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 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 writings[3] 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 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 Guidi 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, collège—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 Coste[4] 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 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.

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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.

Seeing that those Gentlemen[2] 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's[5] estates, I believe, although I am not very sure about it, [and] in Richelieu, in the diocese of Poitiers.

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 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 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 ecclesiastical censures put together. Our Lord and the saints accomplished more by suffering than by acting. That is how the blessed Bishop of Geneva[6] and, following his example, the late Bishop of Comminges[7] 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 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

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 Princess[1] and the Duchesse d'Aiguillon[2] 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 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. Lambert[5] to ask him to send you your 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. Dehorgny[1] on the fourteenth of the month. Your letter makes me think that you are not receiving mine. 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 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]

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 leagues[4] 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 son[8] 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.

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 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. Grandnom[2] has written about this, to a man of rank in Angers, as you will see from his letter.

M. du Fresne[3] 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.

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 Marie[4] 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 Isabelle[5] is better, and most humbly thank our dear Mother, the Superior of the Visitation Sainte-Marie[6] 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

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. Marchand[2] 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 Assistant[3] 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.

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.

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-lez-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 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 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 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 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 Vaux[1] who spoke to you about him, and in acknowledgement of the obligations you have toward him, and which we all have because of you.

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 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 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 MISSION[1] 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 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 pistole[2] 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 Cuménon[2] 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 Germain[3] and the 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. Louistre[7] 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 Jacobins[8] is reluctant to do it.

Our news is that M. Boucher[9] is better, that we had eighteen retreatants yesterday and seventeen today, three of whom are from the Sorbonne house.

Addressed: Monsieur Lucas, Priest of the Mission, in Saint-Prix[10]

429. - JACQUES ROUSSEL[1] 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 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 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 CHANTAL[1] 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 Geneva[3] and I are indeed receiving an inexpressible consolation from them. It seems that they are our real brothers, with whom we feel a 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 fifth[4] 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 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 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!

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 Ingoli[2] 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 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 Bibiana[4] affair succeeds, but the matter is too difficult, and Our Lady of Loretto in the Marches[5] is expensive and, still more, the palace in which Cardinal Bichi[6] 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 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 Assistant[8] 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 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. Brandon[14] 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 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 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 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 Bret[20] 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. Renar[22] who sent for me as he is gravely and critically ill.

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 Mathieu[24] 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 month[26] 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.

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 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 Eminence[4] 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.

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 Coudray[5] 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

435. - A PRIEST OF THE MISSION[1] 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:

TEXT600 = "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

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 Archbishop[3] to go and see the Duchesse d'Aiguillon in Rueil today with the Pastor of Saint-Leu.[4] See which would be better: either tell the Sisters not to come or let Monsieur Dehorgny or M. Soufliers[5] 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 Prior[2] has asked me for some three thousand livres he gave 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 meeting[3] 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 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's[2] niece[3] 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 Beauvais[4] 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

442. - A PRIEST[1] 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 Bayonne[1] to say a word about the subject you did me the honor of mentioning in your letter, which is that the deceased Monsieur Fouquet[2] 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

444. - TO THE DUCHESSE 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 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 Louistre[6] 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 unequaled benevolence Our Lord 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 BORDEAUX[1]

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.

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 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 Commander[3] will send you M. Roton, his 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 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

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 Geneva[3] 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.

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.

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 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 Nuncio[2] 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 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 Eminence[6] 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

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 Superior[1] 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.

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.

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.
Mathieu[3] 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. Midot[5] and that you settle your differences with him amicably as the need arises, whereas President de Trélon[6], 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 Richelieu[8] and in Troyes[9] 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 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 Chaumont[2] can take 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 Chandenier 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-Denis[7]

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 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 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 President[1] 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 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 Ladies[3] 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

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 Jesuits[2] 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 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

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. Cuissot[1] 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. Savinier[3] 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 him[4] to act in that way and brought things to the point where they are. Oh! 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 Superior[7] and a priest in M. Gautier's[8] 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. Chiroye[9] 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. Thibault[11] can be submissive; he is so at present with regard 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 Tours[13] 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 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 Cé[16] 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

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

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 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 Father[2] 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 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 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, 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 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 Mother[1] 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 François[3] will do well. That, Monsieur, is the prayer I am offering to God.

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 Geneva[4] 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 Commander[5] 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 Senate[6] 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 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 Annecy[8] 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 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 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 Bullion[11] and Tubeuf[12] 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 MM. Jegat[13] and Bastien[14] 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 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's[17] hundred écus.

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

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's[1] 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. Cuissot[2] 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 letter[4] how the Coadjutor of Tours[5] 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 Savinier[6] was so touched Friday evening by the 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 Duchesse[7] 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 brother[2] 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 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

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-Marie[1] 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.

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 city[2] 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 Visitor[3] 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 Sens[5] had considered. He was recently elected one of the three Superiors of the Carmelites and acquiesced to that election because of the Cardinal's[6] 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 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 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.

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

Toulouse, 1640[2]

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.

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's[2] 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 Purposes[4] 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 Assistant[6] said that this does not make one a religious; discuss it with him a little more thoroughly.
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-Geneviève.[11] Assure him of my obedience, and my 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]

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 1640[1] and 1644[2]]

Monsieur,

Madame de Verthamon[3] did not fail to come and see the Ladies. After having again made known more clearly that those Gentlemen 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

471. - THE MARQUISE DE MAIGNELAY[1] TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,

Some time ago, I wrote to Mademoiselle Poulaillon[2] to find out from Mademoiselle Le Gras if she could be so kind as to furnish a 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

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 Charity[1] 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

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. Cuissot'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. Benoît[2] 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. Perdu[4] 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 Charity[5] and shall return what you gave them. As for Barbe, look into the matter.[6]

Your trip to Toul[7] 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

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 ago[1] 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 Missionaries[2] or in Alet with the ones who are there[3] does not allow him any rest, then, in 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 lady[5] 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 city[8] is concerned. We 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 Trinité[9] 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 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 Mother[1] that Madame Goussault told me, before she died, that 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 time[2] 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 Commander[5] 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 Bishop[6] 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, 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 Guérin[9] 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 judicia 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 in that of His holy Mother, I am, Monsieur, your most humble servant.

VINCENT DEPAUL i.s.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 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

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 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

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.

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 Vigean[2] upon the death of the latter's son.[3] The said lady's retainers came to get me for that purpose. 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,) 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's[2] note, and shall send the one you sent me to the Procurator General.[3]
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 Vincy[2] 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 see the Bishop of Meaux[3] 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

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. 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-Marie[1] 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. 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 parish[3] 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. 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 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]

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 Parlement[12] 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

486. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[October 1 or 2, 1640][1]

Monsieur,

The friends of the mother of one of our children[2] 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 Roy[3] 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 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

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

488. - TO JACQUES CHIROYE, IN LUCON

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. Cuissot[3] 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 Soudier[4] 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.

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 constitutes the religious state. You wrote me that the Assistant[3] 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 Féret[7] wrote to you. 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 France[9] 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 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 Mathieu[12] 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 Ventadour[13] left forty thousand livres for the foundation of a mission; and a person who does not 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

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.

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 year, really a little short of fifteen,[2] and I hope that what Providence has given us through the Commander[3] 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

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 RICHELIEU[1]

Paris, October 29, 1640

Monsieur,
The grace of Our Lord be with you forever!
I wrote yesterday asking you to give Monsieur des Noyers[2] a written statement[3] of what you would like His Eminence[4] 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 garden. It belongs to the parish of La Villette and comes under that house for dues[3] 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 parish[4] 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 General[7] with regard 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 Prelate[1] 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 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 fever[3] 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 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 power[1] did not approve of my having forwarded the letter you sent me for the purpose of informing His Holiness[2] about us, and he told me himself, just three days ago, to wait for another one[3] and he would 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 Meaux[6] wished us to submit to him, when faults in the house 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 Spirit[7] 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-Aignan[9] wrote to you. Please continue.
Addressed: Monsieur Lebreton, Priest of the Mission, in Rome

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 Mother[1] 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 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 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-Marie[1] 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

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 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 Liancourt[2] told me she would send for me tomorrow around eight o'clock. I most humbly entreat you to let me know if 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.

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 meeting[3] 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 then Daughters.[4] That is what they do at Sainte-Marie.
Addressed: Mademoiselle Le Gras

502. - THE TOWN MAGISTRATES OF PONT-A-MOUSSON[1] 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 Vincente[2] from Richelieu 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.

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's[3] 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 it is appropriate for him to make use of the nephew of the Bishop of Troyes[5] to get payment from Monsieur de Saint-Armand, and that, nevertheless, we shall continue the payment, as well as the Commander's[6] 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 Gouault[7] 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

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

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 Eminence[2] concerning our foundation in Rome. I have no answer yet.

I am greatly consoled by what you wrote to me: that Cardinal Bagni[3] 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 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 Geneva[5] 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 Fathers[6] 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 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-Eutrope[9] and that you will continue to see to the success of that affair.

The Prelates all seem to want to have seminaries of priests, 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 Saintes[11] 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 Mathieu[12] 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.

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 BOURDOISE[1]

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 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, your. . .

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 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

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 Pastor[2] 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.

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 Marie[2] has made up her mind! All for the best, since you think the one from Beauvais[3] 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-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 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, 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 Bouillon[2] 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.

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 medecine 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 Duchesse[2] 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's[3] servants to find out from him and send me word.

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, you 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 Marillac[2] 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 mother[3] 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 Beauvais[4] 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 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 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 Chaumont[2] 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, 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 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 Marquise[2] 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 Duchesse[2] 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 Jeanne[4] 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-Jacques[6] and for the galley-slaves.

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.
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 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 brother[2] has his title and dimissorial letter[3] 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 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 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

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, 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

527. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[1641]

I think, Mademoiselle, you would do well to give what is necessary to your good Sister[1] 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 Belot[2] 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.

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-Nicolas[3] 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 Marguerite, 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 Jeanne[5] 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 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,

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 communication[2] 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 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 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 city[6] seems to have the spirit of God in her way of directing. Our dear Sister Angélique[7] 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!

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 Menthon[8] 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 LIONS[1]

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. Duchesne[2] to give you the response verbally. He is coming to see you with the Dean of Saint-Frambourg[3] 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.

The Pastor of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois[4] 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 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 Maignelay[2] [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]
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!

I am back,[2] by the grace of God, whom I thank for your health.

Isabelle[3] 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 girls[6] 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 Lamoignon[8] made to her about 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 Maretz[2] 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.

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 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 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.

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 Blonay[1] that I have accepted with respect and entire submission 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 Geneva[3] 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- Gerent[5] 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 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.

I see clearly from the Pastor's letter[2] 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, 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 evening concerning the Lady with the galley-slaves. It was decided yesterday that I should see M. Accar[2] 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 Fontenay[5] 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

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 Bourlemont[2] and Monsieur Perrochel,[3] but I can assure you that, because of my wretchedness and laziness, I am in a state more worthy 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 Brezé[5] 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 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 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 Traversay[2] 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 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 Angers[5] 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 Elisabeth[6] 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 Chantal[8] 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 Angers[2] approve of those Sisters, if he can approve of any of them.

(4) Those good gentlemen[3] 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

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 Barbe[2] 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 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.

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.

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 faubourg[1] (our worthy Mother[2] was there and two days previously the Superior from Rouen[3]) 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.

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 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 Troyes[5] 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 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 Barberini[2] and Lenti[3] 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.

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

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 Chancellor[2] 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 Vertamont[3] 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 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 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.

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 nun[1] 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 Geneva[4] 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 trips,[6] to grant her heart to this monastery.[7] Our Mother[8] 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. Grimal[11] 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

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 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.

562a. - TO MOTHER LOUISE-EUGENIE DE FONTEINES, IN PARIS[1]

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 faubourg[2] that to my mind, although I honor the thinking of the Bishop of Sens[3] 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 dear Mother from the faubourg to ask Monsieur Le Blanc[7] 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 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

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 secretary[2] 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's[4] 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, 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.

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 reponsibility 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 wife[2] 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 Lamoignon[4] yesterday that the meeting[5] would be held today at Sainte-Marie in the city, where I have necessary business.

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 give the former the letters concerning his position as Superior, which I am sending him, and assure the Bishop[2] 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 Troyes[3] 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 Troyes[4] 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 texts[5] 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 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. Lumague[8] 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 Visitation[9] 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 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 Rome[14] 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, 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[oment], 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 work[1] 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? 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 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 Eminence[3] about the Bishop of Geneva's[4] plan; otherwise, I would have written tomorrow to M. de Chavigny[5] in Lyons to tell him about it. Your presence in Rome will be a great help with the Ambassador[6] 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 Dauphiné[8] 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 Lumague[9] in Lyons 250 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. Duval[10] 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 Trent[11] recommends seminaries, we have given ourselves to God to serve Him also in that regard wherever we can. You have begun; the Bishop of Alet[12] is doing likewise; the Bishop of Saintes[13] 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 servant[15] 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.

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 CLAYE[2]

Saint-Lazare, March 2, 1642

Monsieur,

Here is the answer for Madame de Claye and a note to have M. Boudet[3] return. Mon Dieu, Monsieur, what shall we do about that, and how is M. de Renty?[4] How is your 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 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 TOWN[1]

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 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!

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 Soufliers. Now, I shall tell you, in answer to yours and then to that of Monsieur Soufliers, 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. Soufliers. 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 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 Bonacina[1] 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 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 externs[2] 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 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. 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 Binsfeld[5] 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 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,[8] the President's wife, 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!

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 objection[1] 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 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 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 FONTAINE[1]

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.

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, 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-COLONS[1] 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 LUCON, 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 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's[1] conditions four or five years ago, and when he came back from Provence, he sent me word that these Gentlemen[2] 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 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 Rome[3]

581. - TO JACQUES CHIROYE, IN LUCON

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 19[1]

Addressed: Monsieur Chiroye, Superior of the Mission, in Luçon

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's[1] 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 diocese[4] 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, according 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 Marie[7] 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 Senlis[8] about accepting the best parish in his diocese,[9] which he is offering us for our residence. He spoke 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 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

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 citizens[2] who wish to keep her there. She really thinks that her brother who is the executor 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'Humières[3] 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

588. - TO SAINT LOUISE

[Around May 1642][1]

I am thinking of sending Monsieur du Coudray to Fontenay tomorrow to that Sister[2] 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 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.

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 happened at your house yesterday. I told the Company about it[2] 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 we have Sister Gillette[2] come back, and in that case, will we have to send two of them?

A. - I think so.

Q. - Shall Sister Barbe[3] 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 General[5] 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 Duchesse[6] 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 wife[8] 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?

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 conference[10] 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.

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 Lannoy[11] 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 Beaufort[12] 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 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!

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-Yves[1] 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 Datary[2] 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. 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 Brothers,[7] and you Monsieur, with unimaginable affection. I am for all, in the love of Our Lord. . .

595. - TO A BISHOP[1]

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 we have toward your goodness, unequaled 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 GUIBOURGERE, 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 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 decree[2] drawn up, because this one applies only to the Foundlings and is not in line with the proposal of the Duchesse.[3] 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 Sisters[1] in the decree, according to the desire of Madame 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 Françoise[1] 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. Thibault[2] 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.

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 Henriette[4] 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 inopportunely, 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 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.

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[loesquellec] 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[loesquellec], 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[loesquellec] 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] If you can feed them for a jule[4] 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 bank[5] 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 Nuncio[9] 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 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 Brittany[14] and those of Lorraine[15] 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 same[18] 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 the seminary that the Abbés Olier,[20] de Foix,[21] Brandon, and some others[22] are beginning in Vaugirard,[23] from which they are going to Saint-Sulpice, whose parish they have accepted.[24] 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. Lucas[26] 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 provided[27] 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 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 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 Bayonne[30] 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 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 Poulaillon 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 Pascal[4] back to you and am your servant.
VINCENT DEPAUL
I think it would be better for you to write to the Bishop of 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 Crécy[5]

604. - TO FRANCOIS DE SAINT-REMY[1]

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 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 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 comformity 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 CANON[1] 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]

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 Sisters[3] 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

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 foundation, under the direction of Monsieur Soufliers, 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 Senlis[6] 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 Carmelites[7] 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 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-Marie[1] 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 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. Fourdim[5] have withdrawn from the Company, as also M. Lescuyer[6] 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 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 Sarlat[11] 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 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 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 Geneva[2] 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 the necessary permission from His Royal Highness[3] 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 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 commited 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 Boysne[2] and M. Bonaflos[3] 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 Jeanne[4] 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 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

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 Madame[2] 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's[3] 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 journey[2] and to grant you His spirit, so that you may act in His spirit.

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 children[4] 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 Madame[5] 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

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. Lambert[1] 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 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 pistoles[3] 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.

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 Chambéry[8] 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, 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 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 SaintLazare

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 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 Madame[1] 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 Jeanne[2] 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.

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 BRUNET[1] 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 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 Alet[2] to approve and to lend you twenty écus for your journey.

You will go straight to Marseilles where you will meet M. Roze[3] and our Brother Pascal[4] 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 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 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 Angers[3] 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 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 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 Skyddie[2] has left with our Brother Pascal[3] 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] 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 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 Huguenot[2] 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 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 Dalmagne[2] 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 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's[2] 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] if his indisposition permits. I cannot send you Brother Alexandre[5] because we have M. Bécu and M. Prévost[6] 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

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 Nuncio[2] to the Cardinal of Sant'Onofrio[3] 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 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 Velletri[6] 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 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 altar[9] 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 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 LUCON

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 Luçon[1] to be so kind as to write to the Cardinal[2] for his assistance and some resources for 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 Bishop[1] 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), 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 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 Cardinal[1] 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 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 Duchesse[6] 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. 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 priests[9] 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 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 Meilleraye[11] is the Governor of Brittany and is leaving in ten days to hold the meeting of the Estates. The Duchesse[12] will talk to him about Saint-Yves and will give him your report.[13] She told me that the Cardinal[14] 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. . .

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 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 Gallemant,[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 Gallemant, 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 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 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 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."

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 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 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]

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 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 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 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 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, 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 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 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 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. 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 Baron[3] 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 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."

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 Issy[2] because she will be needed at Fontenay[3] 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 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 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 Redemption[3] 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 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 Rheims[5] and of Châlons[6] 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. Boulier[8] 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 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

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 affair[1] more difficult, and it is not to be hurried.

The other matter[2] 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 Annecy[3] 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 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.

M. de Saint-Aignan has resigned in our favor the priory of Dyé,[7] in the Langres diocese. M. Gallot[8] 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 Nesmond[1] 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 Beauvais[3] is going to Saint-Germain[4] and that his sister[5] will be able to take them there, 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 Montdésir[6] 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

642. - TO PIERRE ESCART, PRIEST OF THE MISSION, IN ANNECY[1]

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 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, 1643[1]
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 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 FOURNIER[1] 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!
@TEXT601 = Three days ago, I received your letter of the eighth of last 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 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 Messageries[5] 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.

@TEXT601 = 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 Cardinal[7] 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 days for Barbary, and Messieurs Brunet and Candelou[9] 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.

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 SAINTES[1]

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 Guérin[2] 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 Saintes[3] 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, 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

648. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,
I learned what Monsieur Compaing[1] 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 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 Bagot[1] 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 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 Lord has chosen two Commanders of Malta[1] 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, 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 are bringing regarding Saint-Louis[1] through their Father General,[2] confessor of Monsieur, the King's brother;[3] the person[4] 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 Cahors[7] after Easter. The Bishops of Mende[8] and of Angoulême[9] 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. Soufliers about what you tell me concerning Agen.[11] I will await what the Duchesse[12] will have to say about the seminary in Richelieu[13] and the ordinands in Poitiers.[14]

I am delighted by what you tell me, that the Pope[15] will allow the union of the parishes to the seminary, paying the componende[16] for this. The Bishop of Saintes[17] asked me about this in the letter I received from him yesterday. But please 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. Callon[18] rewrite and sign the letter which he 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 Vannes[21] which you mentioned to me, in order to try to establish a seminary there.

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.

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 Mathurins[27] 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 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 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 Saché[3] 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 Elisabeth[4] to go there, if she finds an opportunity.

(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.

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 pastor[4] 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 Linas[5] 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

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 Cardinal[1] 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.

I have told you so many times that the Barbary affair[4] 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 confessor[5] that I should send him the list of those who seem apt for this dignity.[6]

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 SOLMINIHAC[1] 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 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-Geneviève[4] men, through the intervention of the Chancellor's wife, have had M. de Fouquet[5] appointed, contrary to two decrees by which M. de la Ferté[6] 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 Sarlat[7] 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 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 Cardinal[10] about placing M. Brandon[11] there. He seemed capable of putting it back on its feet, and M. des Noyers[12] 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 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 notary[2] 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 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.

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 pressure 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.

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 Lisieux[7] and Meaux, his principal chaplain[8] 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]

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 Jesuits[11] 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-Louis[12] 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

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 have made their abjuration.

662. - TO BERNARD CODOING, SUPERIOR, IN ROME

Paris, May 29, 1643

Monsieur,

Yesterday, I received the dispensation from vows[1] and your accompanying letter for which I most humbly thank you.

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 Company[6] 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 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 GUIBOURGERE, BISHOP OF SAINTES, TO SAINT VINCENT

[May or June[1]] 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 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.

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 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 Pelletier[1] has just left this house; she came to tell me that the Abbé Buzay[2] was named Coadjutor to the Archbishop. She immediately thought of my son and without saying anything to me, 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
669. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Monsieur,
Mesdames Souscarrière, de Romilly,[1] and Traversay went to your house to tell you that the Chancellor[2] 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 Nesmond[5] 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 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]

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 pastor[2] 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 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 sollicited 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 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? Debuit 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

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.
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

Mercuès, 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 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 Villefranche[2] 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 monks[3] 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.

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 Arles[4] 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

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 Amiens[2]

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-Cécile[3] 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 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 TOULOUSE[1]

Saint-Lazare, Monday noon [Between 1643 and 1647][2]

Your Excellency,

The person who will present this letter to you has the honor 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 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 Cardinal[1] 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 indication 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 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 Romillion[7] who separated from Blessed César de Bus[8] because of the vows,[9] and established a number of houses. Since the Oratory had been founded, he went to see M. de Bérulle[10] 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 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 you[1] 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 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 Rheims[2] 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 Agen[4] 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. Soufliers 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.

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-Denis[2] does not merit the thanks you offer me for it, unless your good angel told you that, being in Pontoise with the Bishop of Beauvais[3] who was going to Saint-Germain[4] 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!

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 Mother[5] 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 charity of your worthy foundress[1] 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 affair[2] 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 successione;[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 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-Chamond[7] 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 benefice[8] 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

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.

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 Bellegarde[2] 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.

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 Dyé[3] 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 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.

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-Louis[2] 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, 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.

685. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

[November 19, 1643][1]
Monsieur,
I have led Mademoiselle Viole[2] 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, 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.

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 Toul[1] that you are being urged to make trouble for us in our little establishment of Holy Spirit house[2] 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, 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 Lorraine[5] 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 Mission[7] 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 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 brother[1] has warned her that the Advocate General[2] 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 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 Council[2] as a Prelate who easily engages in lawsuits, and this 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 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's[2] 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.

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 wife[1] 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.

694. - TO FATHER FAURE

(Now Vol. I, 156b.)[1]

694a. - THE MARQUIS DE FABERT[1] 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.

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-Paul[2] to you, who, I believe, must be handled gently; and Sister Geneviève[3] 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 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, Fortia[2] 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, and in the course of it you made the decision to take the children to the country and prevent M. Pelletier[3] 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 Justice[4] 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 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 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. Dufestel[1] leave to go see the Prior of Chancelade Abbey, and the two of them went together to Saint-Pardoux Abbey[2] where they gathered the

information, according to Her Majesty's[3] 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 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 Blanzac[2] 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 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 diocese[1] 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 Boulogne[2] 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 Beauvais[4] has refused us the dimissorial letter for Carcireux[5] 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.

Addressed: Monsieur Dehorgny, Superior[6] 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 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 religion[3] 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 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 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 clearsighted 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 BOUCHER[1] 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 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 Catalonia[1] 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 Ambassador[2] 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, 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 Community 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 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 seminary[1] 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]

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 Chancellor[2] 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 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 Velletri[1] 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 Cardinal[3] 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 ruling[4] 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 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 Bègue[6] 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 Cahors[8] or, if you like, his ordinance, which could serve as an endorsement for the Bull you propose to me, in case the Cardinal[9] wants to confirm this affair soon.

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,[1] 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 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 niece[2] 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 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 FAURE[1]

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 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 COSTE[1] 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 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

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 Toulouse[2] 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 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 introducing 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 Cardinal Barberini's[1] 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 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 mother[2] 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

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 abundance 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 Carmelites[1] and those of the Feuillants[2] 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

719. - TO LOUIS THIBAULT, SUPERIOR, IN SAINTES[1]

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 Bisson[3] or someone to go with him.
We here will return to the Bishop of Saintes[4] 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 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]

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 Indies[1] 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 Babylon[2] 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's[3] death and have had a most solemn service for him. In the name of God, Monsieur, put some pressure to bear, at this time of change, for the union of M. de Saint-Aignan's[4] 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

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 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.

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 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-Paul[4] 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

725. - TO ANTOINE PORTAIL[1]

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.

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, Buissot,[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 me[9] 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 15th[10] 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 that I beg him to write about my absence to the Archbishop of Rheims[11] 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]

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 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.

I wrote to you from Saint-Dyé[1] 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. Gentil[2] 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. Brisacier[4] very well.

I am uncertain about going to Fontainebleau[5] from here. The Cardinal's[6] illness, the business about the Charity[7] and the question of the nobility of Lorraine seem to require it, in 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 meeting[10] 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 Prior[11] 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!

(1) Enclosed is the response to the Mother Superior[1] 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 Get[2] and Jamain;[3] I hope Brother Alexandre[4] 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-Dyé[5] that the persons who are to come from Richelieu will not leave until the eve of Saint-Simon[6] 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.

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. Gallais[1] will see whom you could designate for it. Nothing should be done while the Court is there.

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. Dehorgny[2] 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 me . . .[5]

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!

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 Rivet[2] 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. Norais[3] in Saclay,[4] to see the farm he is offering us and which the Prior[5] 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 Lequeux[7] back to you tomorrow.

Send us M. Gallais to announce the mission in Fontainebleau on All Saints Day. It would be advisable for him to get the blessing of the Archbishop of Sens[8] 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 Mollin[10] 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

730. - TO MONSIEUR CAMPION[1]

[November 10, 1644][2]

I shall go most willingly next Saturday, Monsieur, to the place[3] 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. Dufour[1] in the classes. You could not imagine how God is blessing him in this or how he satisfies the seminarians[2] who now number twenty-two. M. de Cuissot dismissed two of them yesterday for going out without permission.

Monsieur Soufliers is gone, as are Messieurs Buissot 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. Alain[5] and M. Dephilmain[6] were already there.

M. Ozenne is in charge of the Troyes house. M. Bourdet[7] 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]

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

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 Angers[1] 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 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 Chaussée[2] 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 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 Prior[3] 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 Chamblon[4] 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 good . . .[5] 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 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 Alexandre[6] to send you what is set down in his note.

What can I tell you about the mission of Beuvardes?[7] 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 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 Soissons[1] and to express to him the wish of the Duc de Retz[2] to join the La Chaussée hospital to the Mission; that the Bishop of Troyes[3] on whom the hospital originally depended, has agreed to the union, on condition that we be established in his[4] 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 Dufour[5] either.

The Bishop-elect of Boulogne[6] 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

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

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 Condé[3] 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 Nuncio[5] 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 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 position[1] but my sins are the cause of things working out otherwise and it did not please God to accept the sacrifices I 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.

I shall end here by recommending myself to your Holy Sacrifices with all the humility of which I am capable, and to those[3] 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 man[1] 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 or 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 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 Meaux[3] received us into his diocese[4] 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 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 Beaulieu[1] 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 Montauban[3] and opposed to the Bishop of 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 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 poor at Saint-Gervais[2] (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 Henriette[3] for two weeks, I think that between now and that time we could send a few. But I also think that the Pastor[4] 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 Narbonne[1] during the meeting of the Estates,[2] he did me the honor of talking to me 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

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 Princess[2] to ask you for a nun for the reform of an abbey about which the Bishop of Clermont[3] 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

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 France[2] is to convene, at 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 Nones[3] 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. 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, 1645[1]

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 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

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 bureaus[1] 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.

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 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 practice[1] which the 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 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 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 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 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 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 ceiling[3] 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

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 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

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 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, 1645[3]

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.

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 Coglée[3] seems to be needed in Marseilles where he has recovered from his upset.
I told you my thoughts about B[rother] Berthe[4] with regard to that gentleman.
I am consoled by what you told me about Father Leon [5] 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 Lisieux [6] and Beauvais[7] 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 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 Chavigny[9] 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 seminary[10] where he is giving very good example.

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 Beaumont[13] 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 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 Gras'[15] 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, 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.

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 farm[2] 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 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 Mission[6]

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 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-Dieu[1] 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 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 Deure[3] would have soon cured you, and that 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 Madeleine[4] has spoken to you. He is anxious for the decision on that person's[5] departure and seems to be convinced of her conversion, stating that she assures him of never wanting to give a thought to the person[6] 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.

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 Anne

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, 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.

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 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 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 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?
@TEXT610 = In the article: "they will show respect and obedience in all that concerns their conduct and the treatment of the sick poor in 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 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 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 Confraternity 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 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 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 Lodève[2] 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 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 TRADESMEN[1]

[January 1646][2]

The Priests of the Congregation of the Mission established 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 Guénegaud.[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 Mission[5]

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. Charles[2] 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 Toledo[3] in French.

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 Guérin[4] 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.

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;

(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 Longueville[3] as wet nurse for her son.[4] 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 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 Assembly[1] affairs, 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 Féret[2] 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

783. - CARDINAL MAZARIN TO SAINT VINCENT

February 1646

Monsieur,

These lines are to inform you that the Chief Justice[1] 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 affection . . .[3]

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

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's[1] resignation of his

diocese in favor of Monsieur du Bosquet[2] 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 Narbonne[3] 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 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

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 Chancellor[3] and the Chief Justice,[4] to act as we 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 place[1] 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 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 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!

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.

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 tomorrow[3] 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 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 communication[2] to him in whom Our Lord has given 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 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 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

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 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 General[3] 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 pastor[4] was ill.

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. Water[6] 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 Treffort[7] 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 Dupuis[8] 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 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 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 DELATTRE, 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 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 General[4] 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 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 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 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 tomorrow's meeting at your house for the Sisters going to Le Mans. That is why I sent someone to the Pastor of SaintJacques-du-Haut-Pas[2] 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 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 Testacy[3] 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 Rivanaigre[4] will be able to stay at the house and M. Brin[5] 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. Gallais[6] 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. 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 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 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 time[1] 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 pastor[3] 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 Cahors[4] 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]

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 girl[2] had wanted to make her confession to you 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 Navarre[1] told me that Your Eminence had instructed M. Le Tellier[2] to have me write him to say whether the Sieur de Douay, licentiate in theology, has the requisite qualities to be head of the school of philosphy 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.
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 Mortemart[2] has just left here and has told me to ask you most humbly on her behalf for a tutor for her son.[3] She still has a good priest from Roule[4] 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 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's[1] 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

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.

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 Genevieve[2] 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 letters[2] to Mademoiselle Le Gras. Will she please let me know if she was in Angers with the Fathers of the Poor[3] at the time our Sisters were established 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 babies[8] 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 Anne[2] here. If you had the time to say a few words to her, we could send her over today.

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 obtrusivenesss 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 consultors 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 Plancoët[1] chapel, even contrary to the reasons I gave you for not taking it, and they were 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 Troyes[2] 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 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 THIBAULT, 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 Gondrée[1] 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 priests[2] 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.

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 Noyelles[1] 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 Saintes[3] 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 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 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 BAUTRU[1]

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.
The authority the King has given you, by the o[racle] 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 Mayor[3] 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 good[6] 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 protection 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 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 Crécy, 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 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 Duchesse[1] 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. Gautier[3] 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

823. - SAINT LOUISE TO SAINT VINCENT

Friday, [July 20, 1646][1]

Monsieur,

I felt it very necessary to send our Sister Elisabeth[2] 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 Maule[3] 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 Bouillon[6] 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 Bouillon[7] 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

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 letter[1] 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 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.

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 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 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-Essart[2]

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 Fontainebleau[1] for 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 Gobert[4] 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 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's[6] return.

Brother Pierre Vas[7] 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 Blanc[8] 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 Rogueux[9] 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 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 Barreau[11] arrived in Algiers a short 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.

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 Périgueux[1] 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 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 Officialis[3] 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 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

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 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 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, 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 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 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

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