was seen at the altar so weak and with such stomach pains that one would think he was about to breathe his last. The difficulty he had with taking medicines was that they prevented him from celebrating Mass. A month before his death, he was observed serving Mass, when he could scarcely stand up. He had a very great devotion to the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar and almost continually made acts of faith with regard to this mystery, as well as fervent aspirations, sometimes saying with tears: "My Savior, people do not know You, they have no faith, etc."

⁷*The little ones have asked for bread and there is no one who can break it for them.* Lam. 4:4. "The tongue of the suckling cleaves to the roof of its mouth in thirst; the babes cry for food, but there is no one to give it to them." (NAB)

⁸*Lord, I have loved the beauty of your house.* Ps. 26:8. "O Lord, I love the house in which you dwell, the tenting-place of your glory." (NAB) (In D-R B, Ps. 25:8.)

This great charity gave rise to such a great desire for the salvation of souls that he was prepared to tear his soul to pieces to save just one person. And, in fact, when there was question of going on a mission and his infirmity would permit him to go, only God knows whether he spared himself in any way. And although he was more in need of rest than of work, he would still labor beyond his strength. He gave three or four missions during which those sent with him said that they had never seen a Missionary work the way he did. He was the first in the confessional, and would have been quite content to spend the entire day there without eating, if obedience had not moderated his zeal. On the fourth mission, his physical strength failed him completely so that he had to be brought home. It was at that time that he began his laments, saying that he was useless to the Mission and had brought it only inconvenience. That was his most usual way of expressing himself. "Alas!" he said one day in tears to one of our brothers, "the souls of our brothers are falling into hell for want of instruction, while I am doing nothing!"

As for his devotion and fidelity to his vocation, that is indescribable; he himself would have to express his feeling for it. He was, as it were, beside himself every time someone spoke to him about it. This can be seen very well from an answer he gave to one of our seminarians who had inquired how he was feeling. Monsieur Pillé replied that he was useless and that he was a burden to the house. The Brother, misunderstanding his meaning, said to him: "What! Monsieur, would you really want to leave?" This cut him to the quick; never could one have touched him in a more painful spot. "Ah! my Brother," he said to him with tears in his eyes, "God forbid that I have that idea! If I am put out of the house by one door, I shall come back in by the other and die on the doorstep." He loved and esteemed everything great or small concerning the Mission, but he was deeply attached to the seminary and was delighted when he could render some

service there, such as writing the names of our Brothers in large letters, transcribing writings, pasting pictures on cardboard, etc. And when the late Monsieur de la Salle,⁹ at that time Director of the seminary, made use of his services to hear the confessions of the seminarians, he did it with inexpressible joy. People often heard him say: "If I had a little health, I would ask to be admitted among the seminarians to serve and obey there as the least of all; and because I cannot do that, to my great regret, I try to make up for this deficiency by these small services." He would often say to our Brothers in the seminary: "Oh! how fortunate you are to have such a marvelous opportunity to work at your perfection! We did not have it in our time! Courage then, my Brothers! Everything depends on you." One day, when one of our Brothers was recommending himself to his prayers, he told him that he did the rounds every day, meaning that he prayed for everyone individually, beginning with the oldest in the Company right down to the youngest. Anyone wishing to give joy to M. Pillé had only to speak to him about the results obtained in the missions and about the good workers in the Company; however, anyone who wished to sadden him had only to mention someone's departure. "Alas!" he said one day in response to such a remark, "what are they thinking of, wretches that they are? As far as I am concerned, they are blind. They are greatly mistaken to think they will succeed elsewhere as they did in the Mission. Do they not realize that when they leave they are like fish out of water and like

⁹Jean de la Salle, whom Saint Vincent calls a "great missionary" and whom the Bishop of Beauvais considered the "most gifted expositor" he had ever known (cf. Conference of Saint Vincent of August 5, 1659, vol. XII, no. 210), was born in Seux (Somme) on September 10, 1598, and offered his services to Saint Vincent in April 1626. In 1631 he preached in Champagne; in 1634, 1635 and 1636 he worked in Gironde and the surrounding areas. When the internal seminary of Saint-Lazare opened in June 1637, he was entrusted with its direction. The following year he returned to his mission, after which he was engaged in the ordinands' retreats until the end of his life. He died October 9, 1639, much regretted by Saint Vincent, who lost in him one of his best workers.

members separated from the body no longer able to share in the influences of the head? Oh! how worthy they are of compassion!" But, when he was told that someone had just been received into the Company, his heart was so delighted and transported with joy that, sick as he was, he could not keep it from showing exteriorly: in his body, which quivered; in his face, which would suddenly brighten; in his hands, which he would raise and join; in his arms, with which he would cordially embrace his new brother; in his eyes, which would shed tears of joy; and especially on his tongue, which, being unable to restrain the abundance of his heart, would utter such fervent and powerful words and do so with such vehemence and liveliness that it seemed the Holy Spirit was in his mouth in the form of a fiery tongue. "The Mission," he used to say, "is the spirit of the first Christians; it is a wholly apostolic life; it is the sovereign and ultimate means God has found to reform His Church; and it seems that His goodness, wisdom, and omnipotence have been exhausted in this masterpiece of His hands. Oh! what great designs His Providence has on the Mission! Oh! what great things we shall see! Oh! what a happiness to be a Missionary! How happy I am to be of this number and at the same time how unhappy to be so useless and such a burden!, etc." He said as much and more every time someone got him started on this subject, but especially on his deathbed. He could not prevent himself from talking about it to everyone who came to see him, but with much more ardor and vehemence than ever; it seemed he had strength and words only for that. And what I think is the best part is that he was saying what he really felt in his heart because he would have scrupled to say the least thing contrary to simplicity or through exaggeration. Finally, you know that I am scarcely given to exaggerating things, but I can assure you that it would be impossible for me to be able to express to you the lofty opinion he had of the Mission and that everything I have said about it is nothing compared to what

still remains to be said. That is why it is better for me to be satisfied at present with admiring him and with leaving you to think about this. I shall tell you only that the more he went on extolling the grandeur of our Institute and exaggerating his low opinion of himself, the holier he appeared to me and the more useful to our entire Community, so that often I could not keep from saying aloud: "Monsieur Pillé, by his inactivity and by his suffering alone, is doing more for God and for the house than I and our whole Company are doing by constant activity and work."

His humility was very great and very profound. What we have just said about the low esteem he had of his own person is a sure enough indication of this, for it was such that, although I told him quite a number of times that I considered it a great blessing to have him in our Company, nevertheless he could not be persuaded of this. Therefore, he always lived with this low opinion of himself, saying at every opportunity that he was useless to the house, that he accounted himself unworthy to be in it and that he was a burden to it and did not deserve the least of the good services rendered to him, even in his illnesses. He was not content with having this humility in his heart and on his lips; he made every effort to practice it in deed, offering with this end in view to serve in the lowest capacities and under the least person in the house. Among other things it was remarked that he was sent one day to help our Brother Alexandre,¹⁰ who was the bursar at that time. This he did so wholeheartedly that the same Brother told us he had never seen such submission of will and judgment. He, who was many years a priest and quite elderly, obeyed him as if he were just a young man. One day, he also entreated one of our kitchen Brothers to warn him of his faults. He often used to help the cook in any way he could and in the

¹⁰Brother Alexandre Véronne.

most menial and demeaning tasks. He would take the trouble to teach the chant to the younger students, although it was no little inconvenience for him. His humility was further apparent in the fact that he never busied himself with giving his opinion on any subject whatever, especially if it concerned learning, since he considered himself ignorant. He told one of our Brothers one day that he was unfit to carry out any function of the Mission because of his incompetence and that he was not even capable of guiding a group of ordinands, which our simple seminarians used to do at that time. He was content with mending the ordinands' chairs, saying that this was the only service he could render them, although he was in fact capable and experienced enough in such matters. And what is more remarkable is that when he said this with his lips, he felt it in his heart, wherein lies true humility.

His obedience equaled his humility. He never did anything without permission, although he was one of the elders in the house; he wished to have an order from Superiors for the slightest matter. He accepted with indifference whatever was given to him, whether it be well or badly prepared and even though he might find it distasteful or have an aversion to it. When the younger students asked him for something, he worried about their having permission. This great obedience caused him to have a marvelous condescension toward his equals and even toward his inferiors. Never did he contradict anyone. One could get him to converse on any subject one wished, provided it was edifying, and he would readily and promptly drop what he was doing, to do something else requested of him. What is more perfect is that he obeyed in all things with submission of his judgment, and did this all his life, but particularly at his death; witness the heroic acts that we shall presently touch upon, so much so that it could be said of him: *Factus est obediens usque ad mortem*.¹¹

¹¹*He was obedient up to death.* Phil. 2:8. “. . . and it was thus that he humbled

His patience was heroic. He never gave evidence of the least sign of impatience. He always blessed God in the midst of his sufferings, which were often so intense that he aroused everyone's compassion. One might have said at any moment that he was about to breathe his last. Notwithstanding all that, he never stopped being cheerful and was always himself. The poor man could not get up in the morning without aggravating his discomfort, nor could he get dressed by himself, except with great difficulty. With all that, he continued going to prayer as often as he could, even though he had a great need to rest, since he scarcely got any sleep at night because of his cough. In short, his zeal made him do more than he was able. That is why he was often seen to fall on the stairway, unable to support himself or get up again. He was not satisfied with the crosses God sent him; he would inflict punishments on himself by mortifying his flesh, notwithstanding his great infirmities, sometimes by fasting, sometimes by other austerities, as can be presumed from a bloody discipline found in his bed after his death. In summary, he was a man of sorrows and at the same time a mirror of patience. And although he always appeared to everyone as such, it must be admitted that on his deathbed he was so in a special manner. It seemed that patience was on its throne or that it had mastered the pain and sorrow. His sufferings were greater than ever and his strength declining, but his patience increased more and more, so that not only did he endure his sufferings gladly and with resignation to the Will of God, but he also delighted in them and wished to suffer more for Our Lord and for his neighbor. That is what caused him to repeat over and over again with so much affection: *Domine, bonum mihi quia humiliasti me.*¹² Blessed may you be, Oh my God! Oh! how

himself, obediently accepting even death, death on a cross!" (NAB)

¹²Lord, you are good to me because you have humbled me. Ps. 119:71. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn your statutes." (NAB) D-R B puts it

good You are! *Absit mihi gloriari nisi in cruce Domini Nostri Jesu Christi, etc.*¹³

The virtue of poverty was present in him in a sovereign degree. He had no attachment to the things of earth. He was content to be treated as a poor man and to use the poorest things, to the extent that he would pick up anything he came across that might be of use for something, like a scrap of paper or wood or a little metal tab from a lace. As for the things that were in his use, he was very careful about them, mending his clothes himself, and his breviary, which was always in need of repair. He had a pair of glasses with one broken lens; never could he be persuaded to get another pair. He had renounced proprietorship of the things he used, to such a degree that he would scruple giving any away without permission, no matter how small, although he was otherwise very generous. I found out that he practiced this even on his deathbed. When his own nephew, our Brother Bonichon,¹⁴ asked him for just some small devotional manuscripts in order to learn how to perfect himself, the poor man refused him. He told him that he was going to present them to the Superior and that he could ask him for them later on himself. He was no less conscientious about accepting what people wished to give him. He wanted to have permission to accept a little book, a holy picture or some such thing. And although these things seem small in the

thus: Ps. 118:71 - "It is good for me that thou hast humbled me, that I may learn thy justifications."

¹³*I do not glory except in the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ.* Gal. 6:14. "May I never boast of anything but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! Through it, the world has been crucified to me and I to the world." (NAB)

¹⁴Nicolas Bonichon, cleric, born at Ferrières-Gâtinais on July 30, 1619, entered Saint-Lazare on September 24, 1641, made his vows on June 9, 1644, was ordained a priest on September 21, 1647 and later assigned to the house of Cahors. Saint Vincent often referred to clerical students as "Brother". The context sometimes enables us to distinguish between a clerical student and a coadjutor Brother. Another nephew of M. Pillé, Christophe Bonichon, entered the Congregation of the Mission in 1645, as a coadjutor Brother.

judgment of men, the spirit with which he did them rendered them great in the eyes of God and the angels.

He had great simplicity, neither rustic nor foolish, but dove-like and holy, a simplicity that perfected his other virtues. His charity was simple, his humility simple, his obedience simple, his patience simple, and so on with the others, for there was no mixture of human respect, dissimulation, artifice or subtlety. That is why, although he was very wise, he allowed himself to be managed like a little child. He believed almost everything he was told, even in jest, and did whatever was desired of him. He would often even recreate with the younger students and converse with them simply as though he were a child like them. This simplicity made him lovable and loved by everyone, but especially by God, who no doubt usually communicated with him in a special way, since *cum simplicibus est sermocinatio ejus*.¹⁵ Therefore, we should not be surprised if he always seemed interior and fervent, aspiring only to God.

His diligence was marvelous. Although his indisposition made him quite weak and feeble and work made him unwell, never was he seen idle. He was always active, holding as one of his maxims that idleness was the mother of all the vices, as he said one day to one of our Brothers who asked him why he worked so hard. Most often he would be mending missals and breviaries, and writing up the ceremonies and other things for the house. He would even go to the garden to work, and lying flat on the ground, would pull up the weeds. He carried wood and water to the kitchen and washed the dishes, doing this so graciously that all who saw him were edified by it. And when his infirmity obliged him to stay in bed, he still found

¹⁵*His discussion is with the simple.* Prov. 3:32. "To the Lord the perverse man is an abomination, but with the upright is his friendship." (NAB) The D-R B states it thus: "For every mocker is an abomination to the Lord, and his communication is with the simple."

work to do, either reading, writing or sewing and, above all, praying, especially ejaculatory prayers, so often and ardently that he touched and filled with fervor those who observed this.

As for chastity, he possessed it to an eminent degree and I believe he made use of every imaginable precaution to keep it intact. The brief notes on this subject, found in his bag after his death, give ample evidence of this. There is every indication that he observed them conscientiously, although they were very hard to put into practice; they are certain sovereign means for preserving chastity. This proves that our Brother Alexandre, his nurse, had good reason to say before everyone, at a conference, that he had observed signs of a virginal chastity on his body. And yet his natural temperament seemed quite contrary to this; from which it follows that he must have gone through fierce battles and achieved great victories to prevent this treasure being stolen from him.

His mortification was evident not only with regard to carnal movements, which he repressed so well, but also with regard to everything else, both interior and exterior. Has anyone seen a man of that kind more mortified than he with regard to his sight, hearing, taste and other senses, especially the tongue, and his judgment and will? I leave you to think about this. But the better to recognize the excellence of this virtue in him, it must be remembered that he was by nature quick, passionate, irascible and eager to hear and know, etc. Nevertheless, he so well mastered all his inclinations and passions that he always appeared to be naturally sedate, gentle, indifferent and good-humored. Yet, he was this way only through virtue and grace, which he acquired by dint of mortifying himself. In a word, it is true to say that his life was just one perpetual mortification, as though God took pleasure in seeing him thus make use of mortifications, like another Job. He was not satisfied with ordinary ones, but gave him extraordinary ones. And it was particularly so when, after having bestowed on him, on the one hand, a deep understanding of the value and

beauty of souls and the great need they had of assistance from the mission and, on the other hand, an insatiable and unbelievable desire to work at it unceasingly in order to win them over, He deprived him at just about the same time of the means of carrying out his holy designs by giving him a bodily infirmity that tormented him almost continually and another, even greater, of the spirit, convinced as he was of being useless and burdensome to the house, a belief that proceeded from his great humility as we have already said. In order to imagine in some way this heroic mortification, you need only picture to yourself a starving man who is constantly being shown a table covered with all sorts of good food that he cannot touch because he is too tightly chained up. His mortification was like that and even greater, at least because of its long duration. And yet, although his humility caused him to make some slight loving complaints about his sufferings, we can say of him what the Holy Spirit said of Job: *In his omnibus non peccavit*,¹⁶ but rather he purified himself so much the more in this, like gold in the furnace, because in all that he was entirely resigned to the Will of God, which he could not hide because of the frequent acts he was seen to make with such great fervor.

Although I have already mentioned his great devotion, I still cannot refrain from saying one more word about it. It is incredible how devoted he was to all the holy things the Church recommends or approves, such as holy water, the *Agnus Dei*, the rosary, relics, indulgences and the like, as well as devotion to the saints and angels, but especially to three: (1) to his good angel whom he honored every day in a particular way. He had great confidence in him, which could not have existed if he had not often obtained through his intercession the answers to the prayers he usually addressed to him. It is likely that he often regarded him with the eyes

¹⁶*In everything he did not sin.* Jb. 1:22. "In all this Job did not sin, nor did he say anything disrespectful to God." (NAB)

of the spirit as Saint Frances looked upon hers with her bodily eyes, and that he spoke to him familiarly and with great reverence; (2) to the Blessed Virgin, even more so, but it would be impossible for me to express this to you; you would have to hear him talk about her. What he said was capable of instilling this devotion in others, particularly when it had to do with her Immaculate Conception, the great power she had with her Son, and the great miracles she accomplished in favor of so many persons. The main thing was that he imitated her in her virtues and exhorted others to do likewise. I believe that this devotion was one of the principal reasons for his chastity, about which we have spoken, and that the Virgin granted him everything he asked of her. He also had great confidence in her, particularly on his deathbed, as I myself noticed several times, among others when he uttered these words: *In te, Domina, speravi; non confundar in aeternum, quia non solum sperantem, sed etiam desperantem adjuvas.*¹⁷

However, his principal devotion was to the Passion of Our Lord. He reflected on it every day and almost every hour, and thought about it only with sentiments of compassion, admiration, and thanks. He frequently could not refrain from manifesting this externally by aspirations, sighs and tears. This is what caused him to say often that the person who does not thank Our Lord Jesus Christ for His Passion every day is wasting his day. That is also why, during his last illness, over and over again so often and so devoutly, even with tears, he would kiss the crucifix he always had near him on his bed. Who could relate the beautiful conversations he held with Him then, both with his heart and with his lips? Who could express the feeling with which he would say to Him: *O bone Jesu, qui mortuus es pro me, quis mihi tribuat ut moriar pro te! Salve,*

¹⁷*In you O Lord have I hoped; let me never be confounded because you help not only those who hope but also those who despair.*

*crux pretiosa, suscipe discipulum Christi, ac per te me recipiat qui per te moriens me redemit!*¹⁸

I would never end if I tried to tell you about all his virtues here. Suffice it to say that not only do I not remember ever having noticed any vice in him nor heard that he had any, but I also never observed anything in him but virtue. Everyone looked on him, as I did, as a mirror of devotion, patience, humility, obedience, charity and all sorts of virtues. That is why I cannot omit mentioning the esteem in which he was held by Monsieur Parmentier, the Pastor of La Queue,¹⁹ a man of exceptional virtue who knew him very well. He never spoke of him except with admiration, usually saying with ardor: "Monsieur Pillé is a man of God. He is a hidden treasure; he is a saint."

It seems that we have quite enough here now to raise the edifice of the virtues of this great man of God, but we have failed to lay its foundations. There still remains one eminent virtue, so much more alive and striking in him than all the others that it gave fresh life to them and made them shine wondrously: this was the great and lively faith he always possessed to a sovereign degree. To hear him and see him act, it seemed that he touched and felt the mysteries of faith. He had no difficulty believing even things that were not of obligation, like the lives of the saints, their miracles and all that books of devotion contain. It was the great and lively faith he had in the grandeur and goodness of God which caused him to suffer with so much cheerfulness and to act with so much fervor. It was his deep faith in Divine Justice which caused him to fear so strongly its judgments and punishments. This is what caused him to have such a horror

¹⁸O good Jesus, who has died for me, grant that I may die for you! Hail, precious Cross, take upon yourself the disciple of Christ, and may He who, by dying, redeemed me through you, receive me.

¹⁹La Queue-en-Brie, now La Queue-les-Yvelines.

of sin and so much zeal for the salvation of souls. This is what caused him to be so fearful of rendering an account to God, particularly for the souls entrusted to him. This is what caused him to say so often, with tears and sighs: "Oh! how frightening are the judgments of God! Oh! how happy I would be if I had never been a pastor!" In a word, it was this faith which caused him to practice to such a high degree all the virtues we have remarked in him. And what seems the most admirable to me is that this faith produced grace even in the souls of others, as some of our Brothers have experienced, having had recourse to him in their temptations. He used to say to them: "Do or say this or that, and you will be delivered from them." And it worked out just as he had said. And I myself recognized this in several instances, particularly one day when I was greatly distressed about the lawsuit the Gentlemen of Saint-Victor had initiated against us because of our establishment at Saint-Lazare, so much so that I was on the point of giving up this house for good to avoid going to court. I consulted several important persons on all aspects of the matter, who with all their good reasons, could not persuade me to hold my own and defend our cause. But as soon as I asked M. Pillé's advice, he simply told me frankly and calmly: "Monsieur, that is nothing; go ahead. Do not worry about it; it is the Will of God." As soon as he said this to me, you could not imagine how consoled I was and all of a sudden determined to undertake the affair, and I have never had any worry or difficulty about it since then, as if God Himself had revealed and arranged it for me, so lively and efficacious was his faith.

This great faith did not prevent him, at the hour of death, from being slightly tempted to infidelity. But this temptation was allowed by God to render him firmer in his belief, just as a little water thrown into a well-lit fire only serves to make it burn brighter. The act he then made is a sufficiently strong and authentic proof of this because, shortly before he lost the power of speech, I went to see him and he told me of his

temptation. I asked him if he did not believe all that God had revealed to his Church. Suddenly, he said to me with very strong feeling: "I renounce all the suggestions of the evil spirit; I want to die as a true Christian," and exclaiming, he made this act: "O my God, I believe all the truths that You have revealed to Your Church; I renew all the acts of faith I have made during my life, and because, perhaps, they did not have all the requisite conditions, I renew all those of the apostles, confessors and martyrs, etc."

When I said that so strong a faith caused him such great fear of the divine justice, you must not imagine because of this that he lacked hope, since he had this virtue to a high degree. There is no need to be amazed at this, since the very faith, of which he made so many acts, always served him as a shield to resist the assaults of temptation and, at the same time, as a torch to see clearly the immensity of God's mercy, the infinite value of the passion and death of Our Lord, and the infallible truth of the promises He has made to repentant sinners. In addition, his great charity, united with his deep faith, was an infallible indication that his hope was equally great, just as when in the night one sees a tremendous brightness and feels intense heat, it is a clear sign that the flame from it is also very great. So, having shown you the bright light of his faith and the wonderful ardor of his charity, it follows infallibly that the flame of his hope was proportionately great. And if there were no other proof than the experience we have of the continual victories he gained by combating fear right up until death, this would suffice to let people see the greatness of his hope, for otherwise it could not have subsisted as it did. And not only did it subsist but it increased, doubtless in the measure that it was thwarted, just as the flame of a huge, well-lit fire grows when it is fanned by the wind. And this was probably why God tried him so, in order to have him gain a richer crown. And although he had this great hope all his life, it was much more apparent and

dazzling at the end, as seen in the many acts he made of it, particularly when we would speak to him about paradise, where he was soon to go, and recommended ourselves to his prayers when he would be in heaven. He responded firmly and simply that he would not fail to pray to God for us and for all the Mission, and promised us this as if he had the revelation of entering heaven immediately after his death. Oh! what beautiful petitions he promised to present to the Divine Majesty for the whole Company! In short, he made it clear that in the measure he foresaw his reward approaching, his hope grew stronger, just as the movement of a stone picks up speed the closer it approaches its center.

That, Monsieur, is the summary of M. Pillé's life, which probably seems quite long. And yet, I find it brief, partly because I have not described to you all his virtues, for this would be impossible, and partly because what is the noblest and most excellent has been hidden from view by his profound humility, besides the fact that only God is capable of knowing him. We shall know him only in heaven, particularly that fullness of grace and the spirit with which he performed all those acts of virtue. Whatever the case, this is a part of what we were able to observe in his life.

You are possibly expecting me to give you an account of his death as well but all I have to say is that you have already seen it in the mirror of his life, because he died as he had lived. If there is any difference, it is that his life was like the large painting and his death like the miniature. I can say that in the ten or twelve final days of his life, he made and remade interior and exterior acts of all the virtues we have mentioned, particularly acts of faith, fear, hope, charity, contrition, humility, obedience, patience, resignation and conformity to the Will of God. In fact, he made *intensive* in his death what he had made *extensive* in his life. I mean that, if in his lifetime he made several acts of one virtue, e.g., to three degrees, the little he did at his death was to six degrees. To tell you,

nevertheless, something more detailed about the end of this man of God, you should know, Monsieur, that around three weeks before he died, he was taken from the Bons-Enfants to Saint-Lazare because of a constant heavy drowsiness that was noted in him, in addition to his usual chest and lung trouble. Three or four days after his arrival, he began to stay in bed, and from then on, he grew weaker and weaker and his suffering increased because his chest pain was oppressing him more than ever, so that within a very few days he found it impossible to stand up or to use his limbs. Furthermore, he began soon after to cough up blood. But he still was strong in spirit and courageous and his speech was clear. What is most admirable is that often he spoke and prayed with more vivacity and vigor than before, especially when he was told that it was by this illness that God intended to put an end to his temporal sufferings so that he could go and delight in eternal joys. It was then that, like a swan, he began to sing more sweetly than before. Oh! who could express the sentiments he had in his heart while he was reciting with his lips this verse of David: *Laetatus sum in his quae dicta sunt mihi: in domum Domini ibimus!*²⁰ Oh! who could describe the spirit in which he made all those acts of virtue both interior and exterior which he performed in this final passage, particularly when I gave him the sacred Viaticum and Extreme Unction! All those acts of faith, hope, charity, contrition, humility, simplicity, obedience and conformity to God's Will which he was making were like so many flaming darts that pierced the hearts of those present and caused them to dissolve into tears. He was a second Saint Andrew for, just as that great apostle died on a cross but remained attached to it for two days without dying, during which he preached to the people and

²⁰*I rejoiced in those things which have been said to me: we will go into the house of the Lord.* Ps. 122:1. "I rejoiced because they said to me, 'We will go up to the house of the Lord.'" (NAB) (D-R B, Ps. 121:1)

prayed to God for the conversion of their souls, so M. Pillé died on a cross. I mean, that in the acute pains of his illness and in the midst of his sufferings, he edified all the Missionaries by his virtuous conversations with them and by the extraordinary examples of patience and other virtues which he gave them. Ordinarily, I would go twice a day to visit him, particularly during the last week of his life, but I must confess that it was not so much to console and encourage him and to dispose him to die well, as to be consoled and encouraged myself, and disposed to live well. And, in fact, I never left there without my heart being softened and filled with devotion. I was in great admiration at seeing so many contrasts in one person at the same time: such great patience coupled with such great suffering; such strength of mind with such frailty of body; such a strong voice (above all when he was speaking of God) with such weak lungs; so much alertness and attention to what was being said to him in such an extraordinary state of somnolence. At the first word addressed to him to prepare him for death, he would suddenly open his eyes and his mouth to show that his heart was not sleeping although his body was slumbering, but that he was always watching with his lamp lit, ready to welcome the Spouse whom he was awaiting with such yearning. I was even more delighted at seeing such profound humility in him, along with such exalted charity, a fear so great with a hope so perfect, a faith so steadfast with such violent temptation, so much contrition with so much innocence, so much devotion with so much desolation, so much patience amidst so much pain and, finally, so much resignation to the Will of God along with such cause for interior and exterior mortification.

But what most touched my heart with piety was to see and hear him when we would recommend ourselves to his prayers and ask for his blessing, especially when I was the one who was asking this. In the beginning, he would excuse himself, saying that he should be the one to ask me to do the praying,

but after that he would obey in all simplicity, saying: "What I am going to do through obedience is to my shame." And all of a sudden he would begin wonderful prayers, calling down so many blessings on us, giving us such good advice, telling us so many good things about the Mission, envisioning so many graces for us. And he did this with such fervor, simplicity and humility that we felt we were listening to a saint from paradise. We could not hold back our tears at this, especially when, in conclusion, he would raise his hand and form the Sign of the Cross to give me his blessing, which I received from him as if Our Lord Himself in person had given it to me. And it seemed to me that at that very moment I felt its effects in my soul.

So that is what I can tell you about his illness, which lasted about two weeks. Toward the end of that period, after having performed all the duties of a perfect Christian and having rendered homage to the Sovereign Lord with heart and lips and deed, he began to lose the power of speech and finally entered into his agony, albeit a peaceful and gentle one, and ended his life, breathing his last even more gently, so that we would scarcely have noticed this, except for a devout aspiration he made, saying "*O mon Dieu!*"—a short phrase but uttered emphatically and energetically. Oh! what beautiful things are contained in that brief expression! Oh! who could describe them! These final words seemed so admirable to one of our men, that he said we had reason to believe that at his last moment this apostolic man was already beholding God and even touching Him. He was so enraptured by this that, like another Saint Thomas, he felt constrained to exclaim *Dominus meus et Deus meus!*²¹ And that was how he gave up his soul, which probably took flight to heaven, having no need of purgatory after his death, since it had been purified so well

²¹*My Lord and my God!* John 20:28.

during his life. He died in the month of October,²² two days before the feast of Saint Denis, on a Tuesday, the day dedicated to the angels, to whom he had great devotion. He was buried in the choir of Saint-Lazare, with a solemn high Mass of which I had the honor of being the celebrant. Besides this, each of us has not neglected to say three Masses for the repose of his soul, and each Brother has offered one communion and three chaplets for him. I ask you also to have your Community do likewise.

There, Monsieur, you have the life and death of this good and true Missionary, or rather, of this saint, who is now praying for us as we may piously believe. There is a great deal to be learned and to profit from this for all categories of persons who make up our Congregation. The old will learn not to dispense themselves from the Rule; the young, to be submissive; the sick, to be encouraged and to be patient; the healthy, not to pretend to be working; the spiritual, to perfect themselves; and the sensual, to be ashamed at the sight of a sick old man mortifying himself. Those who are not solid in their vocation or who, at the first temptation or displeasure, begin to plan their departure, will see here how they should esteem the grace which God has given them of being Missionaries. Those who complain of being unfit for preaching, hearing confessions and carrying out other mission functions because of their infirmity or ailments of body or mind, or because they are left at home to work at something else that they do not like, will learn here that it is great presumption to imagine that God needs their talent, as if He could not convert souls by some other means, and that obedience, mortification, prayer, patience and similar virtues win souls better than the lofty sciences and all human industry. All this was clearly seen in M. Pillé, as I have already mentioned; he did more by himself in suffering than all of us by our activity.

²²October 7, 1642.

What we have to do is to imitate him in these virtues and to pray for him or rather pray to him, at least in private, since the Church does not yet allow us to act otherwise. By doing this, we should, through his intercession, hope for great favors from heaven in this life so that, later, we may go to enjoy with him glory in the next. May God grant us this grace through the merits of Our Lord and His holy Mother, in whose love I am, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

From Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris, New Year's Day, 1643

Addressed: Monsieur du Chesne, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Crécy, in Crécy

635. - TO JEAN GUERIN, IN ANNECY

(Now 642a.)

636. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

I embrace you with all the tenderness of my soul, considering yours as a victim offered continually to the glory of its sovereign Lord, who is working for its perfection and for the salvation of the neighbor. *Mon Dieu*, Monsieur, how happy are those who give themselves to Him without reserve to do the works Jesus Christ did and to practice the virtues He practiced, such as poverty, obedience, humility, patience, zeal

and the others! In this way, they are the true disciples of such a Master. They live purely of His spirit and diffuse, together with the fragrance of His divine life, the merit of His holy actions, for the edification of the souls for whom He died and rose again. If then, I look upon you as one of His good servants, am I not right in cherishing you and esteeming you in Him and in frequently imploring, as I do, the continuation of His grace for you to be faithful to Him until the end of the ages, so that you will then be crowned with His glory for all eternity? These are the desires of my heart for the happiness of yours.

637. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[January 17, 1643]¹

Monsieur,

Enclosed is a letter from our Sister Jeanne of Issy.² You will see what she has done about the copy of the receipt being requested of them. I think it would be well, Monsieur, to settle this matter as soon as possible.

The Pastor of Baron³ expects to get a Sister after Candlemas, and we are awaiting Divine Providence to inspire your charity to advise us. The Sisters and I both believe that this benefit, of which we have been deprived for so long, is a punishment for the bad use we have made of the past. We regret this, while recognizing that we will be

Letter 637. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹January 17 is the feast of Saint Anthony. Some of the contents of this letter are treated again in no. 641, which was certainly written in 1643. Therefore, this date has been assigned to this letter.

²In the suburbs of Paris. The Daughters worked there from 1642 to around 1649.

³A locality in the district of Senlis [Oise].

able to do no better in future without considerable help from your charity. I am, Monsieur, your poor little daughter and most grateful servant.

L. DE M.

Feast of Saint Anthony

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

637a. - BROTHER MATHIEU REGNARD TO SAINT VINCENT

January, 1643

A few days ago, our Brother Mathieu wrote to me from Lorraine, and his letter, drenched with tears, informed me of the miseries of that region, particularly of more than six hundred nuns:

"Monsieur, the sorrow in my heart is so immense that I cannot express it to you without weeping, because of the extreme poverty of these good nuns whom your charity has assisted. I can only depict the smallest part of it to you. Their habits are scarcely recognizable. . . . They are all patched over with green, gray, red—in short, with anything they can get. They had to wear wooden shoes."

Letter 637a. - Excerpt from a Conference to the Daughters of Charity on January 25, 1643 (cf. vol. IX, no. 13). The archives of the Daughters of Charity have the original of this conference in the handwriting of Saint Louise. This edition uses the text published in *Mission et Charité*, 19-20, p. 36.

638. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[January 25, 1643]¹

Monsieur,

I most humbly beg you to do me the charity of telling me what time you will say Holy Mass tomorrow and to do my son the charity of praying for him, and to remember there my most humble petition.

We cannot send Sister Henriette to Issy² because she will be needed at Fontenay³ to conduct the school, since our Sister who lives there does not know how to read. This good, simple Sister, whom I had told you I was thinking of sending back, has not made her retreat, because I did not feel she was capable of it. I most humbly entreat you, Monsieur, to take the trouble of letting me know if I should put her in it with the others.

I hope our Sisters will make good use of the instruction your charity gave us today.⁴ Their hearts are all filled with desire to do this and they would really like to remember it forever. This causes me to entreat you most humbly to send us the little memorandum of the points you had in it. It seems to me that this would help me recall a large part of what our good God said to us through your mouth.

Shall I never, before I die, be in the state God wishes of me for love of Him? Do me the charity of giving this a little thought and of being aware of my failings so that, at my death, I shall not have all the shame I merit for my lack of fidelity to God's plans, and particularly when God will demand an account of me since the time His goodness has granted me the grace of being, Most Honored Father, the least of your daughters and your most grateful servant.

I forgot to ask you if I should write the official notice of acknowledgement which I sent you, on the back of the page where

Letter 638. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Date added on the back of the original.

²Commune in the suburbs of Paris. Sister Henriette Gesseume is the Sister referred to.

³Fontenay-aux-Roses (Hauts-de-Seine).

⁴This conference of January 25, 1643, "On Imitating the Conduct of Country Girls," has been preserved for us (cf. vol. IX, no. 13).

the settlement of the account is, or whether it should be in the margin of the same page so that it will be included in the settlement.

Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

639. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

Paris, January 30, 1643

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Two of your letters, dated the eighth and the fourteenth of last month, reached me at the same time. I shall not reply to the first, except to say briefly that I accept the first article, which concerns the means of strengthening the Company by the promise to pay the expenses incurred, if one leaves, being obliged to do this. . . .¹ However, experience has shown, in the seminary founded in Rouen by the late Cardinal de Joyeuse,² where people bind themselves and give a guarantee that the board will be paid in case they do not persevere in their vocation, that this means is useless and has brought no remedy to any of the preceding disorders.

As to your second letter, concerning the parishes, we pray to God unceasingly for that, in consequence of four or five

Letter 639. - Archives of the Mission, original autograph letter.

¹The poor condition of the original letter prevented Father Coste from reading the word on this line.

²François, Duc de Joyeuse, born June 24, 1562, occupied successively the dioceses of Narbonne (1582-1584), Toulouse (1584-1605) and Rouen (1605-1615). He was created Cardinal on December 12, 1583 and took possession of his titular benefice in Rome on January 7, 1590. He had negotiated the reconciliation of King Henri IV with Rome and presided over the Estates-General of 1614, the last Estates-General before the French Revolution. He died in 1615.

discussions we have had on this subject, without being able to come to an affirmative or a negative decision. We shall furnish just as many good priests for the Church through our seminaries as through the Company itself, as I hope, in the event that after many prayers and discussions, the Company decides in favor of not accepting parishes. Be assured, Monsieur, that you could not put forth any reason, for or against, which has not been examined and considered by the Company in the long period of time it has been reflecting on this and on the other matters contained in your first letter. That is why I am begging you to be at peace about it, as well as about the Barbary question, concerning which I will say nothing else to you except that our plan does not exclude nor is it doing anything contrary to the Orders of the Redemption³ and the Mathurins;⁴ we are only trying to see if there is any way for the Little Company to give some kind of mission among those poor slaves from time to time. For the first attempt at this, we could perhaps use as a pretext the ransom of a small number of slaves, which we shall try to bring about. It is to this that Providence seems to be calling us, and so that we might carry out our obligations to eighteen men who have [lost] their faith. Regarding that group, I promised to have Monsieur [du Coudray] leave in five or six days for Marseilles where, while working with the galley-slaves, he will draw up the agreement.

I adore Divine Providence for what you tell me, Monsieur, in the second letter, and I praise God that Cardinal de Lenti

³The Order of the Redemption or of Mercy was founded in the thirteenth century by St. Peter Nolasco for the redemption of slaves. Father Juan-Bautista Gonzalez introduced the reform into the Order at the end of the sixteenth century.

⁴The Order of Mathurins went back to the twelfth century and had as its founders Jean de Matha and Saint Felix of Valois. It took its name from the convent of Paris built on the site of an old chapel dedicated to Saint Mathurin. It is also called the Order of the Trinitarians. The reform, begun in 1573, was extended to the whole Order by Pope Urban VIII in 1635.

is giving some thought to the seminary. O Monsieur, how much good can be done, if it pleases God to bless this good work! Just this morning, we sent two seminarians to the mission in Champagne, and tomorrow or the day after we will be sending seven or eight of them in two bands. Those who have recently returned from there have done very well, and the ones we gave to the Bishops of Rheims⁵ and of Châlons⁶ as chaplains are doing quite well. *Mon Dieu*, Monsieur, how consoled I am that you are working with the shepherds and with the incurables! I think it is a good idea for you to help with the ordinands. Everyone here realizes that the good that is evident in Paris today comes mainly from that.

I was on the verge of sending you Messieurs Blatiron and Brunet, but what you tell me about not sending you anyone, *si annona non sit duplicata*,⁷ has prompted me to name the former for Saintes and the latter for someplace else.

We still do not have your foundation contract. We have reason to expect it within three days, and I can also assure you that I am losing no time pressing for it. As soon as we have it, we will try to get what is owed to you from that quarter. However, I am paying off the thirty-seven pistoles you tell me you got, plus the one hundred you paid us and the money I said you could get from M. Marchand, which makes another hundred.

Mon Dieu, Monsieur, how consoled I am that Our Lord has given you those two good Italian priests! I entreat you, Monsieur, to tell M. Boulrier⁸ and them that I embrace them, prostrate in spirit at their feet, and that I am about to celebrate Holy Mass, so that God may be pleased to fashion them

⁵Léonor d'Estampes de Valençay was Bishop of Chartres from 1620 to 1641, and was then transferred to Rheims.

⁶Félix Vialart.

⁷*If the means of subsistence is not doubled.*

⁸The index (vol. XIV) states that Boulrier was a member of the Congregation of the Mission but it gives no further information. Nothing can be found in the *Notices*.

according to His own heart. It would be well, as you mention, to form them interiorly. Without that, a person soon sees the disappearance and end of his fervor. I also greet the rest of the Company, prostrate in spirit at their feet as well, and I most humbly beg them to pardon me for being unable to write to them all. Oh! how I need your support and theirs. I request this of you, Monsieur, with all the humility and affection of which I am capable, and I recommend to your prayers the retreat I hope to begin toward the end of next week, to review our little Common Rules, and to send them to you afterwards.

I cannot thank you with as much humility and affection as I would like for telling me that you are ready to set aside your own opinion about the things you write to me. Rest assured, Monsieur, that nothing is decided nor done until there have been several communications and discussions with persons of outstanding piety and that with God's help we shall always remain part of the secular clergy and in the disposition of devoted servants with regard to the prelates.

What I said to you before about. . . .⁹

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

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Rome, in Rome

⁹The rest of this sentence is illegible except for a few disconnected words.

640. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

Paris, February 5, 1643

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I wrote to you last week and it seems to me that I have nothing new to tell you except that a minor change which has taken place in the business is making the Saint-Yves affair¹ more difficult, and it is not to be hurried.

The other matter² concerns the request you made me as to whether we should give the mission in cathedral cities. On that, I will tell you that I never had the idea of this exclusion or of not working there in any other way but that and, in fact, you did it in Annecy³ and M. Chiroye is doing it in Luçon, but what does not seem advisable to me is preaching, catechizing and hearing confessions in those places, outside the time of the mission. I am asking the Company to settle the question, if it can be done, according to God's plan, and we shall put this solution into the Rules, with God's help.

I entreat you to remember the dispensation from the vow of religion that I requested of you for a widow and the one for a Capuchin priest who has become a heretic. M. Portail has written you about this.

And here is another one: a pastor obtained his parish

Letter 640. - Original autograph letter. Ducal Archives of Sagan (Silesia). The text was published in the *Annales CM* (1936, pp. 405-408) and reprinted in *Mission et Charité*, 19-20, pp. 37-39. This edition used the latter text.

¹It was a question of uniting the parish of Saint-Yves in Rome to the Congregation of the Mission and establishing the Priests of the Mission there (cf. no. 594). The project did not materialize.

²In the margin Saint Vincent wrote: "For a long time I have been forgetting to send you the letter of M. Codoing." It is not known to whom Saint Vincent sent the letter with this note added.

³M. Codoing had remained at Annecy as Superior from 1640 to 1642.

through a minor act of simony. His name is Taufin,⁴ of the Troyes diocese. He is asking for a dispensation to keep the benefice and the use of its revenues which are only one hundred écus a year. He is a very upright man and the simony only involved six hogsheads of wine which his predecessor absolutely insisted he give him, after agreeing on a pension of twelve écus. In the name of God, Monsieur, get this moving as soon as possible. If the benefice must be named, it is Nogetum.⁵

I am awaiting the letter of exchange for the thousand livres which I suggested you get. We still do not have your foundation contracts, no matter how hard I try to get them, because of a variety of circumstances surrounding the case.

M. du Coudray and M. Boucher are leaving in two days for Barbary,⁶ for the reasons I wrote to you, and will give the mission in the meantime on the galleys of Marseilles. If it were only for the ransom of captives, we would not go but since it is a question of considering the reasons for the spiritual assistance of the poor slaves in future, we all are inclined to do it. Please mention this to Bishop Ingoli.

I await with impatience the favorable outcome of your seminary; ours here is blessed by God. We have twenty-two men; seven or eight of them are on the missions.

As for myself, I greet and embrace your dear Company, prostrate in spirit at its feet and at yours. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

⁴This name, scarcely legible, was subsequently crossed out, without doubt in order to cover with a veil of anonymity this story of simony.

⁵This word was also erased, without doubt for the same reason given in note 4. Nogetum (or Nogetus) corresponds to Nogent, but there are three Nogents in the diocese of Troyes.

⁶These plans had to be abandoned. The Congregation of the Mission did not take up its work for the spiritual well-being of the Christian slaves in Tunis until 1645 and in Algiers until 1646.

M. de Saint-Aignan has resigned in our favor the priory of Dyé,⁷ in the Langres diocese. M. Gallot⁸ is to send the power of attorney to one of his men, a respondent, [. . .] a banker in Rome. He will, in addition, send the consent of the Abbot and the monks. Please see him, to advise him and to insist on the *componende*.⁹

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Rome, in Rome

641. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

Madame de Lamoignon and Madame de Nesmond¹ came here on their return from visiting the hospital of Saint-Denis for which they have to request sisters from the Charity, in the event that the hospital nuns will not accept the conditions we want to propose to them.² These Ladies, Monsieur, wanted very much to speak to you, to tell you that they do not think the Bishop of Beauvais³ is going to Saint-Germain⁴ and that his sister⁵ will be able to take them there,

⁷A Benedictine priory, today in the diocese of Sens (Yonne). The proposal in question was unsuccessful.

⁸M. Thomas Gallot was the ecclesiastical notary for the diocese of Paris.

⁹The *componende* was an offering given to the Holy See on the occasion of obtaining a benefice, a grace or a favor.

Letter 641. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Madame de Nesmond, born Anne de Lamoignon, was the wife of Theodore de Nesmond, presiding judge of the Parlement of Paris, and sister-in-law of Madame de Lamoignon (Marie de Landes). The members of these two families were both linked with Saint Vincent whose virtues they appreciated and whose works they promoted.

²The establishment in Saint-Denis (Seine-Saint-Denis) did not take place until August 2, 1645.

³Augustin Potier.

⁴Saint-Germain-en-Laye (Yvelines), where the Court resided for part of each year.

⁵The Bishop of Beauvais had two sisters: Renée, wife of Oudard Hennequin, seigneur de Boinville, Master of Requests at the house of the King, and Madeleine, wife of

instead of him, if you approve. But their biggest objection to going there is that they have been told that Monsieur de Noyers is at Versailles with the King. It seems to them that, if he were not at Saint-Germain, their journey would be useless. Also, they do not know whether they should simply thank the Queen, recommending this work to Her Majesty, or ask her to become its protectress. They will await your advice on all that before making a decision on their journey. They should be sending someone to your house tomorrow morning unless, if you deem it necessary, Monsieur, your charity were to give them a solution sooner.

The Pastor of Issy came to this house and, after speaking to me about an act of charity for a little girl, asked me if we would be sending Sister Jeanne back soon. I gave him to understand that I was waiting until my doubt cleared up, as to whether or not they planned to continue offering that charity, and I very simply told him the reason for it. (I do not think I did any harm.) He is to speak to Mademoiselle de Montdésir⁶ and tell you what she wants to do. He would have been only too willing to place the blame on us for the little that has been given to our Sisters since they have been in Issy. Would your charity kindly take the trouble to let me know if I should still delay sending Sister Jeanne back?

I am, Monsieur, your most humble daughter and servant.

L. DE M.

February 9, 1643

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

Theodore Choart, seigneur de Buzanval.

⁶A Lady of Charity in Issy.

642. - TO PIERRE ESCART, PRIEST OF THE MISSION, IN ANNECY¹

Paris, February 11, 1643

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

If you had seen the joy of my heart as I read your letter, your own heart would have throbbed with the same emotion. O Monsieur, how tenderly I embrace you, but humbly as well and prostrate in spirit at your feet! Tomorrow, God willing, I will say Holy Mass partly to give thanks to God for the graces He has bestowed on you. Oh! how this argument from heaven: *all that contributes to the ruin of charity comes from the evil spirit*, really seems to me to have come from heaven and how many times I have declared and will declare this! Oh! blessed be the eternal wisdom of Jesus Christ who has had you make the minor premise and the conclusion with so much strength and blessing! Continue, Monsieur, to view the affairs and the actions of your neighbor in the spirit of charity. And when their actions have a hundred facets, let us put into practice the advice of our blessed Father,² always to see their best side. *Mon Dieu*, how consoled I am by the share Our Lord has given you of His humility, in the change of Superiors that has taken place,³ and likewise your indifference in submitting yourself to anyone whomsoever. That is, indeed, a mark of the sovereign dominion Our Lord has over your dear

Letter 642. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹A tear obliterated the address of the letter. The contents indicate that it was addressed to a Priest of the Mission in Annecy, very probably Pierre Escart, who received in other letters the advice given here by the Saint.

²Saint Francis de Sales.

³Jean Guérin had just replaced François Dufestel.

heart, which I love more than my own, in the heart of Our Lord in whose love I am your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

642a. - TO JEAN GUERIN, IN ANNECY

Paris, February 12, 1643¹

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Mon Dieu, Monsieur, how comforted my soul was at the way the Company has accepted your new assignment! This causes me to hope for God's special grace for you. O Monsieur, how necessary this is for the direction of a family such as yours, so as to prevent anything contrary to His spirit from creeping into it and to make it advance in the way of perfection! Frequent prayers will assist you in this, as well as taking some time daily or weekly to consider how important it is for a Superior to advance his Company in the perfection God asks of it; (2) to consider in what this perfection consists; (3) how the Company in general and each one in particular works at it; (4) to think about the means of making it advance and to put them into practice. To be always among the first in the exercises of the Community, as far as business will allow, is the first means; to be unwavering with regard to the end and gentle with regard to the means of arriving at it, is the second; and the third is always, in important matters, to seek the advice of the two men whom you will take for your council, Messieurs Escart and Tholard, and always to consult Monsieur

Letter 642a. - Collection for the process of beatification of Saint Vincent.

¹In vol. XIII, p.848, Coste made this correction, from January to February. Therefore, for reasons of chronology, the editors have repositioned this letter, formerly no. 635.

Dufestel. For all that, do not be constrained by the majority opinion. Choose the one that seems best to you, or your own, provided you give an account of this at the visitation, as the Rule states. Oh! how well you will be acting if you count on Monsieur Dufestel's advice! If it is a question of temporal matters, you can consult lawyers for this; outside of that, no. Only the members of the body may be animated with the influence of the spirit of that same body. When I said that you must be unwavering as to the end and gentle as to the means, I am describing to you the soul of good leadership, and one without the other spoils everything. O Monsieur, a sharing in the gentleness and humility of the heart of Our Lord represents a lifelike image of Our Lord and of his good leadership, especially when firmness is present. Without it I see the majority of Communities that are lax reach that state because of the excessive leniency of Superiors. So, be firm, Monsieur. I admit that, at the time, you may upset people, but they will have more confidence in you afterwards; otherwise, in a short time they would despise you. Be exact in having them make the interior communication every month. I beg the Company to be attached to this holy practice and to all the others. What I am saying to the Company and to you, Monsieur, on this point, I intend for the observance of all our little Rules, above all, of mutual charity. And because only the spirit of Jesus Christ Our Lord can be the true Director of souls, I beseech His Divine Majesty to give us His spirit for your own direction and for that of the Company. Alas! Monsieur, how can I be so wretched as to have the audacity to mention to you those things I do not do myself? Your charity will please excuse me and pray to God for me who am the most miserable of men. I hope to improve if I am helped by your prayers and those of your little Community, to which

I recommend myself. I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Guérin, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Annecy, in Annecy

643. - FATHER PIERRE FOURNIER¹ TO SAINT VINCENT

Nancy 1643

Your charity is so great that everybody has recourse to it. Everyone here considers you the refuge of the afflicted poor. That is why several persons have come to me, that I might refer them to you and so that, by this means, they might experience the effects of your goodness. Here are two of them whose virtue and excellence will move your charitable heart to assist them, and rightly so.

644. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

Paris, February 20, 1643

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with you forever!
Three days ago, I received your letter of the eighth of last

Letter 643. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. XI, sect. I, p. 387.

¹Born at Château-Thierry in 1600, received in 1616 into the Society of Jesus, Pierre Fournier was director successively of the colleges of Metz, Nancy, Rheims, Pont-à-Mousson, Verdun and Châlons. He died in Châlons on September 17, 1671.

Letter 644. - Archives of the Mission, a copy made from the original letter in the possession of M. Charavay. In 1881 the original letter belonged to the Marquis de Gerbéviller in Gerbéviller (Meurthe-et-Moselle).

month. You complain that I do not write to you enough. I do not think that any regular mail has gone out since that time in which I have not done so, and three or four weeks have passed without my receiving any of your letters. We have to believe that they are getting lost. It is true that, since you wrote, I have let two mails go by without writing to you through. . . .¹

I praise God for blessing your work with the shepherds in Ostia and for continuing to bless the good elderly persons in that hospital. I have never seen more beautiful missions than those given at the hospital of the Petites-Maisons in this city.² These are persons who, for the most part, have lived disorderly lives, who have never made a confession as it should be made and who are on the eve of appearing before the judgment seat of God. Oh! I am aware, Monsieur, that there is every indication that the spirit of God animates the spirit of Cardinal Lenti who has had the idea of helping these poor old people. I beg Our Lord to go on preserving him for the good of His Church. How old is he?

I forgot to reply to your question as to whether we shall be working in the cities where there is an archbishopric or a bishopric, and I shall tell you that in Annecy, and M. Chiroye in Luçon. . . . My opinion is that we should make a rule of this.³ There is one among us who does not agree with it. And

¹The copyist was unable to read what came next.

²The hospital of the Petites-Maisons, also called the Hospice des Ménages et des Teigneux, consisted of cottages for the patients. It was situated very near the intersection of today's rue de Sèvres and the Boulevard Raspail, on the site of the square of the Ménages or of the Bon-Marché. It afforded shelter for four hundred elderly and infirm persons of both sexes, affected by dementia, disreputable illnesses or skin diseases. Saint Vincent himself had preached a mission there before the establishment of his Congregation. (Cf. Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. I, p. 20.) He later sent members of the Tuesday Conference there, where they did considerable good. (Cf. Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. III, sect. III, p. 257.)

³The copyist read: ". . . and I will tell you that in Annecy and M. Chiroye at Luçon, we contradict my advice, which is that we should make a rule of this." Formulated this way, the sentence makes no sense. Saint Vincent certainly wrote something else.

you will please return to the custom, until we have decided otherwise.⁴

You ask what we can give you, in order to act accordingly. This is what I can tell you: you had already written that to me and I replied that you had only 2,500 livres revenue, which might well be reduced because of a lawsuit the coach contractors have against the Messageries⁵ about transporting passengers. It was sent to the Parlement by the Council, where the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, by her authority, is supposed to have obtained awards favorable to the coach contractors. The Messageries were offering us 3,000 livres a year for the coaches, but the contractor, who still has them for five to six years, wanted them. We retained his lease and, in fact, it was accepted.

I have shown the Duchesse the letter you asked me to show her, to see how she feels about whether you should take on the exercises of the ordinands. She told me it was her opinion that you should take them and she will help you somehow for the present and will put you in her will. That is what she told me. We still do not have your foundation contract for many. . . .⁶

The late Cardinal⁷ has bequeathed sixty thousand livres to the mission of Richelieu for its foundation, asking in his will that we pray for him.

Three days ago, M. de Liancourt was to have come to the group assembled on behalf of the nobility of Lorraine. It was stated that a year ago some of them were saved by the missions he arranged to be given there.⁸ Please do not mention that.

Messieurs du Coudray and Boucher will be leaving in two

⁴The custom was maintained. To dispense with this rule, to which the Saint was greatly attached, it needed nothing less than a formal command from the bishops.

⁵The royal stagecoaches, organized by Richelieu.

⁶The copyist was not able to read the end of the sentence.

⁷Cardinal Richelieu died December 4, 1642.

⁸At La Chapelle.

days for Barbary, and Messieurs Brunet and Candelou⁹ will go with them, along with a Brother who is a surgeon, to give together the missions on the galleys of France.¹⁰ The surgeon will have some sort of hospital set up in Algiers for the poor galley-slaves and, in this way, will have the right to stay there and to work like they do in the hospitals in Canada.¹¹ We can find no more effective means of letting people see the beauty and holiness of the Catholic religion than by hospitality shown to the sick. I beg you to recommend this to God and not to talk about it.

I greet the Company, prostrate in spirit at its feet, I who am, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

⁹Jean Candelou, born in Fabrezan (Aude), was received at Saint-Lazare on April 6, 1640 at twenty-three years of age.

¹⁰Messieurs du Coudray, Candelou, Boucher and Brunet began to work as soon as they arrived in Marseilles, in collaboration with eight priests of M. Authier's Congregation (Congregation of the Priests of the Blessed Sacrament). On March 6 Bishop Gault was already able to write to the Duchesse d'Aiguillon: "The arrival of these Gentlemen made me decide definitely on this mission that otherwise I might have put off to some other time. I cannot express, Madame, the blessings that the poor convicts call down on those who have brought them such salutary assistance . . ." Since the convicts were soon going to leave Marseilles, the Bishop added Jesuits and Oratorians to assist the Missionaries. The mission lasted twenty days. There were three priests on each ship. Bishop Gault distinguished himself among all the others by his zeal. He went from ship to ship, preaching, catechizing, hearing confessions and giving a word of consolation to everybody. All the Catholic convicts performed their duty, except five or six. Some Turks were baptized, heretics abjured, and there were innumerable conversions. "The convicts were so changed," wrote Belsunce, "that they were compared to cloistered monks." (Cf. Henri-François-Xavier de Belsunce, *L'antiquité de l'Eglise de Marseille et la succession de ses évêques* [3 vols., Marseille: Vve J. P. Brebion, [1747-1751], vol. III, p. 411; also, H. Simard, *Saint Vincent de Paul et ses oeuvres à Marseille* [Lyon: E. Vitte, 1894], pp. 60-67; also, Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. II, pp. 35-38.)

¹¹It was again thanks to the intelligent initiative and generous charity of the Duchesse d'Aiguillon that the Hôtel-Dieu in Quebec was founded. It was served by the Ursulines and some French hospital personnel. They had won over the natives by their dedication towards the sick and by their heroism during an epidemic. (Cf. Sr. Françoise Juchereau de Saint-Ignace, *Histoire de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec* [Montauban: Jerome Legier, 1751].)

It seems to me that the idea Our Lord has given us, of not working in the cities, was never intended to exclude the missions but only concerned the customary preaching, catechizing and hearing confessions in our own houses and not elsewhere, in order to be more free and available for the poor people. You have done that.

645. - THE AUTHORITIES OF SAINT-MIHIEL TO SAINT VINCENT

1643

The entire Community of Saint-Mihiel and each member of this body in particular offer you a million thanks for the trouble and care you have deigned to take for their relief, not only for the distribution of alms and assistance to the sick and needy poor but also for lightening part of our garrison's burden. We most humbly entreat you to continue your protection and your alms, which this poor and devastated town needs more than ever. It is a fact that, because of this, a great number of persons are alive today who would not have been otherwise. If your assistance were cut back or taken away entirely, a good portion of the inhabitants would, of necessity, die of hunger or would have to go elsewhere to keep alive. And I have not mentioned the distributions you have made to the convents, on which they have partly subsisted, and the assistance that so many other bashful poor, even persons of quality, have received from your priests, when they were sick and in need. We cannot sufficiently praise the work and the great care they have taken in this, nor request you earnestly enough to continue this same assistance to the many sick and needy, in addition to the glory and the merit you will have from this before God.

646. - TO JEAN MARTIN, IN SAINTES¹

Paris, February 23, 1643

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I cannot express to you, Monsieur, the consolation my soul has received every time Monsieur Guérin² has told me how happy he is to be working with you. My consolation has doubled in reading your letters and seeing the sentiments he inspires in you to give yourself to God in this Little Company. I give thanks to His Divine Majesty for both and ask Him to make known to you His Will in this for, supposing that this is God's good pleasure, *O Jésus!* Monsieur, we acquiesce to it wholeheartedly, realizing however that we are most unworthy of this happiness. Now, in order to understand more clearly the eternal designs of God on you in this matter, since you are hoping that the Bishop of Saintes³ will agree to it, it would be advisable, Monsieur, for you to take the trouble of coming here at a time [convenient for both him]⁴ and you. You will then be able to observe our way of life more closely, make your retreat for this purpose, and will let me know about it. I shall send some other priest of the Company to replace you. *O Jésus!* Monsieur, how consoled I shall be to embrace you, if this happens! I do it already in spirit, prostrate at your feet,

Letter 646. - Archives of the Mission, Curia Generalitia, Rome, original autograph letter; a copy is in the Archives of the Mission, Paris.

¹This Jean Martin was a young priest, twenty-five years old, born in Surgères (Charente-Maritime). He was received into the Congregation of the Mission on May 20, 1643. He should not be confused with the other Jean Martin, who was Superior of the house in Turin for a long time. The former is mentioned in Saint Vincent's correspondence only two more times, both in 1639. (Cf. vol. VIII, nos. 2970 and 2985.)

²Julien Guérin.

³Jacques Raoul de la Guibourgère.

⁴Words erased on the original.

with all possible humility and affection, I who am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Martin, Priest, presently at the Mission of Saintes, in Saintes

647. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

*Monsieur,*¹

I think there was some problem since Madame de Lamoignon did not send me her carriage. Therefore, I most humbly beg you, Monsieur, not to mention my doubt about what I gave the Sisters when they were leaving, because I am still wondering if I only gave them fifty écus, and I have had no other thought than the uncertainty as to whether they had any. I most humbly entreat you to count only that much. I intended to tell you this in front of the Ladies as I am obligated to do, and to declare myself, Monsieur, your most obedient daughter and very grateful servant.

L. DE M.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

Letter 647. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Before 1650, Saint Louise began her letters to Saint Vincent with *Monsieur*; after 1650, she used *Mon très Honoré Père*.

648. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

I learned what Monsieur Compaing¹ had promised to find out for me and for this reason I am as distressed as I could ever be. This is why I entreat you for the love of God to let me talk to you today, here in this house, if possible; if not, I will come to see you. It is time, I think, to apply some remedy to this extremely serious evil which is worse than you could imagine. I have very good reason to fear and to desire that God may keep me and inspire your charity, to draw His glory from such a great evil. It seems to me that I am willing to submit to everything, but I dread eternity. In the name of God, consider this a matter of great importance and do me the honor of believing that I am, Monsieur, your most obedient daughter and very grateful servant.

L. DE M.

Addressed: To be given to Monsieur Vincent in person

649. - A BISHOP TO SAINT VINCENT

1643

The extreme desolation I encounter in the clergy of my diocese and my powerlessness to remedy it have obliged me to have recourse

Letter 648. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Guillaume Compaing, son of the Seigneur de l'Estang, had the honor of being assisted at his first Mass by Saint Francis de Sales. He lent his house to the priests of Saint-Nicolas du Chardonnet and entered their Community himself in 1621. He did a great deal of good, both for the parish of Saint-Nicolas, whose vicar he remained for forty-three years, and for the Daughters of Sainte-Geneviève, whose Director he was. The reconstruction of the parish church cost him a large amount of money and even his life, for he died August 21, 1665, crushed by the fall of a scaffolding. (Cf. Jean-François-Frédéric Darche, *Le saint abbé Bourdoise* [2 vols., Paris: H. Oudin, 1883-1884], vol. I, pp. 348-351.)

Letter 649. - Abelly, *op.cit.*, bk. II, chap. II, sect. I, p. 214.

to you, so well known for your zealous dispositions and strong propensity to restoring priestly discipline in the places where it is found to be lax or entirely broken down.

650. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

February 27, 1643

In the name of God, Monsieur, do not place any restrictions on the freedom to write to the Superior General. This is the custom, founded on many good reasons, and one of the principal consolations that subjects have in enjoying this complete freedom, and it is certainly just. Do not think, Monsieur, that the subject is believed against the Superior without hearing the latter, nor that we act according to what may be conjectured from what they report. *O Jésus*, no; I can assure you that I never mention anything based on that, but on the behavior that is evident in the letters of the individual Superiors. It is strongly to be desired, Monsieur, that all the Superiors of the Company act like one of them who says in public, from time to time, that if anyone has something to reproach in his leadership or his character, the General should be informed of it and he will correct himself, with the help of God. Yesterday I saw Father Bagot¹ who greatly consoled me by all he told me about the virtue and regularity of your family. I thank God wholeheartedly for this because on this

Letter 650. - Reg. 2, pp. 29 and 267.

¹Jean Bagot, of the Society of Jesus, was born in Rennes on July 2, 1591 and died on August 23, 1664. He directed the Collège de Clermont and for a short time was confessor to Louis XIV. The pious and renowned Henri-Marie Boudon, Archdeacon of Evreux, considered him one of the most saintly and erudite men of his century. He wrote several works of theology. The best known is: *Défense du droit épiscopal et de la liberté des fidèles touchant les messes et les confessions d'obligation* (Paris, 1655), which was censured by the Assembly of the Clergy of France on April 7, 1657. (Cf. Guy-Alexis Lobineau, *Les vies des saints de Bretagne et des personnes d'une éminente piété qui ont vécu dans cette province* [6 vols. Paris: Méquignon, 1836-1839], vol. II, pp. 344-350.)

point consists or depends the reason to hope for God's mercy on the Company and the services it should render to His Church.

Continue, Monsieur, to make your Community very virtuous and exact in our little observances of the Rule, and do not worry about anything else; Our Lord will do the rest.

651. - TO JEAN GUERIN, SUPERIOR, IN ANNECY

March 10, 1643

O Monsieur, how wholeheartedly I pray to God for you and all your men, that His Divine Goodness may be pleased to make all of you of only one heart and one soul! Charity is the cement which binds Communities to God and persons to one another in such a way that whoever contributes to union of hearts in a Company binds it indissolubly to God. May His Infinite Goodness be pleased to animate you with His love for this purpose!

652. - TO FRANCOIS DUFESTEL

March 10, 1643

O Monsieur, what great consolation I have because Our

Letter 651. - Reg. 2, p. 34. The Coste text has been used in this edition. However, the editors have been informed that the original is in the possession of the Lazarists in Beirut, Lebanon.

Letter 652. - *Mission et Charité* 19-20, p. 39, reprinted a résumé found in a Charavay catalogue for an original three-page letter of Saint Vincent to François Dufestel: "Interesting details on the general affairs of the Congregation in various towns and on the galleys, as well as on the results of studies in the seminaries. He sends him the ratification of the foundation of the Commander of Geneva with every possible

Lord has chosen two Commanders of Malta¹ for the benefit of the diocese of Geneva. I beg Our Lord to sanctify that Order more and more, and the soul of the said Seigneur as well, and to glorify more and more the soul of Commander de Sillery. I entreat you, Monsieur, to ask permission of the said Seigneur to kiss his hand on behalf of our Little Company and on my own behalf in particular.

653. - TO A NUN IN PARIS

[Between 1639 and 1647]¹

My very dear Mother,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Since yesterday morning I have not heard a word about that girl. I am concerned about your young Sisters and I beg Our Lord to be your solace. On Saturday I am supposed to say Mass at Notre-Dame in Paris and to give Communion to the Ladies of Charity of Lorraine. If you are planning to make the trip before or after that, I will go there, with the help of God.

I am sending you Madame de Villeneuve's letter and I am,

recommendation." Coste's résumé (no. 652, p. 374) cited only the work of the galley-slaves. The part of the original which *Mission et Charité* reproduced was found in Bibl. Nat. (Département des Manuscrits: Nouv. Acq. fr. 3099).

¹Order of the Knights Hospitalers of Saint John of Jerusalem. They became popularly known as the Order of the Knights of Malta, the place where their headquarters were re-established in 1518.

Letter 653. - Archives of the Mission, a copy taken from the original owned by the Abbé Eglée, titular Canon of Notre-Dame. This original is in the handwriting of Saint Vincent. The present location of this letter is unknown.

¹Period during which the Ladies of Charity worked in Lorraine.

in the love of Our Lord, my very dear Mother, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

654. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

Paris, March 20, 1643

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received two of your letters at the same time, the one of February 1 and the other of February 12. Here is my reply to the first. I thank God for all you tell me in both letters, especially that you have had the good fortune of paying your respects to Cardinal Lenti, and for all that His Eminence said to you. I also thank Him [God] because you have begun the seminary with the deacons and subdeacons Cardinal Lenti sent you. I will tell you that I am beginning to see the fruit you tell me could result from this, if it pleases God to give it His blessing, as I pray Him to do with my whole heart, and I offer Him every beat of my heart as so many ejaculatory prayers to ask Him unceasingly for this grace.

As for the Saint-Yves affair, I do not see much to be hoped for at present, due to the lawsuit the Fathers of the Oratory

Letter 654. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, photocopy of the original. Coste stated (no. 654, pp. 375-382) that he used an incomplete copy of the original in the possession of Charavay. In 1960 the original was discovered in the museum in Mariemont (Belgium), where it had been since 1910. This original is not in very good condition: in several places the ink has eaten through the paper. There are many erasures; some proper names, and even whole lines, have been made illegible by a later handwriting. This edition has used the text printed in *Mission et Charité*, 19-20, pp. 40-44. The editor of that text stated that because of the defective original, some reading and interpretations were conjectural.

are bringing regarding Saint-Louis¹ through their Father General,² confessor of Monsieur, the King's brother;³ the person⁴ I mentioned to you is unwilling to displease him. Do not speak of this to anyone at all; we shall see to it, with time.

I have shown your letters, as I usually do, to your foundress.⁵ When there is anything especially noteworthy, tell me about it in a separate note.

Here is my reply to your second letter which tells me in detail about Saint-Yves and about some missions in Brittany. I can tell you nothing other than what I have already said to you on this matter, except that the person to whom I mentioned this is avoiding me because of it, and that we have several Bretons in our seminary, if the matter is urgent. With that exception, *omnia tempus habent*.⁶

I agree with you completely, Monsieur, that we must be committed to seminaries and that the missions will go better because of this. We are obliged to go and open the one in

¹The confraternity and parish of Saint-Louis-des-Français in Rome (to which were attached the confraternity and parish of Saint-Yves). It depended on the French Oratorians.

²François Bourgoing (1585-1662). He had been the predecessor of Saint Vincent at the parish of Clichy and since 1641, Superior General of the Oratory in France.

³Gaston, Duc d'Orléans, was born in Fontainebleau in 1608, the son of Henri IV and Marie de Medicis. Louis XIII was his brother. Gaston took part in the conspiracies against Richelieu and Mazarin during the Fronde. He became Lieutenant-General of the kingdom in 1643 and died in 1660. *Monsieur*, in this context, is the stylized title used for the eldest brother of the French King.

⁴Probably, the Comte de Brienne.

⁵The Duchesse d'Aiguillon.

⁶*All things have their season.* Eccl. 3:1. "There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens." (NAB)

Cahors⁷ after Easter. The Bishops of Mende⁸ and of Angoulême⁹ are urging us to do likewise in their dioceses at the same time, which is impossible for us, if God does not assist us. We are having all those who can afford it pay board; some pay two hundred livres, others eighty écus.¹⁰ I think, as you do, that we should do this everywhere.

I will write first thing to M. Souffliers about what you tell me concerning Agen.¹¹ I will await what the Duchesse¹² will have to say about the seminary in Richelieu¹³ and the ordinands in Poitiers.¹⁴

I am delighted by what you tell me, that the Pope¹⁵ will allow the union of the parishes to the seminary, paying the *componende*¹⁶ for this. The Bishop of Saintes¹⁷ asked me about this in the letter I received from him yesterday. But please

⁷The contract of foundation had been signed on the preceding January 4. At the beginning, the personnel of the house of Cahors had to be composed of three priests and two brothers to give missions, to instruct clerics of the diocese who would present themselves, to maintain free of charge three seminarians chosen by the Bishop, and to receive, for a period of ten days, clerics called for Holy Orders at the time of ordination. The Bishop of Cahors gave them for their maintenance the revenues of the priories of Vaurette and Balaguier, and he promised to add immediately eight hundred livres on the condition that, as soon as this was done, they would add a fourth priest and that the number of clerics admitted free to the seminary would be increased from three to six. The three Priests of the Mission arrived in Cahors on June 12, 1643. M. Adrien Foissac wrote the history of this establishment: *Le premier grand séminaire de Cahors et les prêtres de la Mission* (Cahors: F. Plantade, 1911). We shall often refer to this well-documented work.

⁸Sylvestre de Crusy de Marcillac, Bishop of Mende from 1628 to 1659, the year of his death.

⁹Jacques de Perron, Bishop of Angoulême (1637-1646).

¹⁰240 livres.

¹¹More exactly, La Rose, in the diocese of Agen, where François Souffliers had been Superior since the preceding year.

¹²The Duchesse d'Aiguillon.

¹³The seminary of Richelieu began in 1646 and had only a brief existence.

¹⁴It is a question either of a projected seminary for ordinands (the project was abandoned) or of a retreat for ordinands preached at Poitiers.

¹⁵Urban VIII, Pope (1623-1644).

¹⁶Cf. no. 640, n. 9.

¹⁷Jacques Raoul de la Guibourgère, Bishop of Saintes (1642-1646).

explain to me the situation you mention, about paying the *componende*, how much it comes to, and what parishes are served by the seminary priests.

I do not have the honor of knowing M. de Vanuci; I will nonetheless give some attention to the possibility you suggest to me in his regard.

As for the rectorship in Cardinal Lenti's diocese, if we have the men and provided it is in a small town, *in nomine Domini*, we should give it some thought. But if you can put the matter off, you can look around in the interim and let me know the condition of the place, the number of communicants and how many persons it could support after you have conducted the mission there.

Regarding the dispensation from the vow, I returned to you the one you had sent me and informed you that this good soul is only about thirty-six years old. As for the illness which obliges her to eat meat, it is a weakening of nature due to a continual turmoil of her mind and the worries which business matters give her. I beg you, Monsieur, to take pains with this.

The absolution or the dispensation you were being asked to obtain for the converted heretic who was a Capuchin, will be requested in Rome by the individual himself, who has left to go there.

I will have M. Callon¹⁸ rewrite and sign the letter which he

¹⁸Louis Callon, Doctor of the Sorbonne, was one of those men "in whom holiness, learning, zeal and simplicity were beautifully allied." To these gifts were added those of fortune, for his parents had left him fifty to sixty thousand livres, a large sum for that period. In July, 1626, he left the parish of Aumale, his native place, to enter the Congregation of the Mission. After a rather short stay at the Collège des Bons-Enfants, he returned to Aumale with the consent of Saint Vincent who continued to regard him as one of his own men. The good he did in Aumale was considerable. He established a collège in his paternal home, bought a house for a girls' school, aided the parish church, the hospital, and the convent for religious penitents. The Feuillants, a branch of Cistercians of Rouen, and other Communities likewise benefited from his generosity. On August 23, 1629, he gave Saint Vincent four thousand livres to establish missions which were to be given every two years by two priests of the Congregation in the diocese of Rouen, and more particularly in the deanery of Aumale. He himself preached in the

has already written to the Abbé d'Aumale;¹⁹ if the Saint-Yves affair were moving forward we would have persons of substance write to him. If this affair were to work out, you would remove the heart of the matter in suppressing the consideration for the seminary. What explanation could be given for this change of direction?

Since the brother of Brother Martin is useful to you and since you plan to make a good fellow of him, *in nomine Domini*, keep him.

We will try to get Cardinal Mazarin's letter in the manner you are asking for it, and I shall send you the Latin book for the ordinands through M. Dehorgny whom I hope to have leave at Easter to go and visit Our Lord's poor little families.²⁰

We will think about what you tell me, that it is advisable for the General to have the option to use the goods of one house for another. Seek advice about whether that is desirable and whether there is any precedent for it.

Hereafter, I will have the memorials drawn up in Latin, before asking you to procure what they contain.

Here are the words of the lady with the vow regarding her indisposition: this illness is rather a weakness and sensitivity of temperament, which prevents this lady from being able to fast six days in a row without falling victim to a particular illness.

Please send me the name of the parish at Vannes²¹ which you mentioned to me, in order to try to establish a seminary there.

dioceses of Rouen, Paris, Meaux, Chartres and Senlis. In the midst of his labors, he found time to write various works of piety, among others, a *Traité pour la préparation à la sainte communion* (Rouen: Laur-Maurry, n.d.), and *Le catéchisme de la chasteté honorable* (Paris: Thierry, 1639). Conscious that his end was near, he left Rouen to go to die at Saint-Lazare, but his illness prevented him from getting beyond Vernon, where he died August 26, 1647, in the convent of the religious of the Third Order of Saint Francis.

¹⁹Edmond or Aimé du Broc de Nozet.

²⁰In other words, to make the canonical visitation of several houses of the Company.

²¹This project of the seminary at Vannes was not pursued.

There now remains for me to reply to what you told me about M. . . .²² and, with regard to him, about putting up with difficult people. What would you do, Monsieur, with an individual who for years has done everything in his power to get all those he could to leave the house and who, effectively, has enticed away four or five of those most capable of service? He has also caused an astounding setback in one of the best souls in the Company, whose spirit, if not entirely perverted, is greatly changed for the worse. He tries his best to do this, not only by words, but also through correspondence with those who are absent. Here is what he says to one Gentleman. . . .²³ “Is he still a baby?²⁴ Has he stopped thinking about what I told him—that if he raises the flag, I will beat the drum everywhere? And what about such and such? Will they not join us? And what about you? Do you not want me to send you some material from this region to make yourself a cowl for your vows (which he had made six or seven years ago)?” And then he tells him about the physical defects of people of that region and that most of the men enter the Church through the cloister and that the women are so ugly that he did not need to trouble himself with making the Sign of the Cross to chase away temptation. He writes this from the place where he is conducting a mission, to an individual who is 150 leagues away.

What would you do . . . [?] because he has always . . . [?] since he has been away, and has caused such a division in the family of . . . [?] that we have had to make a clean sweep? And worst of all, he gave me the greatest hopes. O Monsieur, God forbid we should send him to you and you should take him! He would soon upset your house or change it much for the worse.

²²The copyist was unable to read the name of the person.

²³The name was apparently crossed out on the original.

²⁴An idiom for “to be as inexperienced as a child.”

You tell me that it is necessary to put up with such people at the start because the Company has such a need of men, and that, in time, we could purge the Company of them. It is true, Monsieur, that the Company does need men; but it would be so much better to have fewer men than to have a number of difficult individuals and deeds of that sort. Ten good men will do more for God than a hundred of those people. Let us purge, Monsieur, let us purge the Company of worldly persons and those who are not pleasing in the eyes of God, and He will give it increase and bless it. When God wanted to put to death nearly three thousand men who had adored the golden calf, and Moses wanted to prevent this by his prayers, He replied: *Dimitte me ut irascatur furor meus contra eos faciamque te in gentem magnam.*²⁵ Based on that, Monsieur, to diminish the number of those who offend God in a Company is to increase that same Company in virtue and in size because people flock to Companies that are well-regulated and virtuous. Oh! how well Our Lord knew what He was saying when He said that *malum pecus inficit omne pecus.*²⁶ It only takes one man like that, Monsieur, to upset a Company. The Company of the reformed Mathurins²⁷ is in the gravest affliction and is threatened with being wiped out either entirely or in part by a spirit which is worldly, troublesome, incorrigible and full of trickery.

I beg God, Monsieur, to enlighten and elevate your understanding, in order to perceive how important it is for the glory of God, the sanctification of the Company and the good of

²⁵Let me alone that my wrath may be kindled against them and I will make you a great nation. Ex. 32:10. "Let me alone, then, that my wrath may blaze up against them to consume them. Then I will make of you a great nation." (NAB)

²⁶One bad sheep infects all the sheep. Saint Vincent erred when he attributed this statement to Our Lord, since this utterance cannot be found in Sacred Scripture.

²⁷The Mathurins (Order of the Trinitarians) were, at that time, in a complete state of crisis following the opposition of some members of the Order, headed by a certain Alexis Berger, to the authority of their Superior General, Louis Petit.

the Church, that we in no way tolerate in it persons who do no good there, and I pray that the time will come when people will be unable to do this when they would like to try it.

Yes, but he is going to write and rage against the Company. He will do us no more evil than God allows him to do us and the evil he will do us will turn to our benefit. Besides, would we not be unworthy to serve God in the condition in which we are, if, in order to prevent a person from doing us harm, we allow him to corrupt the service and the glory of God among us? Remember, Monsieur, that the downfall of most Communities comes from the cowardice of Superiors in not holding firm and in not purging them of the troublesome and incorrigible.

I close by recommending myself to your holy prayers and those of the Company, I, who am in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

655. - TO PIERRE DU CHESNE, SUPERIOR, IN CRECY

Paris, March 25, 1643

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have just now seen the letter you wrote to M. Portail and it concerns me a great deal because of your illness and the difficulty of sending someone to replace you in your duty. Nevertheless, I will do whatever I can and I beg you, in the

Letter 655. - The text was taken directly from the original autograph letter in the possession of M. Charavay.

name of Our Lord, to do the same for your health and send M. Boudet back to us, if he is not hearing confessions.

I very humbly greet M. de Vincy and all in your little Company, prostrate in spirit at their feet and yours. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

If I can do it, I shall have someone leave today. The messenger is taking the pen from my hand.

656. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Thursday evening. [1643, around May]¹

Blessed be God, Mademoiselle, for all you tell me regarding the state of our dear Sister at Nanteuil;² for what the good Pastor of Saché³ tells you; for the fact that Providence has led this good young woman to you and, what is more, for the lowly opinion Our Lord is giving you of yourself!

It is not advisable for us to send someone from this house to Nanteuil. It is enough for our dear Sister Elisabeth⁴ to go there, if she finds an opportunity.

Letter 656. - Archives of the Mission, original autograph letter.

¹Sister Jeanne Dalmagne went to Nanteuil-le-Haudouin in July 1642 and made her vows there in March 1643, after which she became ill. The month of May would seem to be a reasonable time to assign to this letter.

²Sister Jeanne Dalmagne was born in 1611 in Herblay and entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity in 1639.

³M. de Mondion.

⁴Saint Louise wrote to a sick Sister, possibly Sister Jeanne Dalmagne in Nanteuil, that Sister Elisabeth Martin was coming to nurse her: "Our good Sister Elisabeth is going to assure you of the affection of all of our Sisters and how they hope that you will remember them in heaven, when God will have had mercy on you." (Cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 97.) But Jeanne Dalmagne was not at that point yet and she said to Sister Elisabeth

(2) Consider the use our worthy Mother de Chantal made of the reproaches she received from a Sister who had left the house. Oh! how happy you are to have the occasion of showing heaven and earth the use you will make of this. Is it not right that you should recognize God in the person of this good girl He has sent you, by some special act of acquiescence to His good pleasure, such as this?

(3) Thank God also for the opinion He gives you of yourself and have confidence that His goodness will supply for what is wanting in me. Give yourself wholly to Him for that purpose. We shall speak of this at our next meeting and will see that good girl, whom I greet, as well as good Louise.⁵

If I am not wrong, you are not mistaken in your dealings with your son.

I have no fever at all. I have reason to fear that I am coddling myself a little too much with this cold.

Tomorrow after dinner I have to go out to see the Queen at Val-de-Grâce.⁶ After that I shall come back home and shall put off seeing you until I am going out regularly. I saw you and your good Sisters at Holy Mass today, with God knows what consolation. In His love I am your servant.

V. D.

Please let me see those papers of the Duchesse d'Aiguillon.

when she saw her: "I'll go with you." In fact, she regained her health and was taken to Paris a little toward the end of 1643 to convalesce; she returned to Nanteuil where she died on March 25, 1644. (Cf. Conference on her virtues, January 15, 1645, vol. IX, no. 19.)

⁵Sister Louise Ganset.

⁶The former hotel du Petit-Bourbon. Queen Anne of Austria had established the Benedictines of Bièvre there; she used to visit them often and lavished gifts on them. At her request, her son, Louis XIV, laid the first stone of their church on April 1, 1645. She willed them her heart and the relics from her oratory.

657. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1638 and 1649]¹

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am very glad that you did not find a seat.² You must honor the sentiments of Our Lord when He said to the Apostles who were complaining that others were preaching and casting out devils as they were: "Those who are not against you (this blessed Savior said) are for you."³ Be assured, Mademoiselle, that all this petty conniving of the malcontents will turn to the good of the Company of the Daughters.

We must decide what will be done with Marie Denyse and give the pastor⁴ more than has been given, in view of the long period of time when he received nothing at all.

As for your son, we shall find him work either in Linas⁵ or in Normandy.

Take care of your health, I beg you. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Mademoiselle, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

Letter 657. - The original autograph letter is kept at the Provincial House of the Daughters of Charity of Rio de Janeiro.

¹We do not believe that the sentence referring to Michel Le Gras could have been written before 1638 or after 1649.

²The word means a place in a coach.

³Lk. 9:50. "Jesus told them in reply, 'Do not stop him, for any man who is not against you is on your side.'" (NAB)

⁴Probably the pastor of Saint-Laurent, M. de Lestocq.

⁵Near Corbeil (Essonne).

658. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

Paris, April 17, 1643

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter of the tenth of last month, together with those from the Vicar General of Ostia, from M. Marchand and from M. de Luzarches. In reply, I shall tell you that I have sent you the power of attorney to buy a house and to bind us to the payment of six thousand écus. Even to think about getting one for sixty thousand livres, as is being suggested to you, *O Jésus!* Monsieur, we are in no position to do that. The sixty thousand livres you mention have been earmarked by the late Cardinal¹ for Richelieu, and neither the executors of the will nor the heirs would ever consent to having this sum diverted to another place or for another purpose.

Although M. Blatiron was in Richelieu, I did not fail to inform him that he should leave in order to be in Lyons on May 3, when M. Dehorgny, who is on his way to see you, will take him, pick up M. Brunet at Marseilles,² bring both of them to you and return with M. Germain.

I gave the letter you wrote to the Duchesse d'Aiguillon and the ones you wrote me. I saw her yesterday and . . .³ on it.

The unusual amount of business I have is preventing me from replying to all those Gentlemen. I do hope to write to Cardinal Lenti's Vicar General and to those other Gentlemen.

Letter 658. - Archives of the Mission, original autograph letter. A Masonic lodge had reproduced a great number of copies of this letter, prefaced by the words: "Letters and autograph excerpts of S. Vincent de Paul, the lithographing of which was ordered by the R. . . [Right Worshipful] of his disciples in duplicate, one in facsimile, the other in cursive writing, because of a gift made to him by f. . . [illustrious brother] Le Bouillé of Saint-Gervais. Paris, July, 19, 1823." This work is full of textual errors.

¹Cardinal Richelieu. He died December 4, 1642.

²He was working on the galleys with François du Coudray.

³An illegible word in the original. Coste (II, 387) also included after "on it" which follows, 5 lines not found in the original.

I have told you so many times that the Barbary affair⁴ is not being handled at our expense nor at that of Cahors.

I hope that your establishment is neither sumptuous nor showy. The works of God are not done in such a way, and those of the world are.

If you could discreetly disengage yourself from the proposal to receive that good nobleman into your house, it would be a good idea. I thought I had told you that you should take as a maxim not to interfere with others' affairs under any pretext whatsoever because rarely can charity be preserved in this, not so much because of the masters as because of the servants.

If the plan regarding the bishops-elect were to succeed, that would be splendid. Those who have been trained here stand out among the other prelates, so much so, that everyone, all the way up to the King, notices something different about them. This is why His Majesty has informed me through his confessor⁵ that I should send him the list of those who seem apt for this dignity.⁶

⁴Saint Vincent did not want to accept a permanent mission in Barbary. He would, however, consent that from time to time missions be preached among the slaves and prisoners there (cf. no. 639).

⁵Jacques Dinet, a Jesuit. In March he had replaced Father Sirmond, S.J. who because of deafness had had to resign his post. Born in Moulins in 1580 and received into the Society of Jesus in 1604, Dinet successively filled the positions of Rector in Orleans, Tours, Rheims and Paris and became Provincial of France and Champagne. He died of dropsy on December 22, 1653, a few months after his appointment as confessor to Louis XIV.

⁶Observe in what terms Father Dinet spoke of this in the *Idée d'une belle mort ou d'une mort chrétienne dans le récit de la fin heureuse de Louis XIII* (Paris, 1656), p. 14: "Because some dioceses were vacant and he desired to fill them only with men who were worthy, he charged me to ponder this and to inform some intelligent persons about it, men who were zealous for the interests of God, Jesuits and others, and especially Father Vincent de Paul, General of the Mission, and to furnish him with a list in which the feasible ones would be placed according to the order of their adequacy and merit." (Cf. also Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. I, chap. XXVII, p. 125.) This matter was very current when Saint Vincent wrote this letter.

That, Monsieur, is all I have to say to you for now, except that I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Rome, in Rome

659. - ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC¹ TO SAINT VINCENT

Cahors, May 3, 1643

Monsieur,

The public affairs in which I have been involved for several days since I returned from the visitation of my diocese, deprived me of

Letter 659. - Archives of the diocese of Cahors, Alain de Solminihac collection, file 22, no. 2. This file includes forty-four letters of Alain de Solminihac to Saint Vincent, copied during the eighteenth century, before the original letters were sent to Rome at the time of the beatification process for the holy Bishop of Cahors.

¹Alain de Solminihac was born in the Château of Belet in Périgord on November 25, 1593. He was only twenty-two years of age when one of his uncles resigned the Abbey of Chancelade (Dordogne) in his favor. This abbey depended on the Order of Canons Regular of Saint Augustine. He replaced some old buildings with new constructions and had discipline restored to the abbey. On January 21, 1630, Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld sent him full powers to visit the houses belonging to the Canons of Saint Augustine in the dioceses of Périgueux, Limoges, Saintes, Angoulême and Maillezais. Alain de Solminihac was sought after in many places to establish reform. Appointed to the diocese of Cahors on June 17, 1636, he devoted himself body and soul to the church of which he was the shepherd. He procured for his people the benefit of missions, visited the parishes of his diocese regularly, created a seminary for the formation of his clergy and entrusted its direction to the sons of Saint Vincent. At the time of his death on December 21, 1659, the diocese of Cahors was completely renewed. Since God had manifested the sanctity of Alain by several miracles, his cause was introduced in Rome at the request of the clergy of France. (Cf. Leonard Chastenot, *La Vie de Mgr. Alain de Solminihac* [new ed., Saint-Brieuc: Prud'homme, 1817]; Abel de Valon, *Histoire d'Alain de Solminihac, évêque de Cahors* [Cahors: Delsaud, 1900].) On October 4, 1981, Pope John Paul II beatified Alain de Solminihac.

the means of communicating with your Missionaries until Friday, when they took the trouble to come to Mercuès.² This prevents me from being able to converse with you about them. I can only tell you that they have had the exercises for those I promoted to Orders on Saturday carried out at the usual time with excellent results to the edification of the whole town. M. Dufestel with whom I have spoken more, seems to me to be an excellent man with very fine qualities. He acknowledged as I have said to you several times that this establishment is one of the most important you have, and possibly will have, in the kingdom.³

My steward informs me that the Saint-Geneviève⁴ men, through the intervention of the Chancellor's wife, have had M. de Fouquet⁵ appointed, contrary to twodecrees by which M. de la Ferté⁶ continues to be arbitrator in this affair which is very dear to me, as you know. That is why I beg you, in the name of God, to assist us and our good monks, etc.

I have learned that the Bishop of Sarlat⁷ is seeking the post of tutor to the King, a position certainly far below his dignity. Meanwhile, his diocese, one of the most forlorn in Christendom, remains abandoned. You would be rendering a great service to God if you were willing to say a word about this to the Bishop of Beauvais,⁸ to get him to issue an order for him to come and assume his responsibility, or else this diocese should be provided for. The Périgueux diocese is also in great distress and apparently it will not

²Today, it is the chief town of a canton in the district of Cahors.

³The first seminarians arrived on June 15, 1643, three days after the Priests of the Mission. They established themselves at the Chantrerie, a house of the Cathedral Chapter. This served as the lodging of the Constitutional (schismatic) Bishop in 1791 (French Revolution); it was demolished in the nineteenth century.

⁴Saint Vincent and Bishop Solminihac were very much concerned with matters dealing with the Congregation of Sainte-Geneviève.

⁵Nicolas Fouquet, born in Paris on January 27, 1615, became Attorney General of the Parlement of Paris in 1650 and Superintendent of Finances in 1653. Accused of embezzlement and arrested in Nantes on September 5, 1663, he was judged, condemned to life imprisonment and incarcerated in the Château de Pignerol where he died in March 1680. He became reconciled with God in his last years and even composed some books of devotion. (Cf. Jules Lair, *Nicolas Fouquet, procureur général, surintendant des finances, ministre d'Etat de Louis XIV* [2 vols., Paris: Plon et Nourrit, 1890].)

⁶Scipion-Marc, Seigneur de la Ferté, a friend of Bishop Solminihac.

⁷Jean de Lingendes. He occupied the diocese of Sarlat (1642-1650).

⁸Augustin Potier.

be long before it is vacant.⁹ I also beg you, if you deem it proper, to make the Bishop understand how very important it is that a person who has all the requisite qualifications be appointed there, so he can be placed in such an important diocese which is in so ruinous a state. A long time ago, I had spoken with the Cardinal¹⁰ about placing M. Brandon¹¹ there. He seemed capable of putting it back on its feet, and M. des Noyers¹² had led me to hope for this at the time of my last trip to the Court.

I am, etc.

ALAIN
Bishop of Cahors

659a. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

Paris, May 7, 1643

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The Duchesse d'Aiguillon has finally decided to give five thousand livres annually, from the income of the lease of the Rouen coaches, in addition to what she has already given on the Soissons lease. This amounts to 7,500 livres a year for the Rome house, which is what you requested.¹

Since this type of income is on the estate of the King,² who

⁹François de la Béraudière had been Bishop of Périgueux since 1614. He died on May 14, 1646.

¹⁰Cardinal Richelieu.

¹¹Philibert de Brandon.

¹²François Sublet, Seigneur de Noyers.

659a. - Original autograph letter. Archives of the Mission, Paris, photocopy. In 1965 the original was in the possession of M. R. Schuermans, a lawyer in Turnhout (Belgium). It was published in *Mission et Charité*, 19-20, pp. 45-46. This edition uses the latter text.

¹The house in Rome and those in La Rose, Algiers and Tunis were beneficiaries of her desire to support the work of Saint Vincent.

²King Louis XIII died on May 14, 1643, seven days after Saint Vincent wrote this letter.

is seriously ill, it runs the risk of being reclaimed, and sometimes worse. We have, however, reason to hope that since it is being used for something so important, for the glory of God and the good of His Church, and is being supported here by the Nuncios, the matter would be reserved in the alienations that are sometimes made of that type of possessions, or when the King by the extreme necessity of his affairs lays claim on it. The contract has not yet been approved, although it has been drawn up. I shall see the Duchesse today. That is all I can tell you today because I am in a hurry to go and begin a novena for the King whom I recommend to your prayers, as also the mission of Sedan where His Majesty has ordered me to send priests. I likewise am telling you to send us the dispensation from the vow to enter the Carmelites. I am, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission, in Rome

Below: Monsieur Marchand, of Rome

660. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

Paris, May 15, 1643

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received two of your letters together, one dated the fifth,

and the other the fifteenth, of April. The former urges me to do what we can for the establishment in Rome, and I assure you I am wasting no time about it. I sent you a power of attorney to purchase a house, together with my ideas in regard to the last one you suggested and also about the new foundation of five thousand livres income from the Rouen coaches, which the Duchesse is giving.¹ I am sending to the notary² to find out if she has signed the contract she sent us to be signed first, and if I hear before sending this letter to the post, I will include it in a little note.

In the second place, your letter mentions some members of the Company other than those whom you first asked for. Now, in reply to this, I may say that I wish you would be good enough to think over matters carefully before making a request because, as you easily change your mind, things are not carried out according to your latest ideas.

Messieurs Blatiron and Brunet, who were more useful to us here than any of those for whom you ask, are now on their way to you, after making several journeys to different places. In future, it will be quite enough for you to let me know what sort of men you need, and leave the selection to me. A Superior of a Congregation has a better knowledge of the persons who compose it than anyone else. You tell me I made a bad choice in the beginning; I do not think so. You see, Monsieur, I have great confidence in gifted persons, but experience shows me every day how very little is to be expected from human talents

¹The contract is dated May 2. The Duchesse d'Aiguillon bound herself to give fifty thousand livres to the house in Rome, which was thus assured a yearly income of five thousand livres. She asked, in return, that a Mass be said there daily for the repose of the soul of her uncle, Cardinal Richelieu; that every year, on December 4, the anniversary of his death, all the Masses be said and a memorial service celebrated for the same intention; that similar favors be granted her after her death; that the Missionaries extend their hospitality to ordinands throughout the year to prepare them, by a preparatory retreat, for the worthy reception of Holy Orders; and finally, that an epitaph be placed in their church, in the most suitable and prominent position, to serve as a reminder of this foundation.

²Maître Charles, the lawyer of the Duchesse d'Aiguillon.

and human instruments, of no matter what nationality. I remarked a few days ago to a person of rank what I feel in the bottom of my heart, that I no more trust in human means for divine ends than I do in the devil. And even if things had not progressed as far as they have actually done, I have no doubt that Our Lord has done them in His own way, which is to produce better results by less excellent instruments than by more excellent ones, according to His rule: *Infirma elegit Deus ut fortia quaeque confundat.*³ That is what I mean when I say that we have not, by God's mercy, chosen badly, and that I hope Our Lord will be satisfied to make use of those whom He Himself sends us, and will not for the present ask us for others. As for the future, I trust He will grant the Company the grace either to send it better subjects, to train them better than it has done, or to rest content with its poverty.

We have sixteen or eighteen students of theology or philosophy here who are doing very well, according to the opinion of those who know more about these matters than I do. M. Messier, a Doctor of the Sorbonne,⁴ who was present three days ago at their debates, was quite surprised at how far they have been able to advance in such a short space of time, and so too was our own M. Gilles.

The Saint-Yves affair cannot be dealt with here just now. M. de Chavigny told me why, as I have already informed you. If you can do anything there, through M. Marchand, to influence those who are concerned, which is not likely, I am quite agreeable to it. Things have changed since then.

³God chooses the lowest in order to confound everything powerful. 1Cor. 1:27. "God chose those whom the world considers absurd to shame the wise; he singled out the weak of this world to shame the strong." (NAB)

⁴M. Messier, born in Paris in 1573, was Pastor of the parish of Saint-Landry from September 1598 to April 1664, Dean of the faculty of theology, and an elder of the house and faculty of the Sorbonne, but he allowed himself to be swayed by Jansenist ideas. He died on November 15, 1666. Louis Messier, his brother, was one of the first companions of Bourdoise, whose right arm he was. He was also Archdeacon of Beauvais and Doctor of the Sorbonne.

We are also leaving the seminary of Vannes alone. We have been spoken to about a seminary for Tréguier in Lower Brittany; but it has only an income of about five hundred livres.⁵

I am quite pleased at what you have to tell me of the ease with which a union of parishes can be effected. But since what you suggest about allowing a Superior General to take something from one house to give to another entails many inconveniences and is unheard of in any Company, it is advisable for me to reflect a little longer on the matter before God.

Concerning the residence of the Superior General, I have already written to you to say I have been pondering it for nearly a year, as well as most of the other matters to which you refer, particularly what you have to say about those who leave.

I praise God for your news about the ordinands, Cardinal Barberini,⁶ and the resolution you have taken about the pastoral charge of Cardinal Lenti's diocese. *Mon Dieu*, Monsieur, how ashamed I am for not having written to him or replied to his Vicar General! The pressurè of business which I have had to handle for some time past, and my own wretchedness for which there is no excuse, prevented me from doing so.

⁵Saint Vincent did not accede to the request to staff a seminary in the diocese of Vannes; however, he eventually accepted the seminary which Bishop Balthazar Grangier de Liverdi requested that he staff in the diocese of Tréguier.

⁶We have already said that the Sacred College had three Cardinals bearing this name: a brother and two nephews of Pope Urban VIII, namely, Francesco Antonio, Cardinal of Sant' Onofrio; Antonio, commonly known under the name of Cardinal Antonio; and Francesco. Here the last-named seems to be indicated. Francesco Barberini was born in Florence in 1597 and was created Cardinal shortly after his uncle was elevated. He became *Legate a latere* in France, and then, at the beginning of 1626, in Spain. He took refuge in France with his brothers, when Pope Innocent X wanted them to render an account of the peculations of which they were guilty under Urban VIII. In France he received very cordial hospitality, although, while his uncle lived, he had shown himself more favorable towards the interests of Spain than those of France.

It pleased God to dispose of our good King yesterday, which is the same day he began to reign thirty-three years ago. His Majesty wanted me to assist him at the hour of death, together with the Bishops of Lisieux⁷ and Meaux, his principal chaplain⁸ and his confessor, M. Dinet.⁹ As long as I have been on this earth, I have never seen anyone die in a more Christian manner. It was about a fortnight ago that he sent word I was to go and see him. Since he felt better the next day, I returned home. He had me summoned again three days ago, and during that time Our Lord granted me the grace of remaining with him. Never have I seen greater elevation of the soul toward God, greater tranquillity, greater apprehension of the smallest atom that seemed to be sin, greater kindness, or better judgment in a person in this state. The day before yesterday, when the physicians saw that he had fainted and his eyes had rolled back, they were afraid he was dying and they said this to the Father confessor. He at once awakened the King and told him that the physicians thought the time had come for him to recommend his soul to God. At the same time, this soul, so filled with the spirit of God, embraced that good Father long and tenderly and thanked him for the good news he had given him. Immediately afterwards, raising his eyes and arms to Heaven, he recited the *Te Deum laudamus* and finished it with so much fervor that the mere remembrance of it still moves me to tears as I tell you about it now.¹⁰

⁷Philippe Cospéan, Bishop of Aire (February 18, 1607-March 18, 1622), of Nantes (March 18, 1622-1635), and of Lisieux from July 25, 1636 to May 8, 1646, the day he died.

⁸Dominique Séguier.

⁹Here is what Father Dinet wrote about the presence of the Saint with the dying Prince (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 44): "Father Vincent came there twice at the request of the Queen who suggested it to the King; but this great Prince would agree only if his confessor had no objections, because his mind was so intensely present to everything that was happening around him; and that excellent Princess was good enough to take the trouble to mention it to me each time. This filled me with admiration and obliged me not only to thank her but to beg her humbly to do as she wished."

¹⁰The pious monarch bequeathed to the Saint twenty-four thousand livres for the

Since the bell is calling me and so prevents me from telling you any more, I shall end by recommending him to your prayers and to those of the Company.

You might tell the Assistant of the Jesuits¹¹ that Father Dinet conducted himself so well with this Prince that Her Majesty and the whole Court have been greatly edified by it. O Monsieur, what a great servant of God is this good Father!

His Majesty gave his heart to that holy Society to be buried at Saint-Louis¹² with that of the Queen Mother, and I give you mine and am, Monsieur, in the love of Our Lord and of His holy Mother, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

I have just been told that the Duchesse has not signed the contract and will be unable to do so for some days.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Rome, in Rome

foundation of two missions which six Missionaries were to give annually for ten years in the town of Sedan. Moreover, he placed at his disposition and that of Father Dinet the sum of forty-six thousand livres: forty thousand to be used for the benefit of poor people of rural areas, partly in missions, partly in alms; and six thousand for the ransom of French slaves in Algiers.

¹¹Father Etienne Charlet, French Assistant of the Jesuits (1627-1646).

¹²The professed house of the Jesuits. The state of disrepair of the Church of Saint-Paul caused the parish services to be transferred in 1802 to the Jesuit church, which then took the name of the Church of Saint Paul-Saint Louis.

661. - FRANCOIS DU COUDRAY TO SAINT VINCENT

[Marseilles, May 23 or 24, 1643]¹

Jean-Baptiste Gault, Bishop of Marseilles,² has just given up his beautiful soul to God. "We still have a mission to give on one of the galleys, and then no more for this year. This is hard work, but what helps us a great deal to endure it is the notable change we remark in these poor convicts, who give us all possible satisfaction. Yesterday, I catechized seven Turks from various galleys whom I had had brought to this house. God in His mercy is blessing this undertaking which I recommend to your Holy Sacrifices. Another Turk, who was ill, has been baptized on the galley. Besides these Turks, about thirty heretics have been converted, all of whom made their abjuration."

662. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

Paris, May 29, 1643

Monsieur,

Yesterday, I received the dispensation from vows¹ and your accompanying letter for which I most humbly thank you.

Letter 661. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. II, p. 37.

¹The reference to the death of the Bishop of Marseilles dictates our assigning this date.

²Born in Tours on December 22, 1593, Jean-Baptiste Gault was received into the Oratory on June 10, 1618 and was successively professor, missionary and pastor. He was consecrated Bishop of Marseilles on October 5, 1642. He came to that city in January 1643 and died there on May 23 after having given during that brief period of time a thousand proofs of his holiness and apostolic zeal. Miracles so multiplied at his tomb that in 1646 the Assembly of the Clergy of France petitioned for the honors of beatification for him. The canonical process was interrupted by the troubles of the French Revolution (1789) and was taken up again in the nineteenth century. (Cf. Father François Marchetty, *La Vie de Messire J.-B. Gault* [Paris: Hure, 1650].)

Letter 662. - Pémartin, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 454, L. 391. M. Pémartin took his text from the original letter which was put on sale by M. Charavay on April 27, 1864.

¹For the person mentioned in no. 594.

I am surprised that you have not mentioned receiving the power of attorney I sent you for buying and taking a quitrent on the house where you are living,² nor the letter I wrote you afterwards to buy also at perpetual annuity, at the rate of twelve hundred livres, the large house you mentioned to me. The Duchesse d'Aiguillon favors the latter and you are right to delay the ordinands for the Ember season until you get it, since you have no chapel nor the other necessary accommodations. Go ahead, then, Monsieur. I will approve what you do.

Cardinal Mazarin promised me he would write to Cardinal Ginetti,³ and today I am hoping to go see M. de Chavigny for the letter from the King for Rome, and tomorrow the Nuncio.⁴ The Duchesse will also write to him.

Our piece of business regarding the five thousand livres has still not been signed;⁵ I hope it will be done at the first opportunity.

So M. Dehorgny is with you! Please tell him that M. Le Bègue told me that the Superiors of their Company⁶ have written him that they would like M. Authier to be the General's Coadjutor and that he be granted or given the direction of their houses. I am refusing him the first proposition for many reasons, and also the second, except on condition that the General will send someone for an annual visitation of those houses, establish Superiors there and assign the personnel, unless they prefer that this person be one of the General's

²When he first went to Rome, Bernard Codoing lived in a small house near Ponte Sisto, where perhaps he was still living in 1643.

³Martio Ginetti was appointed Cardinal on January 19, 1626, then Legate in Ferrara, Legate *a latere* in Germany, Bishop of Albano, of Sabina and of Porto. He was also Cardinal-Vicar and, when he died at eighty-six years of age on March 1, 1671, he was Sub-dean of the Sacred College.

⁴Gerolamo Grimaldi, Archbishop of Seleucia.

⁵Cf. no. 660.

⁶The Company of the Blessed Sacrament, founded by Christophe d'Authier de Sigau. The matter referred to here seems to be part of the discussion relative to the unsuccessful union of the Company of the Blessed Sacrament with the Congregation of the Mission.

Assistants. I would like a word of advice on that from him and from you.

I conclude by greeting you both with all possible humility and affection, prostrate in spirit at your feet, I who am, in the love of Our Lord

663. - JACQUES-RAOUL DE LA GUIBOURGÈRE, BISHOP
OF SAINTES, TO SAINT VINCENT

[May or June¹] 1643

I spent the feast of Pentecost with your Missionaries who are working with marvelous zeal but also with great consolation, seeing what blessing God is bestowing on their labors. I cannot offer you thanks in due proportion to my obligation to you.

664. - FRANCOIS DU COUDRAY TO SAINT VINCENT

[Marseilles, June 1, 1643]¹

Yesterday, feast of the Most Holy Trinity, nine Turks were baptized in the Cathedral church, before the whole city of Marseilles, and the streets were filled with people blessing God for this. Also, we had no intention of concealing this action so that other Turks, who were hesitating, might be moved. Today, two new ones sought me out to tell me that they want to become Christians. They had come with another one who was baptized about ten days ago. We

Letter 663. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. II, p. 30.

¹Reference to Pentecost Sunday, which was May 24 in 1643, dictates the assigning of the month when this letter was written.

Letter 664. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. II, p. 37.

¹Trinity Sunday in 1643 was May 31, hence the date assigned this letter. Moreover, the Turks who were baptized seem to be among those mentioned in no. 661.

continue to teach them the catechism in Italian twice a day, in order to strengthen and affirm them as much as possible. Otherwise, they would run the risk of returning to Mohammedanism.

665. - LEONOR D'ESTAMPES DE VALENCAY, ARCHBISHOP
OF RHEIMS, TO SAINT VINCENT

1643

I could never thank you enough for the favor you did me in sending your Missionaries to conduct the retreat exercises for my ordinands. I assure you that I had very great need of them and they could not have gone to a place where they would be more necessary. They themselves will report to you what good results they achieved there.

666. - THE PRIESTS OF THE NOYON CONFERENCE
TO SAINT VINCENT

1643

If gratitude should correspond to the greatness of the benefits received, the company cannot help but fall short in the respects it is obliged to pay to you for the extraordinary edification received from your priests in the direction and instruction of the ordinands. For a very long time we had been hoping for this blessing from you, but now that our company has experienced its favorable effects, it esteems and cherishes them to such a high degree that it is at a loss for words to express to you its sentiments regarding them.

Letter 665. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. II, sect. V, p. 235.

Letter 666. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. II, sect. V, p. 235.

667. - A PRIEST OF THE NOYON CONFERENCE
TO SAINT VINCENT

1643

I would like to be able to find words to express adequately the consolation and edification received not only by the ordinands but also by the priests of the Conference from listening to the talks given us by M. N. of your Company. He touched hearts so deeply that these Gentlemen could never tire of speaking about it. And among the ordinands, there were several who, angered because they were being subjected to making this retreat, had made up their minds ahead of time, before even entering it, that in no way were they going to make the general confession; others were determined not to make it to your priests. But after hearing the talks, they were so strongly moved by them that they admitted and declared aloud, in presence of the others, their bad intentions and the contrary resolution they had taken about making their general confession, and even of making it to missionary priests. This is what they all were saying, moved to tears, so touched were they. Therefore, I am offering you infinite thanks for your great charity to us, not only on my own behalf but in the name of those Gentlemen who have asked me to write to you to express the satisfaction they have received.

667a. - TO GUILLAUME GALLAIS, SUPERIOR, IN SEDAN

[Around 1643]¹

When the King sent you to Sedan, it was on condition that there never be any disputing against heretics, neither in the pulpit nor in private, knowing that this is of little use and very often produces more noise than fruit. Good living and the

Letter 667. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. II, sect. V, p. 235.

Letter 667a. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. II, sect. I, p. 19. Coste printed this in his first supplement, vol. VIII, no. 3303, p. 526. Chronologically it belongs here, so the editors have placed it accordingly.

¹Date of the foundation of the house in Sedan.

good odor of the Christian virtues put into practice draw the black sheep back to the right path and confirm Catholics on it. That is how the Company should be of advantage to the town of Sedan, adding to good example the exercise of our works, such as instructing the people in our ordinary manner, preaching against vice and bad morals, establishing and encouraging the virtues, showing their necessity, their beauty, their practice and the means of acquiring them. It is at this that you should principally be working. If you have the desire to speak about some points of controversy, do not do it unless the Gospel of the day should lead you to it. And then you will be able to sustain and prove the truths which the heretics attack, and even respond to their arguments but without naming them or talking about them.

668. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Madame Pelletier¹ has just left this house; she came to tell me that the Abbé Buzay² was named Coadjutor to the Archbishop. She immediately thought of my son and without saying anything to me,

Letter 668. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Madame Pelletier, the former Catherine Vialart, daughter of Madame de Herse, had married Nicolas Pelletier, the nephew of Madame Goussault, on August 10, 1632. She subsequently entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity but did not persevere.

²Jean-François-Paul de Gondi, Abbé de Buzay, son of Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi, General of the Gallies, and of Françoise-Marguerite de Silly. On June 13, 1643, he was named Coadjutor to his uncle, Jean-François de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris, and was consecrated January 31, 1644. Although he played an active part in the troubles of the Fronde, the Queen, no doubt to win him over, obtained the Cardinal's hat for him on February 19, 1652. From this time on, therefore, he was also known as Cardinal de Retz. Discontented with his influence and plots, Mazarin had him imprisoned at Vincennes. Becoming Archbishop upon the death of his uncle, and consequently more dangerous to the Prime Minister, Cardinal de Retz was transferred to the château of Nantes, from which he escaped and went into Spain, then on to Italy. In Rome, the Priests of the Mission gave him hospitality in their house, upon order of the Sovereign Pontiff. Mazarin very nearly let all the force of his wrath fall upon Saint Vincent and his Congregation. After the accession of Pope Alexander VII who was less benevolent to him than Innocent

mentioned him to Father Emmanuel,³ who told her to find out if I would like him to propose him to serve the Abbé Buzay. I do not know if it would be as almoner or in some other capacity more suited to him. Now, since this in no way came from me, I thought, Monsieur, that I ought not to neglect taking the liberty of asking you how I should act in this matter and, if you consider the idea feasible, to entreat you most humbly to do us the charity of helping us with it. I think that, if my son had some diversion from the melancholy which, in my opinion, is the cause of his troubles, they would disappear. He has always seemed to me to have the fear of God and the will to carry out faithfully whatever might be entrusted to him. If you wish me to have the honor of discussing this with you, will your charity kindly take the trouble to let me know and to believe that I am, Monsieur, your most grateful daughter and servant.

L. DE M.

June 8, [1643]⁴

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

X, Cardinal de Retz left Rome and undertook a long journey to Franche-Comté, Germany, Belgium and Holland. Mazarin's death reopened to him the gates of his homeland. He returned to France in 1662, renounced the Archbishopric of Paris, and received in exchange the Abbey of Saint-Denis. Age and trials had made him wiser. In this peaceful, studious, simple-mannered man, concerned with economizing in order to be able to pay off his numerous creditors, even pious during the last four years of his life, no one would have recognized the ambitious, flighty and restless Prelate who had stirred up Paris and made the powerful Mazarin tremble. As a writer, Cardinal de Retz is known especially for his *Mémoires*.

³Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi, the father of Jean-François de Gondi, the Abbé de Buzay. When he became a widower, he entered the Oratorian Fathers and spent the rest of his life in the practice of Christian and religious virtues. He died in Joigny on June 29, 1662. The Congregation of the Mission, the Oratory and Carmel honor him as one of their outstanding benefactors.

⁴Date added on the back of the original.

669. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

Mesdames Souscarrière, de Romilly,¹ and Traversay went to your house to tell you that the Chancellor² gave them a very good reception and told them that, in order to take possession of the château of Bicêtre,³ they would have to speak to the Queen about it and have a petition drawn up. They most humbly ask that your charity be the one to speak to her, if you have not already done so, and to inform them whom they should ask to draw up this petition and who should present it—the Chancellor or Madame de Brienne.⁴

The Chancellor also offered to authorize the Ladies to use part of the money of the poor little children for their present needs. Will you please find out how much they should request, and let them know?

These Ladies are afraid that Madame de Lamoignon has spoiled everything by speaking to Monsieur de Nesmond⁵ and I beg you to speak to the Queen about this as soon as possible, lest Her Majesty be told about it by someone else. I remind you also to explain to her that the people will be most grateful for the reduction the King will make on the grain tax, as Madame de Romilly has already mentioned to you.

I told Monsieur Portail that your charity has led us to hope for the meeting this Sunday. He thought it would be good to suggest to you as the topic: the importance of observing what is in the report

Letter 669. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Louise Goulas, wife of Pierre Sublet, Seigneur de Romilly, Councillor of the King, Treasurer-General of the Military. She devoted herself to the foundlings in a very special way.

²Pierre Séguier.

³What Saint Louise is calling the château of Bicêtre was a huge building constructed by Louis XIII on the site of a former royal residence to offer an asylum to disabled officers and soldiers. After the monarch's death, the plan was abandoned and the building remained vacant. The Ladies of Charity had set their sights on the property for an establishment for the foundlings. This was accomplished in July 1647.

⁴Louise de Béon, daughter of Bernard de Béon, Intendant of Santonge, Angoulême, and the territory of Aunis, and of Louise de Luxembourg-Brienne. She was wife of Henri-Auguste de Loménie, comte de Brienne, Secretary of State, and a Lady of Charity very devoted to Saint Vincent and his work. She died September 2, 1665.

⁵François-Théodore de Nesmond, Seigneur de Saint-Dysan, Président à mortier in the Parlement of Paris since December 20, 1636. He became successively the superintendent

about the manner of life of the Daughters of Charity, and to have this read.⁶ And I think it is very necessary to advise them that one good means of habituating themselves to the practice is for each Sister in the parishes and one for the house to render an account of this at every meeting, either all of them or some of them each time. Also, Monsieur, if you think it appropriate, you might do us the charity of giving us at each conference an instruction on one or two points of our manner of life. If you want us all to make our prayer for the meeting, will your charity kindly give us the points so that we can send them to our Sisters, when we give them notice? I will come early tomorrow morning to see what you would like to tell me on all these matters.

Allow me to entreat you to remember my needs at the holy altar, particularly the one that makes me so culpable before God, preventing me from having entire confidence in His most holy Providence and rendering me, Monsieur, unworthy of calling myself your daughter although, through His goodness, that is what I am, as well as your most grateful servant.

L. DE M.

June 12, [1643]⁷

of the house of the Prince de Condé and Chief Justice of the Parlement; he died November 25, 1664, at the age of sixty-six. Of his marriage with Anne de Lamoignon, sister of the famous magistrate, he had four sons and one daughter. One of his sons became Bishop of Bayeux.

⁶Saint Vincent gave his conference of June 14 on the topic proposed by Antoine Portail. (Cf. vol. IX, no. 15.)

⁷Date added on the back of the original.

670. - JEAN-JACQUES OLIER TO SAINT VINCENT

[Paris, June 1643]¹

He who has Jesus has everything!

Monsieur,

I beg Our Lord to live in you in order to make His Church triumph over the shamelessness of this age.

Yesterday, I forgot to speak to you about the principal reason that brought me to you, namely, to complain to you of the greatest scandal that has happened in the Church of God in a very long time. There is a pastor² who has been beaten and bruised with sticks near Paris by the Seigneur of his village,³ in presence of his parishioners and at the door of his church, with the worst possible ignominy and shame for the priesthood.⁴ The pastor is a person of great integrity and ability who gives very valid evidence of both and deserves to be supported as a person as well as in his official capacity.

I think, Monsieur, that at this beginning of the Queen's regency, if she were willing to force that gentleman to make public amends or undergo some temporal punishment, she would give much authority to the Church and would greatly repress the audacity and insolence the nobility is accustomed to exercise over the Church, despising and violating with impunity all her rights, as though this were an era of freethinking and an impious reign. Yesterday, I asked the Bishop of Puy,⁵ who took the trouble to come and see me, to speak about this to the Bishop of Beauvais,⁶ in order to remedy this unfortunate situation which is public knowledge and of which the

Letter 670. - Archives of the seminary of Saint-Sulpice, original autograph letter.

¹The events reported in this letter necessitate this date.

²Gervais Bigeon, Pastor of Arcueil, Doctor of theology.

³Théodore de Berziau.

⁴Because he prevented the Judge, Seigneur d'Arcueil, from presiding over the accounts of his church-wardens, Gervais Bigeon received from Théodore de Berziau on May 30, 1643 ten or twelve blows with a stick which wounded his head, and blows from spurs which tore his clothing. The affair was taken before the Parlement and came to the attention of the Assembly of the Clergy which in 1645 remonstrated strongly with the Queen, Anne of Austria.

⁵Henri de Maupas, Bishop of Puy and First Almoner to the Queen, Anne of Austria.

⁶Augustin Potier, Bishop of Beauvais, Grand Almoner to the Queen.

Court is already informed. It only awaits Her Majesty's orders to reveal how zealous she is in punishing crimes of this type.

This good priest cannot easily gather evidence needed for a trial because the Seigneur lives on the premises and is intimidating those who witnessed this outrage. Some of them have come to me in secret to ask my advice as to whether they should give testimony in court concerning what they know about such an attack which they lamented. I encouraged them to do their duty, and the pastor as well. While he was still black and blue, he had been solicited by his opponent not to pursue the matter, fearing the foreseeable punishment which he cannot escape under this holy reign of piety. Some very influential and highly respected persons who have heard about it, have indicated to me that this good priest should not acquiesce and keep silent. They say it is in the universal interest of the Church and most fitting that the beginning of the Queen's regency be marked by public chastisement and a significant punishment for such an odious sacrilege, in order to restore peace and tranquillity to the Church at the outset for all the rest of her regency, and to liberate the Church from the vexation and oppression in which pastors are living in areas distant from the Court. Priests in these places have no voice to express their grievances and seem only to have shoulders for bearing burdens.

All the bishops are greatly interested in this case and shudder at this oppression of their pastors, without being able to remedy the situation. You, more than anyone else, are aware of this, having been an eyewitness to all these evils during missions being given in the rural areas. Often God has made you weep with compassion for them, causing you to yearn to bring some remedy to this, if you could. He is granting it to you now and is putting the authority to do it in your hands.⁷ Monsieur, what would you not have done at that time when those evils touched you so? What would you not have been willing to give to have the power God is granting you now and which you can use so effectively for the glory of God and the good of His

⁷Saint Vincent had just been appointed by the Queen as a member of the Council of Conscience or Royal Council for Ecclesiastical Affairs. Appointed in 1643 by the Queen, as mentioned in this letter, he was dismissed by Cardinal Mazarin in 1652. This Council discussed and decided all questions dealing with religion within France. The Queen presided and appointed to this Council, in addition to Saint Vincent, Cardinal Mazarin, Chancellor Séguier, the Bishops of Beauvais and Lisieux, and the Grand Penitentiary of Paris, Jacques Charton.

Church? This great Master and very wise Director of His counsels willed to have you pass through that, to make you more sensitive to the ills of His clergy and to the oppression under which they are suffering. Where is the man, you may say, who will deliver us? Where is the person to whom God will give this zeal and this authority? *Debit per omnia nobis assimilari ut misericors fieret.*⁸ Our Lord has experienced this; He suffered in frailty in order to have compassion on our weakness. And now in the time of His virtue and His reign, when He is seated at the right hand of God, He is mindful of our miseries and assists us with His protection, His virtue and His grace.

This, Monsieur, is what the Church and the lesser clergy, the pastors, ask of you, and I above all, with hands joined, for them, I who have the honor of being one of their confreres. I weep with them and, thanks to you, I have seen enough of the countryside to learn the troubles and evils they endure far from Paris. I cast myself at your feet, along with this good pastor, and ask for your mercy, now that you are free from the chains that hold us captive. Remember us when you are in your kingdom. I am using the language of Scripture and of those poor captives with Joseph who, because of his fidelity, rightly deserved to be in the position you are in, for the redemption of the people, for the maintenance of his brothers and for the immense joy and glory of his father, Jacob.

I expect all this from you, that is, the relief of the Church, the freedom of priests and the very great glory of God the Father, in whom I am, through Jesus Christ Our Lord, your most humble and very obedient servant.⁹

OLIER

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior of the Priests of the Mission, at Saint-Lazare

⁸He ought to be made like us in all things so that he may be merciful. Heb. 2:17. "Therefore he had to become like his brothers in every way, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest before God on their behalf, to expiate the sins of the people." (NAB)

⁹In spite of Saint Vincent's urgent efforts, no sanction was imposed until 1646. At the request of the Assembly of the Clergy of France, the Archbishop of Paris imposed on Théodore de Berziau canonical censures. (Cf. *Procès verbaux de l'assemblée de 1645*, December 29, 1645; February 9, 1646; March 3, 1646; and April 14, 18, 19 and 20, 1646.)

671. - SYLVESTRE DE CRUSY DE MARCILLAC, BISHOP
OF MENDE, TO SAINT VINCENT

1643

Your Missionaries are leaving to go and render you an account of what we have done in the Cévennes in my diocese, where I made the general visitation and received from thirty or forty Huguenots the abjuration of their errors, leaving as many others ready to do the same in a few days. We gave the mission with solemnity and unbelievable success.¹ And since these benefits come from God and your good assistance, I can think of no one who could give you a more faithful report than these good priests.

672. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

Paris, June 18, 1643

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have nothing new to tell you, except what I told you in my last letter of a week ago, that the Duchesse d'Aiguillon has finally signed the contract for the gift of five thousand livres revenue to be taken from the income on the Rouen coaches. She will be very offended if you do not take the ordinands for the Ember season, since she has made that foundation with this intention and because you told us that it was well worth doing. Her opinion is that you should take that large house you mentioned, at a perpetual annuity. I will send you the approval when you have done this.

Letter 671. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. II, p. 31.

¹The mission was given after Easter (cf. no. 654).

Letter 672. - The original autograph letter is in the public library of Lille, Ms 986, f°750.

I have never been more worthy of compassion than I am now, nor have I ever had greater need of prayers than at present, in my new position.¹ I hope it will not be for long. Pray to God for me who am in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

The merchant from Lyons, agent for M. Marchand, has not yet asked me for money.

673. - ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC TO SAINT VINCENT

Mercurès, July 8, 1643

Monsieur,

You have seen from one of my letters that someone has written to you without my knowledge and without necessity, concerning the

¹His membership on the newly created Council of Conscience. According to Madame de Motteville, lady-in-waiting and friend of the Queen, Saint Vincent was to have been appointed head of the Council (cf. *Mémoires de Madame de Motteville*, [4 vols., Paris: Riaux, 1855], vol. I, p. 167). Collet (*op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 365, note) mentions another writer who doubts, and not without reason, the exactitude of this fact. The biographers of the Saint have told us with what disinterestedness he fulfilled his honorable functions, how much good resulted for the clergy of France, and what strength of character he needed to uphold the rights of justice and the interests of religion against the will of Mazarin, who often listened only to his political interests. Tired of the resistance he encountered from members of the Council, the powerful Minister finished by calling the Council together only at rare intervals and even excluding the Saint who, by the end of 1652, was no longer a member. The few letters still extant from the correspondence of Saint Vincent with the Cardinal prove to us that, during the ten years of his tenure of office, Saint Vincent never missed an occasion to prevent unworthy men from obtaining dioceses and benefices, and he worked for the preservation of the faith and discipline.

Letter 673. - Archives of the diocese of Cahors, Alain de Solminihac collection, file 22, no. 1.

*La Vaurette affair.*¹ I was very upset about this because I do not want to have recourse to you except for things we are unable to do without you. On the contrary, I would like to relieve you as much as I can. Monsieur Dufestel has appealed to the Intendant for his assistance which is what we need because, as far as a claim is concerned, Delom has none at all.

I beg you never to wish me in Paris; that to me is worse than purgatory. If you knew how necessary my presence is in my diocese, you would advise me never to leave it. I will dare say to you that it is, in a certain sense, useful for the service of the King. At least it has been up until now because of the unrest at Villefranche² in which, without me, this area would be involved.

Allow me to tell you, moreover, how extremely surprised I was to read in your letter that you had presented a petition to the Queen, written and signed in your own hand, for the first vacancy for a canonry for the joyous event of the King's coronation, in favor of my Officialis. Were you able to do this without violating or even forcing your natural inclination? Allow me to say something further to you: should you have done it? For the honor of God, use the affections of the Queen to better advantage for your own Congregation and your good friends and for important events for which the favors and protection of Her Majesty will be necessary. I greatly fear that consideration for me was the motive for what you did; if this were so, I would be very annoyed and I assure you that if my Officialis has used my name to get you to do this, it would be reason enough for his dismissal. That is why I beg you, in the name of God, to do nothing from now on, for anyone whomsoever, out of consideration for me, unless you have a letter from me specifically for that purpose.

I hope you will be bothered very little by me, except for the business of our good monks³ whom I recommend to you with all my heart. I would like to enlist the support of the Queen for them, if need be, and to request your assistance, not to ask for a canonry; this matter is worthy of you and of the affection of the Queen. I entreat you then to assist them and Father de Recules, their deputy, who is leaving for Paris to see to these matters.

¹The union of the seminary with the secular priory of Notre-Dame de Lugan or of La Vaurette in Bas-Quercy dated from October 6, 1638. There was opposition to this.

²Allusion to the peasant rebellion of 1637, caused by excessive taxation.

³Those of the monastery of Chancelade.

I am quite pleased that M. Authier will also be going there to bring about the union which it seems to me God desires. I assure you that, if I could leave my diocese, there would be no more powerful motive to draw me there than to promote it. But I am not worthy of this. I beg you to speak about it to the Archbishop of Arles⁴ so that, if there is any difficulty, his advice may put an end to it. I shall write my own feelings on it to Monsieur Authier.

I must tell you that last Saturday our poor Missionaries and seminarians all thought they were going to be immolated in a holocaust to Our Lord. At about eight o'clock in the evening, a fire started in the oven of a townsman whose door adjoins the seminary. It had begun in a pile of thirteen boatloads of wood and it caused such a huge conflagration throughout the night that it is a wonder the seminary was not reduced to ashes, as it would have been without all the help and diligence in bringing this fire under control. M. Dufestel was victorious because he fought it so diligently; but they got off with a good fright and the cost of a barrel or so of wine used to provide drink for those who were putting out the fire.

There are fourteen young students in our seminary and they are doing very well. I only regret that they do not have more spacious lodgings and are not close to a church where they could participate in the services, but we cannot find a solution to that right now, so we must be patient. I beg you not to answer when I write to you, unless there is a real need and you have the time to do it. I know well what time you have and feel sorry for you. Make the best use of it, then, for matters of great importance and believe me, Monsieur, to be your most humble and very affectionate servant.

ALAIN
Bishop of Cahors

⁴Jean Jaubert de Barrault.

674. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

July 10, 1643

Monsieur,

I have already told you that what you write to me about the residence of the General in Rome is beset with very serious difficulties, that you are seeing them there and that, like you, I see them, as well as those of the whole Company. There is this difference between the views of an individual and those of the General: the former sees and is aware only of the things committed to his charge and has a special grace only for that, and God's goodness gives graces to the General for the whole Company. Not that the individual may not see the same things as the General and perhaps even more, but his humility should give him a certain caution about this. The General, too, must have confidence that, since God gives grace proportionate to the vocation, He will grant him that of choosing what will be best for the Company, particularly in very weighty matters which for a long time he has pondered and for which he prays. Not that he may not be mistaken and the subject may not perhaps come upon something better, but the latter must not presume this nor hold out against what the General thinks before God is best. So then, let us say no more about this, Monsieur, I beg of you, but let us earnestly pray to God about it and greatly humble ourselves. God will not allow the matter to fail to be taken care of in due time, if it is agreeable to Him, as I am hoping.

675. - TO MOTHER MARIE-EUPHROSINE TURPIN,¹ IN AMIENS

Paris, July 23, 1643

My dear Mother,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter with Our Lord knows what consolation. This has been augmented by everything the good Bishop of Amiens² has reported to me and which had already been said to me about the blessing Our Lord is bestowing on your holy family, whom I greet with all possible respect and affection, asking His Divine Goodness to sanctify it more and more.

The Providence of God arranged for me to meet at Sainte-Marie in the faubourg, as I am doing presently at the one in the city—for you, at the first opportunity—our dear Sister Marie-Cécile³ and your dear extern Sister and ours,⁴ who says there is no Superioress in the world to compare with hers. *Mon Dieu*, my dear Mother, how that has added to the esteem and affection you know the good God has always given me

Letter 675. - Archives of the Mission, original autograph letter.

¹Marie-Euphrosine Turpin, born in Paris in 1605, left the world at the age of nineteen, despite her father's opposition, to live enclosed in the first monastery of the Visitation, where she was professed on February 22, 1625. She was one of the Sisters who went to the monastery in the faubourg Saint-Jacques at the time of its foundation. "Our worthy Mother," we read in the book of professions from the first monastery (Arch. Nat. LL 1718, p. 6), "conceived such great esteem for her during a journey she made to Paris, that she adopted her as a daughter of our holy source and chose her to work under her direction on the completion of the custom book, consulting her about the difficulties found in it." In 1637 Sister Marie-Euphrosine was Assistant and Directress at the Visitation Monastery in Angers. She did not leave that monastery until 1640 when she went to found that of Amiens, of which she became the first Superior. She died there on December 20, 1651, at the age of forty-six. (Cf. "Abrégé de la vie et des vertus de la très honorée Mère Marie-Euphrosine Turpin" in *Année Sainte*, vol. XII, pp. 395-414.)

²François Lefèvre de Caumartin (1618-1652).

³Marie-Cécile Baillon.

⁴Perhaps Marie-Catherine Bassecole who, at the time of the establishment of the monastery in Amiens, was preparing to be the extern Sister.

for you! And because this good girl is on the point of departure and I cannot tell you more, I shall end by recommending you to pray for the infinite number of abominations in my life, so that it may please His mercy to have pity on me whom He has made, by His grace and in His love and that of your holy Community, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

I cannot refrain from telling you what your extern Sister just replied to me. I asked her, "Sister, if I write to our Mother that you have spoken ill of her to me, will you say that I have lied?" "Yes," she replied.

Addressed: My dear Mother Superior of the Visitation Sainte-Marie of Amiens,⁵ in Amiens

**676. - TO CHARLES DE MONTCHAL, ARCHBISHOP
OF TOULOUSE¹**

Saint-Lazare, Monday noon [Between 1643 and 1647]²

Your Excellency,

The person who will present this letter to you has the honor

⁵The monastery was founded in September 1640. Anne-Marie Alméras, sister of René Alméras, was one of the founding Sisters. In 1652 she was placed at the head of the little Community and was its Superior four times. She died there on December 7, 1677.

Letter 676. - The original autograph letter belongs to the Daughters of Charity, 33 rue Caulaincourt, Paris.

¹The name of the recipient was given by Gossin (*op. cit.*, p. 480); he had access to the original letter before the page on which the addressee was written was lost.

²Mention of the problem at the monastery in Louviers necessitates the possible dates within which this letter was written.

of being in the Queen's service, and the person accompanying him will tell you something particular concerning the Louviers affair,³ which is important for you to know. I beg you most humbly, Your Excellency, to listen to him on this matter and to allow me always to be what Our Lord has granted me the grace to be, Your Excellency, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

677. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

Paris, August 24, 1643

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

You are complaining about us because you have not received any of our letters in two consecutive mails. But we

³Saint Vincent was probably talking about the nuns in the monastery of Saint-Louis in Louviers (Eure, diocese of Evreux) who had caused the same disorders as those in Loudun (cf. vol. I, no. 409). The business dragged on from 1643 to 1647. After the canonical enquiry carried out by the diocesan authority (March 1643), there followed the enquiry by the commissioners of the Court, entrusted to Charles de Montchal, assisted by Jacques Charton, Penitentiary of Paris, Samuel Martineau, Doctor of theology, M. de Morangis, Councillor of the King, and some medical doctors from Rouen (August-September 1643). Following the report of the investigators, which was damning for the accused, the matter was brought before the Parlement of Rouen. The prime suspect, Madeleine Bavent, the extern Sister, made horrible revelations on infamous actions, sacrileges, and acts of magic and witchcraft in which many persons were involved, among them three priests: David, a former Director of the nuns; Mathurin Picard, Pastor of Mesnil-Jourdain; and Boullé, his assistant. On August 21, 1647, Boullé was condemned to be burned alive as a sorcerer and author of evil spells. David and Picard were already dead; Picard's body was exhumed and burned. The execution of Boullé put an end to the disorders. (Cf. Paul Dibon, *Essai historique sur Louviers* [Rouen: Périaux, 1836], pp. 126-144; also Z. Piérart, *Affaire curieuse des possédées de Louviers* [Paris: Dentu, 1858].)

Letter 677. - Original autograph letter from the collection of M. Henri de Rothschild.

did not fail to write to you by each of them. One time, the letter did not reach M. Parisot's in time; he had already sent his packet to the post.

We had the bill of exchange for three thousand livres paid on the appointed day. While awaiting your decision on the eight thousand écus you are requesting, we shall try to sell the Soissons coaches which give you twenty-five hundred livres but which will decrease. The tax farmer is asking us for a reduction because of the lawsuit brought against him by the public carriers. Since then, the death of the Cardinal¹ has caused the lawsuit to be referred by the Council to the Parlement. In this case, all you will have left is the five thousand livres from the Rouen coaches.

My old friend, M. de Montheron, who spoke to you about the Babylon Mission, is writing to the Bishop,² who discussed it with Bishop Ingoli. The latter assured him that the Congregation de *Propaganda Fide* will approve our service in these far-off countries and the resignation of his diocese in favor of a member of the Company, which will be able to designate three of its members and present them to His Holiness. He will choose one to succeed the deceased, as the Franciscans do in one of the towns in Hungary bordering on Turkey. He will write about this to the Nuncio, now Cardinal Grimaldi, for two reasons: so that His Eminence might speak to the Queen about giving the Bishop of Babylon some other diocese or abbey here; and to make the offer of this proposal to me.³ Therefore, having thought that there was perhaps an indica-

¹Cardinal Richelieu.

²Jean Duval, Bishop of Babylon, a Discalced Carmelite, in religion called Bernard de Sainte-Thérèse.

³In 1638, a charitable widow named Madame Ricouard, née du Gué de Bagnols, left to the mission of Persia the sum of sixty-six thousand livres and a house on rue du Bac, on condition that the See of Babylon would be reestablished, to be occupied at first by a Discalced Carmelite, and then by French bishops. She herself designated Jean Duval, a popular preacher. The new Bishop of Babylon was also Vicar Apostolic of Ispahan

tion that Our Lord desired something of us in this matter, I replied to a good nun who spoke to me on behalf of the above-mentioned Bishop that we would reflect on it, while waiting for His Divine Goodness to manifest His Will more clearly on the subject by the manner in which the question will be proposed to you by the said Congregation, and the manner in which the proposal will be received here, *positis aliis circumstantiis ponendis*.⁴

There are many pros and cons in the affair. Someone, so I have been told, has written recently that religious and missionaries who do not go to the assistance of infidel souls who are perishing are on the road to damnation. A proof to the contrary is: there is a shortage of manpower in our Company; (2) there are strong reasons to doubt that Our Lord should want bishops taken from among the Missionaries, any more than from the Jesuits; (3) there is nothing to be done at present in Babylon where it is unlawful to speak against the religion of Mohammed, under pain of death. If there is any

and Visitor of Ctesiphon. On July 7, 1640 he arrived in Ispahan and it is said that he made many outstanding conversions. Following some vexations and bad business deals, he returned to France to report the state of his mission to Richelieu but, when he arrived, he found that Richelieu had died. The Bishop of Babylon added a few buildings to his house on rue du Bac, with the idea of establishing a seminary that would provide priests for the mission of Persia. The undertaking was beyond his strength. He failed completely, and on March 16, 1663 he sold his house to the Society of the Foreign Missions (*Société des Missions-Etrangères*) which still owns it. He continued to live there until May 10, 1669, the date of his death. Rue de la Petite-Grenelle or rue de la Fresnaye, which intersects rue du Bac where his property stood, was changed to rue Babylone in memory of this Prelate. Jean Duval remained only two or three years in Persia. Probably, when he returned to France in 1643, it was with the intention, or perhaps even the order, of never returning. He was one of those who cannot resist the temptation of becoming involved in commerce and finances, even though serious losses should have warned them that they have no business acumen. A Coadjutor was sought, not as his Assistant but as his replacement. The pecuniary situation of the mission of Persia explains why many were reluctant to accept the See. The archives of the Society of the Foreign Missions show that the remarks dedicated to Jean Duval seem more a panegyric than an historical note. (Cf. *Gallia Christiana*, vol. VII, col. 1034.)

⁴All other necessary circumstances being verified.

good to be accomplished, it is in the city where the King of Persia resides,⁵ three hundred leagues away. There are two or three kinds of religious there: Carmelites, Capuchins and Dominicans. There are no Catholics, except for a few poor boys whom they have tried to raise in our holy religion. There are close to sixty thousand Greek Christians, Armenians, who have been transported as slaves to a town the King has had built and settled by them close to his own royal city.

So that is the state of affairs. I thought I should tell you this, so that you would recommend the matter to God and tell me your thoughts on it.

I wrote you that we have put off until next year discussing the union with M. Authier,⁶ since he wishes us to admit his printed Constitutions and Statutes among our own, with the intention of adjusting the difficulties encountered in this. It is likely that it will be perhaps the same with him as with Father Romillion⁷ who separated from Blessed César de Bus⁸ because of the vows,⁹ and established a number of houses. Since the

⁵Ispahan.

⁶This refers to the proposed union of Authier de Sisgau's Company of the Blessed Sacrament with the Congregation of the Mission.

⁷Jean-Baptiste Romillion, born in 1553 in Isle (Vaucluse) of Huguenot parents, was converted in 1579, became a priest in 1588 and died on July 14, 1622. In 1592 César de Bus and he founded in Isle the Institute of the Priests of Christian Doctrine for the instruction of the poor, the ignorant and the people of the rural areas. Clement VIII approved it in 1597. (Cf. Abbé Claude Bourguignon, *La vie de P. Romillion, prestre de l'Oratoire de Jésus et fondateur de la Congrégation des Ursulines en France* [Marseille: B. Garcin, 1649].)

⁸César de Bus, born in Cavaillon (Vaucluse) on February 3, 1544. After having lost and reacquired his faith, he became a priest. He became blind at the age of 49 and died on April 15, 1607. (Cf. Jacques de Beauvais, *La vie du B. Père César de Bus* [Paris: S. Heure, 1645].)

⁹César de Bus wanted to unite his priests more closely by a vow. All would not accept this, among them Father Romillion. This resulted in two parties and a division. César de Bus kept the house of Saint-Jean in Avignon; the house in Aix was left to Father Romillion's faction. The Priests of Christian Doctrine had difficulty recovering from this trial. In 1610 they had only three institutions left. Their Community joined the Somaschi of Italy in 1616, then separated from them in 1646 to return to simple vows and the secular state. At the time of the French Revolution they had fifteen houses and twenty-six colleges in three Provinces, with their Motherhouse in Paris.

Oratory had been founded, he went to see M. de Bérulle¹⁰ to effect a union. But he was never able to do so until several years later when his Congregation, which considered this union suitable, pressured him very strongly and, in the end, forced him against his will to bring about the union.¹¹ Apparently, something similar is taking place in regard to his own men, from what people tell me. But please do not mention this to anyone at all, except to M. Dehorgny, if he is still in Rome.

That is all I can tell you for now, except that after

¹⁰Pierre de Bérulle was born in the château de Cérilly (Yonne) on February 4, 1575. He was ordained a priest in 1599 and shortly afterwards was appointed chaplain to the King, Henri IV. His expertise in controversy enabled him to bring several important persons back to the Church, among others the Comte de Laval, the Baron de Salignac, and a judge of the Parlement of Paris. He established the Carmelites in France in 1603 with the support of Michel de Marillac, Keeper of the Seals, and of Madame Acarie, and in 1611 he founded the Congregation of the Oratory of which he was the first Superior. He was entrusted by King Louis XIII with the honorable mission of conducting to England Henriette of France, daughter of Henri IV, who was to marry (May 11, 1625) the Prince of Wales, the future Charles I. He greatly influenced the clergy and gathered around himself the most virtuous and eminent priests of Paris. As soon as Saint Vincent arrived in town, he sought the assistance and advice of Bérulle. Abelly alleged that the Saint lived "about two years" under his roof, but we think the two years should be reduced to four or five months at the most. The intervention of Pierre de Bérulle is evident in Vincent's acceptance of the parish of Clichy, in his entrance as tutor into the de Gondi family, in his retreat to Châtillon-les-Dombes, and in his return to the General of the Galleys. We would like to be able to state that their relationship always remained the same. However, Pierre de Bérulle did not approve of the nascent Congregation of the Mission; he even tried to prevent its approbation in Rome, as one of his letters to Pierre Bertin indicated. In 1628, referring to the new Congregation, he wrote: "The plans that you tell me belong to those who are soliciting the affair of the missions by divers and, in my opinion, devious ways, should make it suspect and oblige us to put aside the reserve and simplicity with which I consider the affairs of God should be conducted." (Cf. Archives of the Mission, according to the Arch. Nat. M 216, second packet, folio of Father Bertin, p. 26, in which this excerpt is no longer found.) At that time, Pierre de Bérulle had been a Cardinal for a year. He died on October 2, 1629. His life was written by Father Cloyseault. Father Ingold published this manuscript in 1880.

¹¹On the advice of Cardinal Tarugy, Archbishop of Avignon, Father Romillion adopted the Rules of the Oratory of Rome after he separated from César de Bus. He had only twelve priests then. They soon multiplied to the point of filling nine establishments. Father de Bérulle requested him to merge with the Congregation of the Oratory in France. He accepted under pressure from his own men, and the contract of union was signed in Tours on September 21, 1619.

prostrating myself in spirit at the feet of your Community and your own, and recommending myself to the prayers of everyone in this situation, I am, for all, in the love of Our Lord and by His pure mercy and your charitable support, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Rome, in Rome

678. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

Paris, September 11, 1643

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am replying to two of your letters, one to me, dated August 4; the other to M. Lambert of the tenth of the same month.

We have paid the bill of exchange for three thousand livres that you have drawn on us.

I have written you¹ and I repeat once again that, for some very important reasons, we must defer the decision and execution of the General's place of residence. I beg you, Monsieur, let the matter rest.

What causes me to be torn at present is that the prelates are jealous of their authority and of dependence on them. They will say and do the same thing here which you fear there. The next congregation will settle that. In the meantime, we will pray to God, and if God's justice is pleased to suffer my

Letter 678. - Archives of the Mission, original autograph letter.

¹Cf. no. 674.

presence on earth until then, I will give my thoughts on the matter, if He is pleased to give me the time. I will have them put in writing. Meanwhile, let us leave it to the guidance of the wise Providence of God. I have a special devotion to following it, and experience has shown me that it has accomplished everything in the Company, and that our acts of foresightedness hinder it. It is in this spirit that I have never done nor said anything to call attention to us, so it seems to me, and I will not be in any hurry to get from the Archbishop of Rheims² the letter to Bishop Ingoli regarding the blessing Our Lord has given to the mission of Sedan.³

I spoke with M. de Brienne about the Saint-Yves affair. He told me he will do what he can and that I should find out from you how to set about working on this business. This will not prevent you from thinking about that little parish church, if you live nearby; otherwise, I see no great advantage in it. Multiplicity of houses is troublesome and causes murmuring. If it is necessary, we will have to go ahead and let people talk.

I spoke with Monsieur de Saint-Aignan about resigning in favor of some individual member of the Company. He has given me no reply on that.

The Richelieu business is at a standstill. We had to give up a great deal because of the heavy debts of this inheritance and the attitude of those with whom we had to deal.

I shall make sure that what you write me about the seminary of Agen⁴ gets done. There is a certain spirit of division in that house, which has always troubled it and is doing so at present more than ever. Yesterday, I wrote to M. Souffliers to go and replace M. Dufestel in Cahors, and to M. Dufestel to go and replace him. All the other houses have not given us so much trouble.

²Léonor d'Estampes de Valençay.

³Mission founded by King Louis XIII (cf. no. 660, n. 10).

⁴This seminary had not yet been confided to the Congregation of the Mission.

I entreat you, Monsieur, to pray to God for it and for this poor miserable sinner who abuses so many of His mercies and who is, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

679. - TO SISTER HELENE-ANGELIQUE LHUILLIER

Saint-Lazare, Saturday morning [Between 1641 and 1644]¹

My very dear Sister,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The service I tried to render to our dear Sisters of Saint-Denis² does not merit the thanks you offer me for it, unless your good angel told you that, being in Pontoise with the Bishop of Beauvais³ who was going to Saint-Germain⁴ and who insisted I go there, I had no better reason for excusing myself than the promise I had given for this visit. So, it is I who should be thanking God, as I do with all my heart, for the grace He bestowed on me of seeing the union of hearts, the simplicity, the humility, the obedience and the exactitude in the observance of the Rules, in a state of remarkable perfection. O my dear Sister, what great reason to praise God on seeing that!

Letter 679. - The original autograph letter was in the possession of Mademoiselle d'Alaincourt in Cambrai. Copy in the Archives of the Mission, Paris.

¹The letter was written after the foundation of the monastery of Saint-Denis (June 29, 1639), before the death of the Bishop of Beauvais, Augustin Potier (June 20, 1650), and during the time when Sister Hélène-Angélique Lhuillier was a simple Sister in the first monastery of Paris (1641-1644).

²The Sisters of the Visitation.

³Augustin Potier, a member of the Council of Conscience.

⁴Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

I began the visitation there on Thursday at two o'clock and finished it last evening at seven. At the first opportunity, which will be as soon as I can, I will tell you in person what my pen cannot express to you regarding the reason you have for blessing God for these amiable spouses you have engendered and trained for Him.

Meanwhile, I thank Him that your sweating attacks have passed. I greet our dear Mother⁵ and, if it is proper, our poor patient as well. I am, in the love of Our Lord, my dear Sister, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Dear Sister Hélène-Angélique Lhuillier, at Sainte-Marie in the city

680. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

Paris, October 9, 1643

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

God is pleased that I should have reason most humbly to ask your pardon for not having written you by the last two mails, out of sheer forgetfulness. Your charity will please pardon me for this.

Your latest letters mention the necessity of taking that mansion at a rent of six hundred écus. Now, having weighed all these things you tell me, have no scruples about taking it, if you have not already done so; all the more, because the

⁵Louise-Eugénie de Fontaines.

charity of your worthy foundress¹ has led us to hope that she will also provide these funds. She has not yet done so. I do hope she will, but it will be out of the kind of funds like the rest she gave you, on which the King has already issued an edict laying claim to a quarter and a half of the value of the coach routes for this year and the same amount for next year. Since, at this time, they are charging on everything, there is not a Sovereign Court officer who is not likewise being charged. I am doing all I can to get ourselves exempted from this. I do not know if our good God will grant us this favor.

The person who spoke to us several times about the Babylon affair² mentioned it again yesterday. I asked him if Monseigneur had not dealt with the person about whom I sent you word, M. A[uthier], who was so insistent about getting it. He assured me that he had not, and that, if we could have M. de Saint-Aignan's priory, at twenty-five hundred livres, given him, he would negotiate. In addition, he told me that that good Gentleman was not asking for the diocese but would be pleased to receive them into his association to serve him in all his functions and plans in those far away lands. That has given me reason to think that perhaps the union could be facilitated by having him given the diocese, I mean M. Aut[hier], because he is the greatest obstacle being encountered in this whole business. His men strongly desire it and have said as much to M. du Coudray. I have learned that the union of the Christian Doctrine of Provence with the Oratory was always opposed by Father Romillion, their founder, and that it was his Company which pressured him, so that he felt forced to do it. One of the difficulties presented to us in this affair by one of his important members is what position he will have after the union. He asked to be our coadjutor *cum futura succes-*

¹The Duchesse d'Aiguillon.

²The question of the Coadjutor or of the successor of Jean Duval, Bishop of Babylon.

sione;³ but I told him quite plainly that this could not be. Now, it seems that Providence might be telling us something in this. We have two things to do in this matter, one here, the other where you are. Here, we have to see if we can assure the affair for the Company by means of M. de Saint-Aignan's priory, and there, you will see Bishop Ingoli and negotiate with him with your usual prudence, concerning the union of the Company and this position for M. A[uthier].

Monsieur du Coudray has recovered his health by returning home and is ready to go back to Provence, because of the urgent request for him from Marseilles.⁴ He will get in touch with the said Gentlemen there. I told you we have postponed the decision until next year. This opportunity might perhaps speed up and facilitate the business, which requires great precaution and discretion where you are. We have no difficulty, by the grace of God, with the uniformity of functions; on the contrary. *Utinam omnes prophetent!*⁵ But all our friends tell us that the title is detrimental to us and with time will cause a thousand unfortunate incidents, and all are of the opinion that either they or we must make a change. Let them take the name *Priests of the Clergy*;⁶ there is no objection to that. They take no notice of this and think we should oppose their Bulls in Rome and from here verify the letters patent they can obtain, but that is going to extremes. They say that the Pope refuses them his approbation and is sending them back here for the union. If you have ever had a delicate affair to handle, it is this one. It is extremely important that you

³With right of succession.

⁴The saint had not carried out the project of sending him to Barbary. After several months of fruitful work on the galleys of Marseilles, François du Coudray had returned to Paris where on July 25 he signed the contract for the foundation of the house in Marseilles.

⁵Would that all might prophesy. Nm. 11:29. "But Moses answered him, 'Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the people of the Lord were prophets! Would that the Lord might bestow his spirit on them all!'" (NAB)

⁶They were calling themselves *Missionaries of the Clergy*.

keep everything highly confidential and inform me exactly about everything. The heart of this matter, I repeat, is secrecy in regard to anyone whomsoever.

I gave your report on Saint-Yves to M. de Brienne; he referred me to M. de Saint-Chamond⁷ who is going there as ambassador and will work on it while he is there. This affair will raise an annoying storm for us with the O[ratorian] Fathers. My thinking is to put it off.

We received the authorization for the Champvant benefice⁸ and have sent it on so that possession may be taken of the place, while awaiting the union.

I am writing to M. Le Bret about the difficulty involved in the matter he mentioned to me.⁹ Assure him of my service.

Our La Rose situation is going badly; we have to be patient. M. Lambert is on his way to make the visitation there. I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Please offer my apologies to Messieurs Brunet and Blatiron for being so busy that I cannot answer their letters. I embrace them both, as well as all the rest of the Company, to whose prayers I recommend myself, prostrate in spirit at their feet and yours.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Rome, in Rome

⁷Melchior Mitte de Miolans, Marquis de Saint-Chamond, Seigneur de Chevières. He was sent to Rome as Extraordinary Ambassador. He died in Paris on September 10, 1649.

⁸The Priory of Saint-Nicolas de Champvant, in the diocese of Poitiers, remained united to the Congregation of the Mission until the time of the French Revolution. Etienne Blatiron was the first titular. Today, Champvant is part of the commune of Chaveignes (Indre-et-Loire).

⁹The Bishop of Toul had just died and there was some thought of giving the vacant

681. - GUILLAUME GALLAIS, SUPERIOR IN SEDAN,¹
TO SAINT VINCENT

Sedan, 1643

I shall tell you, Monsieur, that since the time God has been pleased to form the Little Company of the Mission, it has not worked so usefully nor necessarily as it is doing here.² The heretics continue to be edified and to come to the sermons with which they are quite well satisfied. As for the Catholics, we have to work with them as we would with completely new people because, for the four or five years since there has been liberty to preach in this town, people have spoken almost exclusively of controversies and very little of the practices and exercises of religion and piety. Several men have admitted openly that they had not thought it necessary to confess all their sins. The same abuses were being committed with regard to Holy Communion, etc., so that we had to begin to instruct them in the fundamental principles of religion. It is true that there has been a great deal of consolation in this, all the more since they would listen with pleasure to what was being said to them and put it into practice faithfully. They could not admire sufficiently the grace God has granted them, nor how to render themselves grateful for it to the extent they desire.

diocese to Jacques Le Bret.

Letter 681. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. II, p. 38.

¹Guillaume Gallais, born in Plouguenast (Côtes-du-Nord), was received into the Congregation of the Mission on April 7, 1639, at the age of 24. Ordained a priest in 1641, he was admitted to vows in 1645. He was Superior in Sedan (1643-1644), Crécý (1644-1645) and Le Mans (1645-1647). He was a very talented Missionary.

²On May 7, 1643, four Priests of the Mission, Jacques Le Sage, Evrard Gobert, Jean Alain and François Dephillmain came, with their Superior, Guillaume Gallais, to Sedan. September 8, Guillaume Gallais took possession of the parish. When he gave it over to the Congregation of the Mission, René-Louis de Fiquelmont, the Abbé de Mouzon, who was the collator for the parish [the one who admitted or instituted a cleric to a benefice], laid down two conditions: (1) the Abbés de Mouzon would remain the primal pastors of Sedan and would retain the right of chanting High Mass in the church twice a year, on days of their choice and with all the ceremony due to the Pastor; (2) should the Priests of the Mission withdraw, the Abbés de Mouzon would resume their rights as collators. The contract of establishment provided for seven priests and two Brothers. Four priests were to work in the dominions of Sedan, Raucourt and Saint-Manges to give missions; the other three were entrusted with the care of the parish of Sedan.

682. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

Paris, November 6, 1643

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have received and lost your last letter which came three days ago and which gives me good reason to thank God for the blessing He has bestowed on your solitude,¹ and to ask Him to grant all of you the grace of being most faithful to the resolutions you have taken.

I do not recall what you mentioned in your letter, except that you do not feel that the parish that was offered you is for you. I have told you several times that you should take the house at two thousand livres.

Yesterday we signed the foundation for a like sum which the Duchesse d'Aiguillon is giving. Today there is to be a decision as to whether they will take this and the rest of these foundations from us, as a result of the lawsuit the Duc de Bellegarde² is bringing, to have the King return to him the coaches of France which he insists belong to him. I wrote to the Queen about this yesterday. We shall see.

Monsieur de Saint-Chamond, who is going to Rome as ambassador, has done us the honor of coming to see us and to offer us his benevolent protection. Please be very careful to see him on his arrival in Rome, which will not be very soon.

Cardinal Grimaldi will soon be returning to Rome. It will be well to do likewise with him.

Letter 682. - Archives of the Mission, original autograph letter.

¹"Solitude" means retreat, in this context.

²Roger de Saint-Lary, Duc de Bellegarde, former favorite of King Henri III and former overseer of the House of Gaston, Duc d'Orléans. Compromised in the rebellion of his master, he followed him into exile and during 1634 returned to France with him. In 1639, he resigned his office of Grand Equerry or Master of the Horse in favor of Cinq-Mars and died seven years later.

As for the General's place of residence, there is much to be said about the place you wrote about as being suitable for it. We shall see.

I hope to be given leave to go see you soon, if God is pleased to sustain me on this earth. Then we shall discuss the matter thoroughly.

Do not give any more attention to the Saint-Yves union. It is feared that rivalry might arise between the holy Congregation of the Oratory and our own wretched one.

I cannot tell you anything about the diocese of Babylon. The nobleman who used to speak frequently to me about it is not breathing a word about it now.

Do not give up hope about the petition or about the union of the priory of Dyé³ which good M. de Saint-Aignan is offering us. All things have their definite opportune time, and not before or after it. The Jesuits, despite whatever difficulty they are encountering with unions there, do not stop trying to get the resignations here.

Do you think you will have much trouble getting the approbation for our Rules there, if we send them to you?

I do not know the origin of the impulse I have to advise you to be determined, as I am trying to do, not to become involved in any intrigue nor get caught up in external temporal affairs. Oh! what an example Our Lord has left us for both! I am relinquishing any function other than that which pertains to the Company and to religious and ecclesiastical affairs. Help me, Monsieur, with your prayers to this end and to obtain from God that He will not permit me to do anything except with Him in view and according to His holy Will. *O Dieu, Monsieur!* how willingly I ask each member of your little Company to visit the seven churches once, that God in His mercy may be pleased to pardon the abominations of my past

³A place in the district of Tonnerre (Yonne).

and present life and to grant me the grace I have requested you to ask Him for me. I am, Monsieur, in the love of Our Lord, prostrate at your feet and at those of all your Little Company, whom I greet, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Rome, in Rome

682a. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

Paris, November 13, 1643

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I would be more worried about your illness if I were not being informed at the same time that you are feeling better. I am praying to Our Lord and will have others pray that He will restore you to perfect health. I beg you, Monsieur, to take better care of it when His Goodness does restore it to you and, therefore, I beg you to moderate the austerity of your life as regards eating and sleeping, which you have increased since your retreat. With this end in view, follow the advice of M. Blatiron. *Rationabile enim debet esse obsequium vestrum;*¹ excess in the practice of virtue is no less imperfect than the lack of it.

Letter 682a. - Archives of the Mission, Curia Generalitia, Rome, original autograph letter. This letter had been put up for sale in 1925 or 1926 by M. Lemasle, a dealer in manuscripts. It was published in the *Annales C.M.* (1926), pp. 231-232 and reprinted in *Mission et Charité*, 19-20, pp. 47-48. This edition used the latter text.

¹*Truly reasonable must be your compliance.*

I think you have already concluded negotiations on the house at two thousand livres. Your business about the coaches they were trying to take from you has ended to your advantage in the King's Council; and the foundation of two thousand livres has been made, by the grace of God. Nothing more remains but for you to prepare the ordinands and the priests' seminary.

The Oratorian Fathers are bringing a lawsuit here in order to take over Saint-Louis² entirely and, for this purpose, they have been directed by the Council to discuss it with the Ambassador in Rome.³ I beg you not to mention this to anyone whomsoever.

M.de Brienne gave me the same reply with regard to Saint-Yves.

M. de Saint-Chamond is leaving in two days for the embassy in Rome. He did me the honor of coming to see me and of leading me to hope for his protection.

Cardinal Grimaldi will be leaving within the next month. He is a Prelate of great virtue, leadership and firmness. I received his blessing yesterday. He, too, led me to hope for his protection for you, although I may unwittingly have given him a little shock regarding the Vicar General of Pignerol,⁴ because of a certain difficulty I raised about something he was requesting. But that is nothing. Yesterday, he spoke to me with great interest about our happiness in devoting ourselves to the assistance of the poor country people.

That is all that the pressure of business allows me to tell you for now, except that I embrace your Little Company,

²The parish of Saint-Yves was attached to the parish of Saint-Louis-des-Français in Rome which the Oratorians staffed.

³Marquis de Saint-Chamond, Melchior Mitte de Miolans.

⁴Pignerol, a town in Piedmont; at that time it was a dependency of France.

prostrate on my knees at its feet and yours, and I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Rome, in Rome

683. - A BISHOP TO SAINT VINCENT

Assisted by his Vicars General, he is working as hard as he can for the good of his diocese; *"but with little success because of the large and unaccountable number of ignorant and corrupt priests who make up my clergy and who are unable, either through word or example, to mend their ways. I am horrified when I think that in my diocese there are nearly seven thousand drunken or lewd priests who ascend the altar every day and who have no vocation."*

**684. - ANNE DE MURVIEL, BISHOP OF MONTAUBAN,
TO SAINT VINCENT**

[Between 1635 and 1652]¹

The Priests of the Mission are greatly needed in this diocese, because in the places where they have previously worked, no sorcerer or sorceress has been found. So great is the benefit reaped everywhere from catechism classes and general confessions, putting the people in such a good state, that the devils cannot delude them with witchcraft, as they do those who wallow in ignorance and sin.

Letter 683. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. II, sect. I, p. 214.

Letter 684. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. II, p. 49.

¹Abelly states that this letter from Anne de Murviel, who died in 1652, was written a few years after 1632.

685. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[November 19, 1643]¹

Monsieur,

I have led Mademoiselle Viole² to hope that she might be able to speak with you here at this house tomorrow, at a time convenient for you. So, she will come in the morning and will not leave until evening.

Enclosed is a letter Monsieur Compaing gave me to have you look at; he told me that you are well acquainted with this business.

I entreat our good God to give you renewed strength and health for His glory. I am, Monsieur, your most humble and very grateful daughter and servant.

L. DE M

From the Foundling Hospital, Thursday, November 19

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

686. - JEAN-JACQUES OLIER TO SAINT VINCENT

He who has Jesus has everything!

Monsieur,

I dare to take the liberty of entreating you, for the glory of Jesus Christ and the service of His members, if it is convenient for you,

Letter 685. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Date added on the back of the original.

²Mademoiselle Viole, born Madeleine Deffita, widow of Jacques Viole, Counselor in the Châtelet of Paris. Her name appears quite frequently in the correspondence of Saint Vincent, who greatly appreciated her charity, intelligence and activity, especially in her capacity as treasurer for the Ladies of Charity at the Hôtel-Dieu. She died in Paris on April 4, 1678.

Letter 686. - Archives of the seminary of Saint-Sulpice, original autograph letter.

kindly to take the trouble to come and encourage our Ladies of Charity. They are holding an extraordinary meeting today to work out the means of going themselves to serve the poor and to carry out the regulations of the company to which they have not subjected themselves up to the present. I beg you, in the name of Our Lord and of His Mother, not to refuse me this favor, in whose love I am, Monsieur, your most humble and very obedient servant.

OLIER

Wednesday evening, for Thursday at 11 o'clock

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior of the Mission, at Saint-Lazare

**687. - JACQUES DU PERRON, BISHOP OF ANGOULEME,
TO SAINT VINCENT**

December 1643

It would be desirable for the Priests of the Mission to have an establishment in the diocese of Angoulême. The retreats for the ordinands, which began this month, are producing so many fruits that the whole town of Angoulême is praising God for this and desires the continuation of this work.

Letter 687. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. II, sect. V, p. 234. This is Abelly's summary of the Bishop's letter to Saint Vincent. Abelly does not quote it.

688. - TO A MAGISTRATE OF TOUL

Paris, December 13, 1643

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Having been informed by one of the priests of our little Congregation of the Mission in Toul¹ that you are being urged to make trouble for us in our little establishment of Holy Spirit house² by some persons whose benevolence it has not pleased God we should merit, and that your goodness has been unwilling to take action against us without warning me, I make bold to write you this letter to thank you most humbly and to entreat you most humbly as well, Monsieur, to protect us in our establishment. And here are the reasons I put before you for this purpose, Monsieur:

(1) We are not intruders in that house but were called there by the late Bishop, a person of outstanding piety,³ and it was three years before we would even agree to it.

(2) Because he did this at the insistence of the late Commander of that house before he died,⁴ seeing that he was leaving only two monks there and neither had the requisite qualities to maintain or rather to restore discipline there, and very few monks of that Order were left either in France or in that area.

(3) This good Prelate, as a result of that good man's request to him to provide persons who could supply for the shortage of monks, presented the request to the King, explaining to His Majesty what this good Commander had represented to him,

Letter 688. - Archives of the Mission, original autograph draft.

¹Jean Bécu, Superior of the house in Toul.

²A house previously owned by the Order of the Knights of Malta and ceded to the Bishop of Toul with the request that it be given over to the use of the Congregation of the Mission.

³Charles-Christien de Gournay died on September 14, 1637.

⁴Maître Dominique Thouvignon.

and entreating him to consent to his introducing a seminary of priests into that house, who would labor at the instruction of poor country people and the ordinands of his diocese. His Majesty granted him this, after seeking the advice of his Intendant of Justice for Lorraine⁵ who gave it to him after hearing the magistrates and aldermen of the town of Toul. The Council directed that the King should be asked to write to His Holiness for the union of that house to the said seminary of priests.

(4) As a result of that Council decree, a lawsuit was brought in Rome where they are still working for the aforementioned union. This union is being opposed by the Commander of the Holy Spirit Order in Rome,⁶ who claims to have jurisdiction over this house.

(5) However, the Council agreed to having a member of the Mission⁷ appointed for the said Commandery, both by the King and by said Commander in Rome.

(6) The person appointed to the said Commandery made an arrangement with the two remaining monks for their pensions. By this means, they consented to the union of the Commandery with the Congregation of the Mission, and this transaction has been registered with the Parlement of Metz.

(7) In addition to the authorization of those monks, we also have that of a person who has been appointed by the one who calls himself General of the Holy Spirit Order in France.⁸

That, Monsieur, is the state of this affair and in virtue of which we are present in Holy Spirit house in Toul, which you will have been able to learn from others.

This is the reply to the objections raised against us.

It is being said that the Bishop did not have the power to

⁵Vignier, Baron de Ricey.

⁶The Grand Master of the Holy Spirit Order was at that time Etienne Vaius, titular Bishop of Cyrene.

⁷Jean Dehorgny.

⁸Olivier de la Trau, Sieur de la Terrade.

admit us, because of the rule: *Regularia regularibus et saecularia saecularibus*.⁹ We reply that the canons allow bishops to place secular priests where no monks of an Order are to be found.

You have been told, Monsieur, that the property of Holy Spirit belongs to the poor and was founded for the assistance of the poor. . . .¹⁰

689. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

Madame Traversay and Madame Viole have just left here and greet you most humbly. The latter told me to let you know that her brother¹ has warned her that the Advocate General² had told him, on the information of someone who really knows, that a person who has been in the service wanted to ask the Queen for the endowment of the bids of the grain carriers. If he arrives before those who are supposed to ask for it, the children will lose it. This good lady was very anxious for you to be informed of this.

Madame de Liancourt had also asked me, Monsieur, to talk to you about the lodging of the lay monks in each abbey,³ which she would like to propose to the Queen for the disabled. If you feel that she should not do this, please let her know. Would you also please consider before God how I can be faithful to my obligations, being conscious of no other guidance except my own will, which I seem to

⁹Religious establishments for religious clergy, diocesan establishments for the secular clergy.

¹⁰The text stops at this point.

Letter 689. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹M. Deffita, a lawyer in the Parlement of Paris.

²Omer Talon, born in Saint-Quentin, became Advocate General in the Parlement on November 15, 1631 and died December 29, 1652, at fifty-seven years of age. His *Mémoires* were published in 1732. His biography has been written by Abbé Hubert Maillfait (*Un magistrat de l'ancien régime: Omer Talon, sa vie et ses oeuvres* [Paris: Société française, 1902]).

³The name given to the disabled soldiers whom the kings formerly used to place in the abbeys where they were employed in various ways.

be doing in all things? This is a great obstacle to me in the accomplishment of God's Will, by which I am, Monsieur, your most grateful servant and unworthy daughter.

L. DE MARILLAC

December 16, [1643]⁴

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

690. - TO A BISHOP

[Between 1643 and 1652]¹

In the name of God, Your Excellency, forgive me if I am interfering in these affairs here without knowing if the steps I have taken meet with your approval. It may perhaps happen that you will be dissatisfied with them, but there is no remedy, since what I am doing in the matter is only through an excess of affection in order to see you relieved of the cares and distractions which these troublesome affairs may be causing you, and so that you may be able to devote yourself with greater peace of mind to the direction and sanctification of your diocese. For all this, I frequently offer my poor prayers to God.

But there is one thing, Your Excellency, which distresses me greatly, and it is that you have been depicted to the Council² as a Prelate who easily engages in lawsuits, and this

⁴Date added on the back of the original.

Letter 690. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. III, chap. XI, sect. IV, p. 141.

¹The period during which Saint Vincent was a member of the Council of Conscience.

²At the Council of Conscience.

impression is well imprinted on their minds. As for myself, I admire Our Lord Jesus Christ who disapproved of lawsuits and who, nevertheless, was willing to undergo one and lose it. I have no doubt, Your Excellency, that if you are engaged in any, it is only to uphold and defend His cause; and so you preserve great interior peace in the midst of all external contradictions, because you are considering only God and not the world. You are seeking solely to please His Divine Majesty, without being concerned about what men will say. I thank His Divine Goodness for this because it is a grace which is found only in souls intimately united to Him. But I must also tell you, Your Excellency, that this regrettable opinion of the Council could be harmful to you in the present situation and prevent you from being granted what you are requesting.

691. - TO THE SAME BISHOP

[Between 1643 and 1652]¹

Once again, Your Excellency, I most humbly entreat you to bear with me if I dare to suggest a compromise. I am well aware that you do not doubt that it is the affection of my poor heart to serve you which causes me to desire this. But you may be displeased that one of such limited intelligence as I, knowing that you did not accept the first suggestion I made, would venture to propose a second one to you. However, I am not doing this on my own but by order of your rapporteur whom I went to see two days ago to recommend your cause to him and to tell him of the admirable guidance Our Lord exercises over you, Your Excellency, and, through you, over your diocese. To this he replied that he was your most humble

Letter 691. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. III, chap. XI, sect. IV, p. 142.

¹ According to Abelly, this letter followed closely after no. 690, which accounts for this dating.

servant and one of those who esteem and admire you the most. In this spirit, he begged me to inform you that if you believe him, you will extricate yourself amicably from all these disputes. He gave me several reasons for that, among others, that it is seemly for such a great prelate as you to terminate these matters this way, especially since you have to deal with your clergy where persons are disposed to rebel and intend to badger you for your whole life. Now, since he is aware of the Council's² attitude, he is fearful of the outcome of lawsuits because several of the members, not being familiar with the holy life you lead nor the upright intentions causing you to act in such a way, might think that there was something opposed to the support and gentleness befitting your dignity.

I most humbly entreat you, Your Excellency, to excuse my boldness and not to consider what I am representing to you as coming from myself but from your rapporteur who is one of the wisest men of our age and one of the best judges in the world. There are more persons in his offices than in the chambers of the foremost lawmakers because all consider themselves fortunate to have him as rapporteur. I pray that God will be pleased to restore peace to your Church and tranquillity to your mind. You are aware of the power you have over me and the special zeal God has given me for your service. If, then, you judge me worthy of contributing something to it, His Divine Goodness knows that I shall devote myself to it with my whole heart.

²The Council of Conscience.

**692. - THE SUPERIOR OF A REFORMED MONASTERY IN PARIS
TO SAINT VINCENT**

This good monk,¹ for various reasons he could give you, is greatly in need of reforming his life which has heretofore been rather dissipated, to the prejudice of the souls entrusted to his guidance. Someone recommended that he withdraw to your house as to a place of sure guidance for souls to put them back on the path of duty. I most earnestly beg you to grant him the charity of receiving him and of neglecting nothing at all that you will deem apt to win him back to God.

693. - TO SAINT LOUISE

It seems to me you would do better to mention the matter to the Chancellor's wife¹ and, to give an example to the others, it would be a good thing to go for her in a carriage and take her to your house. The village has no reason to complain about that since another Sister will be given to them, and I think they were made to understand that we would change them when we judged it appropriate. Nor should she complain either, because she agreed to this latter condition, and what made you think of her is that you learned that she sometimes takes in persons of disorderly life. Besides, it seems to me that you are making a fuss over this when it is indeed a small matter. Then, too, we must be prepared for such incidents which come up only too often.

Letter 692. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. IV, sect. IV, p. 285.

¹A pastor of a parish and member of the Order to which the writer also belonged.

Letter 693. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Madame Séguier.

694. - TO FATHER FAURE

(Now Vol. I, 156b.)¹

694a. - THE MARQUIS DE FABERT¹ TO SAINT VINCENT

[1643 or 1644]²

The head of the Mission was M. Gallais, a learned Lazarist, a man of acknowledged integrity, disinterested, religious without being superstitious and extremely attentive to doing nothing that might attract any honor from the outside to himself. He was always a model and never made a show in the missions, using his talents for the advantage of others and not for his own advancement. He began the great work of converting the people of Sedan by studying their character so that he could adapt himself to their ways and to grasp somehow the point and degree of their genius.

Letter 694. - The Archives of the Mission now has a photocopy of the letter to which Coste referred in this place.

¹Because of its certain date, the editors repositioned it in its chronological order, vol. I, no. 156b.

Letter 694a. - Joseph Barre, *Vie de Monsieur le Marquis de Fabert, maréchal de France* (2 vols., Paris: J. T. Hérisant, 1752), vol. I, p. 459. This edition uses the text published in *Mission et Charité*, 19-20, p. 48.

¹Abraham de Fabert, one of the most renowned generals of the seventeenth century, was born in Metz in 1599. His civic virtues, his military talents and his administrative qualities could never be adequately praised. He won all his commissions at the point of the sword. The famous retreat from Maintz and the siege of several fortified towns offered him the occasion of showing his bravery. He loved discipline and was the terror of looters. His fidelity to the King and his minister was rewarded with the highest dignities. He became Governor of Sedan in 1642, Lieutenant-General in 1651, and Marshal of France in 1658. He died in Sedan on May 17, 1662. The part of his correspondence from 1634 to 1652 has been published. His life was written by Father Barre, *op. cit.*, and Jules Bourelly, *Le maréchal de Fabert* [2 vols., Paris: Didier, 1879-1881].

²This letter should be dated between May 1643, when Guillaume Gallais and his fellow Missionaries began their ministry in Sedan, and September 1644 or shortly thereafter, when Gallais was replaced as Superior.

694b. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[Between 1643 and 1649]¹

Monsieur,

I most humbly entreat your charity kindly to let us know if I should notify our four Sisters for tomorrow after dinner. I forgot to propose our Sister Anne of Saint-Paul² to you, who, I believe, must be handled gently; and Sister Geneviève³ of the Hôtel-Dieu, who is here in this house now recuperating from the fatigue of caring for the foundlings at the end of Lent. In this case, there would be five or six Sisters. A few of them might be missing at some other time, so it will be helpful for more than four of them to hear the instruction which God will be pleased to give us through your charity. I am, Monsieur, your most humble and very grateful servant.

L. DE MARILLAC

694c. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Between 1643 and 1649]

I cannot take care of that business today, Mademoiselle. I

Letter 694b. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter. Coste placed this letter in his first supplement, vol. VIII, no. 3306. This edition repositions the letter and its reply (no. 694c) here, according to the indication of the *Annales C.M.*

¹This letter belongs to the period when Saint Louise was writing "Monsieur" in the salutation of her letters to Saint Vincent and when, so it seems, Madame de Lamoignon was President of the Ladies of Charity.

²A parish in Paris.

³Probably Sister Geneviève Poisson, who manifested great talent and prudence in working with the foundlings, especially during the civil wars and the Fronde. She entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity before 1634 and her first mission was at the Hôtel-Dieu in Paris, then with the foundlings with whom she worked for a long time. On August 8, 1655, she was one of the signers of the Act of Erection of the Company. She was entrusted with the office of Treasurer of the Community on May 22, 1657.

Letter 694c. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original

must see you before determining the number. I hope that will be tomorrow, with God's help. Today we have the meeting of the Ladies of Charity at Madame de Lamoignon's home.

I bid you good day and recommend myself to your prayers.

695. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Thursday, January 14, [1644]¹

Monsieur,

So our good God wills that you be sick. May He be blessed for it! But He also wills that, for love of Him, you should be kind to your body, as you would be toward that of a poor person. And if I dared, most honored Father, I would say to you that He wills this absolutely. So make use of the opportunity, I beg you, and pardon the excessive liberty I am taking, since I am interested for the glory of God.

Mesdames Traversay, Romilly, Fortia² and Viole are quite anxious about the matter concerning Mademoiselle Serquemanant and had come to tell you, Monsieur, that Monsieur Lavocat sent for them and had them go to the courtroom where he had this demoiselle come. He was offended because his advice had not been followed and convinced that this good demoiselle had reason to complain. He wanted her to tell these Ladies all that she had told him in private.

First of all, she says that a meeting of three was held by you, Monsieur, and Mesdames de Traversay and Romilly in a carriage,

autograph letter. Coste placed this in vol. VIII, no. 3307. Since it is the answer to the preceding letter, it has been placed here in this edition.

Letter 695 - Gossin, *op. cit.*, pp. 483 ff., taken from the original letter made known to him by M. de Monmerqué. The text is very difficult to read in places and its reconstruction is sometimes complicated.

¹Since François Lavocat died in 1646, the words "Thursday, January 14" limit our choice to the years 1638 and 1644. The facts mentioned in the letter could not be explained in 1638 since it was not until 1640 that the Ladies of Charity substituted the work of the Foundlings for the direction of the Couche.

²Probably Anne de la Barre, the widow of François de Fortia, Councillor of the King and Master of Requests for the Hôtel-Dieu.

and in the course of it you made the decision to take the children to the country and prevent M. Pelletier³ from continuing his almsgiving. The Ladies heard what M. Pelletier wrote in presence of the demoiselle and awaited the reply which, she said, was also in writing, wherein she was asking her nephew to wait a week before sending the money. That is not in the document.

When that demoiselle was asked who had told her this secret, she replied that, because there were only three of you, it was an angel, who would tell it again.

Monsieur Lavocat also told the Ladies that, after seeing you, he visited the Chief Justice⁴ who said that he did not lend any credence to all that you had told him, and that that good demoiselle said to him you were very well aware of the Ladies' plan, although you told him the contrary. This is what is making Monsieur Lavocat angry; he says there must be no more talk of taking the children nor of standing in the way of the alms she had for that purpose.

She made quite a scene with Monsieur Pelletier, saying that she would have the children left on his doorstep. She still insists that the foundation had been promised to her, and that the Chief Justice had promised a hospital, and the Ladies are preventing this good work. She complains loudly that you were unwilling to speak with her, although she went to see you on the feast of the Epiphany, in great distress, since Monsieur Pelletier absolutely rejected her. He said he had ordered one hundred livres to be paid for the months he was supporting the children, and that he did not intend to continue this. She went to make her complaints, saying that she is deeply in debt.

The Chief Justice told her to present her petition and that he would support it. He also said that the children would not be taken from her custody unless at least three thousand livres be given as a guarantee. These good Ladies feel that the reputation of the company is ruined and are annoyed that you are interfering in it, and want the evil to be remedied.

I almost forgot to tell you, Monsieur, that yesterday Madame Traversay, finding herself pressured to give some satisfaction to Monsieur Lavocat to appease this demoiselle somewhat, sent a

³Nicolas le Pelletier, nephew of Madame Goussault, Seigneur de Château-Poissy and de la Houssaye, Master of Accounts. After the death of his wife, Catherine Vialart, he began preparation for the priesthood and was ordained a priest on February 27, 1652. He was still alive on July 26, 1675.

⁴Mathieu Molé.

message to Madame de Romilly to tell her nephew what her good angel should advise her. This morning at table, she said to him "I am here to tell you to do whatever God may inspire you to do about the Hôtel Dieu affair." They have also instructed me, Monsieur, to tell you they feel it is essential for Monsieur Lavocat to see Monsieur Pelletier with a few Ladies of the company in presence of Mademoiselle Serquemanant, so that he may be a witness to the intentions of the above-mentioned benefactor, who will declare that he never meant to make a foundation or even to continue his support indefinitely. That will show Monsieur Lavocat that the other things the good demoiselle has advanced are more wishful thinking on her part than a solid basis for the hope of a foundation. But the faith the Chief Justice has in this good woman is unbelievable, so much so that Monsieur Lavocat and the Mothers of the hospital are constrained to say that they need her.

The Ladies' intention in this discussion is to enable Monsieur Lavocat to assure this good judge of the truth of this whole affair. They most humbly beg you, Monsieur, if possible, to give them some advice tomorrow. If Monsieur Pelletier were not sick, they might have proposed to you that he himself go to see the Chief Justice.

I hope our good God will be able to draw His own glory from this unfortunate incident. I beg it of Him with all my heart, and to give you good health for this same purpose. I am hoping from your goodness for a share in the merits of your suffering and Holy Sacrifices, since you know our need. I am, Monsieur, your most grateful daughter and humble servant.

LOUISE DE MARILLAC

696. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[January 1644]¹

Monsieur,

In the event that you intend to approve of Monsieur Lavocat's

Letter 696. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter belongs near no. 695.

going to see Monsieur Pelletier, as I have written to you, I most humbly entreat you to tell me which of the Ladies of the company will be there, too. Mesdames Traversay and Romilly are the ones who come up most often for consideration. Would it not be good for a few of the others to be there with them as well?

I think you would get rid of your cold sooner if you went to bed a little earlier in the evening, because hard work and much standing heat up the blood. I am begging God to inspire you with His Will on this subject and I remain in it, Monsieur, your most humble daughter and grateful servant.

My bloodletting of yesterday has cured me almost completely, thank God.

L. DE MARILLAC

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

697. - JACQUES DU PERRON, BISHOP OF ANGOULEME,
TO SAINT VINCENT

January 1644

Although I have already thanked you for sending your Missionaries to this diocese, I thought I should not let the letter of our little Conference go without accompanying it with these expressions, very feeble though they be, of the lively gratitude I have for the great benefit this diocese has derived from your charity in giving us some of your workers. However, my consolation will always be imperfect, Monsieur, until you have made this happiness which is only fleeting, complete, by a stable and permanent Mission in this diocese that needs it so much more than the others. When I learn that you will be in a situation to grant us this favor, I shall work here to find the means of making this establishment. I hope that God will receive from it much glory and the Church great profit for the salvation of souls which, I know, is the only thing you have proposed to yourself as the goal of all your actions.

698. - ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC TO SAINT VINCENT

Mercuès, January 27, 1644

Monsieur,

As soon as I received your letter, I had M. Dufestel¹ leave to go see the Prior of Chancelade Abbey, and the two of them went together to Saint-Pardoux Abbey² where they gathered the information, according to Her Majesty's³ wish; I am sending it on to you. You will see from it that what I wrote to you is inevitable. It would be a good idea for the Queen to provide that house with a Prioress from a well-reformed Community because, otherwise, there is no way of restoring regularity there. You will see that the young nun being requested as Assistant was not even willing to give her age.⁴

Our seminary is doing well, thank God, to the great benefit and edification of my whole diocese. M. Gilles was directing it well. Nevertheless, since you want to withdraw him, all those you send us will be welcome. What I have to say to you on this subject is that this seminary is very important, as I have already told you several times, so please furnish us always with persons having the requisite qualities to run it well.

I had already learned from one of your other men about the death of Saint-Cyran and I admired the Providence of God in taking him at the time of the commotion that had arisen over him. I trust that God will calm it, although there are certain persons who profess to adhering to his doctrine. . . .

I shall not fail to leave for Pouget,⁵ on the Queen's order, as soon

Letter 698. - Archives of the diocese of Cahors, Alain de Solminihac collection, file 22, no. 3.

¹Superior of the seminary of Cahors.

²Saint-Pardoux-la-Chapelle, today chief canton town in Dordogne.

³Queen Anne of Austria, widow of Louis XIII and Regent for her son, Louis XIV.

⁴Catherine Pot de Rhodes, Prioress of the Dominican monastery established in Saint-Pardoux. On July 5, 1643, when she was eighty-seven years old, she lost her sister, Catherine de Rhodes, who was also her Sub-prioress. In order to assure the vacated position to one of her family, she had requested as her assistant her niece, Gasparde de Rhodes, a nun professed in the same convent and who was in her twenty-fourth year of age.

⁵Monastery of the Poor Clares, founded near Castelnaud-de-Montratier (Lot) in the fourteenth century by the Legate Bertrand du Pouget, Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia.

as I am able to go on horseback, because I cannot go there by carriage. Meanwhile, I would be pleased if you would kindly inform Her Majesty that I cannot make the visitation, except for the enclosure, without her orders because that is not under my jurisdiction, so, if Her Majesty wants me to inform her of the state of the monastery, will she please send me orders for that purpose. I shall tell you in advance that for many years now that house has had a very bad reputation throughout this diocese and in the surrounding areas, and from time to time very serious scandals have occurred there. . . .

It is true that for the first time a Prioress should be taken from some other reformed house. Her Majesty could have one brought from Cahors which is really well reformed; I am always very satisfied with it.

That is all I can tell you in general about this house. I bless God for the Queen's plan to put good superiors in the monasteries where the nomination depends on Her Majesty. God will bless her as long as she takes care of matters pertaining to His glory and His service.

I am always, Monsieur, etc.

ALAIN

Bishop of Cahors

699. - A PRIEST OF ANGOULEME TO SAINT VINCENT

[January or February 1644]¹

Right now I am getting ready to go on horseback to take to your Missionaries working in Blanzac² the money you sent me for their needs. Please allow me to intrude upon you once again and to reiterate my most humble request on behalf of this poor afflicted diocese. I ask you for some reliable workers to assist in its spiritual necessities, which are almost in the extreme and which, nevertheless, would be irremediable unless some persons can be found to look after it with disinterested zeal and charity, such as the men of the Saint-Lazare house. I am well aware, Monsieur, that Providence

Letter 699. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. II, p. 52.

¹Abelly stated that this letter was written two weeks after no. 697.

²Chief canton town in Charente.

could make use of a thousand other means for this purpose, when it pleases to do so, but it appears evident that it has cast its eyes on you and chosen you from among thousands of others to assist not only all the poor dioceses of this kingdom but particularly those which seem to be abandoned by everyone.

700. - TO JEAN DEHORGNY, IN ROME

Paris, February 3, 1644

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I do not have much of anything to tell you today. I wrote in detail about many things to M. Codoing a week ago and told him to share his letter with you.

Your letter of January 9, which I received this week, told me of the need you have for this quarter, and I assure you, Monsieur, that we shall never perhaps have a greater one. We shall do what we can to pay it. In the name of God, act in such a way that we will be relieved next quarter.

A short time ago, the King levied another tax on your coaches; we are working at getting you exempted from it. The tax farmer of the Soissons coach has gone bankrupt. We have been forced to pay 625 livres guarantee for him to pay what he owed. Who will assume that? The house here has advanced it for you.

People here are saying that the Company is doing nothing in Rome. Let me know its duties with regard to the ordinands and retreatants and how many there are ordinarily.

Monsieur Le Bret is leaving in four days. He promised us greater affection and protection than ever, especially regarding

Holy Spirit in Toul. I ask you to visit him often in confidence. There are some plans for him with regard to that diocese¹ but please do not speak about this to anyone.

Never has greater regularity, union and cordiality been observed in this house than at present. It seems like a little paradise, but usually such extraordinary calm precedes some storm.

The Bishop of Boulogne² does not want his diocese because he is unable to pay the twenty-three thousand livres Rome is asking of him. *Si quid potes, adjuva illum.*³

God does not will us to be in the good graces of the Ambassador of Venice, who is going to reside in Rome for a time. Take care to visit him, nevertheless.

The Bishop of Beauvais⁴ has refused us the dimissorial letter for Carcireux⁵ because of the obligation of the Company. I am asking M. Chauvel to draw up one for him. We shall be obliged to him.

I embrace tenderly your whole family, from the youngest of the Brothers to yourself, prostrate in spirit at your feet and theirs, and I am your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

It is not advisable to have M. de Montheron go to the trouble of coming to Paris expressly for the purpose of the Persia business. Assure him of my obedience and of the health of his dear sister.

¹Jacques Le Bret was being considered for the diocese of Toul.

²François Perrochel.

³*If you can, help him.*

⁴Augustin Potier.

⁵Paul Carcireux, born in Beauvais, entered the Congregation of the Mission on July 27, 1640, at twenty years of age, made his vows on March 20, 1644, and was ordained a priest in 1645.

Addressed: Monsieur Dehorgny, Superior⁶ of the Priests of the Mission of Rome, in Rome

701. - TO GUILLAUME GALLAIS, SUPERIOR, IN SEDAN

February 13, 1644

Your last two letters mention the difficulty in which you find yourself. In reply, I shall say that it is rare to be in any situation whatsoever, particularly in the one you are in, without falling victim to the tongue of slanderers or the complaints of malcontents, and you must give yourself to Jesus Christ Our Lord to make good use of it, in union with the good use He made of all the contradictions and calumnies He endured in order to teach us how to act like Him in similar circumstances. And because I have been unable to tell you face to face my sentiments concerning the manner of conducting ourselves on such occasions, I am going to express them to you quite simply in writing.

It is not expedient for us, Monsieur, to become involved in secular affairs, no matter what relation they may have to spiritual matters:

(1) because Saint Paul advises ecclesiastics not to get mixed up in temporal and secular affairs;¹

(2) because no one can serve two masters, God and the

⁶Saint Vincent must have used this word absentmindedly because in later letters he still addresses M. Codoing as the Superior of the house in Rome.

Letter 701. - Reg. 2, p. 194.

¹2Tim. 2:3-4. "Bear hardship along with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier becomes entangled in the affairs of civilian life; he avoids this in order to please his commanding officer." (NAB)

world, the spiritual and the temporal, as Our Lord says;²

(3) because the affairs in which we might become involved would concern either Catholics only, or members of the religion³ only, or the case of a Catholic against a Huguenot. Now, to interfere in the case of a Catholic against another Catholic, by seeking, for example, the help of the Governor or the officers of the law, does not seem to be the way a paternal heart would act in regard to his children. If the matter concerns two persons of the so-called religion, *quid tibi de filiis Belial?*⁴ And if it is on behalf of a Catholic against a member of that religion, how do you know if the Catholic is in the right in the justice he is demanding? There is a great difference between being a Catholic and being an upright man.

(4) Even if you were sure that his claim was based on justice, why would you not think that the Governor and the magistrates would judge the affair according to their conscience, especially when it is not a purely religious matter?

(5) And then, what is it all about? Ordinarily, it is a question of possessions or honor. Now, it is your duty, Monsieur, to exhort the souls God has entrusted to you, individually as well as in general, to disregard honor and to bear with the loss of possessions, as Saint Paul did, and not to make yourself their solicitor so that they may acquire or preserve honor and possessions. O Monsieur [Gallais], my dear brother! what great Missionaries you and I would be if we only knew how to animate souls with the spirit of the Gospel, which should make them conformable to Jesus Christ! I assure you that this is the most effective means of sanctifying Catholics and of

²Mt. 6:24. "No man can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other or be attentive to one and despise the other. You cannot give yourself to God and money." (NAB)

³The Huguenots.

⁴*What is your concern with the children of Belial?* This seems to be a reference to 2Cor. 6:15. "What accord is there between Christ and Belial, what common lot between believer and unbeliever?" (NAB)

converting heretics we could employ, and nothing can make them more obstinate in error and vice than to do the contrary. Remember, Monsieur, what Our Lord said to the man who complained to Him about his brother: *Quis me constituit judicem inter te et fratrem tuum?*⁵ And say to those who would want to make use of you as solicitor for their affairs: *Quis me constituit advocatum vel negotiatorem vestrum?*⁶

(6) It is these and similar considerations which determine me, in the role the Queen has been pleased to give me on her Council for ecclesiastical affairs,⁷ to become involved only in affairs of that nature and in those concerning the religious state or the poor, no matter what semblance of piety or charity other affairs proposed to me may have.

But, you may ask me, what should I be doing? Here, Monsieur, are the things that concern your vocation and to which alone you should apply yourself: (1) your own perfection; (2) that of your family; (3) announcing the word of God to the Catholics in Sedan and, when you are on mission, to poor country people; (4) administration of the holy Sacraments; (5) the offices of the Church; (6) the welfare of the poor, visiting the sick and civil prisoners, as well as criminals after they have been confronted by witnesses, or at least after their trial, but not sooner, lest they complain about you if they are convicted of something they might have confided or confessed to you; or the judges, if they do not tell the truth.

A criminal whose confession I once heard and who confided to me his crime, tried several times to hang himself because of the fear which the devil put into his mind that I might divulge his crime to the judges. To all these concerns you can add that of teaching the things necessary to salvation

⁵*Who has set me up as judge between you and your brother?* Lk. 12:14. "He replied, 'Friend, who has set me up as your judge or arbiter?'" (NAB)

⁶*Who has appointed me your advocate or banker?*

⁷The Council of Conscience.

to the poor who ask alms of you in the town or at the house; of reconciling persons and even families who have some quarrel. It is also your role to give spiritual counsel to persons who seek it of you and to admonish those leading disorderly lives.

“But,” you may say to me, “could I watch a Catholic being oppressed by a member of the religion without doing something for him?” I reply that this oppression must have some cause and is due either to something the Catholic owes the Huguenot or some insult or injury done to him. Now, if one of these be the case, is it not fair that the Huguenot seek redress in justice? Is the Catholic less subject to the law because he is a Catholic, or do you have greater reason to get mixed up in his affairs than Our Lord did in refusing to have anything to do with those of the man who complained to Him about his brother?

“Yes, but the judges belong to the religion.” This is true, but they are also lawyers who judge according to laws, customs and ordinances. In addition to following their conscience, they profess to be men of honor. Furthermore, if you interfere in the case of the Catholic party, the ministers will do likewise for their man, and you should reflect that more attention will be paid to them than to you, and thus you will be doing harm to the Catholic because by petitioning on his behalf you are provoking a more powerful person against him.

“But,” you may say, “it is not the judges whom I shall be petitioning; it is the Governor, whom I shall ask to use his influence with the judges.” I have two things to say in reply to that: (1) since the Governor is a good man, he will listen to the poor man who approaches him directly and will support him, if he sees that he is in the right; (2) by making this an intrigue of religion with the Governor, you will have the ministers to contend with, and in this way you put yourself at risk. Instead of being helpful to the Catholic, you put him in danger of being treated more severely.

Perhaps you may also tell me that you do not intend to take the side of anyone engaged in legal proceedings, but only of some Catholic who may have been harshly treated by the Governor because the latter had been misinformed. Here I should tell you, Monsieur, that the Governor is more clear-sighted in his duty than you or I, and I am not at all of the opinion that you should have anything to do with this.⁸

702. - MONSIEUR LE BOUCHER¹ TO SAINT VINCENT

1644

You are doing good everywhere and rendering great service to God, the Church and holy religion. I have just been to Tonnerre where I saw your dear children, the Priests of the Mission, led by a man of God. I must admit, Monsieur, that all those good priests are working wonders through their teaching and good example; they are reconciling many souls with God and with their neighbor.

703. - A MONK TO SAINT VINCENT

1644

I beg God to lengthen your days and years for His glory and the good of the neighbor for whom you work unceasingly. I am sending you a person worthy of your charity. He is a page of the Prince de Talmond,¹ who up until now has been brought up in the erroneous

⁸Reg. 2 adds: "This letter is written in his own hand (the hand of the Saint) and has no other conclusion."

Letter 702. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. II, p. 46.

¹Vicar General of the Abbey of Moutiers-Saint-Jean.

Letter 703. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. IV, sect. IV, p. 285.

¹Henri, Seigneur de la Trémoille, Duc de Thouars, Peer of France, Prince of Tarente

Calvinist religion, and came to me to be converted. But since I am not sufficiently capable of such a good work, I have the boldness to turn to you as to one to whom God grants very special and very great graces for His glory and the salvation of sinners and those who go astray. So then, my most honored Father in Our Lord, have the charity to welcome and embrace him as a poor lost sheep who is seeking a place of refuge to escape from the jaws of the wolf.

704. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

Paris, March 16, 1644

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have received your letters every week, I think, all of them concerned with the Catalonia¹ affair. I told you my thoughts on this; nevertheless, to comply with your request, *in nomine Domini*, please send good Monsieur Boulier and our dear Brother Martin there, if you can get along without the latter.

I told you that Her Majesty was satisfied with the testimony the Ambassador² gave her about you and that she has designated a thousand écus for your seminary, but I have heard nothing about it since. I did not think I could bring up the seminary in Barcelona to get some assistance for there,

and of Talmond, Comte de Laval, was born in 1599 and died on January 21, 1674, in his seventy-fifth year.

Letter 704. - Archives of the Mission, copy made from the original letter in 1854 in possession of M. Laverdet.

¹They were considering opening an establishment in Barcelona.

²At that time M. de Saint-Chamond was Ambassador of France to the Holy See. It could be that Saint Vincent was talking about the former Ambassador, the Marquis de Fontenay-Mareuil, who had just been recalled to France.

because she is overwhelmed by petitioners from all parts of the kingdom and is unable to provide for all of them from her own resources, and she makes it a matter of conscience to give away what belongs to the King or the public, because of all the needs which exist.

We shall try to assist them from here for their provisions, but what will they do there if they have no funds? In the name of God, Monsieur, think about this.

We shall send out two or three Brothers as soon as possible, and one or two clerics. One of the latter is destined for the Incurables. His conduct is excellent, he is a good theologian, on loan (?) to the priests' seminary,³ and he knows how to sing well. We shall see about the other.

It will be difficult for you to be satisfied with your Italians if you do not open a seminary of the Company and train there those whom you admit. You have done the best you could until now. It is important for you to work on that for the future and especially on the observance of regularity in the house.

In the name of God, Monsieur, stop being concerned about things happening far away that are none of your business, and devote all your attention to domestic discipline. The rest will come in due time. Grace has its moments. Let us abandon ourselves to the Providence of God and be on our guard against anticipating it. If Our Lord is pleased to give me any consolation in our vocation, it is this: I think it seems to me that we have tried to follow Divine Providence in all things and to put our feet only in the place It has marked out for us. Be also most cordial with everyone and spare nothing for the assistance of the sick members of the Company.

I forgot to tell you, right from the very beginning, that the custom of the Company and of every well-regulated Com-

³The seminary of the Bons-Enfants.

munity has been that Superiors should not see the letters the men of their house may write to the Superior General, nor those he may write to individuals in the house. In the name of God, Monsieur, do the same, even if, out of respect, they were to ask you to look at them.

I am not saying anything about what we are being accused of there, except that by the mercy of God, our Company is resisting all the new opinions and that I am doing what I can against them, especially with regard to all those contrary to the authority of the common Father of all Christians. I call as witness to this, Cardinal Grimaldi and public opinion. Therefore, there is no need for us to start justifying ourselves with regard to what you tell me.

I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Rome, in Rome

705. - TO THE SUPERIOR OF THE HOUSE IN MARSEILLES

[1643 or after]¹

Regarding your question, whether you should wear a short cassock when you visit the galleys, I shall tell you that there is a modern author who has written a book in which, among other things, he allows the use of short cassocks, especially when one goes to the country. In Paris today, there is a

Letter 705. - Reg. 2, p. 143.

¹Date of the foundation of this establishment.

Community that is going to write something against that point, because it cannot tolerate the idea of priests being so bold as to do this. Should you tell me that certain prelates and other Gentlemen have adopted them, I would reply, Monsieur, that they have the right to do as they please, since they have the authority to make laws—I mean the bishops. But as for us whom God in His goodness has chosen to render some small service to His Church in the person of priests, as we are trying to do, by God's mercy, I think we should refrain from doing it, since it is most appropriate, Monsieur, for us to try to honor in every way possible the state and order of the Church. For this reason, I beg you, in the name of Our Lord, not to give that another thought.

706. - A MEMBER OF THE ANGOULEME CONFERENCE
TO SAINT VINCENT

1644

Our company felt that it should not put off any longer offering you its respects and acknowledging to you its unworthiness of the honor you do us by the role you are playing in what pertains to its advancement and perfection. It most humbly entreats you, Monsieur, to allow it to acknowledge you as its grandfather, since it is one of your children whom God has used to bring it into the world, and may you add this obligation to the first, of looking on it not as a stranger but as your granddaughter, and to act in such a way that this beautiful and illustrious Company of Paris, which is like your eldest daughter, will not disdain having her as its sister, although she will be inferior to it in every way.

707. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

April 14, 1644

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

In three days I hope to be sending off the three or four Brothers you request, together with four clerics, a priest from Annecy, three priests for Marseilles and M. Dehorgny who is returning to make the visitation and who will accompany each one to his destination.

I have not received the three thousand livres I wrote to you that the Queen led us to expect for Catalonia and I do not know if they will be given to us. Please postpone sending the men to Barcelona until the others arrive.

You now have the makings of a proper internal seminary¹ and another one for externs. Our good Brothers are very good, by God's grace, and very exemplary! Oh! how I wish that discipline may shine among us and that meekness, humility and mortification be especially evident! In the name of God, Monsieur, let this be the principal concern of you and your whole house! And let us not be in too great a hurry for the extension of the Company nor for external appearances. The consolation Our Lord gives me is to believe that, by the grace of God, we have always tried to follow and not to anticipate Providence which knows how to conduct all things so wisely to the end Our Lord destines for them. In truth, Monsieur, I have never more clearly seen the vanity of acting contrary to this, nor the meaning of the words that God uproots the vine that He Himself has not planted.²

Letter 707. - Original autograph letter, communicated by M. d'Haussonville, member of the French Academy. Included in the Charavay catalogue in 1972.

¹Seminary for the formation of members of the Congregation of the Mission.

²Mt. 15:13. "Every planting not put down by my heavenly Father will be uprooted," he replied." (NAB)

I embrace the Company, prostrate in spirit at its feet and yours, and am your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
I.S.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission, in Rome

708. - ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC TO SAINT VINCENT

Saint-Céré,¹ May 1, 1644

Monsieur,

Having learned of the powerful entreaties the members of the religion in this area are bringing to bear in order to have preaching restored to it because it has been suppressed by a decree from the Parlement of Toulouse, I wrote to the Queen about this, begging Her Majesty to command the Chancellor² to confirm this decree as being fully justified. Since my arrival in this town to make the visitation of it, I have been informed by one of the leading citizens who came from Paris that he spoke to you about this matter, which Mademoiselle de Bouillon is soliciting and getting others to solicit most passionately. But since she has no right to ask that preaching be restored there, she is advancing as her reasons that it is a place where she has chosen to live and it is most reasonable that she should be someplace where she can have sermons preached. This is pure invention, to oblige the Chancellor to grant her request, which would have dire consequences and be very detrimental to religion. That is why I beg you, in the name of God, to tell her and make it clearly understood by her what great damage this would cause, not only to

Letter 708. - Archives of the diocese of Cahors, Alain de Solminihac collection, file 22, no. 5.

¹Chief town of the canton of the district of Figeac (Lot).

²Pierre Séguier.

all the Catholics in this town and in my diocese, but even to the whole kingdom. If he did not confirm that famous decree of the Parlement of Toulouse which was given with such full knowledge of the facts, since the most renowned lawyers of the Parlement had argued this case with much show, and since the decree had been praised for its formulation and distributed throughout the kingdom, how disgraceful it would be for us now if it were not confirmed! How prejudicial to religion! What great advantage the opponents would take of this! To be sure, if he did it, which I would find hard to believe of him, I would reproach him for it on Judgment Day along with the loss of souls for which he would be to blame; because heresy will disappear in this area, if this decree is observed as it should be. Since it has been given, six entire families from among the leading citizens of this town have been converted and the others are so shaken, that all they need is a little hope for this re-establishment. A short time ago, I received five of them in this town or in the vicinity; my missionaries two, and one of my non-resident vicars another. There are some who have promised to abjure the heresy in our presence in two or three days. In a word, I hope it will soon disappear, with the help of the Chancellor. I beg you to tell him that I am asking him for it in God's name, because it is a question here of the salvation of many souls for whom he will have to answer on Judgment Day. Tell him not to be stopped by that spirit of Mademoiselle de Bouillon who is fanatical about this heresy, and that there is no question of an affair of State here, but rather of pleasing a woman whose only passion seems to be to have the preaching continued. When you see the Queen, will you kindly do me the favor of telling her that I beseech Her Majesty once again to order the Chancellor to confirm our decree. I make this request to you all the more willingly since this affair is important for the glory of God and particularly for my diocese.

As I was about to end this letter, one of our poor erring souls came to throw himself into our arms, and I have just received him solemnly into the Church.

ALAIN
Bishop of Cahors

709. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

Paris, May 13, 1644

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have seen the letters you wrote to Messieurs Portail and Dehorgny on the sixteenth of last month and I have thought and thought again about the proposal you made concerning the seminary of Velletri¹ and Ostia,² to be set up in the same way as similar establishments. I shall tell you that it seems to me there will be no danger in heeding the intention of the Cardinal³ to make a trial run of this plan for Velletri. Ordinarily, the outcome of things does not correspond to the original ideas about them.

The Council's ruling⁴ is to be respected as coming from the Holy Spirit. Experience shows nevertheless that the manner of carrying it out with regard to the age of seminarians has not been successful either in Italy or in France. Some left before the time, others had no inclination for the clerical life, others went to Communities, and still others fled the places

Letter 709. - Gossin, *op. cit.*, p. 446, from the original letter communicated by M. Alexandre Martin. The letter was written entirely in the hand of the Saint.

¹The diocese of Velletri, united to that of Ostia in the twelfth century, had by law the Dean of the Sacred College of Cardinals as its head. This is no longer true. As of May 5, 1914, the oldest suburbicarian bishop simply added the title and diocese of Ostia to that which he possessed. The 1983 Code of Canon Law stipulates that the Cardinals who possess a title to a suburbicarian church elect someone from their number to act as Dean of the College of Cardinals; the Pope approves the election (C.352). "The Cardinal Dean holds as his title the diocese of Ostia, together with that of any other Church to which he already has title." (C.350)

²Gossin read "Buten."

³Cardinal Lenti, Bishop of Velletri.

⁴The Council of Trent. The decree *Cum adolescentium aetas*, pertaining to seminaries (Sess. XXIII, chap. XVIII), orders that no one may be received into a seminary before the age of twelve, and it stresses how important it is that future priests be initiated at an early age into piety and religion. For the history of this decree, the already quoted work of Abbé Degert could be consulted (cf. vol. I, bk. I, chap. 1).

to which they were in obligation bound by their training, preferring to seek their fortune elsewhere. There are four in this kingdom, in Bordeaux, Rheims, Rouen and, formerly, one in Agen. Not one of these dioceses has received any benefit from them,⁵ and I fear that, apart from Milan and Rome, the situation is the same in Italy. It is quite another story to take them from twenty to twenty-five or thirty years of age. We have twenty-two students in our Bons-Enfants Seminary. Among them only three or four seem passable nor do we have hope that they will persevere, no matter how much care we devote to them. So, this gives me reason to doubt, not to mention the probable outcome, that the affair will not succeed as proposed. M. Authier and M. Le Bègue⁶ are sure it will succeed for them. Now, I do not doubt that they will find this true in the beginning but, Monsieur, it certainly is greatly to be feared that before the fruits have fully ripened, the various events I have mentioned may spoil them. And then, when it pleases God to bestow His blessing on the Company, it is not expedient for us to take any establishments of this type that do not provide for at least two priests who work in the missions. Otherwise, the plan of assisting the poor would come to nothing; *quod absit*.⁷ If the venture seems to be having some success, we will think about the gradual process you are proposing in the Company, and the other circumstances you mention.

Enclosed is the agreement we made with the Bishop of Cahors⁸ or, if you like, his ordinance, which could serve as an endorsement for the Bull you propose to me, in case the Cardinal⁹ wants to confirm this affair soon.

⁵Despite following the age guidelines of the Council of Trent, these seminaries ordained very few men for these dioceses (cf. no. 507, n. 7).

⁶Superior of the seminary in Senlis and a priest of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, founded by M. Authier de Slsgau.

⁷*God forbid!*

⁸Alain de Solminihac.

⁹Cardinal Lenti.

There is one other thing that has troublesome consequences, and it is the obligation of rendering an account to the bishop and all Chapters, although this may seem reasonable. We declined to discuss Saint-Lazare except on condition that we be dispensed from rendering our account to the Archbishop,¹⁰ as had been the custom. Oh! what troublesome consequences that has, although the matter cannot be remedied, since the Council has so ordained.¹¹

Submission to the Chapter deputies for this purpose is of no less importance.

We shall look into the Catalonia question, and you and Monsieur Dehorgny look into it there. We have not received the one thousand écus nor do we have any hope of doing so.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Mission of Rome, in Rome

710. - JACQUES LESCOT, BISHOP OF CHARTRES,
TO SAINT VINCENT

[May or June 1644]²

The two Missionaries you did me the honor of sending here for the Pentecost ordinations are very honest, wise, capable, careful and zealous priests. In addition, they have, by the grace of God, achieved considerable results, for which I am infinitely obliged to you, together

¹⁰Jean-François de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris.

¹¹Sess. XXIII, chap 18: "The bishop shall receive annually the accounts of the revenues of the seminary, in presence of two persons delegated by the Chapter and of as many delegated by the clergy of the city."

Letter 710. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. II, sect. V, p. 236.

¹Jacques Lescot, born in Saint-Quentin in 1593, was professor at the Sorbonne, Canon of Notre-Dame, and Richelieu's confessor, before he became Bishop of Chartres, which diocese he occupied from November 13, 1643 until August 22, 1656, the day of his death.

²Both Abelly and the contents of the letter dictate this date.

with my entire diocese which I find much inclined to what is good. But we need the help that I am expecting, Monsieur, of your charity, which is so universal and so great that you do not refuse it to anyone.

711. - TO A MONK

June 23, 1644

Reverend Father,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The Queen has done me the honor of commanding me to write you that Her Majesty has approved of the visitation which, on her order, you made to the Priory of Saint-Pardoux,¹ and that I should request you, on her part, to return and tell the Prioress and her niece² whom she wants to have as Assistant, that Her Majesty wishes the instructions contained in the enclosed memorandum to be carried out before the patent of Assistant be granted.³ In the event that they and their Community consent to this and execute the contents of the above-mentioned memorandum along with all else you will tell them needs to be done for the good order of the

Letter 711. - Reg. 1, f°2. The register stated that the copy was taken from "the original autograph or a rough draft."

¹Saint-Pardoux-la-Chapelle.

²Catherine Pot de Rhodes and her niece, Gasparde Pot de Rhodes.

³At its meeting of May 11, 1644, the Council of Conscience had expressed the opinion that the Queen could name the Assistant. Twelve days before her aunt's death, August 17, 1645, Gasparde was placed at the head of the convent, which she governed until February 10, 1684, the day of her death.

monastery and the security of their consciences, Her Majesty will have the copy of the said Assistantship delivered to M. de Rhodes.

So, please do this good work, Reverend Father, in the name of Our Lord, and once you have written me that the aforesaid memorandum has been executed, Her Majesty will forward the patent to M. de Rhodes. I renew to you here the offer of my most humble services and am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

712. - TO FATHER CHARLES FAURE¹

Saint-Lazare, June 26, 1644

Reverend Father,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

In accordance with the desire of Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld and your own, I went to Rueil yesterday and had the honor of speaking with the Queen about the immediate resignation by His Eminence of the title and possession of Sainte-Geneviève Abbey in favor of your Congregation. Her Majesty has approved this, as has Cardinal Mazarin to whom she ordered me to speak about the matter. His Eminence also ordered me to mention it to the Chancellor,² which I have done, and he has agreed to send the patent. Accordingly, you

Letter 712. - Archives of the Ministry of War, vol. LXXXV, f°140, original autograph letter.

¹Superior General of the Augustinians of the Congregation of France. Although the name of the recipient is not indicated in the original letter, its contents allow us to guess his identity.

²Pierre Séguier.

will please take it to the Secretary of State whose month it is, and Her Majesty and Cardinal Mazarin will confirm what I am telling you.³ I recommend myself to your holy prayers and am, in the love of Our Lord, Reverend Father, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

If you want letters patent, the Chancellor told me that you must affix to them the agreement made with Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld concerning this matter.⁴

712a. - CHEVALIER SIMIANE DE LA COSTE¹ TO SAINT VINCENT

Marseilles, June 27, 1644

Monsieur,

I have felt duty bound to assure you of my most humble service and obedience and to express to you the joy I have received from the entry your Gentlemen have gained to the hospital for poor

³Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld had submitted his resignation on February 3. It was accepted by the King on June 30.

⁴The intervention of Saint Vincent in the resignation of Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld is indicated in *Gallia Christiana*, vol. VII, col. 779: "The King accepted the resignation on the conditions desired by the Cardinal, in the rescript given June 30, 1644, thanks to the special attention of S. Vincent de Paul who, when difficulties were raised, expedited it."

Letter 712a. - Allier, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-182, who cited Antoine de Ruffi, *Vie de M. le chevalier de la Coste* (Aix: David, 1659). This edition uses the text published in *Mission et Charité*, 19-20, pp. 49-50.

¹Gaspard de Simiane de la Coste, born in Aix in 1607, came back to God because of the premature death of a person whom he loved. He came to Paris, studied there the art of controversy under Father Véron, and struck up a friendship with Vincent de Paul who taught him a love for the unfortunate and, most especially, interested him in the condition of the poor galley-slaves. It is to de la Coste, in particular, as well as to Saint Vincent and to Bishop Gault of Marseilles, that is due the establishment of the Hospital of the

convicts.² *May Our Lord be your reward, Monsieur, for the charity you have rendered to that house and for the kind help you have been to it with the Duchesse d'Aiguillon. I am not writing you anything about its situation or its needs because I have no doubt that M. de Montmort,³ whom we asked to inform you fully about it before leaving this region, has done so, as he did me the honor of telling me in writing, assuring me that your willingness to bring about the accomplishment of Our Lord's work would continue.*

Furthermore, I am aware that M. Dufestel often gives you news of this. Nevertheless I shall be content simply to entreat you most humbly to believe that I am no less devoted to you than the lowliest subjects you have in your Company to which I have dedicated all my services. But, being incapable of making it experience all the effects of this, I ask God in my humble prayers, at least, to impart to you and to it the abundance of His grace, and to fill it with His Holy Spirit and with the same wisdom He poured out upon His Apostles in whose footsteps it follows and for whose crowns you are hoping, Monsieur.

Your most humble and very obedient servant.

Chevalier DE LA COSTE

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent, Founder of the Missionaries*

Galley-slaves in Marseilles. He also founded the *Oeuvre des femmes bohèmes* for women who followed the galleys, either so as not to abandon their husbands or for less admissible reasons. This pious gentleman loved to quote the maxims of Saint Vincent. As far as he could, he conformed to the Rule of the Missionaries: he rose at 4:00 A.M., gave an hour to prayer, read a chapter of the New Testament on his knees with head uncovered, read a spiritual book for half an hour, visited the Blessed Sacrament before and after going out; he also made a monthly retreat and an annual retreat of eight days. The greater part of his time was taken up by the convicts in the hospital, to whom he was pleased to bring consolation and care. The Missionaries could not have had a better auxiliary. He died of the plague on July 24, 1649, a victim of his dedication to the plague-stricken galley-slaves.

²By virtue of the contract signed on July 25, 1643, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon had founded the house of the Mission in Marseilles. She gave fourteen thousand livres. Among the clauses of the contract we find the following: the Missionaries will assure the spiritual service for the Hospital of the Galley-slaves. This hospital, whose institution around 1618 seems due to Saint Vincent and to his protector, Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi, General of the Galleys, had been reorganized just a short while before, thanks to Bishop Gault and the Chevalier de la Coste.

³Henri-Louis Habert, Seigneur de Montmort (or Montmaur, as Pierre Coste has it), Master of Requests and Councillor of the King.

713. - ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC TO SAINT VINCENT

Mercuès, June 29, 1644

Monsieur,

I do not know how people can be spreading the rumor in Paris that I had died, since I made my visitation this entire springtime in perfect health, with the exception of four or five days when I was ailing because of the foul air in the house where we were staying.

I fear that I am doing only too much of what you desire and would like you to apply to yourself the advice you offer me on this subject.¹

The decision you gave us on the establishment of the reform of Chancelade in Foix Abbey is the result of your affection for us, for which I thank you a thousand times, asking you to continue it, along with your assistance in this matter. The old monks were opposed to the re-establishment of our men, whom the Archbishop of Toulouse² has installed there, notwithstanding their opposition. . . . My Vicar General, who was in Foix at the time of the re-establishment and who is still in Toulouse, has written me that he will have the simple contract of the Archbishop sent to Paris, in order to have it confirmed by a decree of the Council, etc.

I am, Monsieur . . .

ALAIN
Bishop of Cahors

714. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

I most humbly ask your pardon for bothering you, but my fear

Letter 713. - Archives of the diocese of Cahors, Alain de Solminihac collection, file 22, no. 4.

¹Saint Vincent had probably advised the Bishop of Cahors to take better care of himself so as not to endanger his health.

²Charles de Montchal.

Letter 714. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

of offending God by remaining any longer without receiving Holy Communion, which I could not do since I have not had the honor of speaking to you, causes me to take this liberty of informing you about it, asking you, for the love of God, to believe that I did all I could to overcome the fear that kept me from Communion yesterday. You know that is not customary with me and that I am, Monsieur, your most grateful and very unworthy daughter and servant.

L. DE M.

Thursday, June 30, [1644]¹

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

715. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

July 9, 1644

Those who are well acquainted with the role of Brothers in a Company think we have accomplished a great deal by having introduced them and retained the custom of their wearing the short coat, and this for several important reasons, so that they have no thought at all of wearing the long one. I admit there is a particular reason for acting otherwise in Italy, although I do not hold that the long coat is much more effective in keeping them from evil. Alas, Monsieur! into what disorder do we not see Brothers in religious Orders fall when they go about alone collecting alms in this city! In the name of God, Monsieur, let us try every means imaginable before introduc-

¹The words, "Thursday, June 30," the stamp of the wax seal which represents a heart upon which Our Crucified Lord appears, and the expression "Monsieur" at the beginning of the letter suggest this date. We do not find this stamp on any of the letters prior to the year 1644. On the other hand, from 1650 on, Saint Louise always calls Saint Vincent "Most Honored Father" in the salutation of her letters.

ing a general practice for one house and for a particular place. We shall see about this in due time.¹

To say that, since your income is running short or being reduced through the King's resale of the coaches, the Saint-Lazare house should borrow money and pledge to support you, both because it will not lack help in Paris, and because it is inadvisable for it to be so rich, seeing that, if it were, those who formerly were trying to get it for themselves, might renew their desire; I reply that, in the first place, no one is helping us. People imagine that we are well off, regardless of what we may say to the contrary; (2) if we overburden the house with loans, the ill-disposed would use that as justification for summoning us before the powers that be; (3) it is unjust to pledge for the establishment of the house in Rome the property which from the beginning has belonged to this house. Oh, no, Monsieur, there must be no thought of that, nor should you move so fast! The works of God do not proceed in that way; they come about of themselves, and those He does not create soon perish. I have often told you this; your piety will please bear with it and rest assured that I have no greater consolation in the work of our vocation than to think that we have followed the order of holy Providence which requires time for generating its works. Let us proceed calmly in our expectations.

716. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

July 15, 1644

I would like to think that the conditions required for

¹The first fragment ends here.

Cardinal Barberini's¹ seminary are not so contrary to our manner of living that they alter what is essential. If that were the case, *O Dieu!*, Monsieur, it would be far better for us to enclose ourselves in our little shell. Please God that no human motivation may cause us to grow lax in any affair considered to be from God! The maxim left by those whom God has called to some new work is to change nothing under pretext of any advantage whatsoever. The blessed Bishop of Geneva instills that in his good daughters.² Nature has its own ways of acting, art has its rules, and the Holy See its precautions. When the Popes approve Orders and give them power to legislate, they lay down, among other conditions, the following: that they approve the Rules these Orders will formulate, provided they are not contrary to the goals of the Institute. According to that, we must be very much on our guard about negotiating with anyone, no matter how advantageous this may be, if the conditions are not in conformity with our manner of living.

717. - FELIX VIALART, BISHOP OF CHALONS, TO SAINT VINCENT

Châlons, July 26, 1644

Monsieur,

In accordance with your wishes, I inquired, as precisely as possible, about this nun, and not finding sufficient information here, I sent M. Basseline to the premises. Here is what I have learned.

She is considered most exact and regular in keeping the Rule, has good judgment and is very intelligent in managing temporal affairs

¹Francesco Antonio Barberini.

²Saint Francis de Sales and the Visitation nuns.

at which she has been and still is employed, but she has not been employed in the spiritual direction of the house, nor even been Prioress or Novice Mistress. She is reserved and inclined to silence and generally is esteemed by all the nuns of that house and they, as you know, have sent us a written attestation of her life and morals. It is said that a man named M. de Pernes, a former governor of the citadel of Saintes,¹ has given three thousand écus to the present Abbess to obtain her consent in favor of that nun here who, it is also said, knows nothing about all that; but M. de Pernes is hoping that one day she will consider his daughter, who is still young, for the same position. It is thought that she is indifferent to the outcome of this affair.

That is all I have been able to learn, without discovering all that is involved. The mail carrier is here and he is in a hurry.

I am wholeheartedly, Monsieur, your most humble and very affectionate servant.

FELIX,
Bishop of Châlons

I am very much obliged to you for the offers you made to my mother² a while ago, of having a decree of the Council granted to me for the parishes that have united. If you please, I accept these offers and I shall be grateful, and I will do something for you later. I am restraining myself now unless the decree obtained is effective for Dauphiné,³ as my mother told you, and I felt it my duty to act this way for now, hoping in time to do the rest.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior General of the Priests of the Mission

¹Louis, Seigneur de Pernes, Baron de Rochefort.

²Madame de Herse.

³A section of southeastern France, centered around Grenoble; it was one of the areas where the Huguenots dominated.

718. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

Paris, July 29, 1644

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

You must not think of getting a sou from the sale of your coaches now but of directing all your efforts towards preserving the revenue from them, because of the continual buying and selling done with this type of goods for the King's business. I always have to keep asking for our exemption from the common tax, and we have to borrow two thousand livres to buy you the Soissons transport service, which is up for sale again, to mitigate the lawsuits you have with the transport services because of the coaches, which are reducing their income by one-third or one-half. What is more, you must no longer bank on the three thousand livres you withdrew too soon on the expectation you had been given of getting them.

But what shall we do, you say? We shall do what Our Lord wills, which is to keep ourselves always dependent on His Providence, since it pleases Him thus and He sees what is best for us. The Prior of the reformed Dominicans of this city told me the other day that the sorry state of their house came about after they had been in a situation of independence with regard to Providence, because they were well established and assured of having enough to live on. In the name of God, Monsieur, let us abandon ourselves to the direction of God's loving Providence, and we shall be safe from all sorts of inconveniences that our haste may draw down on us. We are not sufficiently virtuous to be able to carry the burden of abun-

Letter 718. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, photocopy. In 1970, the original autograph letter was in the house of the Daughters of Charity in Thiers, France; its present location is unknown.

dance and that of apostolic virtue and I fear we may never be, and that the former may ruin the latter.

As to the vow for our principal members, the reason you allege that without it the Company will divide up into separate Congregations or Generalates, I do not know what to say to you, except that the vows of the Discalced Carmelites¹ and those of the Feuillants² have not prevented the division of their Generalates in Spain and Italy, that there are many things to ponder in this fact and that I shall do so. Meanwhile, I beg you to put your mind at rest on that matter. Be assured, however, that I shall reflect on it and will weigh the advantages and disadvantages in it. If you and M. Dehorgny are willing to do likewise, we can consider them before God, in whose love I remain, for both of you, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Rome, in Rome

¹Pope Clement VIII separated the Discalced Carmelites of Italy from the Spanish Congregation and formed them into a distinct Congregation. The new Institute took the title of Saint-Elias and received permission to spread throughout the world, with the exception of Spain.

²Reformed monks of the Cistercian Order. In 1630, Pope Urban VIII divided the Congregation in two: the Italian Congregation whose members took the title of Reformed Bernardines, and the French Congregation which became the Congregation of Notre-Dame de Feuillant. They were popularly referred to as Feuillants because of their principal house. Each Congregation had its own General.

719. - TO LOUIS THIBAUT, SUPERIOR, IN SAINTES¹

Paris, August 3, 1644

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I think I wrote to you a short time ago. This is what I am adding to my preceding letter.

Concerning M. Guérin,² I think you would do well, and it is necessary, to give him Brother Jean Bisson³ or someone to go with him.

We here will return to the Bishop of Saintes⁴ the fifty livres he said he gave to M. Guérin to go to the spa.

Alas, Monsieur! How troubled I am at the poverty in which you are living and that we cannot help you from here! You are honoring the poverty of Our Lord, and He Himself will shower you with eternal treasures, and your present suffering will merit the abundance which we have more reason to fear than want. A good reformed Father,⁵ whose house is, however, sorely divided, was saying to me a few days ago, speaking of his distress: "Alas, Monsieur! While we were badly off, we

Letter 719. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original autograph letter.

¹Louis Thibault was born in Ferrières-Gatinais on March 29, 1618 of pious parents who later, after the death of their daughter, had the idea of leaving the world to serve God; the father with the Priests of the Mission, the mother with the Daughters of Charity. Louis was received at Saint-Lazare on August 21, 1637 and ordained a priest in April 1642. When Saint Vincent wrote this letter to him, he was head of the house in Saintes. He was recalled to Paris in 1646, made his vows, and dedicated himself with zeal and success to the missions. From 1648 to his death in February 1655 he was Superior of the house of Saint-Méen. During his missions, he was in the habit of seeking out persons of piety, desirous of detaching themselves from the world, and of assisting them in the choice of a religious Community. The Company of the Daughters of Charity greatly benefited from his zeal. (Cf. *Notices*, vol. III, pp. 124-128.)

²Julien Guérin.

³Jean Bisson, coadjutor Brother, probably the same who is listed among the personnel as René Bisson who was born on All Saints Day 1600, in Nannes, diocese of Séez. He was received into the Congregation in Paris on November 5, 1636 and made his vows on October 18, 1646. He renewed them in 1656.

⁴Jacques Raoul de la Guibourgère.

⁵The Prior of the Dominicans or the Reformed Jacobins of Paris (cf. no. 745).

served God in great peace and devotion, and now that we lack nothing, here we are, disunited and in distress.”

I am going to tell M. Portail to send you the watch you are requesting. I am, Monsieur, for you and for M. Guérin whom I embrace, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

720. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

August 6, 1644

I see by your letter of the tenth that you have another new scheme for educating children up to the age of eighteen in the humanities and are abandoning the idea of the seminary for clerical students, as also the proposals regarding works to be done for the youth of Catalonia. To this I shall say, Monsieur, what I have said to you at other times, that I fear you are in too great a hurry about everything. This is also the opinion of the laity who observe your behavior there, and I shall not conceal from you that a nobleman himself said this to me. Now, this happens because you are incessantly occupied with ideas and ways for making progress, and you rush to carry them out. And when you undertake something that does not succeed according to your liking, you talk of changing it at the first difficulties that present themselves. In the name of God, Monsieur, reflect on this and on what I had told you about it at other times, and do not let yourself get carried away by the impetuosity of your impulsive ideas. What usually deceives us is the appearance of good according to human reason, which never or rarely attains the divine. I have told

you on previous occasions, Monsieur, that the things of God come about by themselves, and that wisdom consists in following Providence step by step. And you can be sure of the truth of a maxim which seems paradoxical, namely, that he who is hasty falls back in the interests of God.

721. - JUSTE GUERIN, BISHOP OF GENEVA, TO SAINT VINCENT

August 1644

Your Missionaries continue more and more to enrich Paradise with the souls they are placing in a state of salvation, by teaching them the way there and by furnishing them with the means of attaining it through their instructions, catechesis, exhortations, preaching and administration of the sacraments, coupled with the good life they lead and the good example they give wherever they preach their missions. The only thing I regret is that their number is so small in relation to the vast extent of our diocese which has 585 parishes. Alas! If Our Lord granted me the grace before I died, of seeing that they had been to every place in this diocese, I could truthfully say, with all my heart and with a very special consolation in my soul: Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace.¹

Letter 721. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. II, p. 35.

¹Now dismiss your servant, Lord, according to your word in peace. Lk. 2:29. "Now, Master, you can dismiss your servant in peace; you have fulfilled your work." (NAB)

722. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

Paris, August 12, 1644

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Your last letter mentions the questions of Babylon and of the East Indies¹ and tells me that there seems to be a clear call from God for the Company to be in those places. What has held us back for the first-mentioned is what you told me in one of your recent letters about the necessity of first bringing six thousand écus to that land, because of the difficulty of getting money into the region every year; and what you told me in your last one, namely, that if someone goes to Goa, we could send something every year from Lisbon to Goa and from there to Ispahan. There is still another problem and it is that of giving from here to the Bishop of Babylon² the income he draws and which is destined for his diocese. Could you not have the affair arranged without all this?

I have obtained a judgment from the King that your coaches cannot be taken from you unless you are adequately reimbursed, nor can they be overtaxed before the detainer you sent us has been received. A slight indisposition which I have prevents me from writing to them.

We have learned of the Holy Father's³ death and have had a most solemn service for him. In the name of God, Monsieur,

Letter 722. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹For several years the evangelization of the East Indies was considered. Propaganda had conceived the notion of organizing the missions of the Far East and was looking for men and money essential to the undertaking. The project was fraught with difficulties. Only in 1658 did it become a reality, thanks to the Foreign Mission Society (Société des Missions-Etrangères). From this and other letters, it is apparent that Saint Vincent's assistance was solicited.

²Father Bernard de Sainte-Thérèse.

³Urban VIII, who died on July 29, 1644.

put some pressure to bear, at this time of change, for the union of M. de Saint-Aignan's⁴ priory and, if it can be done, for the confirmation of our Rules, with a revocation of the prerogative which [was]⁵ given in them to the Archbishop of Paris.⁶

I shall send you a copy of the duties, especially that of the General. All of that will have to be summarized and only the sense of it retained.

What you tell me about a call to those parts, which I mentioned to you above, impresses me, particularly regarding the Indies. I have thought of a priest and a cleric for Portugal,⁷ and perhaps we shall send them when the Ambassador leaves for there.⁸

Send me the name of the Bishop appointed for the Indies and when he intends to leave and if Goa is his diocese or how far away from it he will be.⁹

I greet M. Dehorgny and your little Community whom I embrace, prostrate in spirit at your feet and theirs, and I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

⁴Paul Chevalier, Canon of Saint-Aignan, had offered Saint Vincent a priory whose income would help defray the expenses of the retreats for ordinands. Rome would have to approve the transfer of this benefice to the Congregation of the Mission.

⁵The word *was* was omitted in the original.

⁶Jean-François de Gondi.

⁷To go from there to the Indies.

⁸Louis de Goth, Marquis de Rouillac, Ambassador of France to Portugal.

⁹Could Saint Vincent have in mind Antoine de Jésus-Marie? He was a Benedictine appointed Bishop of Miliapur on August 23, 1643. At that time, Goa had a Franciscan bishop, François des Martyrs, appointed on March 19, 1636; after his death (November 25, 1652), the diocese was vacant for twenty-three years.

723. - TO LEONOR D'ESTAMPES DE VALENCAY, ARCHBISHOP
OF RHEIMS

Paris, September 21, 1644

Your Excellency,

I thank you most humbly for the favor you kindly granted us, of taking into consideration the modest representations we made you regarding Sedan,¹ and I ask your pardon with all

Letter 723. - Archives of the Department of the Ardennes, series A, art. 21, original autograph letter. This letter was published for the first time in *Recueil des Edits, Déclarations, Lettres Patentes et Arrêts du Conseil enregistrés au Parlement de Metz, ensemble des Arrêts de Règlements rendus par cette Cour* (Metz: Pierre Marchal, 1776), vol. II, p. 53.

¹A writ of the Archbishop of Rheims (*Procès-verbal contenant règlement pour les pensions des curés des ville et bailliage de Sedan et le rétablissement de la Religion catholique èsdits lieux dans le Recueil des Edits*, p. 43), dated August 23, 1644, gives us the circumstances that led to the above letter. An additional note of September 24 informs us as to what followed. "We have come to the conclusion," the Prelate wrote, "that it is expedient to establish a pastor and six priests in this city of Sedan. One priest will be in charge of teaching catechism to the young people; of instructing them in what they should believe, giving them lessons in piety; and will extend hospitality to and pay a preacher during Advent and Lent. Moreover, the above-mentioned M. Vincent de Paul, Superior of the Priests of the Mission, has sent someone there to fulfill the functions of pastor, with the consent of the Abbé de Mouzon, Collator of said parish, besides the considerable bequest which our deceased Louis le Juste, of happy memory, had given because of his piety, both for the administration of the said parish and for the preaching of missions in the said territory under our authority, where necessary, with our permission. The same M. Vincent has been given some funds which we have calculated could produce at least 2,500 livres in revenue, according to the information extended to us by some Priests of the Mission. We allowed them a portion of the tithes of Sedan and Balan Inasmuch as the said Priests of the Mission stated they could not conclude anything because they did not know the amount of the King's gift nor M. Vincent de Paul's intentions, they therefore requested time so as to inform him of it, which I granted them" On September 24, the Archbishop added: "And since then, the said M. Vincent de Paul, having been informed of our report and the opinion of the Priests of the Mission, sent M. Lambert aux Couteaux who, after he had visited Sedan and considered everything, then returned to M. Vincent in Paris to give him an account. He sent him back to us from Paris with the power of negotiating with us, as he informed us in a letter from Paris on the twenty-first of this month, the tenor of which follows." After having reproduced the letter in its entirety, the Prelate continued: "In consequence of this letter, M. Lambert aux Couteaux informed us that he was delegated by said M. Vincent de Paul and the entire Congregation to negotiate with us and will ratify the decisions we make. The following was decided: to support in Sedan a pastor, seven other priests of the said

possible humility and respect because something in my way of proceeding displeased you. I assure you, Excellency, that this was unintentional, because my greatest desire has always been to obey you in all things. I had contented myself with asking the Queen if she understood that what the late King gave for the Mission of Sedan should be used for the same end, without saying or doing anything to prevent the sending of the Letters Patent, assuring myself that, once this point was settled by Her Majesty, we could have recourse to you, Excellency, with full confidence that you would do everything within reason; and that is what you have done, according to what Monsieur Lambert has told me. I am sending him to you to terminate the affair in whatever way you see fit, and I shall ratify it here. So, give your orders, Excellency, and we shall obey you with entire submission and affection.

Your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Mission and two Brothers, together with a vicar or another priest designated by them and approved by us or our Vicars General to serve Balan. Of the eight priests, at least four will remain in Sedan to carry out parish functions, to preach, catechize and give missions; the other four will be employed in giving missions in the territories of Sedan, Raucourt and Saint-Manges, and other places in our diocese, under our authority and with our permission. They will be obliged to return to Sedan, at least the greater part of them, for the feasts of Easter, the Blessed Sacrament [Corpus Christi], Saint Lawrence, the Assumption, and Christmas, so as to render more solemn the services on these days. And because of the remonstrance that we received with regard to the preacher, we did not think it proper to charge them for lodging, maintenance and stipend for the preacher; therefore, we have ordered that for this maintenance and stipend the sum of one hundred sixty livres will be taken from the revenue due on the estate of Bazailles, besides” There are several documents concerning this affair in the Bibl. Nat. n.a.f. 22.326, reg., f°56ff.

724. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[Between September 21 and October 13, 1644]¹

Monsieur,

The confidence our good God has given my heart towards your charity overcomes the fear I should justly have of bothering you, in order to entreat you most humbly to remember that the time is approaching for the execution of a clause included in the little report I sent you before leaving; also, Monsieur, to remind you of Monsieur Guillou's desire regarding the hospital where his sister is. I fear he may be offended if we do not give him any answer within the time he was hoping to get some Sisters, which is before All Saints' Day.

Allow me, Most Honored Father, to ask you what we are to hope concerning your return.² Oh! If only I could let you know my fears, how consoled I should be! They all end up in the fear of being abandoned by God, as I believe I have merited so many times.

I most humbly entreat you to allow me to make the journey to Chartres in your absence, in order to recommend to the Blessed Virgin all our needs and the proposals I made to you.³ It is high time to be thinking about myself, and I tell you before God that I think the welfare of our Little Company is greatly at stake in this.

Last week a lady came here, the widow of a nobleman named Monsieur Sigongne, to tell me she was coming to see if she could serve God with us. She is still in deep mourning over her husband, which is detaching her from everything. She has no children. I do not know if it is God who is sending her. I was filled with compassion for her, seeing her bereaved state. If she returns, Monsieur, would you think it a good idea for us to keep her for a while, to make a little retreat which, depending upon her need, might, if anything, take

Letter 724. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹The year is indicated on the back of the original; the contents of the letter allow us to pinpoint the month and days within which the letter was written.

²Saint Vincent left for Richelieu shortly after September 21, 1644 (cf. no. 723) and returned to Fréneville on October 13 (cf. no. 725), where he remained a few days before going back to Paris.

³Saint Louise has left us a short account of what she did at Chartres, where she remained from October 14-17. (Cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 111.)

her mind off things? I did not think I should make this decision before consulting you about it.

But our good God has permitted this long journey without giving me what I had asked Him, after all. I entreat His goodness to send you back soon with your health completely restored. Do me the charity of taking the trouble to give me some assurance of its present state, and that you still do me the honor of believing that our good God wills me to call myself truthfully, Monsieur, your most humble and very grateful daughter and servant.

L. DE MARILLAC

Allow me, Monsieur, to present to you the humble greetings of your daughters, our very dear Sisters who, along with me, have been very surprised at your absence.

Sister Anne from Saint-Paul⁴ is quite ill.

We are all beginning to feel that it has been a very long time since we have had the happiness of coming together with you for a conference, to which we are most eagerly looking forward. In preparation, we ask in all humility for your holy blessing.

This lady has been a widow for nine months. She is of high rank.

You are well aware that, if La Beauce was on your way, I would try to find out the time of your return, to make the journey I am requesting of you. I beg you to forgive me for bothering you so many times with this matter.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior General of the Priests of the Mission

⁴Sister Anne Hardemont.

725. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL¹

Richelieu, October 5, 1644

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I was distressed to a degree you can imagine by the death of M. Perdu,² and equally consoled, seeing the way in which Our Lord has taken him. A very devout service, accompanied by tears, was held for him here, and a most consoling conference.

Enclosed is the lease which I am returning to you signed. If M. Trubois were to give six hundred livres, I would much prefer that, supposing that we are dealing on those terms. I am having nothing done without the agreement of M. Sorus.

You would do well to send the four hundred livres to Fréneville,³ if you have not done it already. We owe them to the farmer for his wheat harvest.

Embrace M. Gallais for me; I am anxious to embrace him.

We shall decide what to do about the mission of Villevaudé;⁴ as for the other one, do not even think about it.

I am greatly consoled by what you tell me about M. Bourdet;⁵ embrace him as well.

Letter 725. - Original autograph letter, put on sale by M. Charavay in 1927 or 1928. Coste (no. 725) used a facsimile of an incomplete text which was found in *Bibl. Nat. n.a.f.* 1473, reg., f° 1695. The text of the original was published in *Annales C.M.* in 1928 and reprinted in *Mission et Charité*, 19-20, pp. 50-52. This edition uses the latter text.

¹Antoine Portail had been the First Assistant of Saint Vincent since 1642. He substituted for the Superior General when the latter was absent from Saint-Lazare. When this letter was written, Saint Vincent was in Richelieu where he was making a canonical visitation.

²Jacques Perdu; he died in September 1644.

³In 1635 Madame de Herse gave two farms to the house of Saint-Lazare; one in Mespuits, the other in Fréneville, a little village in the commune of Valpuseaux (Essonne). Saint Vincent stayed at the latter from time to time.

⁴A little place in the diocese of Meaux.

⁵At this period, two Priests of the Mission had this name. It is not possible to determine with certitude to which of the two Saint Vincent refers in this passage; it is probably Jean Bourdet.

I will not be able to leave here for three or four days. Oh! how much business I have come upon!

You will be having some additional guests: MM. Colée, Buisson,⁶ Durot, who is ill; Le Noir,⁷ Chastel,⁸ and perhaps Lefebvre and Brother Bastien. I beg you, Monsieur, to arrange for their lodgings.

O bon Dieu, Monsieur, how many things have I found far removed from our expectations!

Do not have any of those men whom I sent you leave before I send you word, but keep them in readiness to go, and tell M. Alméras that I approve of what he suggests to me about Cantelin and the two others he mentions. Tell Mademoiselle Le Gras that I approve of what she wrote me⁹ and that I shall try to carry out everything she promised in my name but that it is difficult for me to meet her in that place and that, by the grace of God, I am well, although I am working from morning till night.

If there is anything urgent that I should know, contact the Pastor of Tours who will reach me, or send an express messenger to Fréneville where I shall not be able to arrive before Thursday, the 15th¹⁰ of this month. I am, in the love of Our Lord,

Your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

If I am unable to write to M. Lambert, tell him that we are in the thick of all this confusion, that we need to pray, and

⁶Nicolas Buisson entered the Congregation of the Mission in 1630 and was ordained a priest in 1632. He left the Company the following November. (Cf. no. 731.)

⁷Jacques Le Noir, born in Arras in 1615, entered the Congregation of the Mission as a priest on May 12, 1641.

⁸Pierre Du Chastel, born in 1606 in Courcelles-le-Comte, diocese of Arras, entered the Congregation of the Mission as a priest in 1641, and died in 1648 at Saint-Lazare.

⁹The allusion here is to the pilgrimage Saint Louise planned to make to Chartres, where she hoped to find Saint Vincent.

¹⁰In actuality Saint Vincent arrived at Fréneville on Thursday, the thirteenth.

that I beg him to write about my absence to the Archbishop of Rheims¹¹ and that we shall work on his affair when I get back.

Addressed: Monsieur Portail, Priest of the Mission, at Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris, in Paris

726. - TO JEAN DEHORGNY, PRIEST OF THE MISSION, IN ROME

Fréneville, October 14, 1644

Monsieur,

Upon my return from Richelieu where I have just made the visitation in fairly good health, I received two of your letters here in which you write about the mission near Saint-Sauveur.¹ The two letters were not for me; you wrote one to the late M. Dufour.²

¹¹Léonor d'Estampes de Valençay, Archbishop of Rheims from 1642 to 1651.

Letter 726. - In his *Isographie des hommes célèbres* (4 vols., Paris, 1828-1830), vol. II, p. 156, Théophile Delarue gives a facsimile of the passage of this letter contained between the words *M. Codoing* and *if he so pleases*. The text of the facsimile differs very little from that found in M. Pémartin, vol. I, no. 418, p. 482. We are of the opinion that the latter had the original under his eyes and that it belonged to M. de Châteaugiron. So, that text is followed with no hesitation for the portion not contained in the facsimile of Delarue.

¹Jean Dehorgny was giving a three-week mission in Longone, a small market-town dependent on the Abbey of San Salvatore in Sabina. (Cf. *Notices*, vol. I, p. 158.)

²Antoine Dufour, born in Montdidier, was a subdeacon when he was received into the Congregation of the Mission, December 31, 1639. He made his vows on September 29, 1642, was placed in Sedan, then put at the head of the Collège des Bons-Enfants, which he directed from 1643 to 1644. During a slight illness, he offered his life to God to preserve that of the Holy Founder whose state prompted the most lively anxiety. His illness worsened while the Saint slowly recovered his health. One night, narrates Abelly (*op. cit.*, bk. I, chap. IV, p. 245), three knocks resounded on the door of the room where the Saint was resting. Those nursing him opened the door, but nobody was there. Saint Vincent understood. He called a cleric and requested him to recite a part of the Office for the Dead. Antoine Dufour had just died. Abelly erroneously placed this event in 1645; it happened in 1644, as Collet asserted (cf. *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 406).

Monsieur Codoing has most humbly asked me to relieve him of the office of Superior, in such a way that I could not but grant him what he requested in the spirit in which he asked it. I beg you, Monsieur, to take his place for a time, although I had asked you to return. It is not that we do not need you here. Our Lord will provide, if He so pleases.

You have perhaps heard that in the place of M. Dufour,³ who was in Sedan and who was unsatisfactory, we have put our Brother Damiens,⁴ who has the grace of God for that, and M. Cuissot for the direction of the collège.⁵ It only remains for me to tell you that I think you should keep M. Codoing with you for a while so he can instruct you a little in the duties of the house. Our business consists in getting the approbation of our Rules in the manner that we all were obliged to devote ourselves to them; and in a number of other small business matters about which we have written to Monsieur Codoing. And when you have familiarized yourself with affairs and

³Claude Dufour, born in 1618 in Allanche (Cantal), entered the Congregation on May 4, 1644, shortly after his ordination to the priesthood. He was first sent to Montmirail (1644), then placed at the head of the seminary in Saintes (1646-1648). He was very virtuous but of a rigid and unobliging kind of virtue. The life of a Missionary was too soft in his eyes. He persuaded himself that the life of the Carthusian was more suited to his love for prayer and mortification. Saint Vincent was of an entirely different opinion and Claude Dufour, always docile, abandoned his plans. To free him from temptations of this kind, the Saint placed his name on the list of priests to be sent to Madagascar. While waiting for the day of departure, the Saint employed him first in Sedan, then in Paris, where he entrusted him with the Internal Seminary during the absence of M. Alméras, and finally, in La Rose as Superior (1654-1655). At that period, sea voyages were long. M. Dufour left Nantes in 1655 and arrived in Madagascar in the month of August of the following year. A few days after he landed, he died, August 18, 1656. (Cf. *Notices*, vol. III, pp. 14-23.)

⁴Gabriel Damiens, born in Bourseville (Somme), entered the Congregation of the Mission on March 30, 1640, at nineteen years of age, made his vows on October 16, 1642, was ordained a priest in 1646, then taught philosophy at the Bons-Enfants. His insistence on combating Jansenism was the reason why Saint Vincent withdrew him from teaching. The Saint knew young people and their tendency to side with doctrines too violently attacked. Saint Vincent refers to clerical students as *Brothers*. The context usually determines whether the one referred to is a coadjutor Brother or a clerical student destined for the priesthood.

⁵The seminary of the Bons-Enfants.

have done what you and he can do, it would be well for him to go make a visitation of our little houses in Marseilles and Annecy.

M. Dufestel writes me that he is sending you M. Nouelly,⁶ to his deep regret, because he was of great assistance to him.

And that, Monsieur, is all I can tell you for now, except that I embrace all the members of the Company there, prostrate in spirit at their feet and yours, and I am your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Dehorgny, Priest of the Mission

727. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL, IN PARIS

Fréneville, October 14, 1644

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I arrived here last evening in fairly good health. Only a toothache is still with me but it is lessening, by the grace of God.

⁶Boniface Nouelly, born in Collonges (Ain), entered the Congregation of the Mission as a priest on November 22, 1643, at twenty-five years of age. In 1644 he was placed in Marseilles and in 1646 was sent to Algiers to direct the new mission. After a year of hard and dedicated work, he caught the plague at the bedside of a plague-stricken man and died on July 22, 1647. (Cf. *Notices*, vol. III, pp. 28-34.)

Letter 727. - Archives of the Mission, photograph. In 1913, the original autograph letter belonged to M. La Caille, 50, boulevard Malesherbes, Paris.

I wrote to you from Saint-Dyé¹ that the Queen has placed two thousand livres in our hands for the nobility of Lorraine. It was most unfortunate that you did not know this. I thought I had told M. Gentil² about it. No doubt someone has told the Queen and here we are in a blameworthy situation. And since I had written about this meeting,³ you might well have been thinking that either we had received some money or that it had to be advanced. I ask you, Monsieur, to send notices everywhere, to apologize, through Father Lambert, to the Company, when it meets at Saint-Lazare, and to take a thousand francs from the safe, even twelve hundred, if necessary.

You answered M. Brisacier⁴ very well.

I am uncertain about going to Fontainebleau⁵ from here. The Cardinal's⁶ illness, the business about the Charity⁷ and the question of the nobility of Lorraine seem to require it, in

¹Saint-Dyé-sur-Loire, a town of Loir-et-Cher.

²Mathurin Gentil, born in Brou (Eure-et-Loir) in May 1604, entered the Congregation of the Mission on November 11, 1639 and made his vows on October 17, 1642. He was Treasurer at Saint-Lazare in 1644 and in 1647 held the same position in the seminary of Le Mans. He died in that town on April 13, 1673, regretted by everyone, especially by his Superior General, Edme Jolly, who announced his death to the Company in a most laudatory circular.

³The meeting for the nobility of Lorraine.

⁴Laurent de Brisacier was born in Blois on August 2, 1609. He was the brother of Jean, the Jesuit who made a name for himself by his controversies against the Jansenists, and the uncle of Jacques-Charles, the future Superior of the Foreign Missions Society. He became Dean of Saint-Sauveur in Blois in 1632; he was tutor to Louis XIV around 1649, during M. Péréfixe's absence. He received from the Court the mission of going to Rome to negotiate various affairs and was charged by the Queen to fulfill a vow she had taken, during her son's illness, if he were cured, of funding a solemn Office every year on the feast of Saint-Louis in the church of Notre-Dame-de-Lorette. Laurent de Brisacier also became Councillor of State. His quarrels with the Chapter of Blois caused him many a lawsuit. He took an active part in the foundation of the seminary of the Foreign Missions and died in Blois on February 15, 1690. (Cf. André Rebsomen, "Une famille Blésoise, Les de Brisacier," in *Mémoires de la Société des sciences et lettres de Loir-et-Cher* [June 30, 1902].)

⁵The Court was there.

⁶Cardinal Mazarin.

⁷Probably the establishment of a Confraternity of Charity.

addition to a certain other reason, as well as the mission the Queen had thought of having us give in that locality.⁸ I am writing to the Bishop of Boulogne.⁹ M. Alméras will propose the Queen's idea at the meeting¹⁰ and will see who among those Gentlemen could assist in this mission, if it takes place; he will take their names and ask them to be ready in case the Queen is determined to have it.

I very humbly greet the Prior¹¹ and M. Cousin,¹² as also the Little Company and I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Monsieur Portail, Priest of the Mission, in Paris

727a. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL AT SAINT-LAZARE

Fréneville, October 15, 1644

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

⁸Should we relate to this mission the incident narrated by Abelly in bk. III, chap. XIV, p. 235? Urged by the Queen to give a mission at Fontainebleau, the Saint sent some of the Priests of his Congregation there. It happened that a monk had begun a series of sermons. So as not to upset him, the Missionaries set their sermons for a different time. Despite this precaution, his audience dwindled. He became jealous and complained bitterly. The Saint, being informed of the matter, begged the Queen to allow him to withdraw his priests and she agreed.

⁹François Perrochel. He was not yet consecrated.

¹⁰Meeting of the Tuesday Conferences.

¹¹Adrien Le Bon, Prior of Saint-Lazare.

¹²Claude Cousin, former religious of Saint-Lazare.

Letter 727a. - Original autograph letter; a photocopy is in the Archives of the Mission, Paris. In 1942 the original belonged to the pastor of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet in Paris. The letter was published in the *Annales C.M.* (1941-1942), pp. 272-273 and reprinted in *Mission et Charité*, 19-20, pp. 52-53. This edition uses the latter text.

(1) Enclosed is the response to the Mother Superior¹ of the faubourg monastery. I ask you to send it to her as soon as possible and to send the Duchesse d'Aiguillon hers as soon as you receive it.

(2) I have to speak to the Abbé de Vaux myself when I return, God willing.

(3) Oh, how saddened I am at the loss for the Church of M. Caignet! I do not recommend to you our Brothers Get² and Jamain;³ I hope Brother Alexandre⁴ will do excellent work there. My greetings to them both. Blessed be God that M. Trubois has finally repaid the seven hundred livres. It is right to prefer this, if things are ready for that; you have done well to put M. Sorus to work on it. I have always had my doubts: God is taking care that it is not definite.

You will learn from the letter I wrote you from Saint-Dyé⁵ that the persons who are to come from Richelieu will not leave until the eve of Saint-Simon⁶ because there are no seats in the coach.

I am worried about Sister Genevieve's illness. I entreat you, Monsieur, to give her and her sick companion my regards.

Blessed be God that all is going well at Saint-Lazare. I hope to leave for Fontainebleau on Monday, if my slight infirmity allows me.

¹Mother Anne-Marguerite Guérin, Superioress of the second monastery of the Visitation (in the faubourg Saint-Jacques) from 1640 to 1646.

²Firmin Get, born in Chépy (Somme) on January 19, 1621, entered the Congregation of the Mission on January 6, 1641, made his vows in January 1643 and was ordained a priest in 1647. He was stationed in the house in Marseilles in 1648, took over its direction in 1654, and held that post till 1662, except for a very short time in Montpellier where he spent only a few months (1659-1660) in establishing a seminary. He became Superior in Sedan (1663-1668, 1673-1681) and in Le Mans (1670-1673), and Visitor of the Province of Poitou, a position he occupied until April 4, 1682.

³Martin Jamain, born in Andieu in 1619, entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 8, 1640 and made his vows on October 10, 1642. He died at Saint-Lazare in 1645.

⁴Coadjutor Brother Alexandre Véronne.

⁵Saint-Dyé-sur-Loire (Loir-et-Cher).

⁶October 27.

I am returning M. Grimal's letter to you, asking you to follow through on it, if you can.

I am asking Alexandre to do what M. Grimal asks with regard to the covers.

Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed [in another's handwriting]: Monsieur Portail,
Priest of the Mission, at Saint-Lazare

727b. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL AT SAINT-LAZARE

Fontainebleau, October 19, 1644

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I just arrived here yesterday, Tuesday, and hope to return to Fréneville today in order to try to conclude the affair with the Mespuits farmer, who is in a state of confusion. He is determined to put an end to the farm, and I do not know what he will do tonight, although what he is asking is not just. From Fréneville I hope to go to Chartres, a day or two later, to fulfill the vow made for me there.

Please give these two messages to M. Chaumel.

The Queen has done me the honor of commanding me to send someone here to give the mission as soon as possible. You and M. Gallais¹ will see whom you could designate for it. Nothing should be done while the Court is there.

Letter 727b. - Original autograph letter which belongs to the Sisters at Mount-Saint-Joseph, Halifax (Canada). The letter was published in *Annales C.M.* (1927), pp. 14-15 and reprinted in *Mission et Charité*, 19-20, pp. 54-55. This edition uses the latter text.

¹Guillaume Gallais had just left Sedan and was at Saint-Lazare awaiting an assignment.

I praise God for Brother Get's improved health and ask God to restore him to perfect health for good.

I sent you two letters for Rome. You have not seen the ones I sent you to deliver. M. Codoing is asking to be removed from office. I am writing to M. Dehorgny² to take his place. Please say nothing about this yet.

I recommend myself to the prayers of M. Lambert and his fellow solitaries.³

All things considered, I think Jourdain is right about the wine supply.

The Duchesse,⁴ speaking about the means devised by M. Lambert, tells me⁵

I see nothing requiring the presence of M. Du Chesne in Paris. My greetings to him, together with the whole house, and especially to the Prior.⁶ I am your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Monsieur Portail, Priest of the Mission, at Saint-Lazare

728. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL AT SAINT-LAZARE

Fréneville, October 21, 1644

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

²At that very time, Jean Dehorgny was in Rome making a canonical visitation of the house, and replaced Codoing as Superior.

³By this expression Saint Vincent wished to designate those making a spiritual retreat at the same time as Lambert aux Couteaux.

⁴The Duchesse d'Aiguillon.

⁵Saint Vincent forgot to complete this sentence.

⁶Adrien Le Bon.

This is the Pastor of Mespuits.¹ I ask you to offer him hospitality and see that he gets settled in our house.

I have finally come to an agreement with the Mespuits farmer, thank God. We owe him 368 livres. We need 400. I ask you to send the money to us with Rivet² or someone else, or with the Etampes messenger if he is willing to take responsibility for it, along with a letter addressed to M. du Pred, our Procurator, to accept it and get it to us.

I hope to leave for Chartres tomorrow, Saturday, or Monday at the latest, and to go to Paris on Thursday, or Friday at the latest, with God's help. I intend to stay with M. Norais³ in Saclay,⁴ to see the farm he is offering us and which the Prior⁵ is advising us so ardently to accept.⁶ However, do not mention to him what I am telling you about going by there. He would go to a lot of trouble to have M. Norais there.

I hope to send Brother Jean Lequeux⁷ back to you tomorrow.

Send us M. Gallais to announce the mission in Fontainebleau on All Saints Day. It would be advisable for him

¹A small commune in Essonne where the Congregation owned a farm given them by Madame de Herse.

²Probably Jacques Rivet, a coadjutor Brother, who was born in Houdan (Yvelines) on September 11, 1620, entered the Congregation of the Mission on December 16, 1641 and made his vows on April 22, 1646.

³Jacques Norais, secretary of the King and a great friend of the Congregation of the Mission. In vol. III, no. 1089, there is a beautiful letter from Saint Vincent to M. Norais consoling him in his trials.

⁴Near Palaiseau, in Essonne.

⁵Adrien Le Bon.

⁶The farm offered Saint Vincent was in the little hamlet of Orsigny. The Saint accepted it by a contract signed December 22, 1644 (cf. Arch. Nat. S 6687). As long as M. and Mlle Norais were alive, the Congregation possessed it in all tranquillity, but after the death of Norais, some cousins claimed it (1658). They sued and gained their cause. The farm was bought at a court-ordered auction by the Priests of the Mission in 1684.

⁷Born in Châlons-sur-Marne, Jean Lequeux entered the Congregation of the Mission as a coadjutor Brother on June 29, 1639 at nineteen years of age, and made his vows on November 13, 1643.

to get the blessing of the Archbishop of Sens⁸ if he is in Paris or Lys,⁹ about a quarter of a league from Melun. It would also be a good idea for you to write to him in my absence, if he is leaving Friday, and to the Father Prior, who is Pastor in Fontainebleau, to tell them the order I have received from the Queen and to ask them, in my absence, to accept it.

See whom you could send and whether it would be expedient to send Messieurs Boucher and Mollin¹⁰ there.

I am fairly well, thank God, and am your servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

We have promised a new flowered camlet cope to the Church in Mespuits; please send it to the Pastor.

729. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Thursday morning [After 1638]¹

Mademoiselle Le Gras is most humbly requested not to notify the Sisters for tomorrow's meeting because the Queen has just sent for me and it will be necessary to have the meeting of the officers of the Hôtel-Dieu tomorrow.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

⁸Octave de Saint-Lary de Bellegarde (1621-1646).

⁹Today called Dammarie-les-Lys (Seine-et-Marne). It has the ruins of an old Cistercian Abbey for nuns to which Queen Blanche, mother of Saint Louis, had willed her heart.

¹⁰Jean Mollin, born in Beauvais, entered the Congregation of the Mission on June 20, 1640 at twenty years of age, made his vows on November 1, 1643, and was ordained a priest in 1644.

Letter 729. - When Coste prepared his edition, the original autograph letter was in the possession of the Daughters of Charity in Sedan. A recent search for it proved fruitless.

¹Before 1639, the words "Thursday morning" would have been placed at the end of the letter, not at the beginning.

730. - TO MONSIEUR CAMPION¹

[November 10, 1644]²

I shall go most willingly next Saturday, Monsieur, to the place³ and at the time you indicate to me.

I am your humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

731. - TO JEAN DEHORGNY, IN ROME

Paris, November 11, 1644

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I wrote to you a week ago and will tell you nothing other than what I told you then, because I have not received any letters from you since that time.

We are trying to get our Common Rules approved here, as well as those for the General, for elections and for the Visitor. If we succeed, *in nomine Domini*, do not fail to see what can be done about it from where you are.

You have been told that we have substituted Brother Damiens for M. Dufour¹ in the classes. You could not imagine

Letter 730. - The Archives of the Mission, Paris, formerly possessed a copy made from the original in the possession of M. Charavay. The copy cannot now be found. This note, in the Saint's hand, was written at the end of M. Campion's letter to him.

¹A priest of the Collège de Fortet.

²That is the date of M. Campion's letter. Saint Vincent answered the same day.

³The office of M. Quarré, a notary of rue Saint-Jacques. It was a question of money.

Letter 731. - The original autograph letter belongs to the Jesuit Fathers, who keep it in the room of Saint Ignatius in Rome.

¹Claude Dufour.

how God is blessing him in this or how he satisfies the seminarians² who now number twenty-two. M. de Cuisot dismissed two of them yesterday for going out without permission.

Monsieur Soufliers is gone, as are Messieurs Buisot and Bastin.³ Messieurs Colée and Durot are sick.

I asked M. Lambert to send back Messieurs Perceval, Le Noir, du Chastel and Le Roy.⁴ We have also purged and re-purged our seminary by nine. There are thirty left and they are doing quite well, by the grace of God.

We recalled M. Gallais from Sedan and sent M. Grimal as Superior, with some persons you do not know, and they are doing very well. M. Alain⁵ and M. Dephilmain⁶ were already there.

M. Ozenne is in charge of the Troyes house. M. Bourdet⁷ is here, waiting for an assignment. In the meantime, we have given him charge of the sacristy and the doorkeepers; he is being named prefect of health. M. du Coudray is in La Rose. Those are the little changes, except for the return of M. Gilles who is working wonders for the piety and learning of our students.

If you see no prospect for the union of the Toul house from where you are, I think it is better to leave it sooner rather than later.⁸

²The seminarians of the Bons-Enfants.

³This name does not appear in the catalogue of personnel.

⁴Jean Le Roy, born in Saint-Malo (Ille-et-Vilaine), was received as a priest at Saint-Lazare on December 15, 1640, at the age of thirty-nine.

⁵Jean Alain, born in Dreux, entered Saint-Lazare as a priest on May 20, 1643 at thirty-one years of age, made his vows on April 20, 1646 and died around April 6, 1649.

⁶François Dephilmain, born in Normandel (Orne), entered Saint-Lazare as a deacon on April 14, 1642, aged twenty-five.

⁷He was previously Superior in Troyes.

⁸We have already noted that this house was disputed against the Congregation of the Mission by the Order of the Holy Spirit.

It is impossible for us to withdraw the three thousand livres we advanced for your house, in hopes of the like amount the Queen had commanded for here. Our financial embarrassment, which is considerable, constrains us to retain them on what is supposed to be sent to you. I am in a quandary; I hope I will not be this way for long. I often celebrate Holy Mass for this intention and pray that Providence may present us with an opportunity to this end.

I have asked M. Portail to write to everyone that Superiors should not see the letters subjects write to the General or the General to them. I ask you to make this understood and to begin its practice.

I am anxious about your not doing anything for the ordinands, according to the intention of the foundress.⁹ It is not our fault; nevertheless, we must continually but prudently have this end in view. On the other hand, the difficulties seem serious to me.

I embrace M. Codoing and M. Blatiron and ask both of them to be your consultors, and you, Monsieur, to make the same request of them; it is up to the General to appoint them, either personally or through the Visitor.

I embrace you all, prostrate in spirit at your feet, and I am, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Dehorgny, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Rome, in Rome

⁹The Duchesse d'Aiguillon, by a contract dated May 2, 1643, assured the house in Rome of an annual income of five thousand livres to defray the expenses of preparing ordinands. (Cf. No. 660, n. 1 for details of this contract.)

732. - NICOLAS PAVILLON, BISHOP OF ALET, TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

Allow me to be so bold as to join my most humble prayers to those of the Bishop of Angers¹ for the accident which befell his family because, in addition to the duties of common charity at such times, I am so much obliged to him on account of the edification he gives and the service he renders to this diocese, that I could not, without considerable ingratitude, fail to offer him this expression of my appreciation. It is not that I think I can add anything, Monsieur, by the recommendation I make to your charity in this instance, but in order to omit nothing of what I consider to be my duty.

I am anxious to know if you received my reply to the proposal in the letter you did me the honor of writing last July. It conveyed the total submission of my person and of my humble tasks to whatever you might judge to be God's Will on this and every other occasion.

To inform you of our modest news, in the midst of your own great and important occupations, I shall tell you that we are continuing with our meetings for the priests of the diocese and for neighboring ones who request them. I am presently holding one for around thirty priests who are making a two-week retreat at the Bishop's residence, with much fruit and edification. At the same time, some priests of the family are going around the parishes of the diocese to see what state they are in since our visitation which we concluded last year, and to see if our decrees are being put into effect. I beg for the assistance of your holy prayers for this little work and for our other minor projects since, without inconveniencing you, I cannot hope for any advice from you. Your charity will not refuse this grace to one

Letter 732. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹Claude de Rueil, Bishop of Bayonne (1622-1626), then of Angers (1626 to January 20, 1649).

who, come what may, perseveres in being always, in the love of our Savior and His holy Mother, your most humble and very obedient servant.

NICOLAS,
B[ishop] of Alet

From Alet, November 18, 1644

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, at Saint-Lazare, in Paris

733. - TO GUILLAUME DELVILLE,¹ IN MONTMIRAIL

Paris, November 20, 1644

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

It is not expedient for you to give away the farms of La Chaussée² until you have taken possession, and you should not do so until we have decided, with solid advice from this town, on the best way, which we shall do with M. du Fresne in three or four days. Moreover, you should let me know what you are being offered, before doing anything. It would be advisable to have the farms made public before giving them away. If you gave them away before taking possession, you would be committing an act of trespassing on the benefice, a

Letter 733. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹Guillaume Delville, born in Tilloy-lez-Bapaume, today Ligny-Tilloy (Pas-de-Calais), as a priest entered the Congregation of the Mission on January 19, 1641 at thirty-three years of age. He was Superior in Crécy (1644) and Montmirail (1644-1646, 1650-1651). He then retired to Arras, where for several years he continued his missionary work with Saint Vincent's permission. He died in Arras in 1658.

²A suburb of Montmirail.

fault sufficient to make us lose it. In the name of God, Monsieur, do not be hasty in business matters and do nothing important without our advice. I shall be most careful to answer you from now on.

Do not ask M. Geger for any more money. Get some from the collectors of the Montmirail property or someone else; we will repay it here at the proper moment.

You are right in what you tell me about having to tread lightly with Madame Gomer.

I beg you to greet and thank the Prior³ for me for the kind welcome he always gives you. I will be infinitely consoled to see, honor and serve him, if he comes to this city.

So, the Chamblon⁴ farm must be left as it is.

I will gain nothing by speaking to the Queen about what you tell me of the violence to the buildings. The business was handled by the late King, and those managing these affairs will turn around anything I could say about it. Nevertheless, I shall say something. Oh! What a great evil war is!

The alms given out at the Hôtel-Dieu for the choirboys and those good women should be continued and then we shall see. I will speak to Father de Gondi about it.

We shall not fail to pray for good⁵ If I can be of service to his family, I shall do so.

I praise God for all you tell me about the late Mademoiselle de Thiercelin.

Blessed be God that the nobility call for you when they are sick! This is a good work and the most effective means of cooperating in their salvation. If they recover, you are getting them to take the resolution to serve God better and to adopt a better manner of living; and if they die, you are placing them

³Jean-François Delabarre, born in Château-Thierry, was named Prior of Montmirail in 1636. He resigned in 1646 and died in 1647.

⁴A village in the commune of Montlevon (Aisne).

⁵In the original letter, the name was overlooked in passing from one page to another.

in the merciful hands of Our Lord. I earnestly desire that the same be done with the poor, as far as this is possible.

You should at least have a Brother with you.

Blessed be God, Monsieur, for what you tell me about those pastors who want to make their retreat at your house! *O Jésus, Monsieur!* welcome them and during that time send someone to replace them, to give the mission there or revisit the people who might want to be reconciled, if the mission has been given in their parish. Or, at least, send someone there on Sundays and holy days, and those Gentlemen could ask their neighboring pastors to assist their parishioners in cases of extreme necessity during their absence.

As for the gentleman who has the same intention, please do as we do here.

I am going to tell Alexandre⁶ to send you what is set down in his note.

What can I tell you about the mission of Beuvarde⁷? You will do well to give it while Monsieur and Madame de Melun are there. Assure them that what has been reported to them is false; namely, that I said I would talk to the Queen about the non-execution of Madame de la Bécherelle's will.⁸ That thought never entered my mind, not even any impatience. Tell them I remain their most humble servant and that we shall try to send them a priest in place of the one who is there.

Have you been given the fifty écus the late Madame de la Bécherelle bequeathed to you?

The pen is being taken from my hand and I am obliged to conclude this letter, recommending myself to your holy prayers, prostrate in spirit at your feet and those of your Company whom I greet. I am sending you this by express

⁶Brother Alexandre Véronne, infirmarian at Saint-Lazare.

⁷In Aisne.

⁸The mission in Beuvarde, founded by Madame de la Bécherelle on July 3, 1643, was supposed to be given every five years.

messenger so you will not give away the La Chaussée and Maladrerie farms until after taking possession.⁹

I am, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Delville, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Montmirail, in Montmirail

734. - TO GUILLAUME DELVILLE, IN MONTMIRAIL

Saint-Lazare, November 20, 1644

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Since my last letter which you will receive by this same messenger, I have thought about asking you to go and receive the orders and the blessing of the Bishop of Soissons¹ and to express to him the wish of the Duc de Retz² to join the La Chaussée hospital to the Mission; that the Bishop of Troyes³

⁹On the presentation of Pierre de Gondî, Duc de Retz and Baron de Montmirail (September 29, 1643), the Bishop of Troyes had united in perpetuity to the Congregation of the Mission on June 20, 1644, the Priory or the Hôtel-Dieu de la Chaussée in the suburb of Montmirail, diocese of Troyes. This carried with it the duty to maintain two priests and a Brother who would give missions wherever the Bishop would send them; keep up the buildings, meet all the spiritual and temporal obligations of the Priory, and concede to the Bishop the right to make visitations and a "superiorship for two livres and five deniers a year." (Cf. Arch. Nat. S 6708.)

Letter 734. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, copy made from the original autograph letter put on sale by M. Charavay in 1913.

¹Simon Le Gras.

²Pierre de Gondî, Duc de Retz and Baron de Montmirail, the eldest son of Father de Gondî. This former pupil of Saint Vincent had succeeded his father in his titles and high positions. He was, like him, General of the Galleys and Seigneur de Gannes.

³François Malier du Houssaye (1641-1678).

on whom the hospital originally depended, has agreed to the union, on condition that we be established in his⁴ diocese; that the inhabitants of Montmirail have sent a deputation to Father de Gondi to ask him not to consent to our going to live in the diocese of Troyes and to keep us in Montmirail; that the above-mentioned Father has given his consent to this, and so have I, in the event that the Bishop of Soissons accepts it, and actually gives us his consent. In that case, we shall most humbly entreat the Bishop of Troyes to agree to our residing in Montmirail. I am not writing to the Bishop of Soissons. I felt he would not be opposed to your being given that work to do, nor to Monsieur Dufour⁵ either.

The Bishop-elect of Boulogne⁶ had a wen on his knee which has prevented him from being able to give the mission at Soissons. We shall try to make arrangements to have it during Lent, if the Bishop is agreeable to this. I offer him my most humble and respectful submission and obedience,⁷ with all possible humility and respect. I also most humbly greet Monsieur Dufour, together with your Little Company, and am, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Please take the trouble to write to me via Soissons.

Addressed: Monsieur Delville, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Montmirail, in Montmirail

⁴The original letter has *our*.

⁵Claude Dufour.

⁶François Perrochel.

⁷Saint Vincent had added here the words *and those of this Little Company*, which he afterwards crossed out.

735. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

I am extremely anxious about my son, who arrived Saturday with the Comtesse de Maure.¹ She informed me that Sunday she gave him a note and he was supposed to come see me, and she does not know where he could be. What should I do? I do not know if he has been to the Bons-Enfants. Should I send someone there or would you, Monsieur, send someone there to find out if he has been there and what he has done? I most humbly beg this of you, for the love of God. You know that my sorrow and my apprehensions are not slight and that I am, Monsieur, your most obedient and very grateful daughter and servant.

L. DE M.

December 2, [1644]²

I cannot get help from anyone else in the world, and I have almost never had any except from your charity.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

Letter 735. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Anne Doni d'Attichy, one of the daughters of Valence de Marillac, and a cousin of Saint Louise. She had married Louis de Rochechouart, Comte de Maure, who is known principally for his role in the Fronde. Her contemporaries considered the Comtesse de Maure "infinitely witty, capable, learned, knowledgeable and extraordinary in all things. To be in her court, one had to be very polite, for well-bred people of both sexes came there from everywhere." In her old age she became extremely eccentric; concern for her health robbed her of all peace of mind.

²Date added on the back of the original.

736. - CHARLES-FRANCOIS D'ABRA DE RACONIS, BISHOP
OF LAVAUR,¹ TO SAINT VINCENT

[Between 1643 and 1646]²

Since yesterday, when I had the honor of conversing with you, I have seen the Prince de Condé³ on the subject of Jansenism.⁴ I found him ardent and enlightened against the errors of this author. He strongly encouraged me to continue my work and to back up your zeal for the defense of the Church, about which I spoke to him at great length and he was delighted. He ordered me to do two things: first, to see the Nuncio⁵ and to tell him, in his name, that he would be pleased to be able to meet him in some church to discuss this affair with him and to point out to him how absolutely necessary it

Letter 736. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. XII, p. 416.

¹A converted Huguenot, who became a preacher and chaplain to the King, then professor of theology at the Collège de Navarre, Charles-François was consecrated Bishop of Lavaur on May 22, 1639. He died on July 16, 1646 in his native region, Raconis, in the diocese of Chartres, after having struggled vigorously against Jansenism.

²This letter would seem to belong to the period when the Prince de Condé was a member of the Regency Council.

³Henri II de Bourbon, Prince de Condé and father of the Grand Condé. Father René Rapin wrote in his *Mémoires* (3 vols., Lyons: E. Vitte, n.d.), vol. I, p. 40, "The Prince de Condé held frequent secret conferences with the Papal Nuncio and the Chancellor, through the agency of Father Vincent, in order to concur on a means of destroying these novelties for which he had a great aversion."

⁴Cornelius Jansen, better known as Jansenius, was born in the village of Accoi (Holland) in 1585. In 1604 he went to Paris to study. There he made the acquaintance of the Abbé de Saint-Cyran, who found a tutorship for him in the house of a councillor; then he took him to Bayonne, where they read together the writings of Saint Augustine. Jansenius returned to Louvain in 1617, took his doctorate there, became the head of the collège de Sainte-Pulchérie, and in 1630 received a chair of Holy Scripture in the University of that city. Through the influence of Philippe IV he was raised to the diocese of Ypres and was consecrated in 1636. Two years later he died of the plague in sentiments of submission to the Holy See. Extant is a book against France, *Mars Gallicus*, several commentaries on Holy Scripture, and letters to his friend, the Abbé de Saint-Cyran. The most important and best-known among his works is *Augustinus*, which caused a violent storm in the Church. This book, published in Louvain in 1640, and Rouen in 1652, had cost him twenty years' work. *Augustinus* was censured by Pope Urban VIII and several times later on.

⁵Nicolò di Bagno, Archbishop of Athens, Nuncio in France from June 25, 1643 to 1657. He was made Cardinal with the titular church of Sant' Eusibio and became Bishop of Senigallia on April 9, 1657. He died in Rome on August 23, 1663 at seventy-nine years of age. Saint Vincent, with whom he was in close contact, had only praise for his benevolence.

is for both Church and State to respond to this author. I did this at once, and saw the Nuncio who, after a rather long discussion, agreed that I should send him a list of the errors of Jansenius that have already been condemned either by the Councils or by the Popes, which I promised to do. From there, I returned to the Prince's residence. He was extremely satisfied with this decision and assured me he would stress its importance to the Queen and to Cardinal Mazarin. He also repeated the second order he had given me, which was to assure you of his zeal in this affair, so as to advance it in conjunction with you.

737. - TO BERNARD CODOING, IN ROME

Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris, January 4, 1645

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Just about an hour ago, I received the letter you wrote me on the 11th of last month. It has consoled me more than I can say, because it is you, and your letters always have the same effect on me.

Blessed be God for all you tell me! It is true that there was some likelihood of my no longer being tolerated in that position¹ but my sins are the cause of things working out otherwise and it did not please God to accept the sacrifices I

Letter 737. - Collection for the beatification process.

¹Abelly (*op. cit.*, bk. I, chap. XXXVII, p. 173) narrates that, after a journey of a few days outside Paris, rumor had it that the Saint was in disgrace and had received an order to leave the Court. He returned to Paris. To a priest who expressed his joy on hearing that it was a false rumor, the Saint answered: "Ah! miserable man that I am, I am not worthy of that grace." Could the journey mentioned by Abelly be the one he made to Richelieu in October 1644, and is it not necessary to reconcile what the Saint says here with this account of his biographer? Rumor of his disgrace was noised abroad more than once, especially in February 1644, when he obtained for Jean-Jacques Olier a benefice requested by Mazarin for the son of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld. (Cf. Archives du ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Mémoires et documents, France, vol. 849, f°68 and 75.)

offered Him for that intention. *In nomine Domini*, I hope they will tire of things. As for going myself for the visitation of the houses you mention, I shall tell you that Cardinal de La Rochefoucauld did me the honor of telling me many times in person that this is inadvisable because, while I am on the road or in some individual house, others would be suffering from this, since I would not be receiving their letters nor would they get my replies for a long time; and the example of the noble Order of Carthusians and of the Jesuits who act in this way, would be held up to me. Accordingly, it is fitting for you to write me what you would say to me in my presence; I will pay attention to it.

Rest assured that I have no repugnance at all to the proposal about the Indies nor about the minor seminary you are suggesting to me, things being as you state with regard to the ordinands. But what shall we do about the latter? Most of the income given to you is for this purpose; and I am beginning to see that our good foundress is upset about it. You are not telling me how many you have each month nor each week; perhaps that might satisfy her. If Monsieur Dehorgny, Monsieur Blatiron and you were of the same opinion, you could also try Saint- . . . ²

I shall give instructions this very evening to have the power of attorney drawn up, which I shall send you within two days, authorizing Monsieur Dehorgny, if he agrees, and Monsieur Blatiron as well, to buy that mansion and to pledge and mortgage your Soissons coaches, leased for about two thousand livres, and your share of the Rouen coaches from which you will draw around six thousand livres income, because it is impossible for us to send you the six thousand livres you are requesting. We would gladly do it, if we could. But take care that this mansion is situated in a really salubrious spot.

²This word was illegible on the copy.

I shall end here by recommending myself to your Holy Sacrifices with all the humility of which I am capable, and to those³ of Monsieur Dehorgny and the Community, prostrating myself in spirit at your feet and the feet of all.

I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Codoing, Priest of the Mission, in Rome

738. - TO GUILLAUME DELVILLE, IN MONTMIRAIL

Paris, February 7, 1645

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The opportunity presented by this good man¹ makes me take this time to recommend myself to your holy prayers and to those of the members of the Company you have there, whom I embrace, prostrate in spirit at your feet and theirs.

We still do not have our dispatch from the Bishop of Soissons.² He did me the honor of writing me that he consents to our establishment and will make all the arrangements with the persons we send to the mission in Soissons, which has been postponed. That is why I think you would do well to go see

³Judging from the pronoun "celles", used for "those" in French, it would seem that the Saint evidently thought he had written "recommending myself to your prayers" in the preceding line.

Letter 738. - Original autograph letter in the house of the Priests of the Mission, Genoa.

¹The bearer of the letter.

²Simon Le Gras.

him in Compiègne where he now is, to get his orders about that and to find out the difficulties, if any, of our manner of acting and what he desires of us. I sent him the conditions on which the Bishop of Meaux³ received us into his diocese⁴ and all the other prelates in places where we are established. Please see to that.

Send me all the details of what you did regarding the Chaussée farm, whether all the income is included in it and what remains, and the state of your farm in Fontaine-Essart.⁵ You should write to me often about all matters.

Good day, Monsieur. I am your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Delville, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Montmirail, in Montmirail

739. - TO CHARLES DE MONTCHAL, ARCHBISHOP OF TOULOUSE

Paris, February 24, 1645

Your Excellency,

I renew to you here the offer of my obedience with all possible humility and submission, and God knows how willingly I do this.

From what he told me a short time ago, that good priest

³Dominique Séguier.

⁴In Crécy.

⁵Louis Toutblanc, secretary of the Duc de Retz, had bequeathed to the Priests of the Mission the farms of Fontaine-Essart and Vieux-Moulins by his will of May 12, 1644. (Cf. Arch. Nat. S 6708.)

Letter 739. - The original autograph letter is in the Archives of the Chapter of Recanati (Italy).

from the Collège de Mage is still persevering in the proposal he made to good M. Flous, with the help of something he expects to be done for him here. He offers to go there whenever we wish, and to get the consent of five or six students who promised to agree to the matter, and he feels that the others will come around little by little. I most humbly entreat you, Excellency, to let me know if the affair is feasible in this manner, if the acknowledgement should precede the service, or the opposite, and how we should go about making the affair a probable success. He seems to be an upright and conscientious man and is willing to settle in this city.

We have the Abbot of Beaulieu¹ here, the brother of the late Bishop of Vabres,² and he is making earnest entreaties to have the diocese. People are giving us varying accounts of him. In the name of God, Excellency, do me the favor of writing to tell me what he is like, whether he is capable and pious and if, in short, he has the qualities suitable to this dignity and, particularly, if he is a priest. He says he is, but some of those who have spoken to me about him and who know him, know nothing about that. I shall put off making a decision until I hear what you do us the charity of writing to us about him. I boldly take the liberty of most humbly entreating you, Excellency, to inform me of what you know about him as soon as possible, and I assure you that no one will ever learn about this from me.

We have M. de Campels here. He is a longtime supporter of the Bishop of Montauban³ and opposed to the Bishop of

¹Jean de la Vallette-Cornusson, Commendatory Abbot of Beaulieu, in Rouergue; Dean of Varenne and Prior of Parisot. Some biographers of the Saint maintained that la Vallette Cornusson had been a pupil of Vincent de Paul in Buzet around 1600. The letter to Charles de Montchal renders this supposition very improbable.

²François de la Vallette died November 20, 1644. He was succeeded by Isaac Habert. Except for a span of ten years, the diocese of Vabres had been in the la Vallette family since 1563.

³Anne de Murviel (1600-1652).

Utica.⁴ What shall we do about that, Excellency? A lot of noise has been made about the affair here. Oh, how I hope that you, Excellency, may be sent here as representative, for many reasons but especially for this question. I shall suggest to them as I have already done to their parties, that they refer to you, Excellency, the question of what the first of the above-mentioned prelates will offer the second one, and what work he will allow him to do in his diocese.

Mon Dieu, Excellency, how grieved I was and still am by your brother's illness! He is awaited here by many upright men whose protector he is, and I, Excellency, am asking God to send him back to us soon in good health and to make me worthy of the favor you do me of allowing me, Excellency, to be your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

740. - *CARDINAL ANTONIO BARBERINI, PREFECT
OF PROPAGANDA, TO SAINT VINCENT*

Most Reverend Father,

Knowing how devotedly Your Reverence applies yourself to the spiritual welfare of the neighbor and particularly to the formation of those who desire to enter the priesthood in carrying out their

⁴Pierre de Bertier, Doctor of the Sorbonne, former Canon and Archdeacon of Toulouse, Coadjutor of Anne de Murviel and then of his successor (1652); in 1636 he was consecrated Bishop *in partibus* of Utica. He had to put up with a great deal of trouble from the elderly Bishop of Montauban, and several times was on the point of resigning. Some time before the death of the Prelate, he wrote to Mazarin, "His health is so good and his humor so bad that I cannot hope for his succession nor even for his favor. Therefore, my Lord, not only am I unemployed in my ministry and deprived of sufficient revenues for my position, but moreover I am constantly persecuted and believed guilty without reason." (Cf. Arch. Nat. KK 1217, p. 207.)

Letter 740. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, copy. The original of this letter from Cardinal Barberini was written in Italian.

office, the Cardinals of this Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith have commissioned me to request you, as I do in this letter, in the name of their Eminences and in my own name, to send some of your workers to Ireland to teach the correct use of the sacred ceremonies and rites to the clergy there who are totally ignorant of them, because of the long period of time in which the public exercise of the Catholic religion has been hindered by heretics, the masters of that country. The work is especially worthy of you, because of the good results that are to be expected from it in that kingdom.

May the Lord be propitious to you!

At the disposition of Your Reverence.

The Cardinal of Sant'Onofrio

Rome, February 25, 1645

741. - JACQUES-RAOUL DE LA GUIBOURGERE, BISHOP
OF SAINTES, TO SAINT VINCENT

March 1645

Our ordinands are going along marvelously well, and now there is as much a crowd seeking to be admitted to this retreat as formerly there was a difficulty trying to get individuals to make it.

742. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[Around 1645]¹

Monsieur,

We have a fairly good number of Sisters but I do not see any of them, for the present, adequately trained to begin the service of the

Letter 741. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. II, sect. V, p. 236.

Letter 742. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹No mention is made of the establishment of the Sisters at Saint-Gervais before March 24, 1646.

poor at Saint-Gervais² (I mean, by them), for I know they are already being served by others. However, if Madame de la Porte were willing just to lend us Sister Henriette³ for two weeks, I think that between now and that time we could send a few. But I also think that the Pastor⁴ and the Ladies of Saint-Gervais should know that we are only borrowing her, so that this rather abrupt change will not offend them. If someone else comes to my mind, I will let you know.

I am quite apprehensive about the matter I put on paper to your charity this morning. I am afraid of the spirit and fear the state of the soul, and find it difficult to submit myself in this matter to eternal justice. For the love of God, I beg your charity to give this some attention and to believe that I am, Monsieur, your most obedient and very grateful servant.

L. DE M.

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

743. - NICOLAS PAVILLON, BISHOP OF ALET, TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

When I was speaking with the Archbishop of Narbonne¹ during the meeting of the Estates,² he did me the honor of talking to me

²A parish in Paris.

³Sister Henriette Gesseume.

⁴Charles-François Talon (August 27, 1620 - September 25, 1651).

Letter 743. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹Claude de Rebé (1628-1659).

²The Estate of Languedoc: an assembly for a particular province. It was modeled on the Estates-General for all of France.

about some important business he had with the Duchesse de Guise.³ Knowing that you might be able to be useful to him in this and that you did me the kindness of caring for me, I thought it was my duty to offer him all the confidence your goodness has caused me to have toward you. I am sure that this most worthy Prelate is already held in such esteem by you that there is scarcely any need for me to intervene in recommending his interests to you and to add my request to his. Nevertheless, I am doing it and I beg you with all my heart to exert yourself on his behalf in every way you possibly can. I have so many proofs of his goodness and of the affection with which he is pleased to honor me, in addition to what I owe to him as his suffragan, that I could not help but be closely involved in all that concerns him and to consider his affairs as my own most important ones which I would take most to heart. Therefore, Monsieur, I ask you once more to take an interest in them. I will tell you again that the glory of God is very much at stake in the happy outcome of his affairs, and it will be a great service to facilitate for him the means of promoting it more and more in his diocese and the whole province. I expect from your kindness as well as your zeal that you will willingly give him all possible attention and I assure you that besides the service you will be rendering to God, you will be adding a great deal to the obligations I have toward you, Monsieur, as your most humble and very obedient servant.

NICOLAS,
B[ishop] of Alet

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, at Saint-Lazare

³Henriette-Catherine, Duchesse de Joyeuse, widow of Henri de Bourbon, Duc de Montpensier; afterwards wife of Charles de Lorraine, Duc de Guise. She died in Paris February 25, 1656 in her seventy-second year.

744. - JEAN-JACQUES OLIER TO SAINT VINCENT

[1644 or 1646]¹

He who has God has everything.

Monsieur,

I am being solicited from two quarters to write to you: on the one hand, by M. Landas, who would like me to testify to you the devotion of his father and mother, which I do willingly because I have been acquainted with their personal piety. I have been requested, on the other hand, by one of the ladies of the Princess² to ask you for a nun for the reform of an abbey about which the Bishop of Clermont³ is writing to you and to me to beg for this.⁴ So I am doing it in the spirit of procuring the good of the glory of God wherever this can be accomplished, and particularly in our much neglected cantons of Auvergne.

I am most willingly in Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and very obedient servant.

OLIER,
Pastor of Saint-Sulpice

Monsieur, I shall soon have the happiness of sending you the book you recently requested; it has been promised me as soon as possible.

Addressed: To Monsieur Vincent, Superior of the Missions

Letter 744. - Archives of the seminary of Saint-Sulpice, original autograph letter.

¹Changes in Abbesses, referred to in this letter, took place during the period of these dates.

²Charlotte-Marguerite de Montmorency, Princesse de Condé.

³Joachim d'Estaing (1614-1650).

⁴During Saint Vincent's ten-year term as a member of the Council of Conscience, there were only three changes of Abbesses in the Clermont diocese: two in the cathedral town, at Sainte-Claire (1644) and at Eclache (1646); the third was at Sainte-Claire of Aigueperse (1646).

745. - TOMMASO TURCO, GENERAL OF THE DOMINICANS,
TO SAINT VINCENT

Most Reverend Father,

The late arrival of the courier bringing me the letters from you, Most Reverend Father, will serve as my excuse to you, and through you, to Her Most Christian Majesty, the Queen. I shall wait until next week before making a decision about the dangerous division contemplated by some of our Brothers of the Congregation of Saint-Louis,¹ which decision the Queen in her gentle piety has left up to me, on the enlightened advice of the Council for Ecclesiastical Affairs, to which I shall conform myself on all points. But since you, Most Reverend Father, urged by the ardor of that charity which burns everywhere, have deigned to grant me favors rendered even more precious by the greatness of your virtues and merits, I confidently take the courage to call upon you with regard to a book allegedly written by Father Jean de Sainte-Marie, Superior of the convent of the Most Holy Annunciation in Paris, faubourg Saint-Honoré. He takes the liberty of insulting the Superiors General of some Orders established in Rome and of turning subjects aside from obedience to their legitimate superiors, in order to submit them to the jurisdiction of the Most Illustrious and Reverend Bishops. Therefore, I earnestly entreat you, Most Reverend Father, to see to it that, by the authority of the Most Christian Queen, this Father, being deprived of every possible recourse, be obliged to submit himself to the obedience by which I am sending him from the Paris convent to the one in Avignon. If, however, Her Majesty should think otherwise, I will withdraw my order.

Various reasons dictate this measure to me: the approach of the day when the Assembly of the Clergy of France² is to convene, at

Letter 745. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, copy made at the Curia of the Dominicans, from the collection of manuscripts entitled: *Praedicatorium Franciae. - Conventus Parisiensis*, series B, p. 105. The original of this letter was written in Latin.

¹A branch of the Dominican Order. The Languedoc Congregation (Occitana), known in 1629 as the Congregation of Saint-Louis, issued from the reform of Father Sebastien Michaëlis. It consisted of seventeen houses, the main ones in Paris, Toulouse, Bordeaux and Avignon. All the convents below the River Loire became part of the Province of Toulouse in 1646. Before 1668, the Congregation of Saint-Louis was not considered a Province, did not enjoy its privileges and was not represented in the General Chapters.

²Periodic national meeting of representatives of the French hierarchy and clergy.

which he might find a fair number of protectors; his turbulent nature; his tendency toward whatever is new; his character inclined to insolence and insubordination; his craftiness in insinuating his obstinate plans for separation into the minds of others, which only those who know him can understand. He would make light of my authority if the Most Christian Queen, in her goodness and piety, under your influence, Most Reverend Father, did not deign to use her power for the execution of the measures to be taken.

Hoping for this favor of your recommendation, to which your eminent virtues and merits give a very special efficacy before all princes, especially before Her Most Christian Majesty, I shall bear toward you, in recognition of this service, my affectionate respect and I shall pray unceasingly for you, as I heartily hope and as I ask you by this letter to pray for me, who am

Rome, 5th of the Nones³ of April, 1645

**746. - TOMMASO TURCO, GENERAL OF THE DOMINICANS,
TO SAINT VINCENT**

Most Reverend Father,

In conformity with the desire expressed by Her Most Christian Majesty, the Queen, and the Council for Ecclesiastical Affairs, I have made a decision on the division contemplated by some of our Brothers of the Congregation of Saint-Louis, and I am communicating this decision to you now. If what I have resolved, in obedience to the most pious will of Her Most Christian Majesty, the Queen, receives her approval, I ask you, Most Reverend Father, to dispose her to uphold Reverend Father Vincent Bosside, Vicar General, and to use her power so that the Brothers sent out of Paris will go to the convents assigned to them and will not be tolerated anywhere else.

³This is an obvious mistake. The "fifth day of the nones" does not exist. The text should read: *5 idus Aprilis* (April 9), because the letters that precede and follow in this collection are dated from this day.

Letter 746. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, copy made at the Curia of the Dominicans, from the collection of manuscripts entitled: *Praedicatorium Franciae. — Conventus Parisiensis*, series B, p. 111. The original of this letter was written in Latin.

Were it otherwise, they would find the means of making light of my authority for, according to what I hear, in this very spot at the heart of the Curia they have their protectors, deceived by their dissimulations and false pretexts. For myself, obedient to the voice of my conscience and the duties of my office, I have no other purpose than to re-establish in its splendor a Congregation that has been on the decline for a long time now, and to brush aside the obstacles which threaten it with worse evils. I tenderly love the Brothers entrusted to me but more than them I love God, the good of the Order and life according to the Rule.

Please excuse me, Most Reverend Father; I am speaking in all sincerity. I am, perhaps, importunate, but your piety will be full of indulgence for the zeal that impels me to expose my needs to you. I beg for your protection, to which I entrust myself implicitly. But your goodness, Most Reverend Father, has already heard and answered me. I express to you my total gratitude for this and offer you my respects. May God preserve your life.

Rome, April 17, 1645¹

747. - TO LAMBERT AUX COUTEAUX, IN RICHELIEU

Paris, April 18, 1645

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

These lines are simply to inform you that the number of Missionaries in our house in heaven was increased a short time ago by the happy death of one of our students, good Brother Jamain,¹ a native of Verdun, whom God has caused to leave

¹Father Tommaso Turco came to France during the year 1645. From Paris where he was on November 26, he went north and passed into Belgium in March 1646. He returned to Paris for Pentecost, made visitations of the convents of France, arrived in Toulouse in November, and went on to Spain. He ended his journey in May 1648.

Letter 747. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter. This letter was sent to several houses of the Congregation of the Mission.

¹Martin Jamain, a clerical student.

scholastic theology to go learn celestial theology in an instant. His exemplary life and holy death lead us piously to believe that he is already enjoying blessed immortality with the saints. My intention here is not to describe his saintly actions in detail, both because I do not have the time and because we have not yet had the conference on his life and death. For now, suffice it for me to tell you that I do not recall ever having noticed any vice in him and he had a high degree of the virtues that make up the spirit of a true Missionary, particularly simplicity, humility, gentleness, submission and exactitude, not only in the seminary but even in class where the most fervent usually relax. He was ill several times, and in that condition always showed great patience and resignation to God's Will, although the interruption of his studies gave him great cause for mortification. His final illness lasted only a week, but he did and suffered more for Jesus Christ in that one week than in several years of his life, because the pain he endured was greater and the virtue he practiced more difficult, so much so that we were amazed at how he could keep his mind only on God. This illness came upon him suddenly on the fourth Sunday of Lent. It was a very violent colic that in a few days turned into an inflammation of the lung which soon became diseased. The heavy weight on his chest and the burning pain were unbelievable. With all that, he showed extraordinary patience and remarkable evenness of disposition. When we broke the news to him of his approaching death, he gave evidence that he was already prepared for it, saying quite calmly: "Well, Monsieur, what then should I do?" He received all the sacraments with unusual devotion and tranquility, and had the happiness of gaining the Jubilee. Almost to his last sigh he was still practicing the virtues that merit paradise, for from time to time he would make acts with his heart or with his lips, especially when someone would speak to him about them. His agony was very short, God having possibly wished to reward him in this way, considering that

he had struggled enough in good health, through the virtue of mortification.

I could not keep silent about the little details remarked before and after his death, which seem to me to augur well for this good Brother. He had the happiness: (1) to kiss the crucifix devoutly just before rendering up his spirit; (2) to expire just as we were finishing the prayers for the dying, with these words: *Pervenire mereatur ad gloriam regni caelestis*;² (3) the last day of his life was the Sunday of Our Lord's Passion and the feast of Saint Francis of Paola whose simplicity and humility he had so well imitated; (4) it was also the opening day of the Jubilee; (5) he was buried facing the crucifix in our church of Saint-Lazare; (6) a few days before his death, contrary to the opinion of the doctor, he predicted he would not last past Sunday.

It strongly appears that all this did not happen by chance but that God allowed it so that we would be better acquainted with the blessed state of that beautiful soul. But please do not refrain from paying him the customary respects, as you have done for the other members of our Company and as we have already done here, having, moreover, a solemn service chanted on the day of his burial which took place on Monday, April 3. May God grant us the grace to imitate him in his virtues so that we may one day follow him in the glory he now possesses!

I am, in the love of Our Lord and of His holy Mother, Monsieur, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Monsieur Lambert, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Richelieu, in Richelieu

²May he be worthy to come to the glory of the kingdom of heaven.

748. - TO MESSIEURS ***

Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris, April 20, 1645

Gentlemen,

I did not answer the recent letters with which you were pleased to honor me, because of the uncertainty of the outcome of your affairs. However, now that they have been concluded here to your satisfaction, since the Queen has had the lease of your election bureaux¹ dropped from the lease of the Bordeaux convoy by the wise, intelligent and vigilant conduct of the Bishop of Dax,² it remains for me to thank you for the honor you were pleased to do me in this matter, and to tell you that, although I tried to serve you according to your instructions, I did it in a m[ost] un[intelligent] way, and did not have the influence [needed to bring it to a conclusion]. The merit and gratitude for it belong to God and to the kindness of the Queen and the above-mentioned Bishop who did everything.

If another occasion presents itself for rendering you any other small service, I shall try to do so with all possible affection and diligence. I am, in the love of Our Lord and His most holy Mother, Gentlemen, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Letter 748. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹Probably the election in the region of Les Lannes. At that time, the Chapter of Dax was trying to find funds to repair the cathedral. It was in such a state of disrepair that parish services had to be interrupted. Upon the intervention of Saint Vincent, the Queen, Anne of Austria, ordered by a decree of July 7, 1644 that, every year from 1646 to 1655 throughout Les Lannes, a supplementary tax of forty thousand livres be levied for the restoration of the cathedral. The assessment and payment of that tax, in a very poor region which the wars of the Fronde were to make even poorer, encountered many difficulties the Saint was not quite able to dissipate. (Cf. Pierre Coste, "Histoire des cathédrales de Dax," in the *Bulletin de la Société de Borda* [1908], p. 88ff.)

²Jacques Desclaux (1639-1658).

749. - TO JACQUES CHIROYE, IN LUCON

Paris, May 3, 1645

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

You have already received a letter with the news in general of the death of dear M. Robiche,¹ a priest of our Congregation in the Marseilles house.² But you did not perhaps hear the details of his illness, death and virtues, and will doubtless be pleased to learn something about them for your consolation and the edification of your Little Company. That is what has prompted me to write you a few lines again, although a little late because I could not take the time to do it any sooner.

Here, then, is part of what I heard about him from our Missionaries who always worked with him in the last year he was alive and who were with him right up to his last sigh and on to the grave.

While this good worker of Jesus Christ was engaged with his confreres in catechizing, preaching, hearing confessions and consoling the poor convicts on the galleys, especially those who were quite ill, God, wishing to have him merit more in

Letter 749. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter. This letter was sent to all the houses of the Congregation of the Mission.

¹Louis Robiche, born in Mareuil-la-Ferté (Seine-et-Marne), was a priest when he entered the Congregation of the Mission at Saint-Lazare on October 31, 1643, at thirty-three years of age. He died in Marseilles on January 27, 1645.

²The Duchesse d'Aiguillon had established the house in Marseilles on July 25, 1643 with a generous gift of fourteen thousand livres. The contract drawn up on that day listed the duties imposed on the four priests whom the Saint promised to send to that city: the right of superiority over the chaplains whom they could change as they pleased; a mission to be given every five years on each of the galleys of Marseilles and of the other ports of the kingdom; the functions of chaplains in the hospitals of the poor convicts of the city; "moreover, when appropriate, they shall send Missionaries to Barbary to console poor captive Christians and instruct them in their faith, in the love and fear of God." (Cf. Arch. nat. S 6707.) Anne of Austria, in harmony with the ideas of the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, granted for life to the Superior General of the Mission, by a decree dated January 16, 1644, the title of Royal Chaplain to the Galleys and conferred on him the faculty of delegating his authority and his rights.

order to reward him more profusely, sent him a purple fever which struck him on the past feast of the Epiphany and lasted three weeks. He was free of it for only four days, during which they had the time to administer the last sacraments while he was fully conscious. He greatly edified the Company because, although he was almost always delirious or dozing off, as soon as someone spoke to him about making acts of love, contrition and others, he always came around a little and made them very devoutly. His resignation to the good pleasure of God was admirable. He would say that it was good for him to be in that condition and that it was the best one for him, since God wanted it that way. People did anything they desired with him, and he would put himself in the position they requested, without complaining or refusing anything presented to him. He hardly ever lost his speech although he was confused and muttered between his teeth, but his talk was always about the things of God or at least related to God, and he expressed a marvelous gratitude toward His Divine Goodness because he was dying in the Company, to which he often proclaimed his fidelity. Finally they began the *Subvenite Sancti* because they thought he had already expired, but just at the words *Occurrite Angeli*, he gave up his beautiful soul to his Creator. That was this past January 27.

The charity he had shown toward the poor sick galley-slaves had so won over the hearts of the people of Marseilles that even though we had no intention of having a big ceremony at his funeral and had invited only friends of the house to it, nevertheless, the people flocked to it in such large numbers that it was feared the floor would give way under their feet, so much so that we were obliged to bring the body down from the room where he had died, and place it in the chapel of the large hall downstairs so that everyone would have the satisfaction of seeing him. As soon as they saw him, they would raise eyes and hands to heaven, saying: "Oh, the beautiful soul! Oh, the saint!" And although the hall was quite spacious

and more than a hundred persons could view him at a time, nevertheless, some were climbing in through the windows and others mounted ladders and pieces of wood they came across. One very remarkable thing among others which occurred was that a well-to-do gentleman seized a cushion and tore it to shreds, to get some of the blood that had fallen on it. Others scraped the chair on which he had sat, still others took the wax that was dripping from the candles. So, if we had let them, they would have carried off and torn everything he used, even breaking the pictures that were around. In short, everyone was trying to get something of his to keep as a relic. While he was being brought down from the bedroom, everybody knelt down and was pressing to kiss his feet. The general opinion in the city is that he is a saint, and people inquire with great devotion about the place where he is buried so they can pray to him.

These, Monsieur, are beautiful testimonies to his holiness but I put more stock in the virtues he practiced, particularly from the time he joined our Company, rather than in all that. I do not recall having remarked any vice in him nor of hearing that he had any. On the contrary, while he lived in our seminary of Saint-Lazare, he always gave good example by his humility, goodness, charity, obedience and piety. May God grant us the grace to profit from it! He was thirty-five years old, with a very strong constitution and in no way subject to illness. This should make us think about keeping ourselves ready to appear before God, since there is so little certainty in this life. And, meanwhile, let us work at storing up good works which we can present to Him on that great day. This is the fruit I wish us to draw from his death, doubtless a happy one for him and also for us who will experience more effectively the effects of his prayers. And because we cannot know for sure if he may not still need prayers (this secret being reserved to God alone), I ask you, Monsieur, to see to it that each of our priests says the three Masses customary on such an occasion (if you have not already done so) for the repose

of his soul, and that our Brothers offer one of their Communions for him and recite a Rosary for the same intention. All of us here in this house have paid him these same respects, although we have reason to believe in piety that he has no need of them since the voice of the people (which is the voice of God) is beatifying him. In a way, he died a martyr, in that he exposed his life and lost it laboring for the love of Jesus Christ, at the corporal and spiritual salvation of the sick poor, of a malady which leads to death and which he well knew was contagious.

If I had the time to describe in detail the mortifications and other heroic acts of virtue I have heard related of him by our men in a conference we had here about him, you would have an even clearer knowledge of the blessed state of his soul than from all I have just told you, since the surest sign of a good and holy death is a good and holy life like that of this apostolic man, at least in the two years we had the happiness of having him in our Company.

O Monsieur, what great reason we have to love our vocation and to render ourselves worthy of it, since in so short a time we can live and die in it as saints! May God grant us this grace!

I am, in the love of Our Lord and His holy Mother, Monsieur, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Monsieur Chiroye, Superior of the Mission, in Luçon

750. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The rule states that the Treasurer will make her financial report in Church, in presence of the pastor and the local inhabitants. Up to the present, we have not observed that the law has been willing to take cognizance of this. It seems to me that M. Tranchot will say and do better than anyone else what will have to be done about it. I really would like you to get a carriage to go see him and to discuss it with him, or take the trouble to write about it to Mademoiselle.¹

That person came to this house today and told me you sent for M. Roche whom you told that he would not dare to maintain in your presence what he is presenting as a fact. Now, he says this is true but that you said or did to him things tantamount to it. I told him that the same things must be weighed in order to have a sound opinion and that he should never speak to me about these matters because I was unwilling to hear them mentioned again in any way whatsoever. I have written to his brother that he should go back home because, thanks be to God, our business is finished. And I am, in the love of Our Lord, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

751. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

We must be on our guard against this practice¹ which the

Letter 750. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹Mademoiselle Tranchot.

Letter 751. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. III, chap. XX, p. 303.

¹The priest to whom the Saint was writing had asked him whether he were permitted

evil spirit might make use of to tempt both the living person and even the dying woman. The devil uses every means possible to attack a soul at this moment of passage, and strength of mind may still remain although the body may be weakened. Keep in mind the example of that saint who, while he was sick, did not want his wife to touch him, after they had separated by mutual consent, saying that there was still fire under the ashes. Furthermore, if you want to know the symptoms of an approaching separation of the soul from the body, ask a surgeon or some other person present to render you this service, there being less danger in that than in doing it yourself, or ask the physician what he thinks. Whatever happens, however, never get involved in touching either girls or women, under any pretext whatsoever.

752. - NICOLAS PAVILLON, BISHOP OF ALET, TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

We now have Monsieur de Beauregard there. He is Dean of our Cathedral, a Counselor in the Parlement of Toulouse and has been named as general agent for the clergy by the province of Narbonne. He wrote me that he has already had the honor of seeing you but he feels, nevertheless, that a letter from me would give him greater confidence and liberty in approaching you when business stemming from his responsibility as agent or some other reason will oblige him to do this. Although I know he does not lack support more influential than my own recommendation, still, I could not refuse him, and so I recommend him to you with all possible affection. Kindly do me the favor, Monsieur, of letting him know that you have some

to feel the pulse of a sick woman to see if it were time to give her the Last Sacraments or to say the prayers for the dying.

Letter 752. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

consideration for these few lines I write you on his behalf, and also to believe that I am forever, Monsieur, your most humble and very obedient servant.

NICOLAS,
B[ishop] of Alet

Alet, May 24, 1645

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission at Saint-Lazare, in Paris

753. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Thursday, [May 25, 1645]¹

Monsieur,

I entreat our good God to grant me the grace that my importunities may not overtax your charity too much, and I ask your pardon for the trouble I give you in my needs. For the love of God, please give me one or several intentions I should have in my little retreat, and grant me the grace of allowing me to hear your Holy Mass tomorrow to receive your paternal blessing there. The great coming feast is for me a particular reminder of all the remarkable graces God has bestowed on His Church and for the one His Goodness granted to me personally a good twenty-two years ago, which made me so happy to belong to Him in the way your charity knows.² I sense within me

Letter 753. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Mention of an approaching "great feast" leads us to believe that Saint Louise was referring to her special devotion to the feast of Pentecost. That, and her statement "a good twenty-two years ago," enables us to assign this date (1645) and the date for the Thursday nearest Pentecost.

²In another letter (cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, L 118 bis), the Foundress speaks of a "law" which God placed upon her heart and "which has never left it." Here, from her own writings (cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, A.2), is the fact to which she alludes: "On the feast of Saint Monica 1623, God granted me the grace of making a vow of widowhood, if God were to call my husband. On the following feast of the Ascension, I became very despondent over the doubt I had whether to leave my husband, since I strongly desired

an indescribable inclination which, so it seems to me, is urging me to become more strongly attached to God, but I do not know how. Please tell your poor daughter and servant, Most Honored Father, what you think of this, in the name of Jesus through whom we are to God what we are to Him. I expect much help from your holy prayers and am asking your most honored angel to remind you of this.

L. DE M.

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

754. - GASPARD DE SIMIANE DE LA COSTE TO SAINT VINCENT

Marseilles, 1645

I am writing to inform you of the progress of the hospital to whose

it, to make good my first vow and to have more freedom to serve God and my neighbor. I was also questioning whether the attachment I had to my director [Pierre Camus, Bishop of Belley] hindered me from taking another one, since he was absent for a long time, and I feared being forced to do this. And I was still greatly troubled by doubt concerning the immortality of the soul. This caused me unbelievable suffering from the feast of Ascension to Pentecost. On Pentecost [June 4, 1623], while I was hearing Mass or making my meditation in church, my mind was cleared all at once of its doubts and I was informed that I was to remain with my husband and that a time should come when I would be in a condition to make vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and this would be in a little Community where some others would do likewise. I then understood this to be in a place to serve the neighbor, but I was unable to comprehend how it could be done because there would be comings and goings. I was again assured that I should remain in peace about my director and that God would give me one whom He caused me to see then, it seems; and I felt a repugnance in accepting him. Nevertheless, I acquiesced, and it seemed to me that this was in order not to have to make this change again. My third difficulty was removed from me by the assurance I felt that it was God who was instructing me on the above and, having a God, I should not question the rest. I have always believed that I received this grace from the blessed Bishop of Geneva, since I had ardently desired to communicate these difficulties to him before his death. Since then, I have experienced great devotion in this, and by means of it I have received many graces. At that time, I had some reason to believe this, which I do not now recall."

Letter 754. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. I, chap. XXVIII, p. 130. This fragment of a letter is to be found in its entirety in a letter of May 30, 1645 addressed by the Chevalier de la Coste to M. de Montmaur, Councillor of the King (cf. Allier, *op. cit.*, p. 198). Did Abelly make a mistake in the destination of the letter or did Chevalier de la Coste write the same letter

establishment you have so greatly contributed.¹ You learned in my last letter how, after much resistance, with the help of Our Lord, we were given the sick from the galleys. To be sure, I would not know how to express to you the joy of these poor convicts when they see themselves transferred from that hell to the hospital, which they call Paradise. At their very entrance, we see them half cured of their ailments because they are cleansed of the vermin covering them when they arrive, their feet are washed, then they are put in a bed a little softer than the wood on which they usually sleep. And they are all delighted to see themselves put to bed, served and treated with a little more charity than on the galleys where we have sent back a large number of convalescents who would have died there. We can certainly say, Monsieur, that God has blessed this work. This is apparent not only in the conversion of lax Christians but even of some Turks who are asking for holy Baptism.

755. - TO THE COMTE DE BRIENNE

Saint-Lazare, June 2, 1645

The Council for Ecclesiastical Affairs requests Monsieur de Brienne, through its servant Vincent, to write to the Comte d'Alais,¹ to the Parlement and to the Consuls of the town of

to M. de Montmaur and to Saint Vincent? Raoul Allier preferred the former hypothesis (*ibid.*, p. 199, n. 2). The latter seems more plausible because what is said is very applicable to Saint Vincent.

¹The biographers of Jean-Baptiste Gault, Bishop of Marseilles (cf. Marchetty, *op. cit.*, p. 206) and of the Chevalier de la Coste (cf. Ruffi, *op. cit.*, p. 123) place the foundation of the hospital for the convicts in 1618, at a time when Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi was General of the Galleys and Saint Vincent was his revered counselor. For lack of funds, doubtlessly, the hospital remained unfinished. Jean-Baptiste Gault took up the project again and interested in it the Chevalier de la Coste, Saint Vincent, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon and other influential people. He died before beginning anything. The Chevalier de la Coste devoted himself to this work and had the joy of seeing it completed, thanks to the same assistance.

Letter 755. - Bibl. Nat., Clairembault collection, vol. 399, p. 9443, original autograph letter.

¹Louis-Emmanuel de Valois who died childless on November 13, 1653.

Aix-en-Provence, that they should put an end to the scandalous actions offending God and upright people, which recently occurred during the Corpus Christi Procession held in Aix. These deplorable practices had been suppressed some years ago by order of the late King and were begun again last year.²

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: For My Lord the Comte de Brienne

756. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Saturday, Eve of Pentecost [June 3, 1645]¹

Monsieur,

I beg our good Lord that the remedy found you well enough disposed to be beneficial to your health; but I greatly fear that it was too soon. A few days ago, I was thinking about suggesting broth to you and I think it would do you a world of good. Please allow us to send you some tomorrow. I took some this week and have experienced a definite relief.

I cannot wait any longer, Most Honored Father, to tell you the state I have been in during these days of my little retreat. I think

²The Corpus Christi processions in Aix were accompanied by allegorical representations that were by no means devout or even decent. Young boys dressed as cupids or devils might be seen going to unwarrantable lengths in order the better to play their parts, which consisted in symbolizing the capital sins. Interesting information on this subject may be found in Joseph de Haitze, *Esprit du Cérémonial d'Aix en la célébration de la Fête-Dieu* (Aix: C. David, 1708) and in Grégoire Gaspard, *Explication des cérémonies de la Fête-Dieu d'Aix en Provence* (Aix: E. David, 1777). The Company of the Blessed Sacrament in Marseilles had to combat similar abuses (cf. Allier, *op. cit.*).

Letter 756. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Date added on the back of the original.

God does not want me to taste this sweetness to the full. I have been quite distracted from it since yesterday because of one of our sick Sisters who received Extreme Unction. She is a good girl who was at Saint-Barthélemy, the daughter of a Tours merchant, and her name is Catherine de Gesse.² Our other disturbed Sister does nothing but reproach us that she has been asking to see you but that we are unwilling to inform your charity of this. We shall make an effort to dismiss her after the feasts, please God.

As for me, my very dear Father, what shall I do tomorrow? Should I not abstain from Communion until I have made known to you the bad actions I remarked in my examination of conscience?

O bon Dieu, what reason I have to admit and recognize that I do nothing worthwhile! My heart is not embittered by this, however, although it has reason to fear that God's mercy is becoming weary of exercising itself in a soul that is always displeasing to Him.

Today is the anniversary of the collapse of our ceiling³ and tomorrow that of the day our good God once made His Will known to me and the day on which I would like His holy love to be given to my heart as a perpetual law.

So you see, Most Honored Father, the need for this and for your charity to instruct me with some helping words. Also, kindly tell me if, in some of my meditations tomorrow, I should take the Gospel of the day or the Descent of the Holy Spirit, and if my meditations for the whole day should be on this subject.

I ask your pardon for my importunity, although it seems to me that I am doing the most holy Will of God in this. Through it I am, Monsieur, your very grateful daughter and most obedient servant.

L. DE MARILLAC

Saturday

I recommend my son to you, for the love of God. It has occurred to me to ask if he has a large cross in his room.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

²Catherine de Gesse, a native of Tours, entered the Company of the Daughters of Charity around 1641 or 1642. She served the sick poor in the parish of Saint-Barthélemy, then in Saint-Gervais. In 1648 she was sent to Maule. In 1655, she was in Montmirail.

³On the eve of Pentecost 1642, some fifteen minutes after the Sisters had left a common assembly room, the floor collapsed (cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 102, p. 75).

757. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[Before 1650]¹

Monsieur,

I most humbly entreat you, for the love of God, to allow me the honor of speaking with you this morning about a response I am anxious to give to my son who is supposed to come to see me today, since I did not want to give it to him yesterday. If business obliges you to go out before I can come to your house, would your charity please take the trouble to pass by here? I take the liberty of addressing this most humble request to you because I am in great need and am, in the love of Jesus crucified, Monsieur, your most humble and very grateful daughter and servant.

L. DE M.

Thursday

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

758. - TO MOTHER MARIE-AGNES CHEVALLIER,¹ IN LE MANS

Paris, June 25, 1645

My Reverend and very dear Mother,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I cannot thank you as warmly as I would like for the many

Letter 757. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹After 1649, Saint Louise would have written "Most Honored Father" and not "Monsieur."

Letter 758. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, a copy made from the original in the possession of M. de Saint-Rémy, Director of the home for the mentally ill in Le Mans.

¹It is uncertain whether Mother Marie-Agnès Chevallier was the one to whom this letter was actually addressed. A professed Sister in the First Monastery in Paris, she was

acts of kindness and cordiality you have shown us in the person of M. Gallais.² O Mother, how very warmly I thank you for this and likewise entreat you to continue that same kindness toward us and to accept the gratitude I offer you for it!

I am sending to M. Gallais the patents required for our business, and to you, my dear Mother, I send my heart in that of Our Lord, as well as to your saintly Community which I beg God to sanctify more and more. I am, Reverend Mother, in the love of the same Lord and His holy Mother, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Reverend Mother Superior of the Visitation, Sainte-Marie of Le Mans, in Le Mans

elected Superioress of the Visitation Monastery in Le Mans on May 17, 1646 and arrived there on June 26, 1646; she was deposed on May 15, 1649. (Cf. *Livre de capitulaire de la Visitation Ste Marie du Mans*, f°10). Therefore, on June 25, 1645 she was not Superioress in Le Mans. Yet, an error in copying the date of this letter cannot be ruled out. Our information on Guillaume Gallais and Notre-Dame de Coëffort lends itself to this possibility. The protracted negotiations for taking possession of this shrine could indicate an error in the 1645 date. If this is true, then after coming to Le Mans, Mother Marie-Agnès could have given him the help Saint Vincent indicates in this letter. In view of the lack of unimpeachable evidence, the editors have made no change in the placement of this letter or in the name of the addressee.

²Guillaume Gallais had gone to Le Mans to take possession of the Provostry choir school of the Collegial and Royal Church of Notre-Dame de Coëffort, given to the Congregation of the Mission on January 26, 1645 by the Provost, Martin Lucas, principal administrator of the Hôtel-Dieu in Le Mans, in his name and that of his fellow priests. The latter gave as conditions that he would enjoy during his lifetime the revenues and goods of the priory, which amounted to twenty-four hundred livres; that his confreres would receive their daily room and board; that an adequate number of Priests of the Mission would be sent there and would pray the Divine Office, celebrate the foundation Masses for the dead and give missions. The King, to whom the right of appointing the Provost belonged, waived his rights and approved the agreement. Emmeric-Marc de la Ferté, Bishop of Le Mans, granted the decree of union on November 18, 1645, and added to it the right of presentation and appointment to the parishes of Montbizot and Maison-Dieu. The Priests of the Mission would be responsible for fulfilling all the foundations and other obligations of the priory. They would also act as chaplains at the Hôtel-Dieu of Le Mans and welcome the ordinands and seminarians who might be sent to them.

758a. - BROTHER SIMON MARTIN TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

This is not the first time and, please God, will not be the last that this excellent book of the late Father Luis de Granada, of happy memory, which has brought about so many miraculous conversions in the world, has chosen you to accompany it.¹ In fact, it was most fitting that this instrument so useful to salvation be placed in the hands of a priest whose charitable actions reconcile not only the hearts of the common people but also of kings, and who, in the role of apostle which he continually carries out personally or through his confreres, extends the kingdom of our sovereign Master even to places where His glory was, so to speak, entombed and, to put it briefly, where the Lord's vineyard was lying fallow and fruitless, for lack of good workers, and who upheld, as it seems fit, the honor of their Master. Thanks be to God, France is now more Christian than it ever was; darkness and ignorance are giving place there to the beautiful light of salvation and grace. The flocks, who walk according to the desire of their heart, hear the voice of their shepherds and are recalled to their sheepfold; and the Gospel of the Crucified One is as well taught to the simplest and most wretched people of the country as it is to the most self-sufficient and important persons in the best cities. This happiness comes from the fact that there is almost no corner of the kingdom, obscure as it may be, where these new workers called by your zeal and piety to the Lord's harvest, do not go to distribute the bread of heavenly doctrine and the sacred wine which makes virgins. They do it with such good results that it is apparent that they are most worthy of the title of disciples of the great Jesus in the service of evangelizing the poor.

It is then to you, Monsieur, as rightly as to anyone else, that this book, which daily makes so many conquests over the three great enemies of our salvation, should be dedicated, since sinners whose guide it is receive no less instruction from the example of your life than from the truth of its teachings. Allow then, Monsieur, for the

Letter 758a. - In vol. XIV (pp. 347-348), Coste inserted in a footnote this letter which had not been published previously. The Abbé Dubarat, Archpriest of Pau, had brought it to Coste's attention.

¹Simon Martin was dedicating his French translation of *La Guide des pécheurs* to Saint Vincent.

love of Him whose glory you desire so ardently, that this work, along with the name of its author which is crowned with good results, might receive another new crown through yours which bears strength and victory, in order to be followed in the end by the triumph hoped for you, Monsieur, by your most humble and very obedient servant in Jesus Christ.

B[rother] S[imon] M[artin], M[inim]²

Convent of Notre-Dame de Toutes-Grâces, Nigeon-lez-Paris, feast of Saints Peter and Paul, 1645³

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Saint-Lazare

759. - TO JEAN DEHORGNY, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

June 30, 1645

I had an insight this week on some ways of introducing piety into the minds of those persons who will be part of that court one day, and I admit that the suggestion made to me on the instruction of the children has struck me as the only way. But there is so much to be said about this that nothing should be done if Providence does not compel us to act.

²The Minims were a mendicant Order founded by Saint Francis of Paola (1416-1507). Simon Martin had previously published an anthology of lives of the saints and *Fleurs de la solitude cueillies des plus belles vies des Saints qui ont habité les déserts*. In 1656, he published the *Catéchisme et Introduction au Symbole de la Foy* of Luis de Granada.

³June 29, 1645.

760. - TO JEAN DEHORGNY, IN ROME

Paris, July 6, 1645

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I am sending you a report regarding the irregularity of two priests who discovered during their retreat that they were in this state. I entreat you, Monsieur, to obtain dispensations for them and send them to us as soon as possible. In the meantime, they are on our hands at the Collège des Bons-Enfants.

Your letter of the twelfth of last month mentioned a general power of attorney to buy a house. I forgot to have it drawn up; furthermore, that is beyond our power. Let me know if a convenient opportunity presents itself.

I agree with what you say about the Bishop of Babylon.¹ We shall look into it.

Monsieur Dufestel is quite ill with lung trouble and is obliged to leave Marseilles. I am having a difficult time replacing him. We have no one better suited nor more available than Monsieur Guérin;² I am asking the former to go to Annecy to take his place.

I am not quite clear about Monsieur C[odoing]'s plan. We have to wait patiently.

Monsieur Coglée³ seems to be needed in Marseilles where he has recovered from his upset.

Letter 760. - Collection for the process of beatification.

¹Father Bernard de Sainte-Thérèse.

²Jean Guérin, Superior of the seminary in Annecy.

³Marc Coglée (Cogley), born in Carrick-on-Suir (Ireland) April 25, 1614, was ordained a priest on May 30, 1643 and the following July 24 was received into the Congregation of the Mission. He had just been sent to Marseilles where he remained until 1646. In a period of distress and discouragement, he had the good fortune to meet Gerard Brin, a fellow countryman, who induced him to remain in the Congregation. After giving him time to make up his mind definitely, by spending a few days in the internal seminary, Saint Vincent sent him to Sedan (1646). Marc Coglée made his vows there on December 13, 1649, and the following year was named pastor of the parish and Superior of the

I told you my thoughts about B[rother] Berthe⁴ with regard to that gentleman.

I am consoled by what you told me about Father Leon⁵ who, I think, is to spend a few days at your house. If he is still in Rome, I embrace him with all the affection of my heart, as also good Monsieur de Montheron, prostrate in spirit at the feet of both.

Concerning the problem you mentioned, of giving benefices to children, an ordinance was issued while the Bishops of Lisieux⁶ and Beauvais⁷ were on the Council for Ecclesiastical Affairs, for reasons you can well imagine and because it is said that this is choosing the worse of two evils, which are the "confidence"⁸ and the uselessness of children. That would be

establishment. Replaced in 1654 by Jean Martin, he resumed the same functions in 1655 for another year. For a few months in 1659 he was Superior of the seminary in Annecy, which he left to return to Saint-Lazare.

⁴Thomas Berthe, of Donchéry (Ardennes), was admitted into the Congregation of the Mission November 26, 1640, at the age of eighteen, and made his holy vows December 8, 1645. Ordained a priest in 1646, he was sent to Sedan. Persuaded that he was sent there in the capacity of Superior, he felt humiliated to see that subordinate work was entrusted to him, and he returned to his family. Shortly afterwards, he came to his senses, and Saint Vincent, who knew his virtues and appreciated his talents, received him back joyfully. Thomas Berthe rendered great services to the Congregation in the important positions confided to him: 1649-1650, Superior of the seminary of the Bons-Enfants; 1653-1655, Superior of the house in Rome; 1660, secretary of the Congregation; 1661-1667, Assistant to the Superior General; 1668-1671, Superior of the new house in Lyons; 1673-1682 and 1687-1689, Superior of the seminary of Saint-Charles; 1682-1685, Superior in Richelieu. In October 1659, Saint Vincent decided that, among his Missionaries, none were more fitted to replace him as head of the Congregation than René Alméras or Thomas Berthe. These were the two names he proposed in writing in advance to the General Assembly which was to choose his successor. Thomas Berthe died in 1697. There were some clashes between himself and Edme Jolly, the Superior General at the time and this clouded his last years. (Cf. *Notices*, vol. II, pp. 247-313.)

⁵Of the Order of the Mitigated Carmelites.

⁶Philippe Cospéan.

⁷Augustin Potier.

⁸The abuse referred to as "confidence" consisted in this: children to whom benefices had been granted were canonically bound, at a certain age, to choose between entering the ecclesiastical state or resigning their benefices. As a matter of fact, they arranged matters in such a way that they continued to remain laymen, without losing their benefices. A contract was entered into, whereby the title of beneficiary was transferred to a cleric who, for a modest stipend, was made the recipient of the revenues from the

all right if only married men with children were petitioning for benefices, but not even a third of them are in this category because not all those seeking benefices are married and not all of those who are married have children. In addition, those who do have them are not all determined to have them serve the Church; yet, they take the property. There have been difficulties in the observance of this ordinance. Violent attempts have been made to do away with it but, by the grace of God, people are beginning to get used to it. Monsieur de Chavigny⁹ had lost his second son who had been entrusted with two fine abbeys, and his parents were requesting them for his third son who was only five or six years old. God gave me the strength to hold fast and that man came to see me to tell me that, far from disapproving of my insistence against this, he would, on the contrary, have despised me and refused to accept it, if I had acquiesced to the mother's wishes. I am speaking to you about Monsieur de Chavigny himself. All this is for the ear of your heart alone. I do not know why I have allowed myself to get so carried away as to tell you so much about it.

Here is a little news about us now. God has disposed of Monsieur de Vincy. He left this world not only peacefully but joyously. Four hours before he died, following an inspiration he told me he had, he wanted us to admit him into the Company. We have also had him buried. I recommend him to your prayers.

Monsieur Lambert has entered the seminary¹⁰ where he is giving very good example.

benefice, but bound himself to hand over the entire revenue to the other party. In seventeenth-century France, this was known as "the enjoyment of the temporalities of a benefice by confidence."

⁹Léon Le Bouthillier, Comte de Chavigny, Secretary of State. By his wife, Anne Phelippeaux, dame de Busançois, he had ten sons and eight daughters, many of whom died young or became religious. One of them, François, became Bishop of Rennes and then of Troyes. The two children in question here are Nicolas, born September 6, 1633 and Urbain, born November 27, 1639. Anne Phelippeaux was an ardent Jansenist.

¹⁰Cf. no. 633, n. 8.

We have sent Monsieur Gallais to Le Mans to take possession of our establishment.¹¹

Monsieur Portail is going away for a week or so and after that we shall have him go make the visitation Monsieur Lambert was making. He needs some practice. Perhaps he will go and see you. Monsieur Lambert will take over his duty as Assistant, provided you and the other men to whom I am writing about this have no objections, in conformity with our Rule.

We have opened the seminary for priests. They celebrate Mass at Notre-Dame.¹² Since about a week ago, there have been around twenty of them at the Bons-Enfants. We have sent Monsieur Gilles and Monsieur de Beaumont¹³ there for the courses and have brought Brother Damiens here; he is delighting his students. As for the ordinands, they will have to be brought here where we are about to start on a building on the site of the small infirmary.¹⁴ The Duchesse d'Aiguillon

¹¹He took possession on June 30.

¹²As a result of a foundation made by Cardinal Richelieu, twelve clerics joined the young seminarians who were doing their classical studies. In 1645, distressed at the sight of several priests who were then residing in Paris in places where their virtue was exposed to great danger; who were celebrating Mass without devotion, frequently with no attention to the rubrics; and who were going from church to church begging stipends for Masses and publicly asking for alms, Saint Vincent arranged a building at the end of the enclosure of Saint-Lazare which was called the seminary of Saint-Charles. The seminarians were installed in it and, in their place, forty priests were admitted to the Collège des Bons-Enfants. Their Mass stipends were intended to help pay for their room and board. It was arranged with the Chapter that they should all go at a certain time to say Mass at Notre-Dame. The Saint had good reason to rejoice at this new undertaking which furnished the Church with good priests. (Cf. Collet, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 411ff.)

¹³Pierre de Beaumont, born in Puisieux (Loiret), February 24, 1617, entered the Congregation of the Mission February 23, 1641, made his vows October 4, 1643 and was ordained a priest in March 1644. He was imprisoned on the occasion of the lawsuit which took place when the house in Saint-Méen was established. He became Director of the internal seminary in Richelieu and later was twice Superior in that house (1656-1660 and 1661-1662).

¹⁴The new building was about twenty-three meters long and nine meters wide. It had four floors with sufficient accommodation for the ordinands. (Cf. Arch. Nat. M 212, file 7.)

gave ten thousand livres for this purpose. We are also going to enclose our property with walls.

Although I am still not well, my letter is longer because I am staying in my room today, with a sore foot. So that is all I can tell you for now, except that I embrace your Little Company, prostrate in spirit at its feet and yours, and that I am, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

I beg you, in the name of Our Lord, to do all you can to get Monsieur Le Gras¹⁵ dispensation. His good mother is very determined about this and it does not appear that he is going to change his mind.

Addressed: Monsieur Dehorgny, Superior of the Priests of the Mission, in Rome

761. - NICOLAS PAVILLON, BISHOP OF ALET, TO SAINT VINCENT
Monsieur,

Since Divine Providence has called you, for its greater glory, to the care of the most important ecclesiastical affairs of this kingdom,

¹⁵We have no information regarding the dispensation required by Michel Le Gras. All we do know is that it proved very difficult to obtain and negotiations were carried on for several years. The King was asked to intervene and he sent orders to the Ambassador in Rome. After having spoken unsuccessfully to the Sovereign Pontiff himself about the affair, the Ambassador enlisted the support of the most influential Cardinals. In 1648, there were still no results. There are two interesting letters on this subject at the Berceau de Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, from René Alméras to Saint Louise, one dated March 23, 1648, the other June 21, 1649. We think it was a question of a dispensation with a view to marriage. But what could have been the nature of the impediment which encountered so many obstacles, in spite of such powerful intervention?

and has long inspired you with such great zeal for procuring on occasion the reform of good order and discipline in the Church, I have taken the liberty of sending you a short report of the principal and most frequent disorders which are troubling it and causing laxity, particularly in these parts. For several years, since I have been aware of this, I have had the thought of apprising you of it. What has caused me to delay doing so until now, however, is that I felt that the most appropriate time for remedying this would be the meeting of the Assembly of the Clergy, whose most worthy and principal task is to draw up regulations of this sort and to take the most efficient means of putting them into effect. So, please study this situation and see what can be done, for I realize that not everything desirable is possible. I have not mentioned in it a number of other needs, although they are pressing, both because they are already fairly well-known and because I doubted that time and the state of affairs would permit the suggestions. And of the little I have learned, you would perhaps judge that now is not the time to discuss this. I submit everything entirely to your prudence. In the event that any of these matters should be proposed, I do not deem it appropriate for anyone to know that I have had any part in them, for several reasons which you could well imagine, because I have not revealed this matter to anyone but you.

I entreat you, Monsieur, to excuse the liberty I dare to continue to take with you, without losing sight of the respect I owe you and will always bear toward you, Monsieur, as your most humble, obedient and very grateful servant.

NICOLAS,
B[ishop] of Alet

Alet, July 12, 1645

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, at Saint-Lazare

762. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

[July 1645]¹

I beg you to pray for the soul of the late Monsieur de Vincy who died very piously, after having been received into the Company, according to the inspiration he told me Our Lord had given him, two or three hours before he died.

763. - TO GUILLAUME GALLAIS, IN LE MANS

July 14, 1645

M. . . . goes with a good will. I think it would be well for you to keep him busy lest, seeking out his own occupation, he might spoil his good dispositions. There are certain persons who are like millstones turning without any wheat; they catch fire and burn down the mill.

I ask you once again to write to me alone about your little difficulties, and never to anyone whomsoever outside, who might completely spoil and change things on the inside for the worse, when someone tells him his troubles. I do not mean that I fear this from the person to whom you have made known your little complaints up to the present; but I cannot hide from you either the contempt to which that subjects the very person who thus exposes his weakness to those outside, and the Company in general, or the tales that are told about it. In the name of God, Monsieur, pay attention to this and do not be afraid to complain to me about myself. You will see that I shall make good use of it, with God's help.

Letter 762. - Manuscript of Lyons.

¹Date of the death of M. de Vincy.

Letter 763. - Reg. 2, p. 261.

764. - TO THE PARLEMENT

[July 16, 1645]¹

The Priests of the Congregation of the Mission established at Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris humbly petition, declaring that the King has been pleased to grant them permission, by letters patent of the twenty-third day of June, one thousand six hundred and forty-five, addressed to you, My Lords, to sell or have cut down ninety arpents of full-grown trees over three generations old, part of the Rougemont farm² in the parish of Sevran, adjoining the Livry woods, because most of the said trees are old, stunted, no longer profitable and are keeping the copswood from coming up. The money from the sale will be used partly for walls and an enclosure they are having built to surround the land they have in back of Saint-Lazare,³ because of all the damage people are causing coming and going, and stealing the wheat when it ripens;⁴ and partly to reclaim a house situated in the faubourg Saint-Martin and

Letter 764. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, photograph. The original letter belonged to Canon Loevenbruck, Pastor of the parish of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, in Nancy.

¹Date written on the reverse of the petition.

²The Rougemont farm in the forest of Bondy, commune of Sevran (Seine-Saint-Denis), covered a vast expanse of wooded and cultivated land. Adrien Le Bon donated it to Saint Vincent on February 11, 1645, "on account of the great friendship and affection" he bore the priests of Saint-Lazare. (Cf. Arch. Nat. S 6698, pieces 1 and 2.)

³These enclosure walls existed in former times. They tumbled down during the civil wars (probably the so-called Wars of Religion [1562-1598]). Although the Saint was having them rebuilt with royal permission given on February 20, 1644, he had been obliged to send the workmen away because of the opposition of Cadet, warden of the King's recreational facilities. Another petition, presented June 6, 1645, to obtain the registration of the letters patent, was approved on July 6 by Gabriel de Rochechouart, Keeper of the Warren of the Louvre, thanks to the influence of the Queen Regent. Work was resumed on condition that "no holes be left at the foot of the walls allowing field hares to enter, and no kind of traps be set to catch quail which might take refuge there." (Cf. Arch. Nat. S 6698, reg. f°49.)

⁴Prior to February 20, 1644, Saint Vincent had already complained about marauders who were in the habit each night of entering the Saint-Lazare property at harvest time, cutting and carrying off one third of the corn, in their sacks. (Cf. Arch. Nat. S 6698, reg. f°49.) Probably they had started stealing again.

alienated by their predecessors, or to purchase a farm suitable for them in the parish of Saclay,⁵ which would be to the advantage of the above-mentioned Saint-Lazare house.

Having considered this matter, My Lords, may it please you to have the said letters registered in your Court records office, so that the above-mentioned petitioners may enjoy their effects; and you will do well.

VINCENT DEPAUL
Superior of the Congregation of the Mission⁶

765. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

I forgot to tell you yesterday that Madame Chanevas wants our Sisters of Saint-Gervais to take the five sous which the Ladies who have the soup pot of the poor prepared used to give as a salary to the woman who distributed it before our Sisters were there. They think that a piece of beef that they also put in the pot for the same purpose should be for our Sisters, along with two loaves of bread that they give them. Everything is now reverting to the profit of the poor because Madame Chanevas takes the five sous from our Sisters every day and has what is left over given to the poor. This distresses our Sisters because the Ladies are asking them if they are not getting a salary and if Madame Chanevas does not want them to say that they are giving this money to her. I most humbly entreat you, Monsieur, to let me know what I should tell them to do because Madame Chanevas had led me to hope that things would not turn out this way.

I am also concerned about whether we should try to keep Sister

⁵The Orsigny farm. It had been bought but the payment had not yet been completed.

⁶At the bottom of the petition, the registrar's office added the word *montré*, indicating that it had already been shown to the Attorney General.

Jacqueline at Saint-Jacques or here. She is the one who was at Saint-Leu. You would have to be told the difficulties in this but I do not dare ask to speak to you unless I know you are agreeable to it. Both matters are urgent. I need your charity to be applied to my misery since I can only be helped by the guidance of God's Will, in which I am, Monsieur, your most unworthy daughter and very grateful servant.

L. DE M.

I most humbly entreat you kindly to let me know if your charity has given any money to my son and if I may go to the service at the Filles-Dieu¹ this morning, to which Madame de Verthamon has invited me, for one of her aunts; in which case I can use her carriage.

July 19 [1645]²

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

766. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

I thought it my duty to send you this letter so you might kindly look it over. I would be very surprised if Mother has had it done, since I explained to her the limited means I have of doing any good at the house, still less in the uncertainty that this would be of any use. It is not that while staying there I do not wish to contribute anything and to procure some good for it in any way I can. I am well aware that most of the girls there give nothing. If what this girl says is true, she could still have a fairly good dowry from her possessions for a girl of her class, even if she only had half of what

¹A convent for repentant women.

²This letter seems to date from the early period of the establishment of Saint-Gervais; consequently it should follow no. 742 rather closely.

she says she has in her own village. I think these good nuns have given a lot of credence to the reasons she gave them for aspiring justifiably to her plans.

I most humbly ask your pardon, Monsieur, for this importunity. My intention is to make known to you the state of this bad business for the time when your charity will take the trouble of going to see these good nuns, who claim to have great need of this.

Would that the Divine Goodness might increase your strength in proportion to the business with which everyone is overwhelming you! In the midst of all that, grant me the charity of considering my needs before God and recommending them to Him, since this is my only aid in doing His most holy Will, in which I am, Monsieur, your most obedient daughter and very grateful servant.

L. DE M.

July 21 [1645]¹

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

767. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[July 26, 1645]¹

Monsieur,

I think it has been quite a long time since I took the liberty of speaking to you. This will excuse me in regard to your charity if I take the liberty of telling you I am worried about your ailment,² which I fear is more serious than we are being led to believe. If you were one of our poor, it seems to me that our aqua fortis [nitric acid] from Monsieur Deure³ would have soon cured you, and that

¹Date added on the back of the original.

Letter 767. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Date added on the back of the original.

²An ulcer on his leg from which Saint Vincent would suffer until the end of his life.

³A merchant for mineral and purgative waters.

ointments, whatever kind they may be, inflame the sore and keep it festering.

I do not know, Most Honored Father, if the good priest for the girls at the Madeleine⁴ has spoken to you. He is anxious for the decision on that person's⁵ departure and seems to be convinced of her conversion, stating that she assures him of never wanting to give a thought to the person⁶ to whom she is attached, and she wants to go back to her own region. I have since recalled that this was the decision they took together before their capture, and the letter I showed you afterwards indicates that his intention is to associate himself, after their marriage, with this girl's parents who are wine merchants, or to go to that region to live there in peace but in idleness. So, her thought of leaving is, to all appearances, because she thinks that as soon as she is out, he will go join her.

I most humbly ask your pardon, Monsieur, for speaking to you about such an affair, still as fresh to me now as it was in the beginning, and at certain times more painful than I can express.

The thought of being very close to death is still with me, and although I am willing, if God wishes, to leave all my little affairs in disorder and poorly arranged, if God wishes, I cannot help suffering on this account.

Our Little Company has never been weaker either. In short, Most Honored Father, I do not know if it is because we have been deprived of your presence for so long, but we are badly off. I most humbly entreat your charity to keep in mind the suggestion I made you about a weekly conference and of having one of your Gentlemen present at it. It seemed to me at that time that you were not opposed to this and did me the honor of naming one of them. Only one Sister from every parish would come each time, so that the poor would not be inconvenienced by it.

⁴A monastery for penitent women in a house on the rue des Fontaines provided for this purpose by the Marquise de Maignelay (Marguerite de Gondi).

⁵A young woman with whom Michel Le Gras was involved.

⁶Michel Le Gras.

Please give us your holy blessing and do me the favor of considering me before God as I am, Monsieur, your most obedient daughter and very grateful servant.

L. DE M.

Feast of Saint Ann

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

768. - *NICOLAS PAVILLON, BISHOP OF ALET, TO SAINT VINCENT*

Monsieur,

Having the honor to be a close neighbor and personal friend of the Bishop of Mirepoix,¹ you will approve of my joining my prayers to his to request your mediation, if needs be, in the case which obliges him to go to Paris a second time. I am sure that when you see him you will be consoled to recognize in him the many good qualities God has given him to make him useful to His Church and you will greatly regret, as I do, that, as a result of this trial which has been going on for several years now, he feels awkward about acting in his diocese and making good use of his talents there with all the liberty he would like in order to develop it well. This, Monsieur, is what prompts me to entreat you most humbly to be willing to procure for him a good and speedy conclusion to his case and to consider it as common to the entire Church in its principal circumstances. And if I dared, I would tell you as well, since it is true, that I shall consider as done to myself and to my diocese all the satisfaction this good Prelate will receive from you in this instance. It would be for me an additional reason for recognizing the very great obligations I have had toward you for such a long time, and for me to say that I am,

Letter 768. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹Louis de Nogaret de la Vallette d'Epéron, Bishop of Mirepoix (December 22, 1629-1655), then of Carcassonne (1655 - September 10, 1679).

in virtue of an entirely sincere and cordial affection, in the love of Our Savior and His holy Mother, Monsieur, your most humble, most obedient and very grateful servant.

NICOLAS,
B[ishop] of Alet

Alet, the last day of July, 1645

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, at Saint-Lazare

769. - *CARDINAL DURAZZO*¹ TO SAINT VINCENT

Genoa, August 1645

During the past few months, when M. [Codoing] was passing through these parts, I learned that he belonged to the Congregation of the Mission, and I availed myself of his ministry in various places in my diocese, where he worked with good results and blessings for the service of God, the salvation of souls and my personal satisfaction. Nevertheless, when he told me that, in obedience to his Superiors, he had to go to Paris, I consented to this, since you have sent other priests to continue what he has so happily begun.² There is hope that such a pious Institute can be established here for the greater glory of His Divine Majesty. I wanted to let you know of our spiritual consolation in this matter.

Letter 769. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. IV, p. 68.

¹Stefano Durazzo, legate in Ferraro, then in Bologna, was created a Cardinal in 1633, was Archbishop of Genoa from 1635 to 1664, and died in Rome on July 22, 1667. This pious Prelate was always admirably gracious and devoted to Saint Vincent and his priests.

²Four priests and a coadjutor Brother had, in fact, just arrived in Genoa to found a new establishment with Etienne Blatiron at their head.

770. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

Here are the difficulties which have occurred to me and which you instructed me to put in writing. I would find it hard to send them to you were it not that I believe they will in no way be detrimental to carrying out God's designs in this matter. I most humbly entreat you to allow me the honor of speaking to you as soon as possible about my son. I feel this is necessary and that your charity may interest itself before God for his needs in the way you know best. His Providence has given you this added burden amidst all the charitable acts you have done and are still doing for her who is, by His love, Monsieur, your most humble daughter and very grateful servant.

L. DE MARILLAC

August 19 [1643, 1644 or 1645]¹

The difficulties in remaining at Bicêtre are:

First of all, the vastness of the building and the size of the place which in more than two years would only be half-filled;

The great inconveniences that arise, even in Paris, when houses have been inhabited by persons of loose morals, all the more to be feared in places which for many years have been the haunt, by day and by night, of all sorts of evil persons;

The danger on the roads for the Sisters, since they are often obliged to travel to and from the city;

The impossibility of carrying the children in their arms and the great difficulty of transporting them on horseback, because of slippery roads, rain, hail and snow;

A large number of Sisters would be needed because of the journeys that would have to be made both for the children and the needs of the house, and we do not have enough who are suited for that;

The danger there is that all these journeys to be made by the Sisters

Letter 770. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter was written when the transfer of the foundlings to Bicêtre was still being contemplated, so it is placed between June 1643 (cf. no. 669) and July 1647. The date of August 19, 1646 must be disregarded, since Saint Louise was not then in Paris.

may cause them a lot of upset both for the present and for the future;

The great expense of making the place habitable and of supplies which will have to be more considerable than for elsewhere. This is rather obvious;

The difficulty the Sisters may find in getting to the monthly meetings at the house and in visiting the children;

And if there were question of placing all the Sisters of the Charity there, it seems to me that this would be very prejudicial to the whole Company because of the necessary visits of the Sisters who serve the poor in Paris, of the training given at the house both for the service of the sick poor and for dressing wounds, as well as for the instruction of youth, and above all for the necessary communications with Superiors and sometimes with the Ladies in the parishes.

If, notwithstanding all these difficulties, we must go, two men will have to live there, at least all this winter. There will have to be daily Mass in the chapel where fonts could be placed for baptizing the children. This would use up the fifty livres donated for that purpose. It would also be necessary to have a little horsedrawn cart for transporting the children and that would arrange matters a great deal. One of the men could drive it. If this is the case, the men will have to be chosen very carefully because of their contact with the wet nurses and the Sisters.

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

771. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[August or September 1645]¹

Mademoiselle,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Enclosed is the rough draft for the establishment of the

Letter 771. - Saint Paul manuscript, p. 76.

¹This letter is answered in no. 772 whose possible date can be determined by external evidence.

Sisters;² it contains three items: (1) the way Providence proceeded to institute them; (2) their manner of living up to the present; (3) the Rules of their confraternity or association. I am putting down the first two, so that the Archbishop and the members of his Council will be thereby informed of everything.

I am writing to Madame Traversay to say that, if she and Mademoiselle Viole can be at your house at two o'clock today, I shall try to be there.

Please look over the memorandum and give your comments. I have left out many things that I could have said about you. Let us leave it to Our Lord to say them to everyone while we ourselves remain hidden.

I am, in His love

772. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[August or September 1645]¹

The number of Sisters employed in the service of the foundlings is greater and should increase around All Saints' Day when a number of children will be brought in.

Is it necessary to be so lengthy in the praises of the above-mentioned Sisters which begin with the words: "And what is more worthy of consideration?" Would it not suffice to say that, "in addition to the corporal service they render to the above-mentioned sick poor, God is blessing the little reminders they give them for their

²This written statement was the first part of a petition to the Archbishop of Paris (cf. no. 733) for the approbation of the Company of the Daughters of Charity.

Letter 772. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, incomplete autograph draft. This letter is the reflection of Saint Louise de Marillac on the text of the petition to be sent to the Archbishop of Paris for the approbation of the Company of the Daughters of Charity (cf. no. 773.)

¹The Daughters of Charity began to serve in the hospital of Saint-Denis on August 2, 1645; this note was written a few days later.

salvation, both to those who are going to die and to those who are going to recover, in order to help them to live well, which is producing very good results and clearly shows”

I would like to mention the other places where they are primarily and say: “in the past few days or recently at Saint-Denis Hospital;” to mention Sedan and also that those in the rural areas serve in instructing children as well as in caring for the sick and dressing wounds.

That no mention be made of the good being done by the above-mentioned demoiselle either at present or in the future.

No widows are making any contributions, or only very few of them and rarely, but not regularly.

As for the work of the Sisters of the house, after the words: “do bloodletting and dress the wounds of the poor from outside who come to them for this purpose,” write: “prepare or give out the medications.”

The two o'clock reading and silence are not specified, nor at the other time either; perhaps this is not necessary.

Should not mention be made that the money put in the common purse is used to buy what is needed at the house to clothe the Sisters, even those living in the parishes where their habits are made so that, in this way, they will always be uniform?

In the article: “they will show respect and obedience in all that concerns their conduct and the treatment of the sick poor to the. . . .”

773. - TO JEAN-FRANCOIS DE GONDI, ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS

[August or September 1645]¹

Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, humbly petitions, stating that, since it has pleased your pastoral charity to authorize the said Priests

Letter 773. - *Recueil de pièces concernant la communauté des Filles de la Charité*, p. 1 ff. This manuscript, preserved in the Archives of the Mission, Paris, concerns mainly documents issued by Jean Bonnet, Superior General; in fact, it is better known under the title of *Recueil de M. Bonnet*.

¹This petition closely followed no. 772.

of the Mission to establish the Confraternity of Charity for the assistance of the sick poor in all the parishes of your diocese where it can be conveniently established, and after having successfully made the establishment in several villages, some charitable ladies of Paris have been so touched by it that they have brought about, through their pastors, the establishment of this Confraternity in their parishes, for example, Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet, Saint-Leu, Saint-Sauveur, Saint-Médéric,² Saint-Etienne, Saint-Sulpice, Saint-Gervais, Saint-Paul and others where this Confraternity has been established and is working successfully. But because the ladies who make up the Confraternity belong, for the most part, to a social class that does not allow them to perform the most menial and abject services proper to the work of this Confraternity, such as carrying the soup pot through the city, doing the bleedings, preparing and giving enemas, dressing wounds, making beds and watching at night over the sick who are alone and near death, they have taken some good country girls to whom God had given the desire to assist the sick poor, who attend to all these little services, after having been trained for this purpose by a virtuous widow named Mademoiselle Le Gras. They have been supported, while living in the house of the above-mentioned lady, by the assistance of some virtuous widows and other charitable persons who have contributed their alms to this, in such a way that in the thirteen or fourteen years since this work was begun, God has so blessed it that at present there are in each of those parishes two or three girls who work every day assisting the said poor and even sometimes instructing poor girls when they can. They live at the expense of the Confraternity of the parishes where they are employed, but so frugally

²Saint-Merry.

that they spend only one hundred livres a year, at the most, for food and clothing, and in some parishes, only twenty-five écus.

Besides the work these girls do in the parishes, three of them are employed by the Ladies of Charity of the Hôtel-Dieu to serve the sick poor there and to prepare for them the little comforts they bring them each day to the Hôtel-Dieu. In addition, there are ordinarily at least ten or twelve engaged in raising the little foundlings of this city, and two or three for the assistance of the poor convicts. Besides those employed in the aforementioned works in this city, there are also some serving in the hospitals in Angers, Richelieu, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Sedan and, most recently, at the Hôtel-Dieu of Saint-Denis-en-France and in other places in the country. There, they perform more or less the same tasks with regard to the care of the sick, healing wounds and educating poor girls, all of this rather successfully, by the mercy of God.

And in order to provide these girls for all the places where they are being requested, the above-mentioned lady trains others in her own home and ordinarily has more than thirty of them whom she employs, some to teach the poor little girls who go to school in her home, some to visit the sick of the parish to bring them food or medicine or to nurse them; some to do the bleeding and dress the wounds of the poor from outside who come to them for this purpose; some to sew or to do similar work; some to learn to read or write; others to do the housekeeping. Everything is done according to the orders given them.

She also supports them partly with the money the girls earn from their handwork when they have some leisure time after their ordinary work; partly with the assistance of the above-mentioned widows who sometimes still contribute to it, each one according to her means; and partly with ordinary alms, but especially with the considerable revenue which the King and Queen, and the Duchesse d'Aiguillon as well, have

charitably donated to them in perpetuity, amounting to more than two thousand livres a year.

And what is still more noteworthy in the work of these poor girls is that, besides the corporal services they render to the sick poor, they try to contribute to their spiritual welfare, as best they can, particularly by saying some good word to them from time to time and giving them little reminders about their salvation, both to those who are going to die, that they might leave this world in a good state; and to those who will recover, in order to help them to lead a good life.

And Our Lord so blesses the little service they render in their simplicity that there is good reason to bless Him for its successful results. It is evident that what is said in Scripture is seen accomplished in them, namely, that God is pleased to communicate Himself to the simple and humble and to use the smallest and lowliest to make them great and exalted. In a word, it is He Himself who has called and approved them and even inspired their humble manner of living. This will be easier to believe if we add that the voice of the people, which is the voice of God, gives its approval to it, not only by reason of the usefulness of their services to the public, but also on account of the good example they are spreading by their upright lives. What lends even greater authority to the above is that everything has been done by virtue of the consent and permission Your Excellency has given to this petitioner, since the approbation of the prelate is the most certain mark of a true vocation and of a good work.

However, works pertaining to the service of God come to an end ordinarily with those who begin them, if there is no spiritual bond among the persons involved in them. That is what this petitioner, under whose direction they have always been until now, in accordance with the authority which you, Most Illustrious Lordship, have granted him in your kindness, fears may happen. For this reason, Excellency, I think it desirable that your charity be pleased to erect as a Confrater-

nity this company of girls and widows and to give them as regulations the following articles, according to which they have lived until now and are resolved to live by in future, under the name of Girls and Widows, Servants of the Poor of the Charity. . . .³

These, Excellency, are, in substance, the little regulations this petitioner had drawn up to be kept by these girls, servants of the poor. They are subject to the good pleasure of your pastoral charity which is most humbly requested to approve them and also to erect their little Company as a Confraternity, since it appears that, by their charitable works and exemplary life, they are useful to the public and prejudicial to no one. So many poor, sick, galley-slaves and foundlings are assisted by them, corporally and spiritually, in addition to their teaching of poor girls, that the Confraternities of the Ladies of Charity cannot really succeed without the aid of these poor girls. Lastly, they themselves will not be able to continue the good they are doing, nor subsist very long together in true charity, if they are not bound together and united as a Confraternity.

For these reasons and other sound considerations, may it please you, Excellency, graciously to grant the most humble request of this petitioner, and you will be doing a work agreeable to God, useful to His Church and one which will draw down blessings from heaven on your sacred person and your whole diocese. For this intention, these good girls, the

³This Rule is published in vol. XIII, no. 145.

poor afflicted persons they will have assisted, and this petitioner will offer their prayers to the Divine Majesty.⁴

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: His Excellency, the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Archbishop of Paris

774. - TO GUILLAUME DELVILLE, SUPERIOR, IN MONTMIRAIL

September 22, 1645

Vincent de Paul asks Guillaume Delville to feed and lodge free of charge in his house Adrien Le Bon, former Prior of Saint-Lazare, who has to go to Montmirail, and even to treat him as if he were the master of the property and persons.

775. - TO DENIS GAUTIER,¹ SUPERIOR, IN RICHELIEU

October 15, 1645

Monsieur,

I am greatly consoled by the blessing God has given to the spiritual exercises of your retreatants but, above all, by your wise direction which I hope will always remain such, when

⁴The following year, Saint Vincent submitted a second petition, which was received favorably. The Archbishop's reply can be found in vol. XIII, no. 146.

Letter 774. - Collet, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 514.

Letter 775. - Reg. 2, p. 176.

¹The Avignon manuscript gives François Grimal, Superior of Sedan, as recipient of the letter. We prefer the reference in Reg. 2.

you act upon advice and with patience. These are the means with which, as today's experience shows, the Romans successfully guided their republic, and also the most effective ones God has left us for sound leadership. I have no doubt that the care of the house, the parish and so much other business you have, weighs you down, but remember, Monsieur, that Our Lord is the strength and wisdom of those whom He employs in such works, and have confidence that He will work in you accordingly.

776. - TO DENIS GAUTIER, SUPERIOR, IN RICHELIEU

1645

Vincent de Paul asks Denis Gautier to receive into his house, suitably to the occasion, Adrien Le Bon, former Prior of Saint-Lazare, to offer him food and lodging, and even to treat him as if he were the master of the property and persons.

777. - NICOLAS PAVILLON, BISHOP OF ALET, TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

During our present stay at the Estates,¹ the Bishop of Lodève² has done me the honor of informing me of the resolution he had taken, because of his age and frequent ailments, to resign his diocese into the hands of Her Majesty, in favor of Monsieur du Bosquet, Councillor of State and Intendant of Justice in this Province, with the sole condition of receiving a reasonable pension. Since he even desired that I be the witness to his resignation, I felt it my duty to

Letter 776. - Collet, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 514.

Letter 777. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹The Estates of Languedoc.

²Jean de Plantavit de la Pause, a very learned Prelate (1625-1648).

notify you of this, believing that you would be most agreeable to it and pleased that he should fix his affection on a person of such merit and ability, as you know him to be. My hope that he will be most useful to procuring the glory of God in this diocese and the salvation of the souls to be entrusted to him has caused me to entreat you with all my heart, Monsieur, to hold him in high esteem and to give him all the help you can in these circumstances.

I can assure you that, besides the service you will be rendering to God and the good you will bring about for this diocese, I will be obligated to you for this in a very particular way, since I cherish him dearly and respect him highly for the proofs he gives of his virtue and his truly Christian piety. I hope for this favor from your zeal for all that concerns what is beneficial to the Church of God, and that you will do me the honor of believing, Monsieur, that I remain always, in the love of our dear Savior and His holy Mother, your most humble and very obedient servant.

NICOLAS,
B[ishop] of Alet

*Pézenas,*³ *December 28, 1645*

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior of the Company of the Priests of the Mission, at Saint-Lazare

778. - TO JEAN SCARRON, PROVOST OF TRADESMEN¹

[January 1646]²

The Priests of the Congregation of the Mission established

³Chief canton town in Hérault.

Letter 778. - The original signed letter is at the seminary of Saint-Sulpice in Paris.

¹Jean Scarron, Seigneur of Mendiné, Councillor in the Great Chamber of the Parlement. The Provost of Tradesmen was the senior magistrate of the royal government prior to the Revolution. He regulated commercial matters for the municipality of Paris.

²Scarron's comments, added to the bottom of this petition, enable us to assign this date.

in the Priory of Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris humbly petition and declare that, having need to build a wall to enclose the land belonging to said Priory, adjoining and contiguous to the house and suburb of Saint-Lazare, in order to put an end to the serious damage being done there, it pleased the King to grant them the authority to surround and enclose this property with walls, as it formerly was, on the old land markers, to continue them where there are none and to build and erect some small houses along the Saint-Denis roadway, at the end of the above-mentioned faubourg,³ as set down in his letters patent of February 20, sixteen hundred forty-four, signed by Guénégaud.⁴ When these letters had been presented to the Treasurers of France in the Generality of Paris, they had the sites inspected and indicated the building-lines needed.

Having considered this, Monsieur, may it graciously please you to ordain that the said letters patent here attached be recorded in your registry, so that the petitioners may enjoy the benefit of them and use them as may be thought proper; and you will do well.

VINCENT DEPAUL
Unworthy Superior of the Priests of the Mission⁵

³The seminary of Saint-Charles, also known as the little Saint-Lazare, was situated there.

⁴Henri de Guénégaud du Plessis, Marquis de Plancy, Commander of Montbrison, Treasurer of the State Treasury in 1639, Secretary of State from 1643 to 1669, Keeper of the Seals of the Orders of the King in 1656. He died in Paris on March 16, 1676 at sixty-seven years of age. On February 23, 1642 he had married Elisabeth de Choiseul, daughter of the Marshal de Praslin.

⁵At the bottom of the petition are a few administrative formulas:

Show to the attorney of the King and of the City.

Issued at the office on January 9, 1646.

SCARRON

I request on behalf of the King and the City that the site be inspected in our presence by the Master of the Works.

February 3, 1646.

(Signature illegible)

Granted as requested.

Issued at the office of the aforementioned city on February 3, 1646.

SCARRON

779. - TO RENE SAUVAGE,¹ IN ANNECY

Paris, January 19, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

For a long time I have been thinking about ways by which we might be all to all and for all the duties in the Company. And because you need practice in preaching and hearing confessions, and in the other exercises of the Mission, I am sending M. Charles² in your place, to give you the opportunity of going to the mission and to form and perfect yourself in this. I beg you, Monsieur, to explain things to him and give him information about your little seminary. I have told him, as I have told you, to be satisfied with explaining to them in simple terms an author such as Binsfeld or Toledo³ in French.

Letter 779. - Made public by M. Charavay in the *Amateur d'autographes*, October 1871, p. 171; copy made from the original letter, which was part of the Merlin collection.

¹René Sauvage, born in Arrest (Somme), near Saint-Valéry in Picardy, entered the Congregation of the Mission on July 2, 1638 at the age of twenty, was ordained a priest in 1640, and made his vows on October 17, 1642.

²François Charles, born in Plessala (Côtes-du-Nord) on December 10, 1611, was received into the Congregation of the Mission on March 12, 1640, was ordained a priest during Lent of 1641, and died on January 26, 1673, after fulfilling at Saint-Lazare the functions of Director of Retreatants and of the coadjutor Brothers. In the circular letter addressed to the entire Company announcing his death, Edme Jolly, Superior General, greatly praised his virtue. (Cf. *Notices*, vol. II, pp. 245-246.)

³The Jesuit, Francisco Cardinal Toledo, born in Córdoba on October 4, 1532, died in Rome on September 14, 1596. He was a brilliant professor of philosophy at the Roman College and successfully carried out various diplomatic missions. He wrote several treatises on philosophy and theology and was especially renowned for a work on casuistry, often republished: *Instructio sacerdotum ac de septem peccatis* (Rome, 1601). It was reissued in 1604, 1608, 1633 and several times later, under the title *Summa casuum conscientiae absolutissima*.

O Monsieur Sauvage, my dear brother, how fervently I ask God to give you the spirit of His Son Our Lord, that you may diffuse it into the many souls His Divine Providence has resolved to save through your ministry!

I had planned to write to Messieurs Guérin⁴ and Tholard but the pen is being taken from my hand and I am obliged to have someone else do it.

In the meantime, I embrace you, prostrate in spirit at your feet and at those of all the members of the Company. I am, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Sauvage, Priest of the Mission, in Annecy

780. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[Before 1650]¹

Monsieur,

I most humbly entreat you, for the love of God, to allow me the honor of speaking to you today for as little time as it will please you. If you have not gone to the trouble of signing our accounts, will you please put it off until I have added the expenses of the Sisters of the Hôtel-Dieu, which I forgot to include yesterday?

In my great hastiness I commit many faults, not to mention those due to malice. I entreat your charity to obtain mercy for me.

⁴Jean Guérin, Superior in Annecy.

Letter 780. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹After 1649, Saint Louise would have written "Most Honored Father" and not "Monsieur."

All your poor daughters greet you most humbly, asking you to remember them. And I, the least of all, am, Monsieur, your most humble and very grateful daughter and servant.

L. DE M.

Feast of Saint Vincent

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

781. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

[1646 or 1649]¹

I know how anxious you are because of a letter your father has written to oblige you to go and assist him. I feel I am bound to tell you what I think about this:

(1) It is no small evil to break the ties with which you have bound yourself to God in the Company;

(2) In losing your vocation, you will deprive God of the valuable services He expects of you;

(3) You will be responsible before the throne of His justice for the good you will not do and which, nevertheless, you should have done by remaining in the state in which you are now;

(4) You will risk your salvation by staying with your relatives, and perhaps you will be of no comfort to them, no more than others who left under this pretext; for God did not permit it because, if He wanted them to be better, He has other ways of accomplishing this;

Letter 781. - Reg. 2, p. 347. The recipient of this letter seems to have been Paul Carcireux, whose sister was a Daughter of Charity, and who left the Congregation to assist his father.

¹Reference to the sons of Madame de Longueville enabled Coste to select these two years for assigning a date to this letter.

(5) Our Lord, knowing the harm there is in being obsessed with relatives, for those who have already left them to follow Him, did not, as the Gospel says, want one of His disciples to go simply to bury his father, nor another to go sell his possessions to give them to the poor;²

(6) You would give bad example to your confreres and be a source of sorrow to the Company, by the loss of one of its children whom it loves and has raised with so much care.

That, Monsieur, is what I beg you to consider before God.

The motive you may have for withdrawing lies in your father's need. But you must understand what circumstances, according to the casuists, oblige children to leave a Community. For myself, I think it is only when fathers and mothers suffer from natural causes and not from their social condition, as when they are very old or when, because of some other infirmity due to natural causes, they cannot earn their living. Now, that does not hold true of your father who is only forty or forty-five years of age at the most, enjoying good health, able to work and who is, in fact, working. Otherwise, he would not have remarried, as he has done recently, to a young woman eighteen years of age, who is one of the most beautiful girls in town. He himself informed me of this so that I might present her to the Princess de Longueville³ as wet nurse for her son.⁴

²Lk. 9:59-62. "To another he said, 'Come after me.' The man replied, 'Let me bury my father first.' Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury the dead; come away and proclaim the kingdom of God.' Yet another said to him, 'I will be your follower, Lord, but first let me take leave of my people at home.' Jesus answered him, 'Whoever puts his hand to the plow but keeps looking back is unfit for the reign of God'." (NAB)

³Anne-Geneviève de Bourbon, second wife of Henri II, Duc de Longueville, was a beautiful, learned and witty woman with a passion for intrigue, who took an active part in the second Fronde. She had a profound veneration for Saint Vincent. After her husband's death (1663), she took up lodgings close to the Carmelite nuns in the rue Saint-Jacques, passed the rest of her days in carrying out the penitential exercises and austerities practiced at Port-Royal, and died a Jansenist on April 15, 1679. Her life has been written by Joseph-François Bourgoïn de Villefore, *La véritable vie d'Anne-Geneviève de Bourbon, duchesse de Longueville* (2 vols., Amsterdam, 1739) and by V. Cousin, *op. cit.*

⁴The Duchesse de Longueville had two sons: Jean-Louis-Charles, Comte de Dunois,

I do think he is not too well off. Alas! who is there who is not affected by the misery of these times? But it is not his present financial difficulty which obliges him to recall you, because it is not serious. It is simply the one he fears, for want of a little confidence in God, although he has lacked nothing up until now and has reason to hope that His Goodness will not abandon him in future.

You might perhaps be persuaded that it is through you God wishes, in fact, to provide for him, and this is why Providence is presenting you with a parish worth six hundred livres, through the actual intervention of this good man. But you will find that this cannot be, if you consider two things: first, that since God has called you to a state of life which honors that of His Son on earth and is so useful to your neighbor, He would not want to remove you at present from this state to compel you to look after a family in the world who is seeking only its own comfort and will be constantly after you to demand what you have and what you do not have. It will also weigh you down with troubles and anguish, if you cannot assist it to its satisfaction and your own. In the second place, it is incredible that your father has been promised a parish for you with a revenue of six hundred livres, because those in the Bourges diocese are among the lowest in the kingdom. However, even if this were the case, how much would you have left over once your maintenance was taken out?

I am not telling you this for fear that temptation may prevail over you. No, I know your fidelity to God; but it is so that you may write once and for all to your father your reasons for following God's Will rather than his. Believe me, Monsieur, his temperament is such that he will give you very little

better known as the Abbé d'Orléans, born January 12, 1646 and died February 4, 1694; and Charles-Paris, born January 29, 1649 in the Hôtel de Ville, who drowned June 12, 1672 when crossing the Rhine. We think Saint Vincent is referring here to the Comte de Dunois.

rest when you are with him, any more than he gives you when you are far away from him. The trouble he causes your poor sister who is with Mademoiselle Le Gras is unimaginable. He is trying to force her to leave the service of God and the poor, as if he would receive great support from her. You know that by nature he is restless, to the point that whatever he has displeases him and whatever he does not have arouses violent desires in him. Lastly, I think the greatest good you could do him is to pray to God for him, while preserving for yourself this one thing necessary, which will one day be your reward and which, even because of you, will draw down His blessings on your family. This is what I ask of Him with all my heart.

782. - NICOLAS PAVILLON, BISHOP OF ALET, TO SAINT VINCENT

Pézenas, February 5, 1646

Monsieur,

On the advice you were pleased to give me concerning the articles people are claiming have been accepted in Monsieur du Bosquet's affair and are causing it to be flawed, I saw him this morning, on his return from the Mass he had just celebrated, and he immediately assured me that he would sooner renounce every kind of diocese than commit this sort of despicable act. I think you will be seeing him soon in Paris where he will talk to you at length about this matter.

I do not know any of those persons professing to be of outstanding piety, about whom you say people are complaining of their misrepresenting affairs here. Since I have gone to the Priests of the Oratory to be more tranquil and free from long and frequent communications, and because by nature I do not have the spirit of intrigue, I am less informed about what people are doing.

If, Monsieur, you want to know my procedure in Assembly¹ affairs,

Letter 782. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹The Assembly of the Estates of Languedoc.

I can tell you that, when I foresee something important to be discussed there, I give it mature consideration before God in my morning prayer and recommend the matter to Him. I say Mass for this intention, and then go to the Assembly where, based on the knowledge God gives me, I form my opinion and propose it in my place quite simply and in the same spirit as I would want to have done it at the hour of death.

As soon as possible, I shall send Monsieur Féret² the letter addressed to him in your packet. Please accept, Monsieur, my boldness in telling you that, before taking him out of the province and withdrawing him from us, you should really think it over, because he is as useful there for the service of the Church as he could be in many other places. Besides a little seminary with twenty-five priests both from the diocese and outside of it, which we opened three months ago in Alet where we need his services, the prelates of the Assembly have taken the resolution of establishing clerical conferences in their dioceses and have been pleased to adopt our own system. Now, if he does not remain with us, I cannot see how we can help them with this, not to mention the meetings of clergy already ordained and those for ordinands, missions, visits and other similar initiatives which are taking place every day and to which the prelates of this province are open, provided they are given some assistance with them. This, Monsieur, is what I have felt bound to represent to you, more to inform you of the state of this region, as far as advancing the Kingdom of God is concerned, than to change your plans for this man, in the event that it seems more advantageous for the good of the Church. I consider and hold anything coming from you in entire submission and reverence, and I am, with all my heart, Monsieur, your most humble and very obedient servant.

NICOLAS,
B[ishop] of Alet

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior General of the Mission, at Saint-Lazare-lez-Paris

²Hippolyte Féret, Vicar General of Nicolas Pavillon.

783. - CARDINAL MAZARIN TO SAINT VINCENT

February 1646

Monsieur,

These lines are to inform you that the Chief Justice¹ has hastened here to ask the Queen for the diocese of Bayeux for his son.² It has been vacant for some days. She has granted it to him all the more willingly since he has the requisite qualities for filling it, and Her Majesty was pleased to be presented with such a favorable opportunity in the person of his son of doing something in return for the father's services and his zeal for the welfare of the State. The Queen promised me that she would write you about this, and I wanted to do it in advance so that you might take the trouble of seeing him and giving him the instructions you judge necessary for acquitting himself well of this office.

I shall say no more to you about this, and so I conclude by assuring you that I am, with much affection³

Letter 783. - An unsigned draft. Archives des Affaires Etrangères. Mémoires et Documents, France, n°855, f°46.

¹Mathieu Molé.

²Edouard Molé governed the diocese of Bayeux for only five years: from June 22, 1647 until April 6, 1652, the date of his death.

³Abelly relates (*op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. XIII, sect. V, pp. 451ff.) the measures which Saint Vincent took to prevent the selection of Edouard Molé by seeking to convince his father, the Presiding Judge, that his son did not have the necessary qualities to be a bishop. Mathieu Molé replied, "I am an old man, I am not rich, I have a large family. My duty as a father is to put them beyond the reach of want by placing them in good positions before I die. If my son has not the requisite qualities for governing a diocese, he will always have some experienced priests beside him whose advice he will follow." (Cf. Coste, *Life*, vol. II, p. 230.) The father outlived the son.

784. - ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC TO SAINT VINCENT

March 1, 1646

Monsieur,

I entreat you to take the trouble of telling one of your men to see Monsieur Laumonion and ask him, on your part, to pass judgment on the La Vaurette affair.¹

This morning, the Vicar General of the Reformed Dominicans came to see me and told me it was absolutely necessary that the incorporation the General has promised me of the Cahors convent into their Province take place here as soon as possible. He is supposed to see you today or tomorrow to ask your intercession with the Queen for this purpose. I beg you to grant it to us in this affair that is so deserving of your efforts.

The Nuncio,² who did me the honor of coming to see me yesterday, is preventing me from going to the Bons-Enfants, as I had decided to do, to assist at your conference and to tell you that there is a big hubbub in this town about the rumor that they want to give the Archdiocese of Bordeaux to a bishop who they feel is unworthy of it.³ You would not believe the uproar this is creating. May God inspire those who make decisions on these high offices to choose persons who are worthy of them!

Meanwhile, I remain

ALAIN,
Bishop of Cahors

Letter 784. - Archives of the Diocese of Cahors, Alain de Solminihac collection, file 22, no. 4.

¹The proceeding to unite the priory of La Vaurette to the Cahors seminary.

²Nicolò di Bagno.

³The See of Bordeaux became vacant on June 18, 1645 by the death of Henri d'Escoubleau de Sourdis. On November 20, 1646 he was succeeded by Henri de Béthune, Bishop of Maillezais.

785. - NICOLAS PAVILLON, BISHOP OF ALET, TO SAINT VINCENT

Pézenas, March 1, 1646

Monsieur,

Regarding what you wrote me recently about several persons being suspicious that the Bishop of Lodève's¹ resignation of his diocese in favor of Monsieur du Bosquet² involved some secret pact between them which rendered the resignation defective and contrary to the holy Canons, I feel obliged to tell you in confidence what I learned from Monsieur du Bosquet himself.

At the beginning of the Estates, he did me the honor of informing me of the choice the Bishop of Lodève had made of entrusting his diocese to him since, because of age and infirmity, he no longer felt he had the strength and power to carry out its functions. At the same time, however, he wanted him to accept his library and a garden he owned near Lodève, as things useless to him in future but which might serve the purposes of Monsieur du Bosquet. But he did not want to do anything against his conscience and the advice of good and learned casuists. I took the liberty of expressing my opinion on this to Monsieur du Bosquet: that he should not get involved in this agreement under those conditions, either verbally or in writing or in any other manner, even if some casuists were of that opinion, because in no way should this smack of simony or border on it in the least. Nevertheless, in the event that he accepted the diocese without binding himself to that stipulation, this would not prevent him from buying both at a fair and reasonable price, if he felt this would suit him. Thereupon, the act of resignation, pure and simple, was drawn up with the reservation of a pension of part of the revenue for the Bishop, in presence of the Bishop of Narbonne³ and myself, as requested by both parties. Now, what could be a problem in this affair is that, although there is no agreement, verbal or otherwise, making this purchase obligatory even after Monsieur du Bosquet is in possession of the diocese, according to what he has always declared to me, he admitted to me in good faith, nevertheless, that he told or

Letter 785. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹Jean de Plantavit de la Pause.

²François de Bosquet, Intendant of Justice in Languedoc.

³Claude de Rebé.

had someone tell the Bishop of Lodève he would need his library and garden once he is in office. Furthermore, he is inclined and has even decided to make an arrangement with him, according to the fair estimate that will be made of them. However, he is unwilling to commit himself to this in any way. Now, because this possibility has come to the knowledge of certain persons, they have suspected some kind of simoniacal agreement or one that could cause disedification if the sale were to go through, since men form their judgment only on external appearances and do not fathom the intentions and benevolent dispositions one might bring to business matters.

I felt, Monsieur, that I should inform you of all the above, to give you fuller knowledge of everything I know about this affair, since you have to give an opinion on it, and I even induced Monsieur du Bosquet, in presence of the Bishop of Puy,⁴ to make known his feelings about it and to speak to you frankly when he is in Paris, so as to avoid the blame and adverse judgment that could ensue from it.

I think you will deem it inappropriate for him to know that I have written to you about this, for it might sadden him and make him cool toward me and, as a consequence, put a stop to the continued confidence he has had in me, which I desire only for the glory of God and the service of His Church.⁵

I remain always, Monsieur, in the love of our dear Savior, your most humble and very obedient servant.

NICOLAS,
B[ishop] of Alet

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, at Saint-Lazare, in Paris

⁴Henri de Maupas du Tour.

⁵François de Bosquet was consecrated Bishop of Lodève on December 20, 1648; from there he became Bishop of Montpellier on June 24, 1657 and died on June 24, 1676. (Cf. Abbé Paul-Emile-Marie Joseph Henry, *François Bosquet* [Paris: Ernest Thorin, 1889].)

786. - TO JEAN DEHORGNY, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

March 2, 1646

I saw in your last letter that you have finally sent Monsieur Martin to Genoa. Dare I say to you, Monsieur, that on this occasion it is important — more than I can express to you — to give yourself to God to be exact to all the orders of the General, whatever they may be, even though they be contrary to your judgment and any plea you might make of something better, or of any inconvenience that might arise from them; for there could be none greater than that of disobedience. A few days ago, a captain was telling me that, when he saw that his general was giving orders badly and he would assuredly lose his life in carrying out these orders, and he could have the general change his mind just by saying a word, he would have lost his honor by doing this and preferred to die instead. Imagine, Monsieur, what shame will be ours in heaven on seeing this perfection of obedience in war and how imperfect ours is by comparison. I assure you, Monsieur, that two or three Superiors who acted in this way would be capable of ruining the Company and, if I did not know your heart so well, I would be obliged to do something else. My conviction, that you are better than I shall ever be and that you love the Institute better than I, causes me to say no more to you about this and I shall not even give it another thought.

Lastly, after trying to show M. . . . the error of his opinions and being unable to do so, we have been advised by four Doctors of the Sorbonne, the Coadjutor of Paris,¹ the Cardinal,² the Chancellor³ and the Chief Justice,⁴ to act as we

Letter 786. - Reg. 2, p. 227.

¹Jean-François-Paul de Gondi.

²Cardinal Mazarin.

³Pierre Séguier.

⁴Mathieu Molé.

formerly did with M. P.⁵ So, we did this last evening. I beg you, Monsieur, to offer his soul to God, and also to offer mine which is in a state a thousand times worse because of my infidelities to the inspirations Our Lord gives me to do His holy Will in all things.

787. - TO JEAN MARTIN, PRIEST OF THE MISSION, IN GENOA

Paris, March 10, 1646

Monsieur,

I cannot express to you the consolation my soul received from your letter, nor how wholeheartedly I have prayed to God to give you more and more of the spirit of His Son and the divine workings in that place¹ where you have such need of it. O Monsieur, how very necessary is the humility and the spirit of a perfect Missionary for the place and duty you have! I ask Our Lord once again to grant you a large share of this and the physical strength so necessary for you in the midst of such heavy labors. I cannot express to you my consolation at seeing you with good M. Blatiron. Oh! what a happiness for the two of you to be together, destined by God from all eternity to serve Him in the important duties in which His Divine Providence has placed you both! O Monsieur, who would have said this four or five years ago? His Divine Goodness will not rest there, if you are most faithful in the present situation.

The Little Company here is doing fairly well, thanks be to God, and often prays to God for both of you. The one who

⁵Probably Guillaume Perceval, who had been requested to leave the Congregation in 1644.

Letter 787. - Original autograph letter, Archives of St. John's University, New York.

¹In Genoa.

needs prayer the most is the most wretched of all sinners in the world and who remains, in Our Lord

I thought I would be able to write to M. Blatiron but they are after me to go say Mass. I have time only to embrace the two of you again, prostrate in spirit at his feet and yours.

788. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION OF THE HOUSE OF SAINT-MEEN

March 16, 1646

Saint Vincent replies to this Missionary regarding the opposition of the Benedictine monks who were claiming possession of the Saint-Méen Abbey.¹ It is better to lose it, he says, than to go to court over it.

789. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL, IN LE MANS

March 20, 1646

I forgot to advise you, before your departure, of some faults found at times in the houses where visitations are made:

(1) That they hear the confessions there of people who come

Letter 788. - Collet, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 414.

¹On July 14, 1645, when Achille de Harlay de Sancy, Bishop of Saint-Malo, turned over to the Priests of the Mission the perpetual direction of the seminary he had just established in the abbey of Saint-Méen (today the chief town in a canton of Ille-et-Vilaine), he assured them of a yearly income of five hundred livres. He joined the seminary to the monastery on condition that there would be five Missionaries, three for the seminary and two to give missions; that they would maintain gratuitously, for two or three years, twelve young clerics, among them four priests, as far as possible, to assure the service; that they would give a pension to the monks of the abbey and, after the death of the latter, that they would augment the number of non-paying clerics to twenty. They were also to officiate at services, repair and furnish all the necessities of the abbey; pray the canonical hours, fulfill the conditions of the foundations, and hear the confessions of the pilgrims and travelers. (Cf. Arch. Nat. S 6711.)

Letter 789. - Reg. 2, p. 99.

from the towns, faubourgs and villages. I beg you to forbid all our priests to do this and to tell them that if, after a mission they have given, some penitents whose confession they heard, return to them for some necessity, they may, in that case go and hear their confession in a neighboring parish that is neither in the town nor in the suburbs.

(2) That there are some who go to preach in monasteries of women. If you come across any, please give orders that this should not happen again.

(3) That the front door is not always kept closed. If the Le Mans house is at fault in this, I ask you to remedy it, so that no one may enter without knocking; and see that the Canons do not allow men, and still less women, to come into our house by another way. Try, Monsieur, to make them observe this precaution so necessary for Communities, and have them consult some persons on this who know how important it is.

(4) That some men are dispensing themselves from Community customs. It is most important to insist that the order of the day be observed invariably and that the holy customs and maxims of the Company be practiced. Let Superiors have a clear conception of their obligation to see to this, as also to hand over, sealed, the letters of the General, without the local Superiors having any right to see their letters. These same Superiors also must in conscience transmit these letters to the General without reading them, even though the men who write them might want to show them to them out of respect.

(5) That petty divisions and aversions sometimes occur among persons. But give yourself to God, Monsieur, to reunite and cement them in charity, for this should be one of the principal fruits of the visitation.

(6) Moreover, you will take notice of the churches, the altars, the crosses they place there and those carried in processions to cemeteries, etc., so that everything may be done with proper decorum and arranged as becomingly as our poverty will permit.

(7) Just as stinginess is blameworthy, so is facility in paying more for things than they are worth, and I see that both faults are equally made light of in some of our houses where they are not so particular as all that and where it is said we bid higher on things and have plenty of money. A middle course between these two extremes, and the observance of what is practiced here in this house with regard to food, must be recommended.

790. - TO A PRIEST OF THE MISSION

It is true that illness, far better than health, makes us see what we are, and it is in the midst of sufferings that impatience and melancholy attack even the most resolute. But since they do damage only to the very weak, you have profited from them rather than their doing you any harm, because Our Lord has strengthened you in the practice of His good pleasure, and this strength is apparent in your determination to combat them courageously. I hope also that this will be even more clearly apparent in the victories you will win by suffering henceforth for the love of God, not only with patience but also with joy and cheerfulness.

791. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL, IN LE MANS

Paris, March 23, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

Letter 790. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. III, chap. XXIII, p. 329.

Letter 791. - The original autograph letter from which this copy was made was put on

This is my third reply, although you told me you have not received my preceding ones. If Mademoiselle Le Gras' health permits and the weather is better and it is after Easter, she could make the journey from Le Mans. Before then, there is no likelihood of this.

Quid if she were to send two Sisters there right now, without mentioning any conditions until she gets there or until we have their approval, which I am seeking and will have someone keep on seeking?¹ How does this seem to you?

You are right, and I am consoled that you are planning to spend the feast days there doing what you told me. Nevertheless, people are crying out for a visitation, which is being requested in several places, and I do not know how you will be able to make the one in Rome. This makes me consider sending Monsieur Alméras and his poor health there.

Just as stinginess is blameworthy so is the fault of facility in paying more for things than they are worth, and I see that both faults are equally made light of in some of our houses where they are not so particular as all that and where it is said we bid higher on things and have plenty of money. A middle course between these two extremes, and the observance of what is practiced here in this house with regard to food, must be recommended.²

I have asked Monsieur Lambert to give you an answer about the rest, as we have agreed on the solutions to be given to you. I have also given instructions for you to be sent what you are requesting.

sale by M. Charavay. One of Charavay's catalogues has this letter erroneously addressed to "M. Pierre Goulart in Sainte-Geneviève."

¹The Daughters of Charity had established such good order in the hospital in Angers that they were requested for the Hôtel-Dieu in Le Mans. In that same month of March, M. Portail wrote to Saint Louise: "We are impatiently awaiting your Daughters here. The administrators are putting pressure on us." (Archives of the Mission, Paris.) The Sisters did not leave for Le Mans until May 4.

²Saint Vincent repeated here what he had already written in his letter of March 20, probably fearing it had not arrived at its destination.

In the meantime, I greet you and your little family, prostrate at its feet and yours, and I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

792. - TO ETIENNE BLATIRON, SUPERIOR, IN GENOA

March 23, 1646

O Monsieur, how apparent God is in your Little Company and in your occupations! And how could you be equal to so much work otherwise? I cannot thank God sufficiently for the strength He gives M. Martin and you amidst such heavy labors, nor can I rid myself of my constant apprehension that you are both doing too much. In the name of God, Monsieur, try to do something to moderate your work in the way I wrote to you. Does it not seem to you that you will have to be relieved by someone else whom we would send to assist you? You can believe, Monsieur, that in saying this to you my heart flutters because I have perfect confidence in you and with very good reason. However, I constantly fear that you may become ill! In the name of God, Monsieur, take the best possible care of yourself.

I embrace M. Martin and you, prostrate in spirit at your feet and at the feet of those Gentlemen working with you, whom I greet and to whose prayers I recommend myself.

793. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[March 24, 1646]¹

Monsieur,

I have good reason to humble myself, seeing God's guidance over me who am unworthy of the grace I desired before our dear feast of the Incarnation to serve me as preparation. I entreat God's goodness that this may be before the end of the Easter season and that, recovered from your illness, you will be in perfect health for that and for all our good God wants from your charity. I entreat Him, through the most holy love of Jesus, that we might truly give ourselves once again to Him and offer to His most holy Mother tomorrow this painting, destined to adorn an altar under the beautiful title of her name, asking her for renewed assistance for my son of whom I have had no news since the seventh of this month. This distresses me greatly. I likewise have had no news from the Mother Superior of the Visitation of Tours,² nor from Monsieur Deure. This really makes me apprehensive.

I also beg you most humbly, Most Honored Father, to do me the charity tomorrow³ of remembering at the holy altar our entire Little Company, guilty and hard-hearted in carrying out the most holy Will of God for us. Oh! my very dear Father, if our good God reveals the reason for this to you, how repulsive I will appear to you! I see nothing in myself that is not blameworthy except for a very feeble willingness to do better. Help your unworthy daughter, by your holy prayers and charitable admonitions, to belong entirely to God and to obtain from His bounty that He may look with pity upon her poor son.

Enclosed is a book which Monsieur Guérin, the confessor of our Sisters at Saint-Gervais, sends you by them. He sent one to us, too. God willing, we shall draw profit from it for His glory!

I ask you, with the greatest possible humility, prostrate in heart and affection at your feet, for your holy blessing, to draw down on

Letter 793. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Date added on the back of the original.

²Claire-Madeleine de Pierre.

³Day of the renewal of vows.

*my poor soul the graces it needs to be truly, Most Honored Father,
your most obedient daughter and very humble servant.*

L. DE MARILLAC

Eve of the Incarnation of the Son of God

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

793a. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Palm Sunday,¹ 1646

I thank you most humbly for all the kindnesses you have done for me during my little illnesses, as you did over twenty years ago, Mademoiselle, and I beg Our Lord to be Himself your thanks just as He will be your reward.

I am well, thank God, but I am not going out yet because I have not been purged, since I still have a slight cold.

Your heart is somewhat dismayed at the sight of my minor ailments and because you sometimes view things with an eye that looks to aftereffects and consequences.

You do the same thing with regard to your son and this is what disturbs your peace of mind. It is good, Mademoiselle, not to give this scope to our imagination and to check it by considering that this is a consequence of our melancholy inclinations and, ordinarily, most things do not come to pass and will turn out only as Divine Providence arranges them.

Well then! You wanted to make your review and a more interior communication² to him in whom Our Lord has given

Letter 793a. - Archives of the Berceau, original autograph letter. The text was published in the *Annales* (1928), pp. 257-259 and reprinted in *Mission et Charité*, 19-20, pp. 55-57. This edition uses the latter text.

¹In 1646 Palm Sunday was March 25.

²"Review," "Communication"—these words allude to the direction of conscience

you a certain confidence. God was not pleased to allow this, in order that you might make it interiorly and intimately with Him who, honoring you exceedingly with His love, as the Apostle says, wills, through divine jealousy, that you make this precious review and interior communication to Him. This being the case, have you any reason to complain?

And how do you know if God is not purposely depriving you of news of your son, so that you might honor in a special way the deprivation He suffered of His Son, and which the Blessed Virgin suffered as well? Offer Him your tender affections for that purpose, Mademoiselle. Bless Him, give over to Him the direction of your son and He will speak so well to him that even out of wrongdoing, if there was any, which I do not believe, He will draw good and his salvation. Will not He who draws water from rocks and oil from hard stones bring about the result I am describing?

I have seen that beautiful painting. Tomorrow the Church will celebrate the feast of the Incarnation.³ I hope to say Mass in sight of it tomorrow, since that seems more fitting to me than today. Is it for your oratory or for the children's?

Will you not be writing Tuesday to Monsieur Portail about your Sisters whom he is requesting?⁴ Could he not arrange things according to your way of thinking, about which you will inform him? It is really desirable for you to go there but, as things are not ready and you cannot be present for every establishment, make some notes for this purpose which may serve both for the present and for the future.

The Sisters either have to be in charge or be subject to the other Sisters.⁵ The latter is not advisable and the former is

for which Saint Louise appealed to Saint Vincent.

³The feast of the Annunciation was transferred to the next day (March 26) because of the solemnity of Palm Sunday.

⁴M. Portail had requested that Daughters of Charity be sent to serve in the hospital in Le Mans.

⁵Sisters of another Community were at that time working in the hospital in Le Mans.

perhaps difficult. However we have to tend toward that or to have them given a certain number of the sick to attend to in their own way. Tell me your thoughts on that. We write on Tuesdays and Saturdays and shall see about it.

In the meantime, I shall offer you and your dear daughters as well to Our Lord at the Divine Sacrifice of Holy Mass which I am about to celebrate. I ask you for the same favor in your Holy Communion.

I would be very glad to know something about that little twelve-bead chaplet attached to the picture of the Blessed Virgin.

Good day, Mademoiselle.

I am your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

794. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[March 1646]¹

I am unworthy of the guidance of Divine Providence which your charity does me the honor of pointing out to me in order to draw me away from my infidelities. So I renounce those apprehensions about the future, in order to will only what God ordains each day. Nevertheless I think I cannot prevent myself from having the justifiable fears which I should have for my infidelities, in all submission, however.

It was not my intention that the painting of the Blessed Virgin be either for our oratory or for the Foundlings, but that it might serve

Letter 794. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter appears to be Saint Louise's reply to no. 793a which was dated March 25, 1646, and a follow-up of her letter of March 24, no. 793.

as an adornment for an altar dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, to make reparation in some way for my son's faults. I used some rings I still had to have it made. That is why, Monsieur, I most humbly entreat you to allow it to remain in your church, that this reparation be made since it was, unfortunately, in one of your houses that the misdemeanor of that son of mine occurred.

The little chaplet is the devotion I asked permission of your charity to make three years ago, which I do privately. I have a number of these little chaplets in a small box, with thoughts on the subject written on a piece of paper, to be left for all our Sisters after my death, if your charity allows this. None of them knows about this. It is to honor the hidden life of Our Lord in His state of confinement in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, and to congratulate her on her happiness during those nine months. The three small beads are to greet her under the beautiful titles of Daughter of the Father, Mother of the Son, and Spouse of the Holy Spirit. That is the essence of this little devotion. By the grace of God, unworthy though I be, I have never missed it since the time indicated, and I am ready to abandon it, aided by the same grace of God, if your charity tells me to do so. My intention in this humble devotion is to ask God, through the Incarnation of His Son and the prayers of the Blessed Virgin, for the purity necessary for the Company of the Sisters of Charity and the stability of this Company, according to His good pleasure.

Tomorrow, with God's help, I shall send you a letter for M. Portail.² Kindly look it over to see if it is appropriate to send it on to him. Also, I shall try to be present in spirit at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass tomorrow, and although I do not think you are saying it downstairs, I will have the happiness of assisting at it, if I can learn the time of it.

Please do not forget the answer to what Madame de Lamoignon, the President, is asking about continuing the collections. I am, Monsieur, your most grateful daughter and obedient servant.

L. DE M.

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

²Then in Le Mans.

795. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL IN LE MANS

April 3, 1646

You are doing very well during your visitation getting to the bottom of everything to make things more stable and conformable to the spirit of the Company; this is what I have been hearing. And since in doing this you would not be able to reach Rome much before autumn, we have decided to send M. Alméras to make the visitations in Italy and, on the way, in Marseilles and Annecy. As for the other houses, they will be awaiting the benefit of your charity and I the satisfaction of seeing you there to establish order and the perfection of discipline. Now, the better to do this, you have no need of hurrying. I have no doubt that you will always find new reasons for refining, regulating, setting things right, as well as doing and undoing, particularly in the house where you are now. It cannot be otherwise this first time. That is why you should take all the time you need there. It took God several days to create the world and He preserves it only by orderly changes and mutations.

May His Goodness be pleased to make us steadfast in His love!

796. - TO GUILLAUME DELATTRE, IN CAHORS

Paris, April 7, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have just received your letter of March 20, with the copy

Letter 795. - Reg. 2, p. 100.

Letter 796. - The original autograph letter is at the seminary of Colle in Tuscany.

of the contract drawn up between the Poor Clare nuns and you regarding payment of three thousand livres for the Fajemot house, with the obligation of thirty-four hundred livres, payable on demand. I have sent you the ratification for this purchase. His Excellency has assured me that he will have the price paid. You did not tell me in your last letter that you expected to pay half of this, and had not His Excellency told me he would pay and would have the whole price paid, I would have been very worried.¹

From this fact I take the opportunity to tell you, Monsieur, that another time it will be well for you to give me succinctly more details about matters. For example, in this affair you might have told me that you had gone to [ask]² the Vicar General³ for payment of that sum and he had treated you coldly, saying he had no orders to give you anything. And yet, lo and behold, two days later that amount was paid. You do not tell me who gave it, and that is what you should have done, so it seems to me, as also you should have done for the Fajemot premises, building and farm area. You likewise did not tell me that you had deserted Saint-Barthélemy during Lent and that the pastor⁴ was ill.

¹The house, composed of two main buildings, which M. Delattre had just acquired from M. Brengue, faced the Place Gaillard. It had belonged to the distinguished Pons-Fajemot family, citizens and magistrates of the town, very much involved in the political life of Cahors at the end of the sixteenth century. It was burdened with a mortgage in favor of the Poor Clares who had a right to 5,744 livres on the 6,400 livres which it had cost. Guillaume Delattre immediately paid 3,000 livres and obligated himself to pay what remained, when requested to do so. (Cf. Adrien Foissac, *Le premier séminaire de Cahors (1638-1791) et les prêtres de la Mission* [Cahors: F. Plantade, 1911], p. 10.)

²This word was blotted out on the original letter. Only the first letter was visible.

³Father Jean Garat, whose life was written by Leonard Roche (*Le portrait fidèle des abbés ou autres supérieurs réguliers et de leurs religieux dans la vie du Père Jean Garat* [Paris, 1691].)

⁴The contract of union between the parish church of Saint-Etienne or Saint-Barthélemy de Soubiroux and the seminary dated from December 27, 1644. The Directors of the seminary could not take possession of the parish until the death or retirement of the pastor, Antoine Guittard. (Cf. Foissac, *op. cit.*, p. 9.)

I think it advisable, Monsieur, for you to inform me in much greater detail about things; it is also advisable for you to act with full confidence and submission to the wishes of His Excellency. You have an even greater obligation to do this since he esteems you and is very fond of you, although he may not express this to you. He wants to have his own way and he wants people to approve of what he orders, what he does, and what he does not do; and he is right. He has his reasons which we do not know but should respect, all the more so since we do God's Will in doing this. Furthermore, I think it inadvisable to air our petty grievances right and left. A strong stomach digests everything and a weak one turns sour everything it takes in and sometimes vomits it. Oh! how good it is, Monsieur, to digest matters between God and ourselves!

His Excellency spoke to me about the moat. I told him he was right not to set himself at variance with the town by trying to demand from it a special gate for you. That has too many consequences in war time. It would be better, for now at least, for you to use the town gate tower.⁵

We shall send you a lector from the seminary in place of M. Water⁶ who will please come here. We have orders from Rome to send Missionaries to his country and are being pressured to do this by the bishops of that land. If he has made a vow to go to Rome, we shall work on getting him dispensed from it. I embrace him and good Monsieur Treffort⁷

⁵We know from Pouillé de Dumas that in 1646 Alain de Solminihac made an initial gift of 2,000 livres to the seminary, then established in the town at the Chanterie, to buy a house called Fajemot, situated in the faubourg de la Barre, near the church of Saint-Barthélemy from which it was separated by a moat and its enclosing walls. A few years later, the new major seminary was built there.

⁶James Water, born in Cork (Ireland), entered Saint-Lazare October 9, 1638 at twenty-two years of age, was ordained a priest in 1642, made his vows in 1644, was sent to the seminary of Cahors, and probably was sent back to his own country in 1662.

⁷Simon Treffort, born in Villiers-Herbisse (Aube) October 2, 1611, entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 5, 1642 and made his vows on October 7, 1645. He was Superior in La Rose from 1668 to 1677 and died in Cahors on July 16, 1682. A

with all possible humility and affection. I am really sorry that I cannot write to the two of them. I ask God to restore dear Brother Dupuis⁸ to health. If we can, we shall send you another priest and the Brother you are requesting.

Meanwhile, be content and at peace, Monsieur, in the confidence that Our Lord will bless your labors more and more and will animate you more and more with His spirit. This is what I ask of Him with all the affection in my power, and I am, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Delattre, Superior of the Priests of the Mission, at the Seminary of Cahors, in Cahors

797. - TO SAINT LOUISE

Saint-Lazare, Wednesday evening [Around 1646]¹

I will speak to M. Vacherot tomorrow, if he comes to this house, it not being appropriate for me to send for him to tell him that. As for the girl, *O Jésus*, Mademoiselle, it is not advisable! I could tell her in a joking way something about the person's affection, if the opportunity arises, but I am really at a loss as to when I shall be able to talk to them. I have never been so overwhelmed with business as I am now. All

few days after his death, Edme Jolly, Superior General, wrote a letter in which he greatly eulogized his virtues.

⁸A cleric of the Mission; no other mention of him is made in the extant letters of Saint Vincent.

Letter 797. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original autograph letter.

¹Around this date in the letters of Saint Vincent and Saint Louise, we find the name of M. Vacherot, the physician for Saint-Lazare.

day tomorrow we shall have some Doctors here on business and Friday I will have to spend almost the whole day writing. We shall see.

As for Mademoiselle Viole's document, the power of attorney she mentions will have to be drawn up early tomorrow morning in your name, and you should sign it as one of the officers of the Confraternity of Charity of the Foundlings. You are indeed one of them and one of the most important. I will have it prepared this evening and will send it to you tomorrow to be signed. The nearest notary will have to go to witness your signature and we will have to send someone to fetch it. I will try to send one of our Brothers posthaste.

Good evening, Mademoiselle. I am y[our] s[ervant].

V. D.

798. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[Between 1645 and 1649]¹

Monsieur,

My apprehension that someone forgot to tell you that I shall not fail to notify all our Sisters to be at the conference tomorrow, Monday, as your charity did us the honor of promising, causes me to bother you with these few lines, for fear that some other business might deprive us of this happiness. Providence has brought here our Sisters from Maule, Saint-Denis and Issy; they, along with all the others, are really happy about this. God grant that it not be to our

Letter 798. - *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 129 bis.

¹After 1649, Saint Louise would not have written "Monsieur," but rather "Most honored Father." Moreover, the establishment of Saint-Denis was made in 1645 and the Sisters withdrew from Issy in 1649.

shame some day that His Goodness has given us so many graces, particularly the one given me of being, Monsieur, your most grateful daughter and humble servant.

LOUISE DE MARILLAC

799. - TO GUILLAUME DELATRE, SUPERIOR, IN CAHORS

Paris, April 19, 1646

Monsieur,

Blessed be God, Monsieur, for what you tell me about the spiritual matters of your house going well and that you are making good use of the advice of your admonitor! I am praying that He will bless your direction more and more.

You may have heard about the ordinance issued by the Bishop of Cahors concerning the priests of his diocese; namely, that they are to spend some time in your seminary, as you will see fit.¹ His Excellency is taking care of his business as fast as he can, with the intention of returning home as soon as possible.² When he gets back, he will see to the purchase of the house.³

On another occasion, Monsieur, it would be well for you to give me the substance or, to put it better, a brief history of the principal matters about which you write me. For example, you give me a short justification regarding the inhabitants of Saint-Barthélemy. It would have been expedient had you narrated the affair just as it happened and mentioned to me afterwards the things that could justify you. And since you did not tell me enough of what went on, I cannot form a

Letter 799. - Pémarin, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 521.

¹The text for this ordinance can be found in Foissac, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

²Alain de Solminihac was in Paris.

³The Fajemot house.

judgment on your offense. I shall only tell you, Monsieur, that your dealings should be gentle as to the means, even though firm in arriving at good and just ends, which will always be the case when they are according to Rule or to the order of Superiors. As for other things, it is good to seek the advice of your Domestic Consultors and, in important matters, of the Superior General and, for external affairs, of the Bishop or his officers. That is how I act, and rarely do I do anything out of my own poor head. And all the more should we take orders and advice from outside when there is question of an action involving the diocese or particular individuals. In this case, we should not only follow the orders of the bishops and of pastors in their parishes, but also the permission of the bishops in person, in disagreements we have with their people and scandals that we remark. It is another story when there is question of discipline and disagreements with members of the Company. In this case, it is up to the General to give the orders and we must have recourse to him. And we are all the more bound to take care to lead the people gently and patiently and to rid ourselves of all sensitiveness in our own opinions, since Our Lord has taught us how to act toward people, and since it is up to us to instruct priests, not only by word but also by example, how to lead their people. Accordingly, it would be well, Monsieur, for you to acquiesce to the orders of the Vicar General⁴ or of whomever His Excellency may have given orders to settle that difference. If he has not spoken to you about this, perhaps it is because he does not know what a humble and docile spirit you have.

I beg you, Monsieur, not to be discouraged by what I am saying to you nor to infer from it that you are not fit for leadership. Nature and the evil spirit are suggesting that to you, but holy humility and confidence in God will lead you

⁴Jean Garat, Vicar General for Alain de Solminihac.

to trust that you will be able to do all things with His grace. This is the opinion of the Bishop of Cahors and my own as well. That is why I want to take special care to warn, counsel and console you because, having a good spirit as you do by God's grace, and good intentions, I hope Our Lord in His goodness will bless your leadership.

It has just occurred to me to give you another piece of advice following on that, but only very briefly; it is that you should get in the habit of judging events and persons, always and in all circumstances, for the good. If an action has a hundred facets to it, says the blessed Bishop of Geneva,⁵ always look at its best side. In the name of God, Monsieur, let us act in that way even though intelligence and human prudence tell us the contrary. I have within myself that unfortunate quality of judging everything and everyone according to my own poor wits, but experience has made me see the happiness of acting otherwise and how God blesses this manner of acting. If time permitted, I would tell you many things about that, but here they are taking the pen from my hand and forcing me to close, by telling you that my heart cherishes yours perfectly in Our Lord's. I ask the same of you for the love of the same Lord, although I do not deserve it, if only because I love you more that I can express to you, and am

800. - JULIEN GUERIN TO SAINT VINCENT

Tunis, 1646

We have rescued one of the poor French women who were in the hands of a French renegade. All the tradesmen contributed their share

⁵Saint Francis de Sales.

Letter 800. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. VII, p. 139.

On July 25, 1643 a contract was drawn up with the Duchesse d'Aiguillon for the

to this. My share cost me seventy écus. The two other women are in great distress; I am working to save the one in more serious danger. There are some others who are young and beautiful and in extreme peril unless they are helped. And one of them would have been lost already if I had not obtained with enormous difficulty a three-month delay for her ransom and put her in a place where her master can do no violence to her. Not long ago, these cruel men gave a woman more than five hundred blows with a stick to force her to deny Jesus Christ, and not satisfied with that, while she was lying half dead on the ground, two of them stamped so violently on her shoulders that they split open her breasts; and in this way she ended her life gloriously confessing Jesus Christ.

801. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[May 2, 1646]¹

Monsieur,

I most humbly entreat your charity to remember that the places

foundation of a house in Marseilles, and it stipulated that when Saint Vincent judged it appropriate, he would send to Barbary some priests of his Congregation "to console and instruct poor Christian prisoners . . . in the faith, love and fear of God, and to give there . . . missions, catechism instructions and exhortations in the usual way." (Cf. vol. XIII, no. 90.) The Saint did not yet have sufficient funds for this; moreover, he had to consult Rome. When everything was ready, Saint Vincent sent Julien Guérin and Brother François Francillon to Tunis, where they arrived on November 22, 1645. Lange Martin, the French Consul, took them into his home. Julien Guérin went to work immediately. At first he ministered secretly. When he saw there was nothing to fear, he no longer disguised the fact that he was a priest, and celebrated Mass publicly in the prisons. But if he could act openly with the Christians, the same did not apply with the Turks; in that quarter the slightest imprudence could have cost him his life.

François Francillon, born in Ceaux (Vienne) in January 1621, was received into the Congregation of the Mission as a coadjutor Brother in April 1645. He was the first Brother to work in Tunis. From there, he returned to France and was then sent to Algiers, where he stayed until July 6, 1688, the day on which the Turks affixed him to the mouth of a cannon.

Letter 801. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter was written on the Wednesday preceding May 4, the day the Sisters destined

for Le Mans have been reserved for next Friday and therefore we must have the conference you have so kindly promised us, tomorrow, Thursday.² I most humbly entreat you to take the trouble to send us the subject so we can notify all our Sisters.

I have figured out all that the Sisters brought to the house in 1645. The total comes to 1,129 livres and 12 sous. Out of that, there were 43 Sisters to be supplied with habits and linen. I think there are almost 400 livres left over for the house, minus expenses, without including in that the linen and habits made by the Sisters of the house. I think, Monsieur, if you say something about this, it would be well for our Sisters to hear that what they bring in is just about equal to what is spent and that those bringing in more than what is needed for them, make up for others who do not bring in enough, for I do not know if the whole Company would be capable of understanding that their frugality is a great help to the house, because of the lack of restraint of some, and of the majority who tell too freely everything they know.

I beg God in His goodness to make you clearly understand our needs and our weaknesses, and my own especially. I am, by order of the guidance of His Holy Providence, Monsieur, your most obedient daughter and very grateful servant.

L. DE MARILLAC

Wednesday

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent

802. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[May 2, 1646]¹

Yes, indeed, Mademoiselle, I remember quite well

for the hospital of Le Mans were to leave.

²If this conference was ever given, it has not been preserved.

Letter 802. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter is the response to the preceding (no. 801); it was written on the blank

tomorrow's meeting at your house for the Sisters going to Le Mans. That is why I sent someone to the Pastor of Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas² to whom, along with the lady officers, I had given the hope that you would go see them tomorrow to arrange the details of their Confraternity of Charity. With this in view, I informed the Pastor this evening that you could not go there tomorrow, but rather on Friday perhaps.

I have also paid attention to what you told me about what the girls are relating and have seen the inconveniences you mention.

Good evening, Mademoiselle. I am y[our] s[ervant].

V. D.

803. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL, IN LE MANS

Paris, Thursday, 10:00 P.M., May 3, [1646]¹

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

The Sisters of Charity by whom I am writing to you are leaving tomorrow morning to go to Le Mans. And since I neither saw nor received your letter of the twenty-ninth until just now as the clock was striking nine, I cannot reply to it at length until the day after tomorrow, with the messenger who

portion of Saint Louise's letter.

²Pierre de Pons de la Grange, from Saint-Flour, a Doctor in Law. He was pastor of Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas in Paris from December 24, 1645 to 1649, at which time he became Director of the Missions-Etrangères. He died on March 31, 1680.

Letter 803. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter. The postscript was written by Saint Vincent.

¹The presence of M. Portail in Le Mans, the departure of the Sisters for that city, and some other details, necessitate this date.

will also be arriving either before or about the same time as the coach.

You are expecting only three Sisters but Mademoiselle is sending you four.² They have all consoled me more than I can tell you by their good dispositions regarding this journey, and I hope God will give His blessing to their establishment and grant them the grace of corresponding fully to their present eagerness to do well. I shall not say anything to you about their particular guidance except that you should give them a good confessor who is truly spiritual, a prudent older man willing to follow the manner of direction proper to them, which you will please make him understand clearly. In addition, no one but he should talk to them, except in passing, and he himself shall do so only in the church.

I am glad that Brother Testacy³ is feeling better but, *Mon Dieu!* how distressed I am about his journey, since he is going on it without any real need and against the customs of the Company! Still, his mind is made up to do it; *in nomine Domini*, you could take him with you when you go to La Rose and give him a companion there to go to his native place where he should not remain longer than two weeks. So, Brother Rivanaigre⁴ will be able to stay at the house and M. Brin⁵

²The Sisters were Jeanne Lepeintre, Claude-Brigitte, Andrée, and perhaps Geneviève. The set of Rules their Foundress gave them before they left is still extant. (Cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 134.)

³Charles Testacy, born in Condom, entered the Congregation of the Mission on March 27, 1643 at thirty years of age, made his vows on January 9, 1646, and was ordained a priest that same year. He was Superior in Cahors (1646-1647), then was placed in the house in Saintes. Saint Vincent wrote of him: "He seems to be a man of common sense, faithful to his practices, mature, and a good businessman." (Cf. vol. III, no. 870.)

⁴Pierre Rivanaigre, cleric, was born in the former diocese of Tournay in 1621 and was received into the Congregation of the Mission on July 6, 1644.

⁵Gérard Brin, born near Cashel (Ireland), entered the Congregation of the Mission on October 14, 1639 at twenty-one years of age, made his vows on November 2, 1642, and was ordained a priest in 1644. This Missionary was perhaps the best of all the Irishmen whom Saint Vincent received into his Congregation. He was recalled from Le Mans during the year 1646 to be sent to Ireland where, together with other confreres and compatriots, he did enormous good. Persecution obliged him to return to France in 1652

could continue to look after the seminarians, if he can do it, as he has begun to do.

I told you in my preceding letter that I did not agree to borrowing money so soon, so as not to give people any reason to talk. However, since we are being pressed so much for redemption, fine! You could get money from someone to meet the most urgent needs, but do it as discreetly as possible.

It is not advisable for M. Gallais⁶ to go and preach in the parishes in order to establish the Confraternity of Charity there. You know what I do in Paris. I try to win over and instruct the ladies in private. If he can do likewise, he will be doing well.

Thank you for the papers you sent me; you have really pleased me. I will read them tomorrow, please God, to be greatly consoled by them. I have had enough consolation for this evening from having seen in your letter the fruits Our Lord is gathering from your labors and those we can expect in future. These will be greater if we are truly faithful. I pray His Divine Goodness to grant it fully to them so that He may be all the more glorified and impart to you more and more, Monsieur, His strength and His spirit. I recommend you to Him very often with my whole soul, because yours is very dear and very present to me.

I was going to end this letter here except that I had to proceed further when I remembered the poor Sisters in Angers, to ask you to visit them on your way. They will be overjoyed to see you and perhaps are in great need of your visit.

where he gave missions in Saint Vincent's native province. He was appointed Superior in La Rose (1652-1654), then spent the following two years in Paris. He held the same position in Troyes (1657-1658), Meaux (1658-1660) and Toul (1660-1662). He returned to Ireland in 1663 and took up his apostolic work with a zeal that age had not slackened. Neither prison, where he stayed for a month, nor illness, which brought him twice to the brink of the tomb, was able to stop this heroic Missionary, one of the most worthy sons of Saint Vincent.

⁶Superior of the house in Le Mans.

Mademoiselle Le Gras is hoping for this, as also to give a warm welcome to the two Sisters you are sending us. May God guide them all and grant me the grace of being, in His love, as much as I desire, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

M. Gallais could have the sermon of the Charity preached by someone else in the town, and have the ladies prepared and instructed at the pastor's house. There is no sermon given in Paris for this. The day before yesterday, I set up the Charity of Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas in the faubourg Saint-Jacques in this way.

Addressed: Monsieur Portail, Priest of the Mission, at Notre-Dame-de-Coëffort,⁷ in Le Mans

**804. - THE ADMINISTRATORS OF THE HOSPITAL OF NANTES
TO SAINT VINCENT**

Monsieur,

The greatness of your charity has spread through every region of the land and principally to this town for which Monsieur d'Annemont, chaplain of the Marshal de la Meilleraye, has assured us your zeal has been aroused to give us some help in remedying the disorders being perpetrated in our hospital, to the prejudice of the relief of the poor, because of the negligence and carelessness of the hired help who are with them. As Fathers of the Poor, we felt it our duty in this urgent need to implore your goodness to give us the assurance of six of your Daughters of Charity to assume the care of

⁷Collegiate church united to the Congregation of the Mission.

*the poor in our hospital. Their sores and ailments are as so many mouths who demand of your compassion this benevolent assistance of your Sisters, whom we shall receive according to their Rule and establishment in Angers. We find nothing to add as regards their Rule and manner of living. But, in what concerns the welfare of this hospital and the administration of its affairs, they would depend absolutely on us and on those who will replace us in the office of Fathers of the Poor. They will even go for the daily provisions to economize the goods of the above-mentioned hospital, on the advice of the Fathers of the Poor. If you wish to have a special contract drawn up for their reception, send us the form with someone who has power of attorney to act on your behalf, and we will try to do what you desire in this instance, Monsieur, of your most humble and most obedient servants.*¹

J. Fourché, J. Fournier, Léonard,
Fathers of the Poor

Nantes, May 18, 1646

Addressed: Monsieur Vincent, Superior General of the Mission, at Saint-Lazare, in Paris

804a. - TO GUILLAUME DELATTRE, SUPERIOR, IN CAHORS

Paris, May 19, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I have just received your letter. In reply to it and to your preceding one as well, I shall tell you, Monsieur, that I was

¹Saint Vincent acceded to the request of the administrators.

Letter 804a. - Original autograph letter in the house of the Priests of the Mission in Florence. A photocopy is also in the Archives of the Mission, Paris. The text was published in the *Annales* (1947-1948), pp. 309-310 and reprinted in *Mission et Charité*, 19-20, pp. 57-59. This edition uses the latter text.

very much saddened when I read in your letter that you have been so sick. I praise God that you were not dangerously ill and beg Him to preserve you for many years in His service and in that of His Spouse. In the name of God, Monsieur, take good care of yourself.

No, Monsieur, it is not the person you suspect who told me that which caused me to write you the last time¹ but, on the contrary, it is he who gave me about you . . . words of gratitude . . .² and of that I can assure you before God who is truth itself. However, it is someone else who mentioned it to me. I will tell you quite simply, Monsieur, that there are two things I would have wished: the first is that you had not been so intransigent regarding the ardor of those people, all the more so since you were not pastor³ and the pastor did not feel the way you did; secondly, it would have been advisable, since you were in town, to bring those people to the Vicar General as soon as they began to stiffen up, or to refer them to him. I can readily see that it is pure zeal to have the ordinances of the Bishop of Cahors⁴ observed, but *honor regis judicium diligit*,⁵ and then we do not always notice everything on the spot.

It is because of your firmness that the Bishop esteems and loves you and even indicates that he wants you, more than any other man he knows, in the duty you have. *Obsequium tuum ejus judicium diligit*.⁶

¹Without doubt Saint Vincent is referring to no. 799 of this volume.

²Certain words are illegible because of stains on the paper.

³Although the union of the parish of Saint-Barthélemy to the seminary of Cahors, whose Superior would be the pastor, was decreed by the Bishop in 1644, it did not take effect until some weeks after this letter.

⁴Alain de Solminihac.

⁵*The honor of the king loves justice.* Ps. 99:4. "The King in his might loves justice." (NAB) Saint Vincent's statement is closer to the Vulgate: Ps. 98:4. "and the king's honor loveth justice." (D-R B)

⁶*His justice loves your compliance.* This statement, suggested by the preceding one, is not taken from Holy Scripture.

This situation, Monsieur, and the acts of patience you are practicing in it will merit for you some new grace for similar situations.

Furthermore, I am delighted to see the offerings so frequently repeated which you have made and still make so often to God. *O Dieu*, Monsieur, how wholeheartedly I beg Him to be Himself honored by the glory He draws from them and be His own thanks and a help to your own dear soul.

I cannot express to you the tenderness Our Lord gives me for you and for your small but very good family, whom I embrace with all the affection of my heart which cherishes yours a thousand times more than itself in that of Our Lord. In His love I am, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

I embrace your dear family, prostrate in spirit at its feet.

Addressed: Monsieur Delattre, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Cahors, in Cahors

805. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[Before 1650]¹

Monsieur,

My poor memory prevented me yesterday from telling you that the little du Pont girl² had wanted to make her confession to you

Letter 805. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹After 1649, the letter would begin with the words: "Most honored Father."

²Marie-Marthe du Pont-Courlay, grandniece of Cardinal Richelieu.

when she made her little retreat. I think she also wanted to talk to you about her parents' wish. This made me think, Monsieur, that, if your charity could speak to her, she would be able to tell you her thoughts more freely; also, you would have more influence over her than her brother, as I had proposed to you. He is living four or five leagues from here.

I most humbly entreat your charity to offer to our good God our little novena which begins today. This good God knows that, by His mercy, I want nothing but His holy Will, by which I am, Monsieur, your most grateful servant and humble daughter.

L. DE MARILLAC

Would you please take the trouble to let me know what time the little du Pont girl should go to see you?

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

806. - TO CARDINAL MAZARIN

Paris, May 24, 1646

My Lord,

The Grand Master of the Collège de Navarre¹ told me that Your Eminence had instructed M. Le Tellier² to have me write

Letter 806. - The original autograph letter belongs to the Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, correspondance de Rome, vol. XCIV, f° 11.

¹The Ecole Polytechnique, which now occupies the site of the Collège de Navarre, was transferred there by the decree of July 16, 1804.

²Michel Le Tellier, born April 19, 1603, was Secretary of State from 1643 to 1666, Chancellor and Keeper of the Seals of France from 1677 to 1685, and died on October 28, 1685. During the Fronde, he supported Mazarin and his policy. "As Councillor of State," he said one day, "I had a great deal to do with M. Vincent. He did more good for religion and the Church in France than any man I have ever known; but I especially observed that at the Council of Conscience, where he was the most important member, never was there question of his own interests or of the ecclesiastical houses which he had established." (Testimony of Claude Le Pelletier, 121st witness at the process of beatification.)

him to say whether the Sieur de Douay, licentiate in theology, has the requisite qualities to be head of the school of philosophy in the same collège. The following, My Lord, is what I have learned about him, both from the deceased principal and from several scholars worthy of credence.

They all say he is very capable, a good man, experienced in the duties of this office in which the late principal had employed him for several years; that he holds the usual orthodox views of the Church and, lastly, that the public opinion of the collège is that this young man is indisputably the most capable of those being considered for that position.

What further confirms this is that the late principal, a holy man who worked wonders in his duty, came to see me a few days before his death and asked me to use my good offices with Your Eminence, that you might be pleased to give him as Assistant this young man whom he judged before God to be the one most capable of continuing the good order he had established in his office. And I, My Lord, beg Our Lord to sanctify you and preserve you for the good of this State, and am, My Lord, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
Unworthy Superior of the Mission

807. - TO JEAN MARTIN, PRIEST OF THE MISSION, IN GENOA

Paris, May 25, 1646

Vincent de Paul gives Jean Martin an account of the labors of the Missionaries. He has just received a new recruit into the Company, in whom he is placing the highest hopes.

Letter 807. - M. Charavay, who put this letter up for sale, stated in his catalogue that the original was signed by the Saint and comprised one page of text.

808. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

I think that the right of the Master of the Hôtel-Dieu in Le Mans to name the two Sisters and of the Administrator to name the others is the cause of the disorders occurring in the service of the poor. Would it not be better for the Master to offer not to make use of this right, while continuing to contribute the sum agreed upon, and for the Gentlemen, having no right in view other than their administration in order to carry out their duty, to be willing themselves to call on Sisters of some religious Community to serve the sick poor? Perhaps you do not see any benefit in having two of our Sisters remain in the midst of these disorders.

I beg to make known to your charity the holy Will of God, who has been pleased to take our good Sister Marie Despinal in Angers by a happy Christian death, as her confessor informs us. I most humbly entreat you to recommend her to the prayers of your holy Company and to remember the reply you must soon give to those good Gentlemen in Nantes, and that I am, Monsieur, your most obedient and very humble servant.

L. DE MARILLAC

May 28, [1646]¹

809. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[Around 1646]¹

Monsieur,

The Marquise de Mortemart² has just left here and has told me

Letter 808. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, a seventeenth century copy.

¹The year that Sister Marie Despinal died.

Letter 809. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹The need for a tutor for the son of the Marquise de Mortemart would make this date a reasonable assumption.

²Diane de Grand-Seigne, daughter of Seigneur de Marsillac, died in Poitiers on

to ask you most humbly on her behalf for a tutor for her son.³ She still has a good priest from Roule⁴ who has begun teaching him the fundamentals but she questions whether he is capable, and is letting him know that he is only temporary. His name is Monsieur Lafons. She most humbly entreats you to find out something about him, if you can, so that if he were as capable as someone else, he might be considered along with the others.

I most humbly thank your charity for doing me so much good. It seems to me that when I allow myself to get carried away like that by the fears that put me in the same state as genuine afflictions, I need to be guided a little severely. From my son's letter which I am sending you, you will see my weakness on the one hand, and ever the cause of my sorrow, which makes me so much in need of your charitable assistance and of being always, Monsieur, your very grateful daughter and most humble servant.

L. DE M.

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

810. - TO JEAN MARTIN, IN GENOA

Paris, June 8, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received great consolation from your last letter as from

February 11, 1666. She had married Gabriel de Rochechouart, Marquis de Mortemart, who became in 1650, a peer of France by the erection of his marquisate as a duchy-peerage, and in 1669, governor of the city of Paris and Ile-de-France. The Marquis de Mortemart was the brother of the Comte de Maure, Saint Louise's cousin, and husband of Anne d'Attichy.

³Louis-Victor de Rochechouart, better known in history as the Duc de Vivonne, was born on August 25, 1636 and died on September 15, 1688. He was the brother of Madame de Montespan (Françoise Athenais de Rochechouart), mistress of Louis XIV. Through her influence, the Duc de Vivonne received the titles of Marshal of France, General of the Galleys, and Viceroy of Sicily.

⁴A parish in Paris.

Letter 810. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.

all the others. That helps to assuage somewhat my apprehension that the labors you have been enduring for so long may overwhelm you. I have written my little thoughts on this to M. Blatiron, so that he will try to get them reduced. I hope he has taken heed of this and that I will soon have some good news on that point.

In my uncertainty about being able to write to you, I spoke to M. Blatiron about your mother's¹ health, which is still good, and told him that your brother is going to Toulouse with the Archbishop to teach Greek to his nephew.

Speaking of relatives, you could not believe how consoled I am at the thought that you share the sentiments of Our Lord and that, like Him, you say that your mother and your brothers are those who do the Will of God. May His Holy Name be forever glorified by this!

I have written to Rome for M. Dehorgny to send you that German pupil, about which you are aware. I have had no reply yet but I hope for one soon.

Believe me, Monsieur, I have great compassion for all your fatigue and, please God, you will get the rest I desire for you! Until then, I shall not stop asking Our Lord to be your strength, your relief, your consolation and your all. I am, always in His love, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Martin, Priest of the Mission, in Genoa

¹Gillette du Noyé, daughter of Guillaume du Noyé and Marie Nubert, owners of a bookshop in Paris.

811. - JULIEN GUERIN TO SAINT VINCENT

Tunis, June 1646

Two Englishmen were converted to our holy faith and are serving as an example to all the other Catholics. There is a third one, only eleven years of age, one of the most beautiful children you could ever see and one of the most fervent you could ever hope for. In addition, he has great devotion to the Blessed Virgin whom he constantly invokes, so that she might obtain for him the grace to die rather than deny or offend Jesus Christ, for that is the intention of his master who is keeping him only to make him renounce the Christian faith and who uses all sorts of means for this purpose. If someone could send us two hundred piastres, we could rescue him from this danger and there would be good reason to hope that some day, with God's grace, he would be a second Bede,¹ so intelligent and virtuous is he, because there seems to be nothing childish in him. He made profession of the Catholic faith last Holy Thursday and received Holy Communion that same day, and he continues to receive frequently. He has already been beaten twice with a stick to force him to deny Jesus Christ. The last time, while his master was striking him, he said to him, "Cut my throat, if you wish, for I am a Christian and I shall never be anything else." Several times he has declared to me that he is determined to let himself be beaten to death rather than renounce Jesus Christ. For one so young and vulnerable, his whole life is admirable. I can say in all truth that he is a little temple in whom the Holy Spirit dwells.

Letter 811. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. VII, p. 133.

¹The Venerable Bede (673-735), a celebrated English monk and scholar, a Saint whose feast is May 25.

812. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[Around 1646]¹

Monsieur,

Since Madame de Mortemart could not find you, she instructed me to tell you that the person who is acting temporarily as tutor for her son is supposed to go see you so that you might take the trouble of finding out if he is capable of this task. However, she is afraid he might simply tell you that he wants to learn from you how he should act, and that is not her intention.

Our poor Sister Genevieve² is still quite sick, and I am, your most obedient and very grateful daughter and servant.

L. DE MARILLAC

Saturday

813. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[June 1646]¹

I forgot to show these letters² to Mademoiselle Le Gras. Will she please let me know if she was in Angers with the Fathers of the Poor³ at the time our Sisters were established

Letter 812. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹This letter is connected with no. 809.

²Sister Geneviève Doinel. She served the poor in the parish of Saint-Leu, then in Chantilly in 1649. In 1650 she was sent to Hennebont, where she remained until 1653. She did not know how to write and placed a cross upon the act of the erection of the Company on August 8, 1655. She returned to Chantilly in 1656.

Letter 813. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹The contents of this letter allow us to assign this date.

²Saint Vincent had enclosed with his letter a petition addressed to him by the Administrators of the hospital in Nantes, requesting the Daughters of Charity.

³Title given to the Administrators of the hospital.

in the hospital?⁴ She will also see from Father Portail's letters that our good Sisters are returning, and this consoles me deeply.⁵

M. Lambert has just told me it is urgent to find a solution for Richelieu.⁶

Mademoiselle de Lamoignon took it upon herself yesterday to inform you of the Ladies'⁷ decisions about what you suggest. Among other things, it was decided that you should send your Sisters to visit the babies⁸ as soon as possible.

814. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[End of June or July 1646]¹

Monsieur,

We are anxious to send Sister Guillemine to Saint-Paul so we can bring Sister Anne² here. If you had the time to say a few words to her, we could send her over today.

⁴The installation of the Sisters at the hospital of Angers took place on February 1, 1640, in the presence of Saint Louise.

⁵We must admit that M. Portail acted too precipitately in calling the Sisters to Le Mans before all the difficulties were smoothed out and especially before seeing that in the hospital services, the personnel would not be mixed with the Daughters of Charity. Sister Jeanne Lepeintre and her companions waited some fifteen days in Le Mans for the solution, in a state of inactivity that must have been very painful for them. Finally, the whole business fell through and on June 1, M. Portail informed Saint Louise that he was sending two Sisters back to Paris and another two were leaving for Angers. "Well, Mademoiselle, here are your dear Daughters back with you, as you ordered. I think they have earned as much merit by their inactivity as they would have in performing heroic actions. If they have done nothing else except preach by their modesty and equanimity in time of trial, neither the time nor the expense of their journey was spent in vain."

⁶Sister Elisabeth Turgis went there some time later as Superior.

⁷The Ladies of Charity.

⁸To visit some of the foundlings farmed out with wet-nurses.

Letter 814. - Archives of the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity, original autograph letter.

¹Reference to the building project enables us to assign this date.

²Guillemine Chesneau and Anne Hardemont.

I had asked Monsieur Lambert to send us your bricklayer to have him look at the place for building a parlor, and I forgot to tell you that there might be a room built above it, since it is also very necessary for that parlor to be covered.³ Since Madame de Liancourt is coming here, I shall speak to her about it because she knows about building. I think she will contribute something toward the expenses, since she can have this room for the time of her little retreats.

I ask your pardon for my obtrusiveness and am, Monsieur, your most obedient daughter and very grateful servant.

L. DE M.

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

815. - TO JEAN BOURDET, SUPERIOR, IN SAINT-MEEN

June 29, 1646

If what you tell me about the little pieces of news of the Company refers only to that news, it was an oversight on my part not to have shared it with you and I most humbly ask your pardon for this. But if it concerns the direction of the Company or some particular individuals, it is not advisable for me to write about it, for many reasons. In any case, I do not think you mean it that way. Rest assured, Monsieur, that I do nothing without the advice of the consultants the Company has given me, nor without recommending the matter to Our Lord.

I saw from your letters that, without awaiting instructions from us, you have accepted the Plancoët¹ chapel, even contrary to the reasons I gave you for not taking it, and they were

³The plan of building a parlor was adopted at the Council of June 26, 1646. Saint Vincent earnestly requested that the parlor not have a grill, for fear lest, in time, the Sisters get the idea of becoming nuns.

Letter 815. - Reg. 2, p. 97 and p. 127.

¹Today the chief town of a canton of the Côtes-du-Nord.

considerable, especially the one where I said that if we are occupied with attending to the devotions of that holy chapel, we are setting aside Our Lord's intention for us which is to go to the rural areas to seek out the poor souls who should receive grace in their own locality and not go searching for it elsewhere. I am well aware that you have good reasons in favor of it, especially that of a change of air; but it would have been much better to buy a house with good air so you could go there for an outing once a week, rather than to commit yourself to a new establishment where, if it is successful, you will have unimaginable work. If we do not do it, there will be reason for complaints against us, or you will have to employ there all the workers you have, and more.

In the name of God, Monsieur, let us not rush into things; let us move very slowly. I recall that I wrote you the same thing in Troyes² and you had led me to be hopeful about this. Rest assured that you could not put forward any reason I have not considered, as well as its response, before deciding on anything . . .³

As for the visitation of the houses of the Company, that is a custom of every holy Community and of the Church itself. If rules or regulations are made, it is to correct faults, and since all faults have to be corrected, then we need as many rules as there are types of faults. The way to avoid having a Visitor make a lot of rules is to act in such a way that he encounters very few faults. In this sense, you are right in hoping that he makes very few rules, and I agree with you. I also agree that the Visitor should be circumspect about giving orders on matters pertaining to the Church and external matters, *positis ponendis*.⁴ The person who has been appointed

²M. Bourdet had directed the house in Troyes from 1642 to 1644.

³Reg. 2 gives us two excerpts from the Saint's letter. The first ends here and the second begins.

⁴Observing, however, what is necessary.

for this will have the necessary prudence, just as I am sure that you will be exact in having his instructions carried out.

816. - TO LOUIS THIBAUT, PRIEST OF THE MISSION, IN SAINTES

Paris, July 4, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I was hoping for the happiness of seeing you rather than of writing to you again, but since the business of the Charity has held you up again, so be it. The joy I will have of embracing you will be all the greater the longer I will have desired and awaited it. I ask Our Lord to bring you back in good health, and the same to Brother Gondrée¹ whom I greet affectionately.

The persons you say you have to bring to us will be welcome but if you have not said anything to commit yourself regarding the one who wants to come to the seminary for non-resident priests² at two hundred livres a year, please do not bring him for such a small amount. We do not take anyone for less than 250 livres. If you have promised him, *in nomine Domini*. There are no residences in Paris that cost less than ours, nor any where the boarders are better treated, and God knows we are experiencing great financial difficulties because of this.

Letter 816. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original signed letter.

¹Nicolas Gondrée, born in Assigny (Seine-Maritime), entered the Congregation of the Mission as a Sub-Deacon on April 11, 1644, at twenty-four years of age. During his internal seminary, he was ordained a Deacon and was sent to Saintes. In 1646 he returned to Paris, was ordained a priest and in 1648 volunteered to go and serve the natives of Madagascar, where he arrived on December 4, 1648. God was satisfied with his good will and called him to Himself on May 26, 1649. Saint Vincent highly esteemed the virtue of M. Gondrée and considered him "one of the best subjects in the Company." (Cf. *Notices*, vol. III, pp. 43-56.)

²The Bons-Enfants.

I am reserving until you are here the joy of showing the tenderness of my heart for yours because words cannot express, as much as I would like, my consolation of being entirely at your disposition, in the love of Our Lord, and always, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: To be delivered to Monsieur Thibault, if he is still in Saintes

817. - TO CLAUDE DUFOUR, IN SAINTES

Paris, July 4, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I give thanks to His Divine Goodness for having preserved you on your journey and to M. des Noyelles¹ as well, and I beg Him with all my heart to preserve you everywhere for His glory.²

Here is the reply to the requests in your letter:

(1) No seminarian is to be accepted until the Bishop of Saintes³ returns, unless he makes his intention known to you by letter or otherwise, as he did for the person who is presenting himself. You may receive him, if it is true that M. Thibault had orders for this, as he told you. And not only

Letter 817. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original signed letter.

¹Philippe des Noyelles, born in Arras, entered the Congregation of the Mission on January 18, 1642, at thirty-three years of age, and made his vows on June 2, 1646.

²At first Saint Vincent had added: "and the good of His Church." Upon reflection he scratched out these words.

³Jacques Raoul de la Guibourgère.

with regard to the seminarians, but also for all the other exercises or exterior functions, you will please remember not to undertake anything without the advice of the said bishop, nor without having written to me about it beforehand.

(2) It is not advisable to perform any public action in the parochial church,⁴ such as preaching, catechizing or hearing confessions.⁵

(3) I highly approve the establishment of the conference of non-resident priests, since you foresee that this can be done easily, but it is appropriate for you to write to His Excellency about it to obtain his consent, for perhaps he would want to be present and to inaugurate it himself.

(4) It would be better from now on to wear a skull cap in the house rather than a hat, to maintain uniformity, considering that you now have a place to stay.

(5) If you judge that giving five sous a week to the poor is insufficient, you could give them up to two sous a day, because you could not give more or even as much there as in Sedan.

(6) With regard to the lamp before the Blessed Sacrament, *Jésus, mon Dieu!* it must indeed be kept lit. This is necessary, especially since oil is cheap.

I entreat the Light of the World to enlighten your dear soul more and more for the guidance and advancement of those whom Providence will send you.

His Excellency spoke to me about you a few days ago, expressing to me his great satisfaction at knowing that you had been sent to Saintes, because of the good reports given him.⁶ I am sure you will always find in him great kindness, great support and much facility in handling business.

I most humbly greet the whole Company, at whose feet and

⁴First draft: "in your church."

⁵The words: "if the Pastor does not wish it," which followed in the original draft, were crossed out by the Saint.

⁶First draft: "what was said to him about you."

yours, Monsieur, I prostrate myself in spirit to kiss them all and to implore the assistance of your prayers for me and for the Company in general, which is doing better and better, by the grace of Our Lord. It is in Him that I offer you my poor heart which cherishes yours in a way I cannot express to you and which makes me forever, in His love, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Dufour, Priest, Superior of the Mission, in Saintes

818. - TO MESSIEURS DEHERES AND BAUTRU¹

Paris, July 8, 1646

Monsieur,²

Although I do not have the honor of [knowing] you, nevertheless, I take the liberty of writing to you [in the interest] of the Congregation of the Mission and to offer you the services of this Little Company in general, along with my own in particular, beseeching you, Monsieur, to accept them.

Letter 818. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, signed draft; the document is in very bad condition.

¹Guillaume Bautru, Comte de Serrant, Councillor of the King, Intendant of Justice, Police and Finance for the *Généralité* of Touraine, member of the French Academy, was one of the wittiest men of his time. He was the author of several poems that were quite popular, and of a satirical work entitled: *L'Ambigu*. He started his career in diplomacy and was Ambassador to several countries. He died in Paris on March 7, 1665, in his seventy-ninth year of age.

²At the beginning and in the body of the letter, the secretary had at first written *Messieurs*. Everywhere else he wrote in the singular, except at the close of the letter, which was probably done out of distraction.

The authority the King has given you, by the [oracle] of Divine Providence, to maintain his authority among his [subjects] and to maintain public rights and guarantee the rights of [each] individual person, causes us to turn to you, Monsieur, [on this occasion] which presents itself, trusting greatly in the extraordinary charity with which you so worthily carry out your duties.

We are proprietors by contract [of the customs dues] of Angers, conjointly with the Hôtel-Dieu of Paris through the donation made to us by the late Commander de Sillery. At present, we have been informed that the Mayor³ and the Magistrates of the said town have had issued a farming lease of several taxes on a great deal of merchandise coming into the town, but especially of a new [tax] on wine. This is to the detriment of several articles of the Council and of the general lease of the above-mentioned dues which expressly forbid this.⁴ Therefore, Monsieur, we earnestly entreat you to have removed from the notice they have posted the article which speaks of the above-mentioned new tax on wine. For, if there were reason to levy new taxes on it, how could we maintain this tax farm, since even the tax farmer is obliged to relinquish his ancient rights in order to facilitate the sale of this commodity?⁵ In doing this, Monsieur, you will be doing a notable good⁶ not only to our Little Company but also to the poor of the Hôtel-Dieu, preserving for us our most available cash and most assured assets, indemnifying us from proceedings we would be obliged to institute against the Council by opposing this undertaking, which would distress us greatly.

You see, then, Monsieur, how much we need your protec-

³Laurent Lanier (1645-1647).

⁴First draft: "which expressly prohibits imposing any tax on said wine for any occasion or reason whatsoever."

⁵First draft: "of the wine."

⁶First draft: "a service."

tion and also how obligated we are to implore even more for you the protection of Our Lord. I entreat Him with all my heart to grant me opportunities to convey to you the marks of perfect obedience and the expression of the desire I have of being inviolably in His love, Messieurs, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL

Unworthy Superior of the Congregation of the Mission

Addressed: Messieurs Dehères and Bautru, Intendants General of Justice in Touraine

819. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL, IN RICHELIEU

Paris, July 11, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received one of your letters from Saint-Méen, written just before your departure, which I do not have at hand right now. I suspected what you wrote me about the situation in that house and I ask you to send me a more detailed report on it.

As for the chapel M. Bourdet has taken charge of,¹ I am distressed about it, not knowing what decision to make on something that will, I think, be more burdensome than useful to us. Please let me know your opinion on it.

M. Brin has been here for fifteen or twenty days. Divine Providence manifested itself in his return, making use of him to give us back M. Coglée who, after spending a few days in the seminary, has been sent to Sedan. M. Codoing also came

Letter 819. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original signed letter.

¹The chapel in Plancoët.

in from the place where he has been and is very well at present.

Right now, the Community is quite large because of the return of those scattered here and there on mission and some others who have come for a visit from Crecy, Sedan, Montmirail, etc. Some of them are studying the art of controversy and others, cases of conscience.

Enclosed are five receipts to be signed for the salt revenues. I ask you to send them back by the ordinary mail.

A while ago, you requested the notes on the manner of living of the Sisters of Charity. They could not be sent in time to you in Saint-Méen but I am sending them to you now, having had a copy put in their place.

I await news of your arrival in Richelieu. May God guide you in that place and give you an abundant share in His grace, in order to bring forth, there as elsewhere, fruits of everlasting benediction.

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

VINCENT DEPAUL
I.S.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Portail, Priest of the Mission, in Richelieu

**820. - ETIENNE BLATIRON, SUPERIOR IN GENOA,
TO SAINT VINCENT**

July 1646

The number of our confessors has gone as high as eighteen. There have been more than three thousand general confessions and a large number of reconciliations of very great importance, putting an end

to disputes which have been the cause of twenty-three or twenty-four murders. Most of the persons involved obtained in writing pardon and peace from the offended parties and will be able to obtain forgiveness from the Prince and be restored to their pristine state.

**821. - ETIENNE BLATIRON, SUPERIOR IN GENOA,
TO SAINT VINCENT**

[Around July 1646]¹

When I wrote you the order followed on our missions, I forgot to tell you what we were doing for the instruction of the people and the relief of the confessors. We have two young clerics who, outside the time for catechism, teach the mysteries to all those who want to go to confession and, when they are sufficiently instructed, they give them a little printed card to that effect. When a penitent comes to make his confession, he presents it to his confessor who is thereby assured that he is adequately instructed in Christian truths, and he does not have to take the trouble to question him. In this way, the confessors proceed more quickly and do not keep those near the confessionals waiting.

822. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL, IN RICHELIEU

Paris, July 15, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I already wrote to you in Richelieu where I think you arrived today, and I acknowledged receipt of your last two

Letter 821. - Abelly, *op. cit.*, bk. II, chap. I, sect. IV, p. 69.

¹Date given by Abelly.

Letter 822. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original signed letter.

letters, one from Rennes and the other from Saint-Méen. They did not surprise me much because I had my own suspicions about what you wrote me.

I hope in this new visitation you will find something to console you, in the care each man takes to do well. Because of this, I am expecting good results from what you will set to rights there and greater exactness in carrying out regulations. For this end, I am asking Our Lord to give you more and more a share in His own spirit.

M. Alméras left here yesterday to go and join you in Richelieu, but he will not be arriving very soon because he has gone as far as Rennes first, to see about a seminary they want established in that diocese. The Duchesse¹ has given for this purpose a recently vacated rectory dependent on Marmoutiers.²

Monsieur Alméras left without taking his letters; I am sending them to you to be given to him when he arrives, please.

My greetings to M. Gautier³ and to the whole family in general, with all possible affection and tenderness. And my heart embraces yours, most dear to me, with consolation and the desire of being one and inseparably united to that of Our Lord, in whose love I am in truth, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Portail, Priest of the Mission, in Richelieu

¹The Duchesse d'Aiguillon.

²The renowned Abbey of Marmoutiers (Indre-et-Loire) depended on the Congregation of Saint-Maur.

³Superior of the house in Richelieu.

823. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Friday, [July 20, 1646]¹

Monsieur,

I felt it very necessary to send our Sister Elisabeth² to Saint-Germain-en-Laye to look into the conduct of our Sister there and, at the same time, being so near, she could go to Maule³ and Crespières.⁴ By the same token, she will be able to get more details about the need to change Sister Marie,⁵ the one Madame de Bouillon⁶ is asking to have removed. She can make it appear that there is no other reason for this except that she is going for a little change of air. In fact, since she is accustomed to doing hard work, I would be afraid that she might fall sick on us when she had to leave. The thought did not enter my mind yesterday to propose this to our Sisters. I beg you most humbly, Monsieur, kindly to let me know if you think this is all right. She could go and spend tonight at Saint-Germain and tell Mademoiselle de Bouillon⁷ your response to her request that you send one of your Gentlemen there to have the treasurers give an account.

I ask your charity for his holy blessing in order to prepare me for Holy Communion, and I am, Monsieur, your very grateful servant and most obedient daughter.

L. DE M.

Addressed: *Monsieur Vincent*

Letter 823. - Original autograph letter. A facsimile of this letter was published in *Revue des Documents Historiques* (July 1873), p. 50.

¹Date added on the back of the original.

²Elisabeth Martin, who would set out for Nantes on July 26 with Saint Louise.

³In the canton of Meulan (Yvelines). The Daughters of Charity had an establishment there.

⁴In the canton of Poissy (Yvelines). The Daughters of Charity had an establishment there.

⁵Probably Marie Thilouse, a Sister who was causing problems. She had had several assignments before being sent to Nantes. She withdrew from the Company before the end of 1649.

⁶Eléonore-Catherine de Bergh, Duchesse de Bouillon. She had a château at Morainvilliers which was near Maule and Crespières.

⁷Louise de la Tour d'Auvergne, Demoiselle de Bouillon.

824. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL, IN RICHELIEU

Paris, July 22, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I received your letter written from Angers, with the report of the Saint-Méen visitation and of the present state of the house. Seeing that your efforts are being blessed ever more by God's paternal hand, I was greatly consoled by it. I offer Him with all my heart my most humble thanks for this and on your advice I have felt it my duty to write to M. Bourdet, although I have not yet finished his letter¹ which I hope to do at the first free moment.

What you also wrote me about the good Sisters in Angers has greatly added to my consolation, and I praise this same goodness of God for causing you to arrive there at just the right time.

I strongly approve the three little remarks you noted for me regarding the authority of local Superiors, and we shall settle that when you get back.

I ask Our Lord to communicate His spirit to you more and more in order to diffuse it in the other places you are to go, beginning with Richelieu where I hope you will find the people well enough disposed to receive the graces God has in store for them. Please take the trouble to give me news of all this. M. Alméras is supposed to go to see you, sooner perhaps than I thought. He left here to go to Rennes, after a stop in Angers. But since I was informed that the matter could be taken care of without him, I wrote him that in that case he could go on

Letter 824. - Archives of the Mission, Paris, original signed letter. The last sentence of the postscript is written in Saint Vincent's hand.

¹No. 825.

to Richelieu. I do not yet know what he has done.

What was written to you about M. Brin is not true. He came here directly from Le Mans where experience has shown us that the Providence of God alone withdrew him from that place in order to bring M. Coglée back to us in the Company. The latter had left it upon returning from Marseilles and has since been sent to Sedan. M. Brin is living with us and giving great edification.

M. Codoing is also doing very well. Every day he goes to the conferences being given on cases of conscience and on controversies. In general, the whole Company here and elsewhere is doing better and better, by God's mercy, so much so that I am not getting complaints from anyone. Only M. Dufestel is no longer with us, and his departure took place very quietly. He is now the Dean of Saint-Omer in Lillers.² M. Colée has also gone to Amiens. My humble and affectionate greetings to M. Gautier and all the others in that house. I embrace them all in spirit as cordially as possible, asking the assistance of their prayers for me and for the entire Company. I ask your prayers in particular, Monsieur, in which I have great confidence. I beg Our Lord to preserve you and to give you a share in His sweetest consolations, that you may be strengthened in sustaining the burden of your labors.

I am, in His love and in that of His glorious Mother, Monsieur, your most humble and obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

After I had signed this letter, I received yours dated the seventeenth, which I cannot answer right now. I will just say that what you want to put into the Rules for the local Superior seems very good to me.

²Today Lillers is the chief town of a canton in Pas-de-Calais.

I think you should be here for the changes to be made in the Rules.

Addressed: Monsieur Portail, Priest of the Mission, in Richelieu

825. - TO JEAN BOURDET, SUPERIOR, IN SAINT-MEEN

[July 22, 1646]¹

You tell me, Monsieur, that you have always found fault with visitations and the way they are made in the Company. I most humbly beg you, Monsieur, to allow me to give you the reasons the Company has for acting in such a way.

The first is that visitations made by those who serve the General of a Company, or the ones they have others make, are conducted like those in the Church, which has ordered all bishops to visit all their churches from time to time and to have them visited every year by their archdeacons and more often by their rural deans.

(2) That every well-regulated Order and Community observes this custom;

(3) That the majority recognize, as the Carthusians do, that one of the main reasons why they have not needed a reformation is that this Order has a visitation every year;

(4) That experience has shown us that one of our houses was almost subverted in its discipline, and several individuals confused as to good moral character, and that only a visitation was capable of remedying that evil and did remedy it, so much

Letter 825. - Reg. 2, p. 95.

¹This is the letter Saint Vincent mentioned in the preceding letter. It is reasonable to assume that it was completed on the same date or shortly thereafter.

so, that no other house in the Company is doing better than that one;

(5) That the same experience has shown us that all the houses are profiting more or less from it, by the grace of God, depending on whether Superiors are more or less faithful themselves in observing, and having others observe, the recommendations the Visitor makes;

(6) That, when a visitation is overdue, most of the houses request that someone be sent for it;

(7) That local Superiors ask for visitations because the Community in general and each member in particular are more united to him and his orders after the visitation than previously;

(8) That Communities breathe easily afterwards, because it moderates ardor and strengthens Superiors who are not forceful enough to curb the audacity of certain members. In addition, if there is someone in the Community who causes trouble for the majority, his bad temper is cured in part, or the Community is disburdened of him by his being sent somewhere else, where perhaps he will improve.

(9) That, by means of the visitation, all the Rules, or nearly all, are put into practice again if they had not been;

(10) That, if enmities exist, charity is restored among all the confreres;

(11) In a word, it can be said that visitations, made well and exactly, do what the sun does: they give light, and these visits reveal all the faults of the Community to the one who is there to remedy them. The sun gives warmth, and the visitation enkindles in the persons visited a greater love of God and the neighbor as well as a greater esteem for their vocation and for the observance of the Rules. Just as the sun spreads its influence over all creatures, it can also be said that the visitation benefits the entire family visited.

Yes, you will tell me, but it still seems to me that all these effects are not apparent everywhere. I reply that this is true

in houses where Superiors and subjects are not sufficiently disposed to merit the grace of this holy action but, in those places where Superiors have sufficient humility and zeal, the visitation works wonders, as experience has proven everywhere.

You will say that you do not blame the visitations but the way they are made by some members of the Company. Blessed be God, Monsieur, that you have nothing against visitations but only against the manner of making them! Let us take a look at how we proceed in them.

We begin this holy action with a sermon dealing with the way to make this visitation well;

(2) Each man tells the Visitor in private his own faults, those of the Community in general and those of any individuals in whom he has remarked some;

(3) When all have spoken in this way, the Visitor admonishes the Community at Chapter, of the faults which pertain to it, and, in private, the individual members;

(4) Then he gives the necessary recommendations to prevent them from falling into the same faults again and to propose the good they should be doing.

What wrong is there in all that? If there is nothing to find fault with in this manner of making the visitation, perhaps you will find it in the performance and recommendations of the Visitor, because I am sure that you cannot find fault with the exhortations and admonitions.

As for performance or confidential information, there is no Community where things are not done in this way, and our prelates publicly question the pastors and people reciprocally about their faults. As for the recommendations, both the bishops and the Visitors of Communities make them. Otherwise, what would be the use of visitations? Once doctors have cured a sick person, they prescribe a mode of living for him in order to keep him from falling into the same illness.

Yes, but sometimes they make recommendations which

diminish a Superior's authority in order to build up that of the Community, such as giving a Superior an admonitor and some consultors, and they themselves cannot choose those officers along with the General, or with the Visitor when the General cannot do it himself. I reply that, if Superiors were faultless and infallible in their suggestions, this would not have to be done, but being subject to sin and to making mistakes, and not always having the discernment necessary to act without advice, it is unjust for a Superior not to have an admonitor himself and persons whom he can consult. The General himself has his admonitor, his confessor and his consultors, whom the Company has given him, and he does not choose them himself.

Moreover, Monsieur, I have seen the recommendations M. Portail gave in your house and they seem very good to me, considering the state of your house and the persons of whom it is composed. That is why I entreat you, by the compassion of Jesus Christ, to be convinced not only of the importance of visitations in the way they are made but also to observe the recommendations that are given and see that they are observed exactly. Rest assured, Monsieur, that, if you do this, God will bless and sanctify your leadership more and more.

826. - TO GUILLAUME DELVILLE, IN FONTAINE-ESSART

Paris, Feast of Saint James,¹ 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!

I learned from your letter, from M. Roze's letter and from

Letter 826. - The original autograph letter is at the major seminary of Bernay.

¹July 25.

Janus the distress in which you and your family found yourselves in the circumstances about which you wrote me. I could not express to you the sorrow my heart felt at this and how I would like to have suffered in your place, myself alone, what you and your family have endured. Monsieur Codoing, the bearer of this letter, will be able to testify to you how deeply this has touched me. I am sending him mainly to assure you that your troubles are my troubles, and to tell you more particularly how I think before God this affair should end. I beg you, Monsieur, to accept this and receive what he will say to you as coming from him who is, more than he can express to you, in the love of Our Lord, Monsieur, your most humble and very obedient servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

Addressed: Monsieur Delville, Superior of the Priests of the Mission of Fontaine-Essart, in Fontaine-Essart²

827. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL, IN RICHELIEU

Paris, July 25, 1646

Monsieur,

The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
Here I am on the point of leaving for Fontainebleau¹ for

²The Priests of the Mission, formerly in Montmirail, established themselves in Fontaine-Essart in 1644, in a house willed to them by Louis Toutblanc, secretary of the Duc de Retz.

Letter 827. - Archives of the Mission, Turin, original signed letter.

¹The Court was at Fontainebleau. Apparently, the Saint was called there to fulfill his

a stay of three or four days. So you can judge whether I have much free time to write to you. Nevertheless, I am doing it in order to respond to what you wrote me in your letter of the seventeenth.

I am starting with the news of the journey Mademoiselle Le Gras is going to make to Nantes in order to establish there the six Sisters requested by the administrators of the hospital. She is supposed to take with her the school mistress who was teaching here,² and leave her in Richelieu in place of Sister Marguerite.

I do not approve, any more than you do, of their little ways of arranging their clothing, and it will be a good idea for you to have them moderate this, especially with regard to the veil they wear, unless that is the way it is ordinarily worn by women of the people. I will talk this over with Mademoiselle Le Gras.³

My opinion is that you should still put off receiving the vows of Messieurs Gobert⁴ and Lucas.⁵

As for what you ask about how to act with regard to M. du Coudray, I cannot tell you a better way than that of gentleness and humility. But I beg you to fear nothing with these virtues. Our Lord will bless whatever you do there, and I hope you will have the same facility as elsewhere to introduce

functions on the Council of Conscience.

²Sister Elisabeth Turgis.

³The result of Saint Vincent's conversation with Saint Louise is familiar to us. On August 13, Saint Louise wrote to Antoine Portail: "I would not dare say anything to you about that suggestion regarding the small veil, except that I feel that M. Vincent is quite apprehensive about it and with good reason. I have made the suggestion several times, not of a veil (which is greatly to be feared), but of something that could protect the face from the intense cold and heat. For this reason he has allowed the Sisters who have recently taken the habit to wear a white linen cornette on their head when need be. But I do not think black is at all feasible, Monsieur." (Cf. *Ecrits spirituels*, L. 148.)

⁴Evrard Gobert, born in Vendresse (Ardennes), entered the Congregation as a priest on July 1, 1641, at thirty-four years of age.

⁵Jacques Lucas, born in La Pernelle (Manche) on April 10, 1611, was ordained a priest in 1635 and received into the Congregation of the Mission on March 10, 1638. He was Superior in Luçon (1650-1654) and in La Rose (1662-1668).

the practices of the Company and banish those that are not proper to it. You will also be able to moderate his authority with regard to the change of officers, just as for other Superiors. In short, everything should be as uniform as possible.

I have no news yet about Brother Testacy's⁶ return.

Brother Pierre Vas⁷ did not stop here after delivering your letter to me.

In my preceding letters, I wrote to you about M. Brin. And now I will tell you that M. Le Blanc⁸ has gone in his place to be in charge of the Le Mans seminary. M. Cuissot has also been sent there to replace M. Alain whom we are recalling here. Brother Nicolas who was in Crécy has gone there to take care of affairs, and Brother François Le Rogueux⁹ to do the gardening.

[As soon] as we [get] the money, we will send the book of ceremonies.

I have nothing in particular to say about the disorder in the church, which you mentioned, but I do entreat you to

⁶Charles Testacy had made an unauthorized journey to his native place (cf. no. 803).

⁷A coadjutor Brother who was received at Saint-Lazare on February 3, 1642, at the age of seventeen. The *Notices*, vol. I, p. 497 and vol. V, p. 547, list him as Pierre Rus, who was born in Luxin-en-Vauge in 1625, entered the Congregation of the Mission on February 3, 1642 in Paris, and made his vows on September 24, 1646.

⁸Georges Le Blanc (George White), born in the diocese of Limerick (Ireland), was already a priest and thirty-seven years old when he entered the Congregation of the Mission on November 7, 1645. Saint Vincent sent him to Ireland at the end of 1646 and recalled him to France in 1648 to place him in Saint-Méen and in 1649 he sent him to Paris. Later on his name never occurs in Saint Vincent's correspondence, at least not with any certainty, because he had a namesake: a certain Georges Le Blanc, with a degree in theology, was involved in 1651 in an affair concerning Irish students of the Sorbonne who signed a declaration against Jansenism. (Cf. Patrick Boyle, "Les relations de saint Vincent de Paul avec l'Irlande," in *Annales* [1907], vol. LXXII, p. 190.) Could it be the same man? According to Father Thomas Davitt, C.M., they are one and the same person. (Cf. Thomas Davitt, "Jansenism and the Irish Student-Priests in Paris 1650-1651" in *Colloque*, the Journal of the Irish Province of the Congregation of the Mission, no. 15, Spring 1987.)

⁹François Le Rogueux (Leroqueux), born in Hiesville (Manche), entered the Congregation of the Mission on August 7, 1644, at sixteen years of age.

remedy it as best you can and to put everything to rights in the way God will inspire you to do.

M. Guérin from Tunis is still working with much success. He escaped great danger following the conversion of the King's son who, having run away with five or six of his attendants, went to Sicily where they were baptized. And poor M. Guérin, forced to remain shut up for a month, on suspicion that he had a part in this, expected from one hour to the next that they were coming for him to have him burnt. He was completely resigned to this but Our Lord willed to preserve him and even to introduce him more than ever into the good graces of the King, who gave him a letter for our King, which I have here, but we are unable to find anyone who knows how to translate it.¹⁰

M. Nouelly and Brother Barreau¹¹ arrived in Algiers a short

¹⁰It was, indeed, Julien Guérin who had prepared the conversion of Cheruby, son of Hadji-Mohamed, Bey of Tunis. He used to receive him into his house at night to teach him Christian doctrine. The Prince fled secretly with three slaves, landed in Sicily and was baptized in Palermo. Felipe IV, King of Spain, on whom the island depended, consented to be his godfather and gave him an appanage in his states. The Bey was furious and put a Christian slave to death; it was rumored that Cheruby had married her. The author of the sketch of M. Guérin's life (cf. *Notices*, vol. III, pp. 57-82) stated that the Bey sent for him and questioned him, and that the suspect knew not only how to dissipate his suspicions by his clever answers, but curried the favor of the Bey who granted him permission to bring in more Missionaries. After a sojourn in Spain, Cheruby went to Rome. Caught in an Italian port by a corsair which his mother had dispatched, he was taken back to Tunis. He always showed great affection for the Catholic religion and for France.

¹¹Jean Barreau was born in Paris in the parish of Saint-Jean-en-Grève, September 26, 1612. While still a young man, he left the position of Parliamentary Lawyer to enter the Cistercian Order. Some time later, he asked Saint Vincent to receive him into his Community. He began his internal seminary on May 14, 1645. In 1646 Saint Vincent sent him to Algiers to fill the post of French Consul. There his dedication to the slaves was limitless. The goodness of his heart moved him more than once to commit himself for sums that he did not possess or that were not his, and so he was badly treated by local authorities and reproved by Saint Vincent. When he was about to lose Jacques Le Sage who died on May 12, 1648, he made his vows in his presence, although he was not yet released from the simple vow of religion that he had taken when with the Cistercians. Only in 1652 was this dispensation requested, and finally, on November 1, 1661, this time validly, he was able to give himself to God in the Congregation of the Mission. At that time he was in Paris, where he had been summoned by René Almérás, the second Superior

time ago. The latter will hold the office of Consul in order to have greater freedom of action.¹²

We are still being requested in Salé,¹³ another town in Africa where we have permission to preach Jesus Christ. We do not yet know whom to select to go there. I ask you to reflect before God on who might really be capable and zealous enough for this, and to let me know your opinion.

Everything else here and elsewhere is going better and better, by the grace of God in whose love I am, with all my heart, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL
i.s.C.M.

General, and he had only Minor Orders. He was ordained a priest in 1662 or 1663 and spent the remainder of his life at Saint-Lazare where he was Procurator. In 1672 he was even associated with the Procurator General, Nicolas Talec. On May 24, 1675, during a serious illness, he made his will to which he added a codicil on April 7, 1679. (Cf. Arch. Nat. M 213, n°8.) He must have died shortly after this, because there is no further trace of his name anywhere.

¹²Saint Vincent had bought the consulate of Algiers from Balthazar de Vias, with the financial assistance of the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, for Lambert aux Couteaux, and the King immediately ratified the contract. This measure had the great advantage of avoiding all fear of conflict or even disagreement between the representatives of France and the Missionaries, and gave a prestige to the latter that could only be advantageous to religion. However, the Saint preferred to confer the office of Consul on a seminarian in order to leave the priests freer to preach the Gospel, and this, perhaps, is the reason why Jean Barreau was not called to the priesthood until late in life, after his return from Algiers.

The French Consul was the official protector of the French, foreign Jews, Greeks, Armenians, and anyone belonging to a country which did not have a representative in Algiers. He defended their rights, took care of their interests, facilitated their trade, and supervised the strict observance of treaties. A certain amount of taxes was due him, levied on all merchandise carried by their vessels to the port of Algiers, where they could not enter or leave without his passport. He was the judge of quarrels arising among slaves or among merchants of divers nations. It is easy to realize that his office was far from being a sinecure.

¹³A city in Morocco, on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, then a well-known lair for pirates. France maintained a Consul there. As early as 1643, the Company of the Blessed Sacrament of Marseilles had requested Saint Vincent to send Missionaries there. (Cf. Allier, *op. cit.*, p. 55.) This latest project was not a success because of a conflict over jurisdiction. Although Saint Vincent had appointed a confrere to that post, the Saint put an end to the project while the confrere was en route to Morocco.

I embrace the whole family with all the affection of my heart.

Addressed: Monsieur Portail, Priest of the Mission, in Richelieu

828. - ALAIN DE SOLMINIHAC TO SAINT VINCENT

Chancelade Abbey, July 31, 1646

Monsieur,

As soon as I arrived in this place, I wrote to the Bishop of Périgueux¹ to offer my services and, having learned through one of his close relatives that he hoped to have the Bulls gratis through the influence of the Cardinal, I begged him to go to Paris as soon as possible to do what was required to expedite them, and to omit nothing that might depend on him to advance this, since it is necessary for the glory of God, the salvation of those in his diocese and even for his own good. I assured him that if he knew how necessary this was, I was certain he would not lose a single moment in having them sent. He replied that he ardently desired to get them as soon as possible but he can only be as diligent in this as his brother wishes. His brother has gone to Holland on business for the King and has locked up his patent along with the letters of recommendation, so things are at a standstill until his return. Furthermore, since His Eminence has led him to hope that the settlement between the Pope and the King will be made at no cost to him, he consequently would be able to advance matters only as His Eminence sees fit. This reply really shocked me and, seeing the trust he has in me and the evidence he has given me of accepting my advice, it obliged me to write another, more forceful letter to him on the same subject. In it I am

Letter 828. - Archives of the diocese of Cahors, Alain de Solminihac collection, file 22, no. 6.

¹Jean d'Estrades, appointed Bishop of Périgueux during the month of July, never took possession of his diocese. He was transferred to Condom and replaced in Périgueux in 1648 by Philibert de Brandon, the candidate of the Bishop of Cahors.

informing him that, having pondered this response before God on retreat (which he was aware I was making), I felt compelled to tell him that, if he puts off getting his Bulls until the settlement between the Pope and the King, this delay will be the cause of his committing a multitude of sins in his diocese and of the loss of a number of souls. He should be in no doubt about that nor that God will also demand an account of him concerning it. This would be a hindrance to the esteem the people of his diocese should have for him—something he needs, seeing that he prefers a little money to the salvation of their souls—and that would prevent God from giving him great graces which He would give him without fail and which are necessary for him in his direction of his diocese. I even fear He might take away those He has given him up to the present, if he were to put off going to his duties as soon as possible.

I felt it my duty to inform you of all this, so that you might act toward him as God inspires you to do, without letting him know that I had written anything of this to you, in order to oblige him not to lose a moment in going to that diocese which, spiritually as well as temporally, is in an unimaginably deplorable condition. I gave him some pressing advice and told him I would be giving him more, and would send it to you as I am now doing, asking you to transmit it to him.

They are trying to force him to make Sieur Alexandre du Fontpidoux, Counselor at the Presidial,² his Vicar General. You saw him this past winter in Paris. He has no experience of any kind in the administration of a diocese, nor even of the knowledge required to do it, although otherwise he is truly an upright and honorable man. Consider, I ask you, how this diocese would be administered: by a young Bishop who does not know what is involved, with a Vicar General who would not know either. Our Officialis³ would be more suited for it, although that office would require a man who had a little experience, if that were possible.

There is talk that he is to bring his mother into his diocese. If that is the case, it will do him no good. I have already had experience with that.

Rumor has it that the Abbé de Vertueil, named for the Archdiocese of Lectoure,⁴ wants to change dioceses with him but I see that people

²Royal courts established in the sixteenth century to relieve the pressure of appeals to the Parlements. In certain cases they also served as courts of first instance.

³Ecclesiastical judge.

⁴Louis de la Rochefoucauld. He died as Bishop of Lectoure in December 1654.

do not want this to happen. I ask you to act as forcibly as you can, either with the Queen, if you judge it expedient, or the Cardinal or the Bishop of Périgueux, to hasten his arrival in his diocese which is in extreme distress, and to make it known that souls are being lost for want of a bishop. If you want to quote me and say that I wrote to you, I do not mind because that is quite true. The people are inconsolable at the loss of M. Brandon and cannot refrain from saying this openly, even to the friends of the Bishop of Périgueux who told me this, and that is doing him great harm.

I leave here tomorrow to go back to my own diocese, after making a retreat of twenty days which kept me from returning until now.

I entreat you to remember the reform of the Jacobin convent in Cahors and to go on working hard, as you have done, to procure good bishops for the Church, which is the greatest service you could render to Our Lord.

Take care of your health, I beg you, and believe me, always, Monsieur, etc.

ALAIN
B[ishop] of Cahors

APPENDIX

1. - DECLARATION BY WHICH SAINT JANE FRANCES AUTHORIZED THE GIFT OF HER HEART TO THE FIRST MONASTERY OF PARIS

Live Jesus!

I permit and consent that, after my death, our dear Sisters of Annecy may give my heart to our dear Sisters in Paris, of the monastery on the rue Saint-Antoine, who have manifested to me their ardent desire to have it. I hope by this means that these two monasteries will remain not only in the perfect union which holy charity demands but also in a close relationship of heart and mind, as I have always desired for them; on condition, however, that it be removed not by opening me up in the ordinary way but only through my side and, if possible, that it be one of our Sisters who might render this service for me.

Drawn up April 13, 1636

Sister JEANNE-FRANCOISE FREMIOT
of the Visitation Sainte-Marie

B[lessed] b[e] G[od!]

SISTER JEANNE-FRANCOISE FREMIOT

November 11, 1641

APPENDIX 1. - Henri de Maupas du Tour, *La Vie de la Vénérable Mère Jeanne-Françoise Frémiot* (New ed., Paris: Simeon Piget, 1653), p. 323. This gift is mentioned in nos. 561 and 569.

2. - PETITION OF SAINT VINCENT TO THE PARLEMENT

March 2, 1645

Vincent de Paul, priest, Superior of the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission established at Saint-Lazare, humbly petitions, stating that, in order to resume possession and proprietorship of a house located in the faubourg Saint-Laurent, they made their claim before the lawyers of the Court of Appeals against Noël Bonhomme, the sworn vendor, controller of wines and a townsman of Paris, found in possession. This person so contested his right, that the parties were joined and the date was legally fixed for the Court of Appeals, notwithstanding the offers made by the petitioner from the initial stages of the claim, in execution of the settlement. The parties' statements were introduced into the proceedings submitted to Monsieur d'Alessau, judge for the Court of Appeals. He was prepared to make his report when said Bonhomme, because of the contestations coming from him and his co-heirs claiming a part and share of the amount offered as reimbursement for the value of said house, addressed the court by means of certain appeals at law which they had, including a foreclosure proceeding and an appeal, and he spoke summarily. Said Bonhomme was advised to accept the offers of the petitioner, which he had reiterated from time to time, that is, from the time the case was presented in the Court of Appeals, during the course of the preliminary investigation, even before the contestation and since then, and among other times, last January when the case was still, as it

APPENDIX 2. - A signed petition. Bibl. mun. of Rouen, Leber collection 3251. On the back is written: "Proceedings from M. Vincent de Paul and the Priests of the Mission against Noël Bonhomme, sworn vendor and controller of wine in Paris, and other claimants concerning the house of Nom-de-Jésus, faubourg Saint-Martin." We preferred to place in appendices this and other petitions because they are more the product of the pen of a lawyer than that of Saint Vincent.

is now, in the Court of Appeals, so much so that by a decree of last February 8, given according to Monsieur Gontier, the Counselor, the court ordered that, following the offers of the petitioner, stated in the Act of last January 16, said Bonhomme should be reimbursed in the amount of eleven thousand livres, out of which the man Paillet and his wife should be sent and paid the sum of twenty-two hundred livres for the deductions claimed by them. In so doing, besides the above-mentioned sum, the petitioner should also be obligated to reimburse the useful and necessary improvements which had been made on the house and property in question since their sale by auction, held for the profit of said Bonhomme, without prejudice to the claims advanced by the petitioner.

To this end, the sites will be seen and visited, and the aforementioned improvements inspected and appraised by experts, upon whom the parties will agree before said Monsieur Gontier, the arbitrator, unless he himself should be appointed for this *ex-officio*. The said experts will make a report on the sites, as well as on the damages if there are any. In execution of the decree, the petitioner appointed an expert, with a view to the prescribed report. But, at the same time, said Bonhomme had a summons issued to the petitioner to send and pay over to him before execution the monies awarded to him. Provided said petitioner can find surety for payment, after deductions have been made on those items claimed by him and declared below, he is quite ready, in response to the summons, to pay and hand over to said Bonhomme whatever is clearly and undeniably due to him.

First, the petitioner states that said Bonhomme must, before all else, settle and pay what is due to said Paillet and his wife, both principal as well as interest, the decree having ordered this when it stated "for the deductions to be settled between them."

Second, in accord with the report that will be made, he

must settle on the damages claimed by said petitioner and reserved by said decree.

Third, he must acknowledge in the Court of Appeals that he is in the wrong, and pay off the expenses incurred by said petitioner from the day the offers of reimbursement were made up to the day of the decree of February 13 which declared them valid, as well as expenses incurred since then and those yet to be incurred, because said Bonhomme presented a fallacious contestation, which he has since been obliged to admit.

In the fourth place, said Bonhomme is to be fined and held responsible for the garnishments given into the hands of the petitioner, at the request of his creditors, of which he offers to give proof; and, in order that the house and property in question may be released from all mortgages which said Bonhomme may have assumed since he has been the proprietor of said house, be it stated and ordered that he shall be obliged to list and declare, in such time as it shall please the court, all his creditors other than those who have foreclosed to the petitioner. Otherwise and in default of this, the petitioner shall be permitted to have decreed in his favor the said house and property in question, in order to pay off all mortgages. Pending the appraisal to be made, the monies still found to be owing to said Bonhomme shall remain in the hands of the petitioner, to earn interest for the time he has them, by reason of the ordinance, unless said Bonhomme, in order to receive the money remaining, prefers to put up valid and sufficient surety, which will be liable not only for said monies but also for the mortgages which may have been placed on the properties in question by said Bonhomme from the time he has been in possession of them, and to pay all costs.

This having been considered, My Lords, may it please you in your indulgence to accede to this request and to pass judgment, in execution of the decree of February 13, in accordance with and conformable to the above conclusions.

Otherwise, so that this case may be heard and the parties settled, order them to address Monsieur Gontier, the Counselor, summarily, or someone else at the pleasure of the court; and you will do well.

VINCENT DEPAUL, LOGER, M. GONTIER

**3. - ANTOINE PORTAIL, PRIEST OF THE MISSION, TO ANOTHER
PRIEST OF THE MISSION**

May 23, 1645

M. Vincent received your letter and expected to answer it himself, but urgent business prevented him from doing so; therefore, he has instructed me to tell you:

(1) That he greatly sympathizes with your parents' affliction and with that which natural love causes you to feel for the same reason. He is asking and will ask Our Lord to give them, and you as well, the necessary consolation and grace to make good use of this for His glory;

(2) That you are not blameworthy for proposing to him that you should go to your native place for such a good purpose, which is to try to restore peace and to see that your mother gets some assistance. On the contrary, you are to be praised in a certain sense before God and the world, particularly for being submissive to whatever your Superior advises you to do.

Nevertheless, he is entreating you to consider before God the following reasons:

(1) That although it is true that the natural law obliges all of us to assist our parents in need, it is also true that the Son

APPENDIX 3. - Reg. 2, p. 285. This letter, written in the name of Saint Vincent, does, in some way, form part of his correspondence.

of God, author of the same law, says, as you know, that anyone who does not leave father, mother, brother, sister, etc., cannot be His disciple,¹ that is, a true Christian and, with greater reason, a true Missionary;

(2) That the same Son of God had those aspiring to this status of disciples put this maxim into practice one time, when he said to the man who wanted to go bury his father: *Sinite mortuos sepelire mortuos*;² and another time with regard to the man who wanted to divide up his possessions and give his share to the poor: *Nemo*, he says to him, *mittens manum ad aratrum et respiciens retro aptus est regno Dei*.³

It really cannot be said that necessity is obliging you. Besides, by letter and through friends, you can make up for not being there. Were it through laziness, disregard, or some other bad motivation that you wanted to omit this duty, you would have some reason to wonder whether or not you were doing wrong. Since you desire this only for the love of God and to get it off your conscience, and you are not going, except by order of your Superior who holds the place of God, you must be at peace, for you will not have to answer for it before God, since M. Vincent is advising you to stay where you are, and he has had experience of the great difficulties that arise from acting otherwise. Also, the more the alleged pretext seems founded on charity and justice, the more dangerous it is because, being hidden, the evil goes unnoticed until after it has been experienced. But this is usually too late to remedy it.

Among other misfortunes that ensue are attachment to parents, their interests and material things; mental upset,

¹Mt. 19:29. "Moreover, everyone who has given up home, brothers or sisters, father or mother, wife or children, or property for my sake will receive many times as much and inherit everlasting life." (NAB)

²*Let the dead bury the dead.* Lk. 9:60. "Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury their dead; come away and proclaim the kingdom of God.'" (NAB)

³*No one putting his hand to the plow and looking back is worthy of the kingdom of God.* Lk. 9:62. "Jesus answered him, 'Whoever puts his hand to the plow but keeps looking back is unfit for the reign of God.'" (NAB)

contempt for regularity and finally loss of vocation. The contrary is apparent in those who have carefully observed the maxims of the Gospel on this point and God has blessed their parents and their concerns; for example, the man whom you know who went twenty years without seeing his mother.⁴ The same cannot be said for another of our men who had left specifically to assist his mother. That was the farthest thing from his mind once he was on the outside. In fact, he sought only to gratify himself and to wallow in vice. This gave him such a fright that, before the year since he left was up, he was asking to return. We did take him back, and his parents' affairs have been going better than ever. I do not know why I included this last example, since it is not very appropriate because it is not a question of dissuading you from leaving the Company but only from a journey home. It is, no doubt, because of the experience we have that those who are insistent in asking and obtaining permission to go see their parents again, ordinarily lose their vocation.

And even though this misfortune might never happen to you because of your virtue, nevertheless, just the consideration of the bad example you would be giving to others by this journey should dissuade you from thinking about it, for those who are not as virtuous as you, Monsieur, might say: why should I, too, not take a holiday like so and so? And, thus, permission would have to be given them to go, or sadden them dangerously; and one and the other would be harmful both to the individual and to the Community. That was the main reason which kept the man who had been in the Company for twenty years from going to see his mother. M. Vincent is asking you, then, to make the sacrifice of your will to God by the practice of these evangelical maxims and by hoping that the same Jesus Christ, for whom you will be renouncing

⁴Antoine Portail is referring to himself.

yourself and your parents, will Himself be your provider, your father, your friend, your protector and your all. He is the one who said: *Quaerite primum regnum Dei et justitiam ejus, et omnia haec adjicientur vobis.*⁵

That is, in general, what M. Vincent instructed me to write you, and he was quite distressed at not being able to dictate it to me word for word. Then this speech would not be boring to you, as it will be, in my opinion, because I have set it down so poorly. I beg Our Lord to put His own spirit into it, in whose love I am

4. - PETITION OF SAINT VINCENT TO THE PARLEMENT

January 26, 1646

Vincent de Paul, Superior of the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission established at Saint-Lazare, humbly petitions, stating that, in order to re-enter into possession and proprietorship of a house now in the possession of Noël Bonhomme, this said Bonhomme, after several contestations before the Appeals as well as in court, has finally been constrained to accept the offer of the petitioner, namely, to reimburse him a sum of eleven thousand livres tournois, the adjudicated value by auction sale, making him its proprietary possessor, by a decision which settled the question of restoring

⁵Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things will be given you. Mt. 6:33. "Seek first his kingship over you, his way of holiness, and all these things will be given you besides." (NAB)

APPENDIX 4. - Signed petition. The original is in the seminary of Saint-Sulpice. At the bottom of the document is written: "Accepted the request and the documents communicated to the parties to show them the contradictions in it; await the outcome of the proceedings but assign some costs."

the inheritance by payment and reimbursement to said Bonhomme of this sum of eleven thousand livres. However, in carrying this out, many difficulties were encountered on the part of said Bonhomme because, at the same time the decision was rendered, several garnishments were delivered to the petitioner, which obliged him to present a petition to the court requesting authorization to consign, deduction having previously been made of expenses he was obliged to bear. With that petition, as summarized by Monsieur Gontier, the Counselor, it was impossible to compel said Bonhomme either to defend or declare the debts and mortgages burdening said house, or to make him renounce possession of it in order to leave it to the petitioner and consignee, and to obtain payment by seizure and decree. The petitioner pursued the adjudication of the summary proceedings, and said Bonhomme was advised last August 28 to notify the petitioner by a declaration of debts with which he says the house in question is burdened. A certified copy of his declaration, signed by La Porte, his attorney, bears true witness that the petitioner was justified in not paying said Bonhomme the eleven thousand livres in question, and, on the contrary, that he could not remain indefinitely in possession of said house, since the petitioner has never deviated from offering to pay and even to consign the amount to him.

This having been considered, My Lords, as well as the summary proceedings in execution of the adjudication which allows the petitioner to repossess the house in question by reimbursing the eleven thousand livres, whereas this reimbursement has only been delayed by the actions of said Bonhomme, as he himself is now obliged to acknowledge, citing as it does the debts and mortgages mentioned in his statement, which, very likely, are not all that may have been contracted by its principals, may it please you in your indulgence to order that the statement of said Bonhomme, of which notice was served last August 28, shall remain attached to the summary

proceedings to show that said petitioner is justified in having feared to make payment without being validly freed from the debt, and hence all the issues he has raised in the summary proceedings in question are just, in the adjudication of any further proceedings which may be taken against him, as the case stands and on whatever shall be found in presence of the court, and you will do well.

VINCENT DEPAUL



INDEX

This index proposes to facilitate reference to the biographical data used in this volume and to the explanation of places and terms which recur frequently in the text and which have been explained in the footnotes when first used. Names of persons are in bold print, those of terms or places appear in *italics*. The accompanying numbers indicate the letters to which the reader should refer for the desired information.

A

ABELLY, Louis: 418
AIGULLON, Marie de Vignerod,
Duchesse d': 419
ALAIN, Jean: 731
ALMERAS, Anne-Marie: 417
ALMERAS, René: 625
ALTIERI, Giovanni Battista: 541
ANGIBOUST, Barbe: 417
APOSTOLIC VISITOR: 431a
ARNAUD, Guillaume: 628
ARRONDISSEMENT: 417
ATTICHY, Anne Doni d' (MAURE):
735
AUCHY, Vincente: 503
AUTHIER de SIGAU, Christophe d':
580
AUX COUTEAUX, Lambert: 419

B

BAGNO, Nicolo, Cardinal di: 736
BAGNO, Giovanni Francesco, Cardinal
di: 434
BAGOT, Jean: 650
BARBERINI, Antonio, Cardinal: 570
BARBERINI, Francesco, Cardinal: 629

BARILLON, Antoine (MORANGIS):
558a
BARREAU, Jean: 827
BEAULIEU, Abbé de (LA VALLETTE-
CORNUSSON): 739
BEAUMONT, Pierre de: 760
BECU, Benoît: 445
BECU, Jean: 625
BELLEGARDE, Octave de Saint-Lary
de: 446
BELLEGARDE, Roger de Saint-Lary
de: 682
BERTHE, Thomas: 760
BERTIER, Pierre de: 739
BERULLE, Pierre, Cardinal de: 677
BICETRE: 669
BICHI, Alessandro, Cardinal: 433
BINSFELD, Pierre: 575
BISSON, Jean-René: 719
BLATIRON, Etienne: 474
BLESSED SACRAMENT, PRIESTS
OF: 580
BLONAY, Marie-Aimée de: 541
BOLLAIN, Anne-Marie: 530a
BONACINA, Martino: 575
BONAFLOS, Jacques: 613
BONICHON, Nicolas: 634
BOSQUET, François de: 785

BOUCHER, Léonard: 428
BOUDET, Jacques: 571
BOUILLON, Eléonore-Catherine de
Bergh, Duchesse de: 514
BOURBON, Armand de (CONTI): 489
BOURBON, Louis de (SOISSONS): 659a
BOUDET, Etienne: 431
BOUDET, Jean: 625
BOURDOISE, Adrien: 508
BOURGOING, François: 654
BOURLEMONT, Claude: 548
BOUTHILLIER, Léon (CHAVIGNY):
561
BRANDON, Philibert de: 433
BRIENNE, Henri-Auguste, Comte de
(LOMENIE): 444
BRIENNE, Louise de Béon, Comtesse
de: 669
BRIN, Gerard: 803
BRISACIER, Laurent de: 727
BRUNET, Jean-Joseph: 489
BULLION, Claude de: 461
BUS, Blessed César de: 677

C

CALLON, Louis: 654
CANDELOU, Jean: 644
CARCIREUX, Françoise: 511
CARCIREUX, Paul: 700
CAULET, François-Etienne de: 602
CHAMBRE DES COMPTES: 417
CHANTAL, St. Jane Frances Frémot
de: 431
CHARLES, François: 779
CHAUMONT, Marie de Bailleul, Dame
de: 517
CHAUMONT, Marie de: 453
CHAVIGNY, Léon Bouthillier, Comte
de: 561
CHEFDEVILLE, Perrette: 441
CHEVALIER, Paul (SAINT-AIGNAN):
496
CHIROYE, Jacques: 459
*CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE, PRIESTS
OF*: 677
CODOING, Bernard: 431
COGLEE (COGLEY), Marc: 760
COLEE, Antoine: 459
COMPAING, Guillaume: 648

CONDE, Princesse de
(MONTMORENCY): 419
CONDREN, Charles de: 626
CONTI, Armand de Bourbon, Prince
de: 489
COQUERET, Jean: 465
CORDES, Denis de: 443
CORDON, Jacques de: 461
COSPEAN, Philippe: 660
COUNCIL OF CONSCIENCE: 670
CUISSOT, Gilbert: 459

D

DALMAGNE, Jeanne: 629, 656
DAMIENS, Gabriel: 726
DEHORGNY, Jean: 420
DELABARRE, Jean-François: 733
DELATTRE, Guillaume: 610
DELESTOILE, Jean-Baptiste: 457
DELVILLE, Guillaume: 733
DEPHILMAIN, François: 731
DES LIONS, Jean: 531
DES NOYELLES, Philippe: 817
DIMISSORIAL LETTERS: 523
DINET, Jacques: 658
DOINEL, Geneviève: 812
DU CHASTEL, Pierre: 725
DU CHESNE, Pierre: 571
DU COUDRAY, François: 435
DUFESTEL, François: 461
DUFOUR, Antoine: 726
DUFOUR, Claude: 726
DU FRESNE, Charles: 422
DUHAMEL, Jean: 431
DU MEE, MADEMOISELLE: 551
DUPUIS, Michel: 457
DURAZZO, Stefano, Cardinal: 769
DUROT, Nicolas: 467
DU SAUSSAY, André: 439
DUVAL, André: 570
DU VAL, François (FONTENAY-
MAREUIL): 444
DUVAL, Jean: 448, 677
DU VIGEAN, Anne de Neubourg,
Marquise: 480

E

ECU: 420
ESCART, Pierre: 431
ESTRADES, Jean d': 828

F

FABERT, Abraham de: 694a
FAURE, Charles: 468
FERET, Hippolyte: 489
FERRER, St. Vincent: 557
FEUILLANTS: 718
FONTEINES, Louise-Eugénie de: 530a
FONTENAY-MAREUIL, Marquis de
(DU VAL): 444
FONTENEIL, Jean de: 445
FOREST, Madame: 525
FORTIA, Anne de la Barre, Dame: 695
FOUQUET, Catherine: 549
FOUQUET, François: 418
FOUQUET, Nicolas: 659
FOURNIER, Pierre: 643
FRANCILLON, François: 800
FRENEVILLE: 725
FROGER, Georges: 452

G

GALLAIS, Guillaume: 681
GALLEMANT, Jacques: 634
GAULT, Jean-Baptiste: 661
GAUTIER, Denis: 459
GENTIL, Mathurin: 727
GERMAIN, Richard: 428
GESSE, Catherine de: 756
GESSEAUME, Henriette: 441
GET, Firmin: 727a
GILLES, Jean-Baptiste: 610
GINETTI, Martio, Cardinal: 662
GOBERT, Evrard: 827
GONDI, Françoise-Marguerite de Silly,
Dame de: 422
GONDI, Archbishop Jean-François de:
439
GONDI, Archbishop Jean-François-Paul
de (RETZ, Cardinal de): 668
GONDI, Philippe-Emmanuel de: 668
GONDI, Pierre de: 734
GONDREE, Nicolas: 816
GORET, Jean-Pascal: 603

GOUAULT, Sébastien: 505
GOULAS, Louise (ROMILLY, Dame
de): 669
GOURNAY, Charles-Christien de: 452
GOUSSAULT, Madame: 417
GRIET, Barthélemy Donadieu de: 418
GRIMAL, François: 561
GRIMALDI, Gerolamo, Cardinal: 602
GUENEGAUD du PLESSIS,
Henri de: 778
GUERIN, Anne-Marguerite: 530a
GUERIN, Jean (elder): 569
GUERIN, Jean (younger): 428
GUERIN, Julien: 549
GUERIN, Juste: 431

H

HARDEMONT, Anne: 483
HERSE, Madame de: 575
HEURTEL, François: 505
HODICQ, Claude Phelippeaux, Dame
de: 464
HUMIERES, Isabelle Phelippeaux,
Dame de: 587

I

INGOLI, Monsignor: 433
i.s.C.M.: 443

J

JACOBINS: 422
JAMAIN, Martin: 727a
JANSENIUS (JANSEN), Corneille: 736
JEGAT, Bertrand: 461
JOLY, Marie: 422
JOURDAIN, Jean: 511
JOYEUSE, François, Cardinal: 639

L

LA COSTE, Gaspard de Simiane de:
712a
LA GRANGE, Pierre Pons de: 802
LA GUIBOURGERE, Jacques-Raoul
de: 444
LAISNE de la MARGUERIE, Elie: 433
LA MEILLERAYE, Charles de la
Porte, Duc de: 633

LAMOIGNON, Anne de
(NESMOND): 641
LAMOIGNON, Madeleine de: 568
LAMOIGNON, Marie de Landes: 535
LAMY, Antoine: 482
LA ROCHEFOUCAULD, François,
Cardinal de: 468
LA SALLE, Jean de: 634
LASNIER, Guy (VAUX): 425
LA TERRADE, Olivier de la Trau: 496
LA VALLETTE, François de: 739
LA VALLETTE, Louis de Nogaret: 768
LA VALLETTE-CORNUSSON, Jean
de (BEAULIEU): 739
LEBLANC, Denis: 562a
LE BLANC (WHITE), Georges: 827
LE BON, Adrien: 440
LE BOYSNE, Léonard: 613
LE BRET, Jacques: 433
LEBRETON, Louis: 423
LE GAUFFRE, Thomas: 433
LE GRAS, Michel: 421
LE NOIR, Jacques: 725
LENTI, Marcel, Cardinal: 557
LEPEINTRE, Jeanne: 519
LEQUEUX, Jean: 728
LE ROGUEUX, François: 827
LE ROY, Jean: 731
LE ROY, M.: 470
LESAGE, Jacques: 558a
LESCOT, Jacques: 710
LE SOUDIER, Jacques: 463
LE SOUDIER, Samson: 463
LE TELLIER, Michel: 806
LEVASSEUR, David: 429
LHUILLIER, Hélène-Angélique: 465
LIANCOURT, Jeanne de Schomberg,
Duchesse de: 499
LIANCOURT, Roger, Duc de: 444
LIEUE: 421
LIVRE: 420
LOMENIE, Henri-Auguste de
(BRIENNE): 444
LONGUEVILLE, Anne-Geneviève de
Bourbon, Duchesse de: 781
LOUISTRE, Jean: 428
LOUISTRE, Robert: 444
LUCAS, Antoine: 428
LUCAS, Jacques: 827

M

MAIGNELAY, Marquise de (GONDI,
Marguerite de): 471
MARCHAND, Monsieur: 423
MARCILLAC, Sylvestre de Crusy
de: 558a
MARILLAC, St. Louise de: 417
MARILLAC, Marie de Creil, Dame de:
515
MARTIN, Elisabeth: 422
MARTIN, Jean (elder): 569
MARTIN, Jean (younger): 646
MASTER OF REQUESTS: 470
MATHURIN FATHERS
[TRINITARIANS]: 639
MAUPAS du TOUR, Henri de: 594
MAURE, Anne Doni d'Attichy,
Comtesse de: 735
MAZARIN, Jules, Cardinal: 448
MERCY, FATHERS OF
[MERCEDARIANS]: 639
MESGRIGNY, Nicolas de: 433
MESPUITS: 727b
MIDOT, Jean: 452
MITTE de MIOLANS, Melchior
(SAINT-CHAMOND): 680
MOLE, Edouard: 783
MOLE, Mathieu: 482
MOLLIN, Jean: 728
MONSIEUR: 654
MONTCHAL, Charles de: 467
MONTEVIT, Germain de: 429
MONTMAUR, Henri-Louis-Habert: 575
MONTMORENCY, Charlotte-
Marguerite de (CONDE): 419
MONTREUIL, Jean de: 565
MORANGIS, Antoine Barillon de: 558a
MORTEMART, Diane de Grand-Seigne,
Marquise de: 809

N

NEMOURS, Charles-Amédée de Savoie,
Duc de: 461
NESMOND, Anne de Lamoignon,
Dame de: 641
NESMOND, François-Théodore de: 669
NODO, Sébastien: 461
NORAIS, Jacques: 728
NORET, Françoise: 529

NOUELLY, Boniface: 726
NOYERS, François Sublet,
Seigneur de: 493

O

OLIER, Jean-Jacques: 602
ORLEANS, Gaston, Duc d': 654
ORSIGNY: 728
OZENNE, Charles: 505

P

PARLEMENT: 485
PAVILLON, Nicolas: 461
PELLETIER, Madame Catherine
(*VIALART*): 668
PELLETIER, Nicolas: 695
PERCEVAL, Guillaume: 461
PERDU, Jacques: 473
PERRIQUET, Monsieur: 418
PERROCHEL, François: 548
PETITES-MAISONS: 644
PIERRE, Claire-Madeleine de: 422
PILLE, Jean: 622
PISTOLE: 427
PLOESQUELLEC, Guillaume de: 594
POISSON, Geneviève: 694a
POLLALION (POULAILLON), Marie
de Lumague, Demoiselle de: 471
PONTCHARTRAIN, Françoise-
Elisabeth Phelippeaux de: 453
PORTAIL, Antoine: 428
POTIER, Augustin: 441
PRESIDIAL COURT: 828

Q

QUINZE-VINGTS: 443

R

RACONIS, Charles-François
d'Abra de: 736
REGNARD, Mathieu: 433
RENAR, François: 433
RENTY, Gaston de: 571
RETZ, Jean-François-Paul, Cardinal de
(*GONDI*): 668
RHODES, Catherine Pot de: 698

RICHELIEU, Armand du Plessis,
Cardinal de: 434
RIVANAIGRE, Pierre: 803
RIVET, Jacques: 728
ROBICHE, Louis: 749
ROCHECHOUART, Louis-Victor de
(*VIVONNE*): 809
ROGUE, Pierre: 459
ROMILLION, Jean-Baptiste: 677
ROMILLY, Louise Goulas,
Dame de: 669
ROZE, Nicolas: 622
ROUEMENT: 764
ROUSSEL, Jacques: 429
RUS, Pierre (Vas): 827

S

SAINT-AIGNAN, Chanoine de
(*CHEVALIER*): 496
SAINT-CHAMOND, Marquis de
(*MITTE* de *MIOLANS*): 680
SAINT-YVES-DES-BRETONS: 594
SALES, St. Francis de: 418
SAUSSAY, André du: 439
SAUVAGE, René: 779
SAVINIER, Annet: 459
SEGUIER, Dominique: 483
SEGUIER, Pierre: 470
SEGUIER, Madeleine Fabri, Dame: 568
SERGIS, Robert de: 467
SILLERY, Noël Brulart, Commander
de: 446
SKYDDIE, Jean: 625
SOISSONS, Louis de Bourbon, Comte
de: 659a
SOLMINIHAC, Alain de: 659
SOUFLIERS, François: 439
SOUSCARRIERE, Madame de: 482
SUBLET, François (**NOYERS**): 493

T

TALMOND, Henri de la Trémoille,
Prince de: 703
TALON, Omer: 689
TESSONNIERE, Marie: 582
TESTACY, Charles: 803
THIBAUT, Jean: 459
THIBAUT, Louis: 719
THOLARD, Jacques: 624

TOLET, Francesco, Cardinal
(TOLEDO): 779

TRAVERSAY, Anne Petau,
Dame de: 549

TREFFORT, Simon: 796

TRINITE, Mother de la: 474

TRISTAN, Claude: 575

TUBEUF, Jacques: 461

TURGIS, Elisabeth: 421

V

VACHEROT, M.: 620

VAIUS, Etienne: 433

VALENCAY, Léonor d'Estampes
de: 639

VAS, Pierre (RUS): 827

VAUX, Abbé de (LASNIER): 425

VERONNE, Alexandre: 628

VERTHAMON, François de: 558a

VERTHAMON, Marie Boucher
d'Orsay, Dame de: 470

VIALART, Catherine
(PELLETIER): 668

VIALART, Félix de: 562a

VILLARCEAUX, Anne Mangot,
Seigneur de: 452

VILLENEUVE, Marie L'Huillier
d'Interville, Dame de: 486

VINCY, Antoine Hennequin,
Sieur de: 483

VIOLE, Mademoiselle: 685

VIVONNE, Louis-Victor de
Rochechouart, Duc de: 809

VOYSIN, François: 433

W

WATER, Jacques: 796