

Introduction to French Edition

1. Pierre Collet, *La vie de saint Vincent de Paul* (2 vols., Nancy: A. Leseure, 1748), I, p. IV. Pierre Collet was born August 31, 1693 in Ternay (Vendôme). He entered the Congregation of the Mission September 6, 1717, probably as an ordained priest, and pronounced vows September 7, 1719. He died October 6, 1770.
2. See the following letters: to Brother Jean Parre, November 16, 1658 (vol. VII, no. 2722); to Bernard Codoing, October 9, 1643 (vol. II, no. 680); to Jean Martin, September 14, 1646 (vol. III, no. 859); to Lambert aux Couteaux, May 3, 1652 (vol. IV, no. 1494); to Etienne Blatiron, January 2, 1654 (vol. V, no. 1694); to Charles Ozenne, October 15, 1655 (vol. V, no. 1942); and to Antoine Durand, December 21, 1657 (vol. VI, no. 2492). In 1658, Saint Vincent wrote to Charles Ozenne only every two weeks. (Cf. letter of January 18, 1658 vol. VII, no. 2513.)
3. See the letter of October 12, 1657 to Charles Ozenne (vol. VI, no. 2409) and the one to Brother Jean Parre, November 30, 1658 (vol. VII, no. 2738).
4. The first letter written by Brother Ducournau is that of May 3, 1645 (vol. II, no. 749) to Jacques Chiroye. Bertrand Ducournau, born in 1614 in Arnou (Landes), was received into the Congregation of the Mission on July 28, 1644, in the capacity of coadjutor brother and pronounced his vows on October 9, 1646. Since he had a fine penmanship, a judicious sense, and a shrewd, frank, and reliable experience of affairs from the diverse positions which he had occupied in the world, Saint Vincent made him his secretary in 1645. By his devotion, his tact, and his love of work, this good Brother rendered inestimable services to Saint Vincent and his Congregation. It can be said that, by his preparation of materials and his personal notes, he contributed more than Abelly himself to the first biography of Saint Vincent. After the death of the Saint, Brother Ducournau remained secretary to the Superiors General (René Alméras and Edmond Jolly) and archivist of Saint-Lazare. He died in Paris on January 3, 1677. (Cf. vol. III, no. 831.)
5. Louis Robineau, born in Neuvy-en-Dunois (Eure-et-Loir), entered the Congregation of the Mission on November 8, 1642, at the age of twenty-one, and pronounced his vows on November 1, 1650. For thirty years he fulfilled the functions of secretary in the service of Saint Vincent and wrote for the author of the Saint's biography some notes which we still have. (Cf. vol. IV, no. 1527.)
6. See the letters of June 21, 1653 to Emerand Bajoue (vol. IV, no. 1633); of August 10, 1657 to Edmond Jolly (vol. VI, no. 2333); and of August 24, 1659 to François Feydin (vol. VIII, no. 2948).
7. See the letters of June 30, 1656 to Jean Martin (vol. V, no. 2089); and of October 25, 1658 (vol. VII, no. 2693) and June 26, 1654 to Firmin Get (vol. V, no. 1756).
8. Letter of July 28, 1651 to Jean Martin (vol. IV, no. 1388).
9. For example, the letter of March 15, 1638 to Lambert aux Couteaux (vol. I, no. 316).
10. This is the case with regard to the letter of November 2, 1636 to Saint Louise (vol. I, no. 248); of February 21, 1638 to Antoine Lucas (vol. I, no. 307); of February 20, and March 15 and 22, 1638 to Lambert aux Couteaux (vol. I, nos. 306, 316, and 320); and of June 2, 1638 to Jean Bécu (vol. I, no. 326). The copyists have almost always placed the date and the day of the week at the head of the letter.
11. From July 1639 to January 1, 1640, the Saint varies; at times the old habit prevails.
12. Letters of April 11, 1659 to Guillaume Desdames and Edmond Jolly (vol. VII, nos. 2810 and 2811).
13. Letter of May 24, 1637 to Saint Louise (vol. I, no. 267).
14. Letter of June 19, 1654 to Thomas Berthe (vol. V, no. 1752). See also the letters of August 14, 1638 to Robert de Sergis (vol. I, no. 339); and of December 1, 1646 to Antoine Portail (vol. III, no. 899).
15. Letter of June 22, 1657 to Jean Martin (vol. VI, no. 2290).
16. Letter of January 9, 1660 to Guillaume Desdames (vol. VIII, no. 3063).
17. Letter of August 26, 1640 (vol. II, no. 476).
18. Vol. I, nos. 49 and 151.
19. Letters of September 17, 1647 to Mathurin Gentil (vol. III, no. 985) and of June 13, 1654 to Marc Coglée (vol. V, no. 1751).
20. Letters of December 1654 (vol. V, no. 1819) and of August 1, 1659 (vol. VIII, no. 2927) to Jean Martin and of March 1659 to Saint Louise (vol. VII, no. 2791).
21. Letters of May 13, 1639 to Robert De Sergis (vol. I, no. 377); of November 13, 1640 to Jacques Tholard (vol. II, no. 495); of November 20, 1644 to Guillaume Delville (vol. II, no. 733); of February 14, 1648 to Antoine Portail (vol. III, no. 1016); of March 22, 1652 to Lambert aux Couteaux (vol. IV, no.

- 1473); of June 13, 1654 to Marc Coglée (vol. V, no. 1751); and of February 5, 1660, to Jean Martin (vol. VIII, no. 3075).
22. Letters of May 1, 1633 (vol. I, no. 137) and December 12, 1639 (vol. I, no. 411) to Saint Louise; of March 22, 1652 to Lambert aux Couteaux (vol. IV, no. 1473); of October 10, 1657 to Jacques Chiroye (vol. VI, no. 2408); and of September 12, 1659 to Guillaume Desdames (vol. VIII, no. 2980).
23. Three hundred forty-seven if we add the forty-two letters from the Hains file which will be mentioned further on.
24. *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission*, 1905, vol. LXX, p. 210.
25. Ms. 2555.
26. September 22, 1672.
27. Letter to Guillaume de Lestocq, Pastor of Saint-Laurent.
28. This excerpt, no. 968 (vol. III), is taken from a manuscript entitled: *Lettres choisies du Bienh. Vincent de Paul, instituteur et premier supérieur général de la congrégation de la Mission*. This anthology, compiled between 1729 and 1737, is found at the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity. It is from the same family as the Avignon manuscript, reproduces all the letters in the same order, and adds a ninth section containing nineteen letters, all related to the direction of the Daughters of Charity.
29. Paris, 1664, 3 vols. in 1 vol. We always refer to this edition because the other editors more or less altered Abelly's quotations.
30. Abelly, op. cit., vol. III, chap. XXIV, sect. I, p. 348 and letter of August 6, 1657 to Honoré Bélart.
31. Abelly, op. cit., vol. II, chap. XII, p. 415 and letter of October 4, 1646 to Cardinal Grimaldi.
32. Abelly, op. cit., vol. III, chap. XXII, end, p. 325 and the letter of June 27, 1660 to a Visitation nun.
33. Abelly, op. cit., vol II, chap. IX, p. 351 and letter of October 1658 to Saint Louise.
34. Abelly, op. cit., vol. II, chap. I, sect. II, par. 3, p. 31 and letter of July 25, 1634 to François du Coudray.
35. Abelly, op. cit., vol. I, chap. XXIV, p. 113 and no. 138 to Saint Louise.
36. Abelly, op. cit., vol. II, chap. IX, p. 351 and no. 354 to Saint Louise.
37. No. 69.
38. Abelly, op. cit., vol. III, chap. VIII, sect. I, p. 77.
39. No. 354.
40. Abelly, op. cit., vol. II, chap. IX, p. 350.
41. Letter of July 25, 1634 to François du Coudray, no. 177.
42. Abelly, op. cit., vol. II, chap. I, sect. II, par. 3, p. 31.
43. No. 27.
44. Abelly, op. cit., vol. I, chap. XXIII, p. 105.
45. Letter of September 15, 1628, no. 30.
46. Abelly, op. cit., vol. II, chap. I, sect. I, par. 4, p. 18.
47. *Ibid.*, vol. I, chap. XXIV, p. 113, and no. 71.
48. Compare in particular Abelly, vol. II, chap. I, sect. VII, par. I, p. 96, and the letter of September 6, 1646 to Brother Jean Barreau; vol. III, chap. VIII, sect. I, p. 77, and no. 69; vol. III, chap. VIII, sect. II, p. 83, and no. 50.
49. Compare Abelly, vol. III, chap. XXIV, sect. I, p. 348, Collet, op. cit., vol. II, p. 308, and the letter of August 6, 1657 to Honoré Bélart; Abelly, vol. III, chap. II, towards the end, p. 8, Collet, vol. II, p. 107, and the letter of February 7, 1641 to Saint Louise.
50. Paris.
51. This is no. 207a in our collection.
52. Paris.
53. We say 2039 letters, although the last one is numbered 2078, because the editor mixes in with the Saint's letters eight documents which are not his (5, 7, 286, 341, 945, 1014, 1370, 1947); he repeats twelve letters (compare 186 plus 187 and 864, 334 and 492, 469 and 480, 671 and 1966, 375 and 922, 179 and 932, 83 and 1130, 1467 and 1936, 722 and 1994, 659 and 1995, 472, 2065, 1213 and 1240); and with fragments of sixteen others he makes thirty-four distinct letters (348, 350 and 351 belong to one and the same letter; likewise 46 and 117, 172 and 173, 24 and 322, 357 and 359, 389 and 390, 186 and 187, 704 and 713, 170 and 769, 845 and 1010, 677, 876 and 877, 1347 and 1589, 958 and 1049, 1023 and 1026, 1046 and 1047, 1999 and 2001). Let us add that the petition published by Father Pémartin as no. 825 was disclaimed by Saint Vincent, and for that reason should not appear among his letters.

The editor did well not to insert in his collection the letter that Canon Maynard (Saint Vincent de Paul 3rd ed., Paris, 1886, vol. I, p. 83) attributes without grounds to the Saint who has recently left Clichy to enter the De Gondi Family: "I departed sadly from my little church of Clichy, my eyes bathed with tears," the holy priest is supposed to have written, "and I blessed the men and women who came to me and whom I had so loved. My poor were there, too, and they broke my heart. I arrived in Paris with my scant furnishings and went to the house of M. de Bérulle." The style of this excerpt is far from resembling that of Saint Vincent. Moreover, Maynard, who is the only one to bring it to our attention, gives no reference for it whatever.

54. Lettres de saint Vincent de Paul, Paris, Dumoulin, 2 vols.

55. Lettres et Conférences de saint Vincent de Paul (Supplément), Paris. The first letter in the Supplément is numbered 2079; the last is 3136. Nevertheless, we fall short of having 1057 letters. The editor absentmindedly passes from number 2099 to number 3000. Let us add that six documents are not letters (2128, 3005, 3046, 3065, 3107, 3131); twelve letters are already found in the 1880 collection (cf. 2082 and 132, 2084 and 231, 2094 and 1627, 2091 and 116, 3018 and 46 plus 117, 3042 and 840, 3035 and 450, 3054 and 952, 3077 and 133, 3089 and 1570, 3110 and 1681, 3117 and 1968); and eight letters are merely complementary fragments of letters partially published in this same collection (2092 and 66, 3027 and 396, 3028 and 408, 3031 and 420, 3047 and 610, 3102 and 1326, 3104 and 1340, 3127 and 2072).

56. Lettres de saint Vincent de Paul adressées à Mademoiselle Le Gras.

INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH EDITION

1. Joseph Leonard, C.M., *Letters of Saint Vincent de Paul* (London: Burns Oates Washbourne, 1937); *The Conferences of Saint Vincent de Paul to the Sisters of Charity* (London: Burns Oates Washbourne, 1938-1940); *Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul*, compiled by Pierre Coste, C.M., trans. by Joseph Leonard, C.M., ed. by the Eastern Province of the Congregation of the Mission (Philadelphia, 1963).
2. Henri Brémond, *A Literary History of Religious Thought From the Wars of Religion Down to our Own Times*, trans. K. L. Montgomery, 10 vols. (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; New York: Macmillan Co., 1936), vol. III: *The Triumph of Mysticism*, p. 212.
3. The two Communities founded by Saint Vincent de Paul: the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission and the Company of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul.
4. Sister Helen Marie Law, having previously translated into English the letters of Saint Louise de Marillac, brought a certain expertise to the translation of Saint Vincent's writings. Her great contribution to the study of Saint Vincent was brought to an end by her untimely death on July 3, 1978.
5. Nos. 115a, 156a, 377a.
6. Nos. 39a, 45a, 45b, 55a, 55b, 57a, 102a, 163a, 188a, 260a, 260b, 260c, 297a, 322a, 362a, 365a, 374a, 392a, 414a.
7. Nos. 47, 65, 83, 413, 414.
8. No. 47a.
9. Nos. 253a and 383a.
10. Nos. 169-170, 247, 348.
11. No. 94a.
12. No. 388a.
13. Nos. 60a, 74a, 156a, 198a-g, 296a, 207a-c, 277a, 290a, 344a.
14. *Annales* (1937), pp. 234-237.
15. Department is the term used to designate each of the principal divisions of French territory. It denotes a geographical area similar to that of the American word state. In the names of several departments, the word maritime, indicating near the sea, has replaced the word inférieure of the same meaning: Charente-Maritime, Seine-Maritime, Alpes-Maritime. In 1964, the Department of Seine was subdivided into Hauts-de-Seine, Paris, Seine-Saint-Denis, and Val-de-Marne; Seine-et-Oise became Essonne, Val-d'Oise, and Yvelines.
16. *Sainte Louise de Marillac, Ecrits Spirituels* (Tours: Mame, 1983).
17. Pierre Coste, C.M., *The Life and Works of Saint Vincent de Paul*, trans. Joseph Leonard, C.M., 3 vols. (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1952).
18. No. 276.
19. No. 377.
20. No. 42.
21. No. 365.
22. No. 266.
23. No. 357.
24. No. 58.