

Blessed DE MAZENOD

LETTERS

TO

CEYLON

AND AFRICA

1847-1860



Letters to Ceylon and Africa
1847-1860

Blessed EUGENE DE MAZENOD
1782-1861

Collection Oblate Writings IV

Letters to Ceylon and Africa

1847-1860

General Postulation O.M.I.
Via Aurelia 290
Rome
1980

Chronological List of Letters

CEYLON

1847

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. To Fr. Semeria | 1 |
|-----------------------------|---|

1848

- | | |
|--|----|
| 2. To Fr. Semeria, January 25 | 5 |
| 3. To Fr. Semeria, May 9 | 9 |
| 4. To Fr. Semeria, August 17 | 14 |
| 5. To Fr. Semeria, November 3 | 17 |
| 6. To Fr. Semeria, November 8 | 22 |
| 7. To Fr. Semeria, November 22 | 24 |

1849

- | | |
|---|----|
| 8. To Bishop Bettachini, January 19 | 27 |
| 9. To Fr. Semeria, January 20 | 28 |
| 10. To Fr. Semeria, February 21 | 30 |
| 11. To Fr. Semeria, March 23 | 33 |
| 12. To Fr. Semeria, May 14 | 36 |
| 13. To Fr. Semeria, November 10 | 41 |

1850

14. To Fr. Semeria, January 17	47
15. To Fr. Semeria, April 2	52

1851

16. To Fr. Semeria, March 12	57
17. To Fr. Semeria, March 25	62
18. To my dearly beloved Sons, June 2	66
19. To Fr. Semeria, June 3	67
20. To Bishop Bravi, June 3	71
21. To Fr. Semeria, July 27	73
22. To Bishop Bettachini, June	77
23. To Fr. Semeria, September 19	78
24. To Bishop Bravi, November 17	83
25. To the Oblate Fathers, November 17	85

1852

26. To Fr. Semeria, January 21	87
27. To Fr. Semeria, April 16	92
28. To Bishop Bettachini, April 16	95
29. Right Rev. Dr. Bravi, April 27	97
30. To Fr. Semeria, July 2	98

1853

31. To Fr. Semeria, January 7	103
32. To Fr. Semeria, April 8	106
33. To Fr. Ciamin, April 9	109
34. To Fr. Semeria, September 29	112

1854

35. To Fr. Semeria, January 26	115
36. To Fr. Ciamin, January 26	117
37. To Fr. Semeria, June 5	118
38. To Frs. Mouchel, Keating, etc., June 5	121
39. To Fr. Semeria, December 8	122

1855

40. To Fr. Semeria, July 10	125
41. To Fr. Semeria, October 1	128

1856

42. To Bishop Semeria, September 23	133
---	-----

1857

43. To the Oblates of Ceylon, January 31	135
44. To Bishop Semeria, October 10	136

1858

45. To Bishop Bravi	141
46. To Bishop Semeria, October 16	141
47. To Fr. Bonjean, October 16	142

1859

48. To Fr. Mola, January 27	145
49. To Fr. Bonjean, November 19	146

1860

50. To Bishop Semeria, February 18	149
51. To Bishop Semeria, July 8	152

52. To Bishop Semeria, September 17	156
53. To Bishop Semeria, December 24	158

AFRICA

1848

1. To Bishop Pavy, December 4	163
2. To Fr. Viala, December 6	163

1849

3. To Bishop Pavy, January 5	165
4. To Fr. Viala, January 17	165
5. To Mr. Peauger, February 8	167
6. To Fr. Viala, March 5	168
7. To Fr. Viala, March 9	169
8. To Fr. Viala, April 5	169
9. To Fr. Grenier, October 26	170
10. To Fr. Bellanger, November 10	171
11. To Fr. Tempier, November 30	172
12. To Fr. Tempier, December 9	173

1850

13. To Bishop Pavy, January 14	175
14. To Bishop Pavy, February 4	175
15. To Fr. Eymère, March 5	185
16. To Fr. Allard, December 4	186

1851

17. To Fr. Allard, January 13	189
18. To Bishop Allard, February 9	190

19. To Bishop Allard, April 18	191
20. To the Bishop of Samaria, October 24	192

1852

21. To Bishop Allard, July 15	195
---	-----

1853

22. To the Minister of the Navy, April 8	197
--	-----

1855

23. To Bishop Allard, June 11	199
24. To Bishop Allard, November 8	200

1856

25. To Fr. Barret, April 23	203
---------------------------------------	-----

1857

26. To Bishop Allard, May 30	205
27. To Bishop Allard, November 10	208

1859

28. To Bishop Allard, October 28	211
29. To Fr. Barret, October 28	213
30. To Fr. Gérard, October 28	216

1860

31. To Fr. Le Bihan, September 3	219
32. To Fr. Gérard, September 4	220
33. To Fr. Barret, September 13	222

Contents

Photo of Bishop E. de Mazenod	XV
Photo of Bishop Étienne Semeria	XVII
Map of the Apostolic Vicariates of Ceylon	XIX
Photo of Bishop J. F. Allard	XXI
Map of the Apostolic Vicariate of Natal	XXII
Introduction (Fr. Yvon Beaudoin, O.M.I.)	XXIII

CEYLON

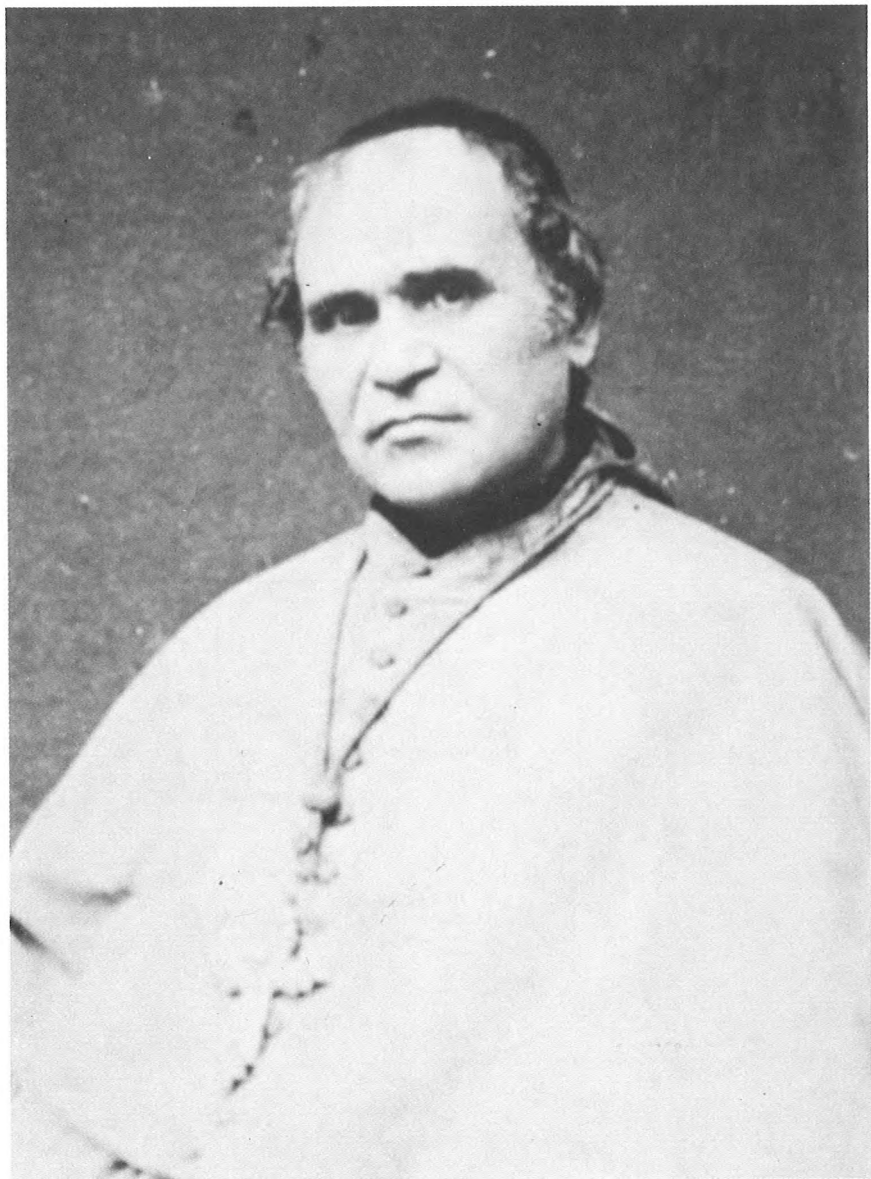
Letter of 1847	1
Letters of 1848	5
Letters of 1849	27
Letters of 1850	47
Letters of 1851	57
Letters of 1852	87
Letters of 1853	103
Letters of 1854	115
Letters of 1855	125
Letter of 1856	133
Letters of 1857	135
Letters of 1858	141
Letters of 1859	145
Letters of 1860	149

AFRICA

Letters of 1848	163
Letters of 1849	165
Letters of 1850	175
Letters of 1851	189
Letter of 1852	195
Letter of 1853	197
Letters of 1855	199
Letter of 1856	203
Letters of 1857	205
Letters of 1859	211
Letters of 1860	219
 Chronological List of Letters	 VII
Index of Names	225
Index of Subject Matter	231



Mgr Charles Joseph Eugène de Mazenod (1782-1861). Founded the Oblates of Mary Immaculate January 25, 1816. Ordained Bishop of Icosia October 14, 1832. Appointed Bishop of Marseilles April 7, 1837. Senator from 1856 to 1861.

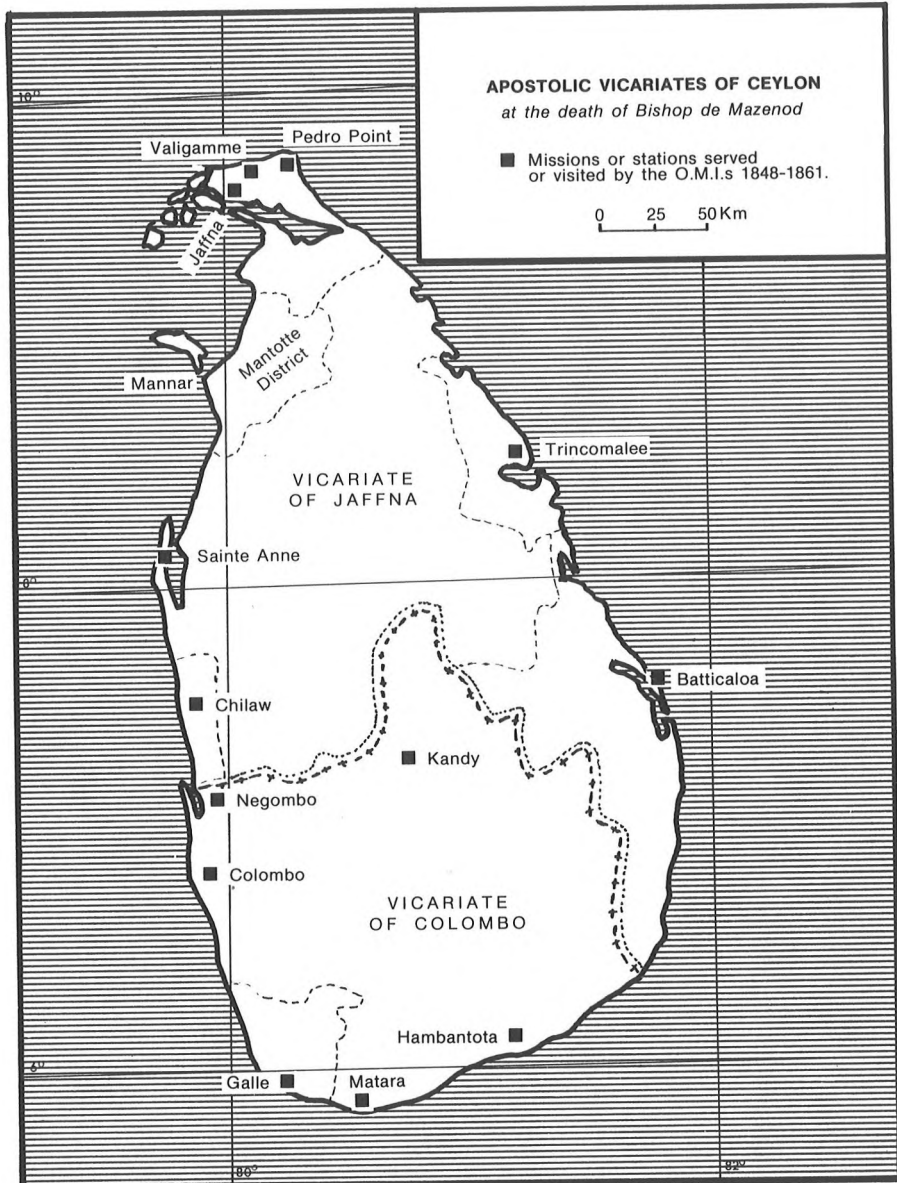


Bishop Étienne Semeria 1813-1868. First Superior of the Oblates in Ceylon in 1847. Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna 1856-1868.

APOSTOLIC VICARIATES OF CEYLON
at the death of Bishop de Mazenod

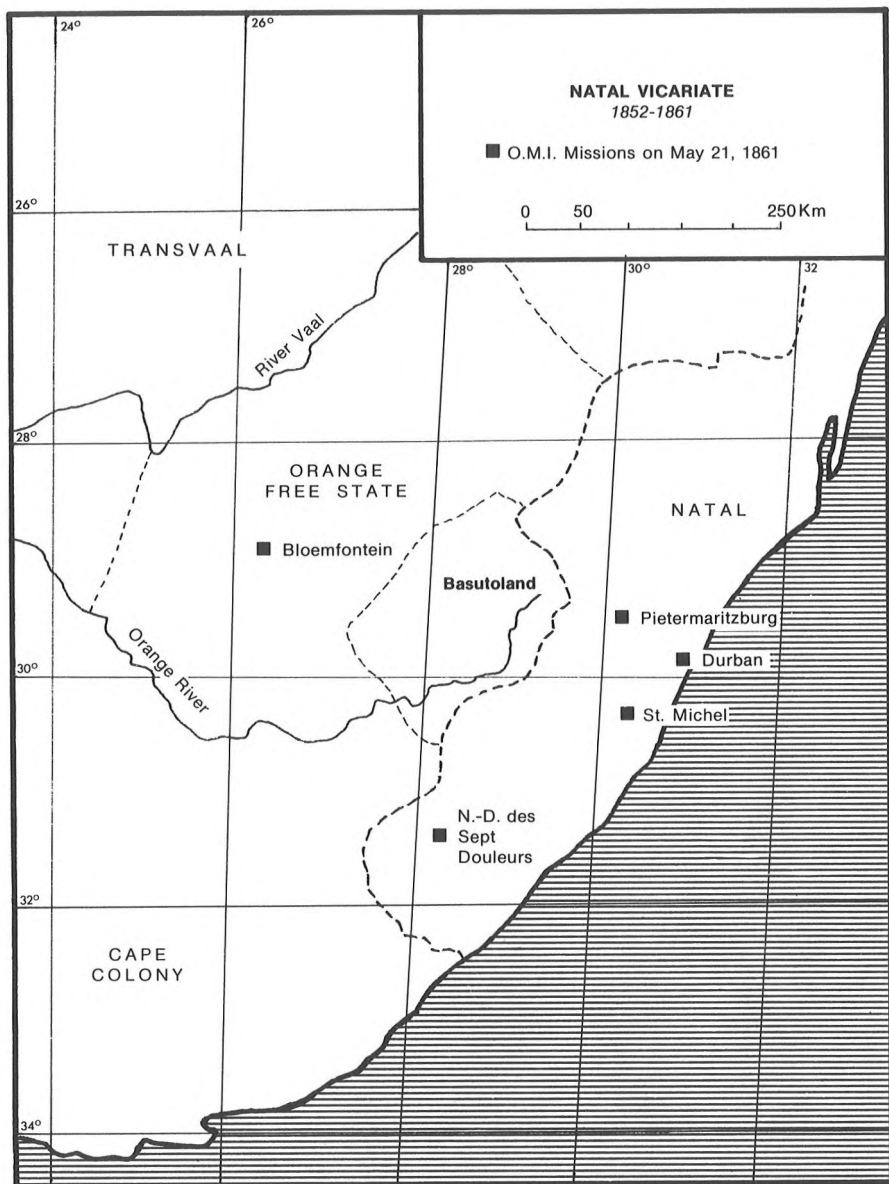
■ Missions or stations served
or visited by the O.M.I.s 1848-1861.

0 25 50 Km





Bishop Jean-François Allard (1806-1889). Consecrated Bishop of Samaria July 13, 1851. Vicar Apostolic of Natal from 1851 to 1874.



Introduction

Bishop Horace Bettachini, Coadjutor of the Vicar Apostolic of Colombo, came to Europe in 1845 to seek missionary help. He obtained no more than one member of the Congregation of the Oratory, and one Sylvestrine Benedictine. In vain he travelled throughout the rest of Europe, pleading everywhere. Every door was closed to him.

In his distress he met Bishop Berteaud of Tulle, who said to him: "Go to Marseilles. There is a Bishop there whose Congregation is still small, but who has a heart as large as Saint Paul's, as large as the world. Go and make it clear to him that it is a matter of saving those poor, poor souls — insist on that point. When he hears that, he will be unable to resist."¹

Bishop de Mazenod responded enthusiastically to this request. On August 12, 1847, he gave his reasons to Fr. Vincens: "What a field is opening up before us! One and a half million Gentiles to be converted in the most beautiful country in the world! One hundred and fifty thousand Christians to be instructed; that whole huge population, disposed by its goodness of character and a certain attraction towards religion to hear with docility the voice of the messengers of God who will announce to them the Good News. On the other hand, there is heresy to be guarded against... How can one resist so many powerful reasons for responding gratefully to requests for powerful assistance in this great and good work? And so I have accepted this new mission, one of the most beautiful on earth, and I predict that one day this large island will be given over to our Congregation and that our Congregation will make the whole island holy."

¹ Cf. P. Duchaussois, *Sous les feux de Ceylan* (Grasset, 1929) pp. 74-75. The author does not give his sources for this detail, which is not found in the biographies of the Founder, but which is faithful to the spirit of Bishop de Mazenod.

"There can be no doubt that once again, and with very sure insight, Bishop de Mazenod had looked far beyond the feasibility of the present to envision the realizations of the future. It does not seem so certain, however, that he had a clear appreciation of the odd and complicated situation which existed in what the first Oblate superior would soon call a 'strange country' and which would discourage his sons as well as himself..." writes Mgr Leflon.² However, a letter of October 7, 1847, to Bishop Casanelli d'Istria of Ajaccio, gives reason for believing that the Founder did foresee many difficulties: *"It is an infinitely difficult mission for several reasons, and I needed a proven man like Fr. Semeria to entrust it to for my own peace of mind. This is the sacrifice that God has asked of us, and I had to make it with joy in firm confidence regarding the great good that will result from it; the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda calls the help that it has asked from us opportunissimo et necessario. I have every reason to think that Fr. Roller, who will replace him at Vico, will do good work."*

The letters that we publish here are mostly replies to those that the Founder received, especially from Fr. Semeria, who wrote very regularly. They therefore reflect the state of mind of the correspondents, and especially of the superior who, for a long period, is concerned and preoccupied with difficulties of an exterior nature, and who often asks advice about such matters from Marseilles. This explains the distinctive character of this correspondence, which informs us above all about problems and events exterior to the Congregation, leaving in the background the personal and religious life of the missionaries, in contrast with what we learn from the letters sent to Canada or to the Oblates of England and Ireland.

What, then, were these difficulties? The Oblates had put themselves at the service of Bishop Bettachini and of the Vicariate of Jaffna, but it seems that they were hoping to work at a good distance from the Bishop, in the province of Kandy. When they arrived in Ceylon at the end of 1847. Propaganda had placed Kandy, since September 17, directly under the authority of Bishop

² Mgr Leflon, in his work *Eugene de Mazenod* vol 4, pp. 167-219 (English Translation), describes with the skill of a master historian the story of the first 15 years of Oblate activity in Ceylon: one can do no better than to advise the reader to refer to this work in order to understand better the contents of all the letters of the Founder to Ceylon discovered hitherto, which we publish in this volume. Cf. also R. Boudens, 'Bishop de Mazenod and Ceylon' in *Études Oblates* 9 (1952) pp. 168-178 and 312-322.

Musulce, Vicar Apostolic of Colombo. Fr. Semeria had no hesitation in remaining at Jaffna in order to work under the immediate direction of Bishop Bettachini, according to the orders he had received, and in collaboration with the other priests of the Vicariate, who in any case were very few in number: 6 Goanese, who lost no time in rejoining their compatriots in Colombo, 2 Spanish Benedictines, 3 secular priests from Lombardy and an Italian Oratorian. These last, Europeans, looked with suspicion on the arrival of 4 Oblates from France, even though, in order to avoid misunderstandings, the Founder had chosen, as well as the Irishman Keating, three Italians: Fr. Semeria from Piedmont, Fr. Ciamin from Nice, and Brother De Steffanis, a Genoese. It was known that they were no more than an advance party, whence suspicion and misunderstandings arose. In 1849 there was a plot, which greatly worried Fr. Semeria, to induce Bishop Bettachini to call the Jesuits to counteract the influence of the Oblates, and even to remove them from Jaffna. Fortunately, this skirmish had no sequel. The Jesuits did come to work in the Vicariate, but far away from Jaffna, in the missions of Mannar and Kayts.

Fr. Semeria wanted to get on with apostolic work and to set in motion plans that he had gradually formed as he visited the island in his capacity as Bishop's Secretary. But this was the essential point on which confidence and collaboration between the superior and the Bishop were severely put to the test. The Vicar Apostolic took no notice of Fr. Semeria's plans, and chose what was more immediately urgent. He placed Oblates like other priests in his service, dispersing them among the various missions and moving them frequently. This way of acting made community life impossible and hindered the work of evangelisation in depth among Christians who were of a quarrelsome temperament and too settled in a religion of tradition and superficiality.

However, the missionaries worked generously, even though they had to be content to be carried along by the tide, with no long-term plans. The Founder was a little disappointed, but nonetheless sent three Fathers in 1849 and two more in 1850, although on each occasion he was obliged to enter into controversy with Bishop Bettachini on the matter of their transport. The Bishop received from the Work for the Propagation of the Faith a grant for his Vicariate; he had even asked that nothing be given directly to the Oblates and that their name should not figure in the Annals of the

Propagation of the Faith. The Founder was surprised to learn this, and to hear that the Bishop was resisting paying for the journeys of the missionaries. Already overburdened with work and correspondence, with sometimes more than 60 letters on his desk awaiting a reply, Bishop de Mazenod was forced to write letter after letter to the Work for the Propagation of the Faith, to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, to Fr. Semeria and to Bishop Bettachini to clarify this situation and to make it clear that the money from the Work was in the first place for the travelling expenses of the missionaries. He won his case, even though for a moment he was obliged to show anger towards those responsible for the Work at Lyon. However, for reasons of economy, he sent some Fathers not on the English boat that took the route through the Red Sea, but on sailing ships that went round Africa, an interminable and exhausting journey. This explains the irritation that he shows on discovering that Bishop Bettachini, who had complained of the excessively high travelling expenses of the missionaries, was paying for sumptuous chandeliers from Paris, and vestments from Lyons, and engaging in Italy music-teachers who were brought by the most direct and comfortable route at his own expense.

A moment of peace and hope followed when a new field of activity opened in 1851. Against his will, but constrained by necessity, Bishop Bravi, a Sylvestrine, Coadjutor of Colombo, accepted four Oblates whom the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda requested from Bishop de Mazenod. But before long it was there that the most serious difficulties were to arise. First of all, Bishop Bravi demanded that the new arrivals should have no relations with their superior at Jaffna. The two communities of the island, he wrote, should have "no more relations between them than the Canons of Genoa and the canons of Ancona". The Bishop even insisted that the Fathers should hide their Oblate cross and conceal the fact that they belonged to the Congregation. The Founder established certain clear principles which saved the rights of the Oblates, but in practice he put his trust in Bishop Bravi and thought it best to temporise for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls. The four Oblates, with no immediate superior, lost no time, in the enthusiasm and ardour of their youth, in taking initiatives that were more generous than prudent, and in particular in making young people and even children make their solemn first communion according to the European custom, although the Goanese often did not allow Christians to communicate except on

the point of death; this brought on them the wrath of the Goanese and consequently of the bishops of Colombo. Furthermore, during a long dispute between Bettachini and Bravi on the status of certain important missions like St Anne of Talavila, Chilaw and Kurunegala, the Oblates of Colombo took the part of the Vicariate of Jaffna and brought on themselves the dislike of Bravi, who vowed that he would never again accept Oblates in his Vicariate, even if he had to go and look for missionaries in Australia.

Little by little, these difficulties had the effect of convincing Bishop de Mazenod that he should make his sons more independent. From 1848 onwards, he hoped to have Fr. Semeria nominated Coadjutor of Jaffna with responsibility for a part of the vicariate reserved to the Oblates. Until 1855, in all his letters to Bettachini, to Semeria, and to the Congregation of Propaganda, he returned insistently to this plan, which was realised in 1856, a few months before the death of Bishop Bettachini.

These same difficulties made the apostolate of the first Oblates in Ceylon an arduous and slow business. Fr. Semeria admitted one day that he had nothing to say about this matter that was not "fragmentary and incoherent". The Founder, who had for a long time preached prudence and patience to him, began little by little to use a different language. On January 17, 1850, he wrote to him: "I cannot see that you are... doing very much, and in fact you are still only beginning! I search in vain in your letters to discover what work you are doing. Until now you have said nothing to me of any conversion, and to speak frankly, I only agreed to send missionaries to Ceylon in the hope of seeing them used for the conversion of souls."

It seems that from this time on Fr. Semeria tried to give more news on the nature of the work and the results obtained, even though the Superior General still accused him of being too vague: "Let us have no more 'perhaps' and 'a little'," he wrote to him one day. Finally, in April 1850, Fr. Semeria gave some details: "We are obliged to be resolved almost to be martyrs to patience. The good that will be done here will not be apparent for a long while; but to wish to treat the Indians as if they were Europeans would be to run the risk of ruining everything... Nonetheless, good can and will be done. Jaffna gives proof of this. When the priests from Genoa were ministering there, the most fervent Christians hardly went to confession at Easter, and those fervent ones were rare; nowadays in

our church we have about thirty communions a day. In the past, there was not even reservation of the Blessed Sacrament; now, there are several people who visit the Sacrament every day... It used to be impossible to get the children together for catechism; for two years now, I am succeeding, and some great personages come to these meetings of their own free will. I hope that both these groups will continue to grow. In a short time, I have baptised between sixty and seventy adults..." Three years later he wrote: "Sometimes I think it is easier to convert an idolatrous people, who often are suddenly touched by the unknown truths that one proclaims to them, than to revive half-christians who have abused the lights of grace. However, if we cannot claim to have done all the good that we desired, the change that has taken place in the ideas and conduct of many of our Christians is, I dare to say, truly marvellous. Anybody who knew the town of Jaffna five or six years ago would certainly have good reason to praise the Lord, if he considered the great difference there is between the Christians of those days and those of today..."

In the same year, still more reassuring news came from the Fathers in Colombo, who were achieving amazing results: Bishop de Mazenod proudly made them known to Cardinal Fransoni on March 1, 1853: "It seems that the Lord is helping them in a very special way. I am certain that they have been granted a share in the miracle of Pentecost; how otherwise could one explain the fact that they have managed so quickly to learn those difficult languages well enough to instruct and hear the confessions of the inhabitants? The most recent arrivals in the Vicariate of Colombo have perhaps done too much in the eyes of the Goanese, who are doing nothing. Still, one man alone has converted to our holy faith 111 Protestants and another 82 Buddhists. I could say a great deal to you about the opposition they have had to face from the Goanese, who set against them the old Bishop, Bishop Antonio (Musulce). Their great sin is to have troubled too much about the poor abandoned young people and to have brought a great number of young people, aged from twelve to fifteen or twenty years or more, to make their first Communion. This was not the practice of the Goanese who allowed people to die without having them make their first Communion. Our missionaries are certain that these young people are very ready to receive instruction; the problem is to work for them whatever sacrifices may be required. On this matter they have told me stories fit to make one cry with devotion and tenderness..."

The nomination of Fr. Semeria as Coadjutor of Jaffna in 1856, and then as Vicar Apostolic in 1857, finally allowed him to put into practice the plans he had formed ten years earlier. He set up a team of missionaries, often leading them himself, and preached missions, according to the traditional methods of the Congregation, in the island of Kayts, troubled by schism, at Valigamme, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Jaffna, etc. These missions proved as fruitful as those in Europe or Canada. He also occupied himself with another important element in his plans: the schools and even a seminary with the aim of forming catechists and priests. Bishop de Mazenod, who tolerated the direction of schools in mission countries, had considerable difficulty in finding brothers, for whom he was asked insistently, but he encouraged the Bishop, and above all Fr. Bonjean, the future Vicar Apostolic and Archbishop of Colombo, who became the great apostle of the catholic schools in the island.

Problems regarding missionaries, their health, their religious and apostolic life, retreated into the background. The Oblate group had gradually grown to a remarkable size, at least when compared with the very small number of other apostolic workers in the island. In fifteen years, thirty-three Oblates left France or England for Ceylon. Two more entered the Congregation on the spot: Fr. Bonjean and Fr. Poorey, the first Ceylonese Oblate.

The Founder often urges his sons to avoid working too hard and to take a little care of themselves, since five of them died within fifteen years, and two more returned to France because of illness. Anxieties regarding their spiritual life appear rarely and with regard to few missionaries. The Founder trusts entirely the balance and the virtue of Fr. Semeria, more severe and meticulous than Frs. Honorat and Guigues in Canada, more flexible and broad-minded than Bishop Allard in Natal. At the time of his death, Bishop de Mazenod himself was amazed by the virtues of his sons. The details that Fr. Semeria gives him, almost as ordinary things, on the occasion of the death of Fr. Leydier, show that the Fathers and Brothers lived in a quite extraordinary state of fervour. The Founder transcribes them on September 19, 1851, in a letter to the Work for the Propagation of the Faith: "In the papers of Fr. Leydier (who died, as I have informed you, in the service of the cholera victims for whom he cared with heroic zeal) resolutions have been found which give strong proof of the sanctity of this good missionary. On the eve of the Assumption last year, when he

ended his prayer, he wrote the following resolutions: absolute distrust of himself, attentive vigilance against the devil, complete confidence in God and in the protection of the Blessed Virgin. To avoid wasting time. To eat little, and work continually. Fidelity to his pious exercises. No truce. If he failed in his resolutions, he imposed on himself as penance: 1. To eat on my knees my dry rice (that is, plain boiled rice with no seasoning), 2. the discipline, 3. sleep on the floor. Then he wrote in his own blood the last words: 'as a sign of fidelity, signed with my own blood, Leydier P., O.M.I.'"

This news could not but give joy to the old bishop who, thirty years earlier, had written in the preface to the Rule: the Oblates "must renew themselves ceaselessly in the spirit of their vocation, live in a habitual state of self-denial and in a constant will of arriving at perfection, working without relaxing at becoming humble, gentle, obedient, lovers of poverty, penitent, mortified, detached from the world and their families, full of zeal, ready to sacrifice all their goods, their talents, their rest, their bodies and their lives for the love of Jesus Christ, the service of the Church and the sanctification of their neighbour..."

These last letters contain a note of joy and hope. The Oblates were working with success, in full liberty, in the Vicariate of Jaffna. In September 1860, it was suddenly learnt that the Vicar Apostolic of Colombo had died during a journey to Rome. "I have been very severe towards that poor Bishop Bravi," wrote the Founder to Bishop Semeria on September 17. "I was speaking to his superior, and I had no scruple in telling him how, from his actions, he seemed to me." This death left Colombo without a bishop. Already, in 1847, Bishop de Mazenod had written: "I have therefore accepted this new mission... and I predict that one day this large island will be given over to our Congregation and that our Congregation will make the whole island holy." For a long time he had been making known his long-term plans to the Prefect of Propaganda, who shared his point of view. Had not the time come for this dream to become reality? He died without tasting the joy of learning that his desires were granted. After a vacancy of two years, Colombo was given to a Silvestrine, Sillani. The vicariate would not be given to the Oblates until 1883.

* * *

The letters relating to Africa are few in number. There were however, two fields of apostolic activity: Algeria in the north and Natal in the south, but the number of missionaries remained very restricted and apostolic activity very limited.

The Oblates worked in Algeria for 17 months, from the end of February 1849 until the end of July 1850. Eight of them were sent, for periods of varying duration, to Blida or Philippeville, under the direction first of Fr. Viala, and then of Fr. Martin. We have only 15 letters of the Founder to Algeria and, what is more, they are only brief extracts from Yenveux. However, two themes emerge clearly: the Oblates must be devoted servants of the bishops, and the aim of their mission in North Africa is the evangelisation of the Moslems. It was precisely because of a misunderstanding with the Bishop, Bishop Pavy, and the impossibility of immediately evangelising the Moslems that Bishop de Mazenod recalled his sons to send them to South Africa.

An unexpected happening hastened their return: the scandalous conduct of Fr. Bellanger, who compromised the honour of the Congregation and squandered its goods by unheard-of extravagance and prodigality.

* * *

In the Spring of 1850, Bishop Barnabò asked Bishop de Mazenod whether he would be able to send Oblates to South Africa. This mission offered two advantages: the Vicar Apostolic would be an Oblate, and the missionaries would be among pagans. The decision of the Founder was easy and swift. On April 1, he wrote to Rome to accept the Natal mission and to nominate a superior, Fr. Charles Bellon. The missionaries would soon be found among the Fathers in Algeria.

Fr. Bellon's broken health did not allow him to accept an appointment which would clearly be difficult. Bishop de Mazenod then fixed his choice on the novice-master of the Canadian Province, Fr. Allard. He, surprised by the choice, sought good reasons for refusing, supported by the Fathers in Canada who judged him unsuitable for this position, especially because of his severity, which had dried up the supply of entrants to the novitiate. The Superior General, doubtless in order not to repeat the experience he had had with regard to Canada, which seemed to him regrettable, preferred

the certainty offered by an exemplary religious life to the advantages of talent and apostolic dynamism. He issued formal orders to Fr. Allard, who came to be consecrated in Marseilles on July 13, 1851, and left in February 1852 with 4 missionaries.

During the first ten years of their activity in Natal the Oblates worked in Durban, Pietermaritzburg and three mission-posts among the Zulus. But their mission to the black people was a failure. There was not a single baptism. Fr. Gérard wrote to the Founder on June 10, 1860: "Pardon... my simplicity. If a child had nothing more than a flower, it would be a pleasure for him to offer it to his father. Well, a tiny flower has appeared in this rocky field, covered in brambles and thorns, which we are tilling... A few weeks ago, we brought to rebirth in the waters of baptism a tiny baby, aged 9 months, who was ill..."

This lack of success explains why Bishop de Mazenod sent few missionaries. At the time of his death there were only 5 missionary Fathers and 5 Brothers.³

We have found 18 letters to Bishop Allard and the Oblates of Natal, happily preserved almost entire. Writing to Bishop Allard, the Founder insists that he show himself more understanding towards the missionaries, three of whom left in the first few years, and more bold in taking risks for evangelising the Zulus. To the missionaries, he recalls the greatness of their vocation, and preaches patience, faithfulness, and courage in trials. It was in fact because of following one of these last exhortations, which was truly prophetic, that this mission was eventually to bear, after the death of the Founder, abundant fruit. On September 4, 1860, he wrote to Fr. Gérard: "The moment will come when the merciful grace of God will cause a sort of explosion, and your Kaffir church will be formed. For this reason, perhaps you should penetrate a little further among these savage tribes." In the month of October 1861, Bishop Allard and Fr. Gérard crossed the Drakensberg Range and penetrated into Basutoland, where they found a people who readily welcomed the proclamation of the Gospel.

Yvon Beaudoin, O.M.I.

³ In a report to the Work for the Propagation of the Faith on March 27, 1860, Fr. Fabre writes that there are 5 Fathers and 5 Brothers in South Africa. In all the sources that have been consulted, only four names of brothers are found: Bro. Compin, who left in 1852, Bros. Bernard, Manuel and Terpend.

CEYLON

1847

1. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria at Vico].¹

Act of appointment as superior of the Ceylon mission.

Charles Joseph Eugène de Mazenod
by divine mercy and favour of the Apostolic See
Bishop of Marseilles,

Commander
of the Holy Religious and Military Order
of Saints Maurice and Lazarus,

Superior General
of the Congregation of Oblates of the Most Holy
and Immaculate Virgin Mary,

to our beloved Brother in Christ Etienne Semeria
Priest of the same Congregation,

Health and Benediction in the Lord.

¹ Latin text, translated by Fr. J. Rousseau. Extract from the Journal of Fr. Semeria, copy by J. Batayron, pp. 6-7, Rome, O.M.I. General Archive.

The Founder had taken care to warn the Bishop of Ajaccio, Bishop Casanelli d'Istria, on October 7: "You know the sacrifice the Lord of the Harvest is imposing on us in calling us to work in an island where there are 1,500,000 Gentiles awaiting the light of the Gospel which the Vicar of Jesus Christ has commanded us to cause to shine before their eyes, and where there are also 150,000 Christians, almost lost, calling for the aid of our ministry. It is for many reasons an infinitely delicate mission, and I had to have a proven man like Fr. Semeria to entrust him with it in full peace of mind. This is the sacrifice that God has asked of us, and I had to make it joyfully in firm confidence of the immense good that must come of it; the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda calls the help that it has asked for from us *opportunissimo et necessario*. I have reason to hope that Fr. Rollieri, who will be replacing him at Vico, will do good there..." (Ms. Yenveux I, Supplement p. 78).

Monsignor Bettachini, Bishop of Toron *in partibus infidelium* and Coadjutor of the Vicar Apostolic in the island of Ceylon, having very insistently asked us to give him some of our Missionaries as companions in his travels and sharers of his work, We, to whom is entrusted the government of the entire Congregation, considering less our lack of subjects than the divine pleasure, the members of our Congregation seeming to be called to work in that part of the vineyard of the Father of the Family, have decided to send some evangelical laborers to work there. They are to employ themselves diligently, under the jurisdiction of the Most Reverend Coadjutor, for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls, to foster the devotion of the Catholics, to restore the faith among the heretics, and above all to rescue the unhappy pagans from darkness and the shadow of death.

Granted the great distance that will separate us and the great difficulties that could result from it, we wish to choose from among the members of our Congregation and to appoint with extraordinary faculties as head of this great undertaking and guide of this excellent mission, the said Etienne Semeria, a man matured by prudence and many years as an Oblate, notable for his zeal and piety, and unshakeable in his attachment to Us and the Family.

It is for these reasons, Reverend Father, that we choose you and by these presents name you Superior of this Mission, granting you full jurisdiction and authority over all the missions that will be put in the care of our Congregation in the island of Ceylon, this jurisdiction and authority to be revocable at our pleasure.

1. You will therefore enjoy, in the first place, all the faculties granted by our Rules and Constitutions to local superiors.

2. Further, you will have the right to establish new missions and residences and, according to your own judgement, to accept or refuse in matters regarding their location or the conditions of their establishment.

3. At the same time we grant you the special power to grant in our name Letters Dimissorial in favour of the missionaries of our Congregation to enable them to receive any ecclesiastical Order.

4. In a word, we wish you to have the power in virtue of which the Superior General rules and governs the entire Congregation; however, this power is not to extend beyond the boundaries of the

above-mentioned island, and, furthermore, the following cases are reserved: 1. the convocation of a General Chapter; 2. the expulsion of any Oblate from the Congregation; 3. the admission of novices to perpetual vows of oblation; this can, however, be done before the consent of the Superior General is known; but it will not be considered valid from the point of view of the Congregation until the approval of the Superior General is known.²

Of aid to you in the capacity of Councillors, but only with a consultative voice, will be those members of the Congregation to whom it will be possible for you to have recourse.

Of affairs transacted and of all things concerning the state of the Congregation, you will take care to render us an account each half-year and even more frequently if it is possible.

Now go forward, beloved Son, to the work that is entrusted to you together with those whom we have chosen to be your companions in those distant parts of Asia, for the greater glory of God, which we must further there and everywhere.

May the Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary, our loving Mother, keep you always under her protection. May the angels of God assist you. And as for Us, beloved son in Christ, we will not cease to implore for you an abundant rain of divine grace from heaven.

Given at Marseilles... October 21, 1847.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles,
Superior General.

² The text copied by Fr. Batayron is incomplete. We add the missing words from a similar decree in the letter of the Founder to Fr. Richard in Oregon, January 22, 1847.

1848

2. [To Fr. Etienne Semeria in Ceylon].¹

Delight at receiving the first letter from Ceylon. Prudence must be exercised with Abbé Reinaud and the other missionaries. He must not hide the fact that he belongs to the Congregation of Oblates. The Fathers must live in community, according to the Rule, united in charity.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, January 25, 1848.

I have received your two letters, my dear Fr. Semeria, I would not say merely with great pleasure, but with a transport of joy. I was counting the days and the hours, and continually asking whether the boat had yet arrived, when at last your delightful letter was brought to me. Thank you, my dear son, first for having given me your news and that of your dear travelling-companions, and also for having gone into all the details of which your letter informs me. This is how things should always be done. When a person writes from so far away and there are so many things to say, how can he ever leave a line of his paper blank? I would love to blacken all my writing-paper in the same

¹ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria. In a letter to Fr. Léonard, dated January 21, Bishop de Mazenod gives some news taken from the letter of Fr. Semeria: "I have had letters from Ceylon. Our Fathers have all arrived there in good health, after a journey of thirty-seven days. It took them only eighteen days to travel from Suez to the blessed isle that was awaiting them. Nothing can be compared with the reception that was given to Mgr the Vicar Apostolic who was with them. They speak very well of him, and the Bishop is no less content with them. What a beautiful mission! My heart swells as I think of it. Just think — there are twelve or fifteen hundred thousand unbelievers to be evangelised, one hundred and fifty thousand catholics to instruct, and a great number of protestants to bring to the faith. It will not be long, then, before we will have to reinforce our colony there. In your travels you could say a few words about this mission which holds such great hopes" (Ms. Yenveux I, supplement p. 79).

way, but I am not in so advantageous a position. Apart from my habitual distractions which you know well enough, I have little time in which to write to you if I am to take advantage of the boat's return journey. No matter, I will do as much as I can, and for that reason I have firmly locked my door, although that has not stopped people from bursting in on me several times already. Fr. Aubert has begun already: he was to write to you in suitable terms yesterday, and in this necessity his reply can serve as a ruling for you, but I have reserved to myself the satisfaction of writing to you direct and in person.

Let us not speak of circumstances, of the fine reception you were given, nor of the contents of your first letter. I want to come to the point, being in fear of distraction before I have told you my thoughts.

You will have been able to judge like us, from everything that has happened between you and R[einaud], that we were right in thinking that he was more concerned for himself than for us in the fine suggestions he made to us.² It is clear that that poor child, who left here in a mad desire to become a bishop, would gladly have made use of us as a step-ladder to reach his goal. After he had been disappointed of his hopes in Baghdad, Ceylon offered him a good opportunity, had matters been arranged as he suggested, and his chief reason for being furious with Bishop Bettachini is that he has seen himself thwarted by the new plan that has been agreed on. Notice too the indifference with which he has greeted your arrival, although from his letters he seemed to set so much store by our becoming involved in that mission. Let this lead you always to observe a just and prudent reserve. I would be glad if you would observe such prudence to the extent of never giving yourself to the other missionaries whom you have found and who have given you a warm welcome. Be polite to them, even friendly, but in important matters never share any confidences with them about anything. You know how easy it is to give a wrong interpretation even to the best intentions. I know for sure that you and your companions went to Ceylon from no motive other than obedience and a desire to work in conformity with your vocation for the salvation of souls, but the same is by no means proven in the case of free priests who may have looked at their mission from another point of view. This being the case, those priests may have

² The Abbé Reinaud, an ex-Oblate, was working in the province of Kandy and desired that the Oblates should come into that area. As agreed, they followed Bishop Bettachini, appointed Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna in 1849. The Abbé Reinaud advised Fr. Semeria not to present himself as a religious and not to carry the cross.

been thoroughly upset by your arrival, although they have welcomed you, especially if they have any suspicion that you might come to inspire so much confidence that you will overtake them in any ambitions that may have arisen in them when they saw a simple priest like themselves become Vicar Apostolic. It is reasonable to suppose that they are not entirely without hope of succeeding him should a change come about, and that they are taking steps in consequence. I am speaking to you humanly. Perhaps this is not the case, but my experience of men obliges me to warn you in advance of any surprise and to illuminate your natural goodness for fear that it might allow itself to be deceived by appearances into believing men to be better than they are. I greatly love the simplicity of the dove, but I never like it to be separated from the prudence of the serpent. You have done very well in not following to the letter the advice that Reinaud gave you concerning your holy profession. You must not boast of it or parade it without reason, but you must never hide it. Moreover, that would be like trying to hide behind your own finger. What you must do is to insist with the Vicar Apostolic that he never separate you. You must not give way to contrary arguments that may be put to you. You must make it known that this would be in a way to do violence to your Institute, that you are absolutely obliged to walk about in pairs, and that therefore it is more simple that you should be placed together. It is essential that you should continue to demand that you be left in pairs. If there is only enough for one you must share what there is, but I can never agree that a subject be alone without at least one companion. The Jesuits have established this rule even in their missions in Maduré. Above all we must take the precautions necessary for the safety of our own men, and this will only make more certain the conversion of others. I know that if you were in charge of the Jaffna mission we would achieve that aim, however difficult it might seem to you; the good Bishop Bettachini³ must be made aware of the problem, and he will realise its importance. He will be better able to take advantage of your theological and liturgical expertise if he is living in the same area as you. Tell him that I will not refuse to send you more subjects when I am asked for them provided they are placed in pairs; but it will always be immensely important that you establish a principal house

³ Ms. Bettachini: the Founder writes the name sometimes with one 'C', sometimes with two.

in one of the main towns. You must set your mind firmly on this, using if necessary funds that we will try to obtain from the Propagation of the Faith. I have asked Fr. Aubert to tell you how to proceed in this matter, since it is essential that some allowance be made to the Fathers of our Congregation independent of what may be granted to the Vicar Apostolic. You have not told me how you managed for the expenses of the journey. I had some news of you in the desert. A traveller who passed through here on the diligence saw you on your donkeys and told me that you were near Suez when he met you. We laughed a good deal about your mode of travel, but he assured us that it was excellent. Not being able to write to you individually, I address myself to all of you, my dear sons⁴, who have been called by God to such a wonderful mission. Do honour to your ministry by practising all the religious virtues. Be faithful in observance of your holy Rules, live in the most perfect union, and conduct yourselves always in accord with obedience. Should any cloud appear, and I pray God to preserve you from that, be careful never to complain to any stranger, for you will regret it later on and you will soon realise that you have done grave damage to the family, an irremediable evil that will weigh on your conscience throughout your life. Moreover, instead of the consolation that you were looking for, be sure that you will have nothing but bitterness and disappointment. Love one another, show due deference to one another and you will avoid this unhappiness, God will bless all your undertakings, and you will be rewarded even in this life as you await your coronation in heaven. Even though there are few of you as yet, while you are together do all your exercises in common as if you were a large community. Who can say how much good will be done by the good example that you will be giving? Do not allow yourselves to be weakened by the heat of the climate. God must be served everywhere with fervour. If I could believe that you would degenerate in that land which you are to soak with the sweat of your brows to recall some to their duties, and to bring the light to others who do not know the true God, I would declare you unworthy of your great vocation and I would regret having chosen you in preference to so many others for your wonderful mission of making Jesus Christ known and extending his kingdom as you walk in the footsteps of the Apostles. But no, you will never cause me

⁴ The first group of missionaries consisted of Frs. Étienne Semeria, Joseph-Alexandre Ciamin and Louis-Marie Keating and Bro. Gaspard de Steffanis.

that pain. On the contrary, I will have only to congratulate myself on having entrusted to you the glory of God and the honour of our dear Congregation. So I bless you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and place you under the motherly protection of Mary Immaculate. Before I end this long letter I wish to say to the Father Superior that I approve for the present what he has done regarding the Friday fast, but I exhort him not to adopt easily the relaxations that have been introduced by laxity.⁵ We must do more and better than others. If you lose the spirit of mortification, I cannot answer for you any longer. Fr. Semeria, beware of your weakness which arises from the excess of goodness in your character. You are not above blame in this respect for your governance of the house at Vico. I am having to reform several abuses which you allowed to be introduced through your excessive leniency. One must know how to resist the demands of lukewarmness which hides itself behind pretexts which one must know how to recognise if one is to overcome them. Even less should one listen to people from outside. So do not loosen the bridle before you have got under way. Try hard at first and yield only to experience. That is what you should have done before you reduced your Friday fasts. Do not dispense from the discipline: it does no harm to the stomach.

3. [To Fr. Etienne Semeria at Jaffna].⁶

Departure of missionaries for Canada. The Revolution of 1848 in France is diminishing the resources of the Work for the Propagation of the Faith, and make it impossible to send more Fathers to Ceylon. Fr. Ciamin is alone in the Mantotte mission. Relations with Bishop Bettachini, the Abbé Reinaud and the Italian priests in Jaffna. Little hope of obtaining Religious Sisters and Brothers of the Christian Schools, but some Oblates are available, in particular Fr. Frédéric Mouchel. Letter of Bishop Bettachini. Illness of Fr. Keating. Hopes of obtaining a Vicariate reserved to the Oblates.

⁵ The final lines of this letter are written in the margins of the four pages.

⁶ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

Marseilles, May 9, 1848.

My dear Fr. Smeria, look how much I have been able to write to you from May 9 to 11, when I take up again, I will not say my pen, which I have never put down since that time, but the letter that was intended for you. During the interval I have written to the whole of North America. On this very day four of our Brothers and a Lay-Brother are to embark for Canada.⁷ They have among them only one priest, a deacon on whom I conferred the diaconate the second day after I had made him subdeacon, and two in minor orders. These last two have not yet begun their theology — Fr. Allard will have the responsibility of teaching it to them at Longueuil; the deacon has only done one year's theology. You will say that we are eating our wheat while it is still green, but it is not true: they will do their studies as well at Longueuil as here, and they will acclimatise themselves to the country as they learn the languages. Also, it was necessary to take advantage of the opportunity of a ship that was leaving Marseilles to go direct to Boston and offered us the advantages of saving five or six francs a head. My dear Father, had God willed that we needed only to spend four or five hundred francs to send you subjects, you would already have had several, but when we must spend 2000 francs for each missionary whom we send to your island, we are obliged to hold back until the Propagation of the Faith decides to provide something. The recent events in France have so depleted their resources that there is reason to fear that they will no longer be able to do anything for the missions, and then what will become of us? I have sent Fr. Tempier to Lyons to try to obtain something, but I have little hope that he will succeed in spite of the pressing letter that I have sent with him. I have received all your letters punctually, and I thank you very much for your promptness in writing to me. If I am not so prompt myself in replying, it must be attributed to two causes, firstly to the disturbances that come to me in my position, which have increased even more of late and oblige me to miss the departure of the boat, and also a little to the fact that I rely on the faithful and incomparable Fr. Aubert who copes with everything with admirable efficiency and presence of mind. I am having another look at your most recent

⁷ Fr. A. Maisonneuve, the scholastics R. Délage, A. E. Cauvin and J. Tissot, and the lay-brother J. Menthe.

letters in the fear of having allowed something to escape of what you have said to me. In your letter of February 7 you told me that you decided you should allow Fr. Ciamin to go and govern the Mantotte mission. It would have been difficult to take any other course, but it is essential that you preserve contact as normal with him, whose superior you still are. You must demand that he write to you at least once a month to give you an account of his administration, and concerning this I would like to know myself what sort of a mission this is, what the missionary has to do there, what the resources are, etc. As regards financial resources, be sure that the missionary renders you an exact account and that he only keeps for himself what, in a spirit of poverty, he must have for his needs: the surplus, if there is any, must be sent to you so that you can begin forming a provincial fund which could help us, if no aid is forthcoming from the Propagation of the Faith, for sending subjects whom I would dearly love to associate with you, but whom I cannot send because I lack the means. I approve very strongly your remaining with the Vicar Apostolic for several reasons. He will become more attached to you, he will appreciate you and you will come to have a perfect understanding of the mission in the whole island, which will help you in drawing up your plans and in communicating them to me when you know where you stand. If the island had to be divided, I would very much like us to have a Vicariate reserved for us alone, which we will be responsible for keeping supplied with subjects, but while we wait we must make ourselves useful and even indispensable to the Bishop who, being good and zealous, will prefer to have you share his concerns rather than anybody else who did not offer him the same guarantees. Make every effort you can, then, to learn as soon as possible the languages it is necessary to know in that country, but at the same time deal carefully with all those Italians so that they do not oppose you, even those who do not like the Bishop, but carefully, in order not so shock him. As for R[einaud], be more and more concerned to know his intentions, do not make yourself his enemy, and see how he comes on. I have always believed firmly that he was working for himself, that everything he did he did in order to become a bishop, and that if that happened he would like nothing more than to have us under his jurisdiction and to use us. It is a pity that you have not been able to talk to Bishop Beni⁸ so that he

⁸ Bishop Louis dei Conti Beni, titular Bishop of Canope in Egypt.

might not allow himself to be influenced too much by biased men *qui quaerunt quae sua sunt*. If everything were not in chaos at Rome I could have thought about doing something there, but at the moment it is impossible. However, I did write to Propaganda to recommend our missionaries personally. If you had a chance to get in touch with them it would do no harm perhaps, even if all you did was speak well of your Vicar Apostolic and to defend him if necessary from attacks made on him by jealous persons and malcontents. I am following your letters item by item. And so now I will reply to you that the plan of Bishop Bettachini of calling the Sisters and the Brothers of the Christian Schools is very good, but impracticable in the manner in which he intends it and especially today with the difficulty of getting anything from the Propagation of the Faith. There is perhaps not a single Brother of the Christian Schools who knows English, and among the Sisters, with the exception of the Dames of the Sacred Heart, I do not think any more are to be found. The other plan would be more practical if the means could be found of paying for the passages. I could send plenty of subjects for you to use for teaching although that is not at all the vocation of those who come to join us; but if they were used for this work only for a time perhaps this would suit them. However, I think it would be a mistake to hope for providing ourselves with subjects from among the inhabitants of the island. How could one hope to form religious from a nature such as theirs? Could you even make secular priests of them? Look at your Goans. As for the schools, it might perhaps be easier to take on that responsibility for the future if we had a house residence and if we were to put some of our brothers there, but the really difficult thing would always be the finances. Do you know who is the first missionary I would send you if I had the money to pay for his passage? Guess: Fr. Mouchel, who is learning English at great speed and has written me letter after letter asking to be given preference for your mission, fearing that he will not be able to endure the cold of North America. I think that, knowing English as he does, he would be a good acquisition for your mission. This Father is very virtuous and his attraction to the missions to unbelievers is very pronounced. No, it is not subjects that we are lacking, it is money.

Bishop Bettachini wrote to me by the same post as you. He paints me a deplorable picture of the ignorance and depravity of the Christians in that country. And whose fault is it, he asks me. Of

pastors *qui pascebant seipsos et quaerebant quae sua sunt*. No catechism, hardly any confessions, and so on. However, he sees from experience that it is possible to instruct these poor folk, to correct them, to reform abuses and their morals. He tells me that one Goan has gone mad, another is dead, and a third has become a schismatic, so that there now remain in the island no more than seventeen of these poor priests, that his voyage to Europe has considerably improved the state of the mission since half the island has been entrusted to him exclusively and he is coadjutor of the rest of the island. He could have added the fact that he brought with him such good and faithful cooperators as yourselves. He asks me for the support of my prayers and assures me of his protection for you. "Sta a V.S. Ill.," he says, 'di mandare un compagno al p. Ciamin.' — Subito, si, ma il denaro dov'è?⁹ It is true that the good prelate, asking me to find for him three Religious Sisters such as you mention adds that the Propagation of the Faith will send me 8000 francs and that he thinks that 6000 francs will be enough for the passages of the Sisters, the remaining 2000 being for the missionary whom he hopes I will send him with the Sisters. We have the missionary already: it is the sisters and the 8000 francs that we lack. I am too busy today, since it is the day the post leaves, to reply to Bishop Bettachini on these various points. Let him know what I have said to you and assure him of my good wishes and my constant goodwill and desire to send him as many missionaries as I can. Finally, I come to your letter of the 7th, the same date as the other and as the Bishop's letter. For a start, be reassured about your alleged incapability. It is not you who have called yourself; God will give you all that you need to bring your ship safely to harbour. Trust in his goodness and his promises, pray to him unceasingly for the lights of his Holy Spirit, and walk without fear in the name of the Lord. I approve of all that you have done. Take great care of Fr. Keating if he has spat blood: you must give him all the dispensations that his delicate constitution make necessary. Fr. Arnoux played the same trick on us when he went to say one of his first Masses at Notre-Dame de la Garde. So Fr. Keating will see that accidents happen everywhere. As for you, do not do anything that is above your strength. Remember that you have a delicate constitution, and have no scruples about allowing yourself all the

⁹ "It is for you to send a companion for Fr. Ciamin." — Yes, at once, but where is the money?

comforts necessary for the accomplishment of your mission. I am looking forward to your explaining to me a little more the state of the mission throughout the island before I give you the advice that you ask me for. There is a little confusion in what you say to me about it, as you recognize yourself. However, I have explained myself clearly on one point at the beginning of this letter by telling you of my desire that a Vicariate could be formed which would be entrusted to our men. It seems to me that you believe that Bishop Bettachini, if he feared that he himself might not succeed, might not be far from suggesting another coadjutor of Colombo. I am afraid that I find it hard to believe, but if it were so it would be annoying if someone outside the Congregation were preferred. You go on to speak to me of Negombo, which has thrown me into confusion. Come back to this subject, and give yourself time to reflect on it in order to explain things to me well and to give me your fully detailed advice. I cannot continue — people are coming at every moment to call me. I would like to write to our two Fathers, but I must put that off until next month. I embrace you in haste and bless you all with all my heart.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. Please pray for a novice who has just died at Nancy. Have you been told of the death of Brother Arvel, Oblate?¹⁰

4. [To Fr. Etienne Semeria, at Jaffna].¹¹

The Revolution in France and Rome is hindering the sending of missionaries. Insubordination of Fr. Keating. Courage of missionaries in the Far North. The Congregation has plenty of students, but is still without money.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, August 17, 1848.

My dear Fr. Semeria, I was waiting for a reply from the Propagation of the Faith to give you some definite news, and this reply has been a very long time in coming; this delay must be

¹⁰ Joseph Ganivet and Antoine Arvel.

¹¹ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

attributed to causes of which you are well aware, events which have followed swiftly one on another in such a way as to turn everything upside-down, and to leave us in a state of serious disquiet as regards the future. You understand that nonetheless I had to know something positive in order to satisfy both the Vicar Apostolic and yourself. Your questions assumed that the Propagation of the Faith had put into my hands the sums that had been allotted to the Bishop, but, my dear friend, there has been no question of that so far, no news of this kind, and no money. While this is the case, how can I find you Brothers and Sisters, and how can I even send you missionaries? The latter are all ready, and the day on which there is money to pay for their journey they will set sail. Fr. Mouchel, who is very anxious to be one of the band has been working hard at his English and he will astonish you by the progress he has made in that language. The same is true of the others, for only English is spoken in the recreations of our Oblates. I would not refuse to give you some of them for the minor seminary planned by the Bishop, but we need money to send all these people off on a journey. You know that it costs 2000 francs a head. And so I am sad to see that for this year you will have to go without the considerable reinforcements that I would have liked to give you, for in the absence of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, none of whom know English, I think I could have spared some of our own Brothers to join the Fathers and the Oblates who were destined for your mission.

Please make this news known to the Vicar Apostolic, to whom I intend to write by the same post. He too has the idea that the Propagation of the Faith has sent me the money that it had promised him. The truth is that I have not received a sou for his needs.

You assume continually, my dear friend, that I have to go to Rome and you think that I will be able to discuss the business of your mission there. You are wrong: I have no journey to make to Rome and in the present circumstances it would be worse than foolish.¹² Furthermore, it is impossible. Even when I could have made the journey, what you said to me was not sufficiently clearly expressed, and so it would not have been possible for me to give my support to any plan. You must realise that we are not on the spot,

¹² An allusion to the Roman revolution and the flight of the Pope to Gaeta at the end of July.

and that to be understood you need to write to us with great precision, giving a project, a settled plan, supported with good arguments. Realise that the Abbé Reinaud will not have failed to mention it in the report he had to send to Propaganda in Rome, for which Bishop Beni, the bishop of whom you have spoken to me, will probably have made himself responsible. You need to act with great prudence among all the disagreements that you mention to me. *Pensa prima che parli*.¹³ This is very suitable occasion for recalling this proverb. I think that the obligation in which you have found yourself of dealing with men will have given you experience, and that in your mind you will have put each one in his place in order to know how you should deal with each of them. I tremble to think of you travelling in Maduré and to Pondichery. Are these not areas where cholera is rife? I would much rather people did not have to travel so far to buy books. As for what is happening within your community, I was greatly pained to hear of the insubordinate wishes of Fr. Keating: I would never have imagined that that young Father, so meek in appearance, could have given you such trouble. Certainly he is not like his fellow-countrymen in this respect, for they are all models of regularity and obedience. What can I say of our men in Oregon and on the shores of the Red River? For food they have a little bacon, they have no bed but the bare ground, and with that they are content and happy as men who are doing the will of God. Fr. Ricard who was dying when he left has regained his health and the last time he wrote to me he said that he had not even had a day's cold although he was sleeping at night under the stars and often lying in mud. Those who are moving towards Hudson's Bay, with cold weather registering 30 degrees, dragged by dogs across the ice, forced to make a hole in the snow in order to pass the night with the snow as their bed, delight one with the story of their adventures. May it be so with you, who have a mission that is less hard than that of your Brothers, in spite of the heat which exhausts you. Live in perfect unity, and may the bonds of charity and obedience soften the hardships that are inseparable from your difficult ministry. May the Vicar Apostolic urge the Council of the Propagation of the Faith to make an effort in order to give him the money to pay for the passages of some missionaries, and I will soon send you reinforcements which will bring joy to your hearts and will

¹³ "Think before you speak".

consolidate the good that you are intending to do. It is not the missionaries that I am lacking, but the money to pay for their travel, and also the money you need to feed them. We have more than forty Oblates, and even more novices, but we have nothing *per andare avanti*¹⁴, and we are so in debt that we have no more securities to offer in order to be able to take out new loans. Also, Fr. Tempier is totally discouraged, repeating from morning till night that we have nothing left, that we must send the novices away, and then when the time comes to do the deed I lack the courage even more than he does. We have plenty of stones for building great houses, but no revenue, and it is in this extremity that Propaganda lets us down, for they do not give us any more than they give you. You see, there is much to be sad about, but we must not lose confidence. God knows that all we want is his greater glory and the salvation of the souls whom he has redeemed.

I bless you all and embrace you lovingly,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

5. [To Fr. Etienne Semeria, at Jaffna].¹⁵

Fr. Strickland, S.J., and some collaborators of Bishop Bettachini are trying to eliminate the Oblates from Jaffna. This Vicariate is not to be left without express instructions from Marseilles. It is impossible to send missionaries since the Vicar Apostolic will not give the money that he has received for this purpose from the Council of the Propagation of the Faith. Death of Fr. André. There are forty-four Oblate students in the major seminary at Marseilles. News from Oregon and Corsica. Ordination of Piedmontese Jesuits at Marseilles. Ordination of Bishop Guigues.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, November 3, 1848.

My dear Fr. Semeria, I do not know how to express to you the pain that I felt on reading your letter dated September 8. Had it not

¹⁴ "with which to go forward".

¹⁵ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

been you who told me, I would not have thought possible the behaviour of the English Jesuit whose name you forgot to give me so horrible it is!¹⁶ But you must realize, my dear friend, that he is not the only one who is to blame, and I am very much afraid that your simplicity and good faith may have fallen victim to a plot more finely woven than that of the imprudent envoy. What was the significance of the journey you were kind enough to make to ask for help? You have been so good as to pull the chestnuts out of the fire. What will you say when you learn that Bishop Bettachini, using no doubt a secretary other than yourself, had written to the Fr. Provincial here to ask him for some Fathers from the Society, and that it is in response to his request that he has decided to send reinforcements to Bishop Canoz¹⁷ so that he can without difficulty detach some religious of his order to send them to your Vicar Apostolic, who had asked for them with such insistence? This is what the Father Rector has told me today, as a thing quite certain. The only thing that gave me great surprise was that he added that the Fr. Provincial was unaware that our Fathers were in Ceylon. This mistake is hard to understand, and I would rather blame his memory, with which I would rather find fault than with his good faith. It remains to be explained to me how the Fr. Rector of Marseilles knew that I had grounds for complaint against his confrères in Ceylon. However that may be, it was too serious a matter, both at root and in all the details, for me not to write about it to the Father General, whom I know personally very well. You can understand that I did not think myself bound to keep secret something that was known already by the entire Jesuit Province in Southern France. I complained forcefully of the behaviour, so

¹⁶ Bishop Bettachini wished to entrust to the Jesuits a college at Jaffna, even though Bishop de Mazenod was willing to take responsibility for it. Suddenly, Fr. Semeria learnt that the English Jesuit Strickland had taken the opportunity of a voyage to the Indies to hatch an intrigue against the Oblates with the Benedictine Garcia, an enemy of the Oblates. Both urged Bishop Bettachini to ask the General of the Jesuits for Italian subjects who had been expelled from Italy and were without work. Since the arrival of the new Oblates promised by Bishop de Mazenod was thus rendered superfluous, they too put pressure on the Vicar Apostolic to countermand their departure. Moreover, Strickland intended to found a college at Jaffna, a project already known to Fr. Semeria; but in order to get rid of Fr. Semeria, who wanted to start a minor seminary, the Jesuit urged Bishop Bettachini to send the superior of the Oblates to a mission in the centre of the island. Cf. J. Leflon, *Mgr de Mazenod*, English Translation vol. IV, pp. 177 ff.

¹⁷ Bishop Alexis Canoz, S.J., Vicar Apostolic of Maduré.

lacking in delicacy, of the English Jesuit, and I was quite annoyed at not being able to give his name. I then laid down the principles of conduct that have been followed since Saint Paul, who was the first not to wish to build on foundations laid by others. *Sic autem praedicavi Evangelium hoc; non ubi nominatus est Christus, ne super alienum fundamentum aedificarem*, and even today the Church takes care to divide the countries to be evangelised among the various orders that are charged with extending the kingdom of Jesus Christ. But it seems that the Jesuits have the privilege not only of introducing themselves where others are already established, but of chasing them away in order to take their place. But no! That is certainly not the intention of their Father General who is a religious filled with the Spirit of God and whose advice was certainly not taken in this affair, which is so disedifying.¹⁸

As for the rest, I am not in agreement with you: far from thinking, as you do, that they will not try to play again the trick that has already been discovered, I think on the contrary that they will return to attack and that they will succeed. It is so easy to send away from Maduré or the coast Fathers who were sent for no other reason than to go there, since the journey is not so long nor so difficult. Until now they have shown respect for that island, but since it was you yourself who called them, they have a good reason to offer. And so, see how often one false step brings regrettable consequences! I would not wish to cast doubt on the sincerity of a certain person, but when I think over what the Father Rector of the Jesuits said to me here, there comes into my mind without my wishing it what M. Reinaud wrote among his complaints about him. May this warn you to watch where you tread, but above all, whatever happens, do not think of leaving that part of the world without having received from me an express order to do so.

You keep asking me to send you missionaries; but you would be even more ready to agree that, for as long as you do not find me the money for the voyage it will be quite impossible to send even one. Is it not pleasant that the Vicar Apostolic, by an unheard-of deception, has caused to come to himself all the funds that the

¹⁸ Fr. Roothaan replied on November 7 to the letter of October 28. Bishop de Mazenod copied an extract from this reply in his letter of November 22 to Fr. Semeria.

Propagation of the Faith should have divided between the Congregation and himself, that he is keeping all that money, and that still he does not cease asking me to send him missionaries? What does he want me to do with the 300 francs that remain from the money for his ticket? Had he not intercepted the sum that was meant for us, it would already have been used for the passage of our Fathers who were intended for your mission. May it not be that he has used this money to pay the travel expenses of the Jesuits whom he has asked for from the Provincial at Lyons? Once one knows the inside story, any conjecture is allowable. However that may be, while I do realize the usefulness, the advantages, the necessity even, of sending you reinforcements, as long as the Vicar Apostolic does not send the money, since it is he who has got hold of it, our missionaries will not be able to set off. It is even more disagreeable because they are being held up, and if this state of affairs continues I will not be able to help using them for other work. Secondly, you urge me to go to Rome as if it were easy for a Bishop to leave his diocese, especially in the present circumstances. I do not see many Bishops passing through on the journey to set me an example. I cannot count one since our revolution, while before there was a veritable procession. No my dear friend, a journey like that is not so easily made as you think, and had I been able to make it, Propaganda would never have given a sou towards the expenses of a missionary from France. I am far from advising you to seem to consult Reinaud, but it would be politic to avoid a rupture with him. He knows the country well already, especially the people with whom you have to deal. If one draws a little close to him, he will let you into the secret of their intrigues. It is hard to talk like this, but how is one to ignore the plain truth?

I have been disturbed so often since I took up my pen to write to you that I was really afraid that I might miss the post which leaves tomorrow. I do not have Fr. Aubert with me any more, for he has gone to England to organise our new province there, and so do not be surprised that you do not receive any letters from him by this post. Perhaps he will write to you from England, where he will be staying until after Easter. He would not in any case have said anything to you other than what I have said.

Have I told you that we have lost our good Fr. André, who died a holy death in terrible suffering? As always, when our men go to heaven they send us replacements. This year we shall have 44

Oblate theologians in my major seminary and 12 philosophers at l'Osier; most of these good lads desire nothing other than to work in the missions to unbelievers, and so you can see that it is not subjects that we lack, but, as I shall go on repeating for all eternity, the money to send them to their destination. I have had letters from Oregon, and Fr. Ricard and his companions are doing wonderfully there, the young Fathers Pandosy and Chirouse have been made subdeacon, deacon and priest in eight days in the very fort of Walla-Walla; and that is what I never cease to do here, where I am ordaining all the Jesuits of Piedmont and of Genoa, who would be set marching¹⁹ religious though they are, if they were not in orders, but the Bishops of those areas cannot ordain them without compromising themselves: and so I think I have held fifteen ordinations to rescue these poor religious from embarrassment. I said as a joke that these days I hold ordinations instead of my morning prayers. That is how I treat these Jesuits, and you can say so to that Englishman, who is well aware of it, but he is not the only one who is to blame. I do not want to speak to you of Corsica. I have taken Fr. Roller away from there: he did not see eye to eye with the Bishop. That house at Vico is too much of a burden to us, and so I am leaving there only two missionaries, and waiting for a time later on to remove them, if we can establish ourselves elsewhere, in a house which will be really ours, and where we can be the sole masters. This plan has been formed after reflection and by common agreement, but the Bishop does not know our hidden purposes, so do not say anything about it to anybody whatsoever.

If you read the English papers you will see that Fr. Guigues was consecrated on July 30; since then an establishment has been made at Pittsburgh in the United States. This is the germ or foundation of a new province.

Goodbye, my dear Fr. Semeria; you know the pleasure your letters give me, and they are never too long, so do not deny me them. I embrace you with all my heart as well as our other Fathers.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

¹⁹ That is, obliged to do military service.

I had written to Bishop Bettachini,²⁰ but my letter was written in a bad mood, and reflected the impression of so much that had gone wrong that I have not sent it. I would very much have liked to write a word to Fr. Keating, but I simply haven't the time. I urge him to live always worthily of his beautiful vocation. If he does not want to forget his French, let him write to me in that language.

6. To the Revd. Fr. Semeria, Oblate of Mary Immaculate, Missionary Apostolic, c/o Mgr Bettachini, Bishop of Toron, Vicar Apostolic in Ceylon.²¹

At the request of Bishop Bettachini, the aid of the Work for the Propagation of the Faith has been given entirely to the Vicar Apostolic and not to the Oblates, who are unable to send missionaries for lack of money. Frs. Ciamin and Keating are asked to write from time to time.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, November 8, 1848.

My dear Fr. Semeria, I want to take advantage of the letter that I am sending to the Vicar Apostolic to put a few lines to you in the same envelope.²² I wrote you a long letter a few days ago, but it does not matter, for this is too good an opportunity to be missed. Since my letter left here, I have received a reply to the one that I had sent to the Council of the Propagation of the Faith at Lyons. They tell me in this letter that Bishop Bettachini expressly recommended them to reserve for him the whole allocation for the island of Ceylon and that he had even asked that they should make no mention of the Congregation in the Annals. I refrain from making any remark about this, but I have made my view known to the Vicar Apostolic. I was asking for funds from the Propagation of the Faith to pay the travel expenses of the missionaries for whom Bishop Bettachini is asking. You know that I have lost fifteen

²⁰ What follows is written in the margins of pages 1 and 2.

²¹ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

²² This letter to Bishop Bettachini has not been found.

hundred francs from my own pocket for your journey. The Propagation then replies to me that the Vicar Apostolic has reserved everything for himself. But they add, and quite rightly, "Is it not natural that, if Bishop Bettachini is anxious to have Missionaries, he should provide for the travel expenses of the subjects for whose help he is calling? Nevertheless, in default of other resources, he can authorise the Councils to put into the hands of the Superior of the Congregation a portion of the allocation made to him by the Work or else authorise a direct allocation to that Congregation, a course of action to which in the present case we see no obstacle other than the desire which this venerable prelate has expressed to us so formally, for he does not wish us to make a direct allocation to a Congregation, and at the same time he forbids us to mention it in the Annals."

And so the money of the Propagation of the Faith will be used to buy chandeliers, and not only will no money be made available for paying for the travel of the missionaries, but I will be allowed to pay fifteen hundred francs out of my own pocket without any attempt being made to reimburse me. Having negotiated in such good faith with Bishop Bettachini, I was far from expecting such extraordinary behaviour on his part. I am wounded to know that such strange precautions are being taken against me. What does he think people want to do with the money of the Propagation of the Faith if not to make possible the journeys of the missionaries for whom he is asking to serve in his Vicariate? And can I hold back so many devoted men whom other missions are clamouring for, while I wait for him to see reason? This is all very strange. Must there not be some snake in the grass hidden somewhere? After what you have told me, one can expect anything. And so it is absolutely essential to know what one can count on. It is annoying to find such stumbling-blocks on one's path when one is devoting oneself to the salvation of souls and responding generously to so pressing an invitation as that which was made to us. At that time I made no other condition than that he should protect and act as a father to those members of the family whom I thought I was placing in the arms of another like myself for care and affection. Now I am left with the fear that I may have shown myself too trusting, and the worry of wondering how things will end. My dear friend, I await fuller explanations from you, but above all press for an end to the embargo on the funds of the Propagation of the Faith, for I cannot repeat too often that we need money to pay for our missionaries'

journeys. Look what a delay this unfortunate tactic has caused in sending those whom, for good reason, you regard as so necessary. The missionaries would be already at your disposal, and when we shall have to come back to this business, at least some of them will no longer be available. I do not wish to miss the post today, especially for the letter that I am sending to Bishop Bettachini. So in haste I end, embracing you very affectionately and blessing you with all my heart. Please point out to Fr. Ciamin that he has not written to me since the two lines he added to the first letter that I received from you. From time to time a little word from him, and from Fr. Keating, would give me the greatest pleasure. He must surely have something interesting to relate concerning the mission that has been entrusted to him. Never be afraid of writing too much. When I have finished reading your letters I turn the paper over and over to see if there are not a few more lines left to enjoy. So, my dear son, I cannot thank you enough for the punctuality and the nature of your letters. Goodbye again: I press you to my fatherly heart.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

7. [To Fr. Etienne Semeria at Jaffna].²³

He sends an extract of the letter of the Superior General of the Jesuits to Bishop de Mazenod. Infidelity of Fr. Ciamin, who must be recalled at once to Jaffna. Prudence and patience to be exercised in the difficulties of the Ceylon mission.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, November 22, 1848.

My dear Fr. Semeria, a little difficulty delayed the departure of my letters. Somebody had forgotten to stamp them, and they went to Paris, from where they were sent back to me from the central office with advice that I should stamp them if I wished them to reach their destination. This mishap gave me time to receive the reply that the Fr. General has made to the complaints that I had

²³ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

made to him. I am sending you a copy of this letter for your guidance. There is no need for you to show it to Bishop Bettachini, since he would then see that we are no longer ignorant of the requests that he had made to the Fr. General to call the Jesuits to Ceylon, even after your arrival there. How these Fathers will manage to pay their travel expenses, I do not know at all. Will Bishop Bettachini give them the necessary money? That is what I do not know. It would be a bit much, I admit, to give them what he is taking away from us. I have told you that the Propagation of the Faith was very disposed to allow us what we needed, and that they were only turned from this plan by the prohibition of the Vicar Apostolic. What you tell me of Fr. Ciamin makes me think. That is the trouble with having left him alone. You simply must call him back to you in order to recall him to his duty. Otherwise, the Vicar Apostolic must be asked to send him back to Europe. Such apostasy in front of your very eyes would be intolerable. If you see him even slightly tempted to such an infamous course, anticipate him, and let the Vicar Apostolic make it clear that in such a case he could not approve his presence in his island or even allow him to celebrate the Sacred Mysteries. You will not find it difficult to convince Bishop Bettachini that this step is essential, and that the mere threat will be enough to keep the faithless man to his duty. My dear friend, with all my heart I feel sorry for you, for you have found so many difficulties and annoyances in a place where you should have found only consolations and encouragement. But remember that the work of God must always arouse the hatred of Hell and of all those who are filled with the infernal spirit. I understand that you must feel the need of somebody to consult, and I would gladly send you somebody, but you know what it is that prevents me. As you wait, trust in the Lord and in our good Mother, pray with confidence for the illumination of the Holy Spirit, reflect carefully before you make any decision, beware of false friends, do not be afraid to be on your guard with regard to everybody; do not share confidences with anyone. For the thousandth time I will say to you: find us money for the travel-expenses of our Fathers, and at once I will send you some, though not as many as you would like because I regard it as important that they should have finished their studies in theology in order to be more useful to the mission and never to compromise themselves; if we were to hurry them too much, we would run the risk that they would never learn what they must know. Goodbye, my dear son: I am in a hurry

to send your letters to the post in order not to miss it yet again. I regret that I am already late enough. Do not follow my example in writing to me, but do it as often as you can. If Bishop Bettachini is a little annoyed at my letter, take it upon yourself to calm him down, for I thought I had to write to him as I did.²⁴

²⁴ Here is the extract of the letter from Fr. Roothaan copied by Bishop de Mazenod:

November 7, 1848.

Monsignor,

It was only yesterday evening that I received the letter that Your Excellency did me the honour of writing to me on October 28. In the midst of the deep distress that reading the letter from Ceylon caused me, I thank you, Monsignor, a thousand times for this communication. The acts of the English Father are such to rouse the indignation of any man, and I am certainly more distressed than I can say, and I am sure that that will be the feeling of Bishop Canoz and his other missionaries; nor can I doubt the sincerity of the reproaches that are said to have been made to the Englishman by his companions. No, no, that is not the spirit of the Society. It is true, Monsignor, that for some years there has been talk of forming an establishment of the Society in that island where the need is so great. Bishop Bettachini spoke to me about it often and at length when he came to Rome, and after his return to Jaffna he wrote to me about it again: I received his letter at Marseilles. How is it that he can have left me in ignorance of the fact that he had some Fathers of your Congregation with him, Monsignor, and there was a plan to form an educational establishment for these same Fathers? I must say that I do not understand this, but this does not in any way detract from the hateful character of the steps taken on the spot by this English Father. Oh! What need I had of the comfort that you were so good as to add in a postscript in speaking of the conduct of Fr. Accolti in Oregon! It came at the right time. He has acted like a true Jesuit, and the other, not like a Jesuit, but like an Englishman...

Please receive, Monsignor, the assurance of my most profound respect, my heartfelt thanks, and the devotion with which I have the honour to be Your Excellency's... etc.

8. [To Bishop Bettachini, Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna].¹

Bishop de Mazenod will borrow the money and will send off two missionaries. Upon the request of Bishop Bettachini, the Council of the Propagation of the Faith allocates nothing to the Oblates of Ceylon.

[Marseilles] January 19, 1849.

[Excellency],

I can understand more than ever the need you have for missionaries, and I assure you that I have never before felt such mortification as I do now in seeing myself unable to satisfy your just request and the urgent entreaties of the excellent Fr. Semeria.

It is not a matter of a lack of missionaries, on the contrary, they are ready to set out; but when I wrote to the Propagation of the Faith to ask for the sum necessary for such an expensive voyage, I received the reply that you had ordered them to reserve for you all the allocations destined for your mission, and that in consequence you must bear this expense.

When the first missionaries left, I had already spent 1500 francs of my own money, which has never been paid back to me. And so, Your Excellency, order the Propagation of the Faith at Lyons to send me the sum necessary for the travel expenses of these missionaries, and I will send them off at once, since they have been ready ever since you asked me for them.

You must understand, Your Excellency, that having received such a reply from the Propagation of the Faith I can ask them for

¹ Translation of the Italian text copied in the Journal of Fr. Semeria, Batayron copy, pp. 43-44, Rome, O.M.I. General Archives.

no more, being too mortified by that reply, polite as it was in form but basically so strange, to expose myself to the risk of another refusal, after the first which I was not expecting.

Only you can raise the embargo and by this means obtain the money necessary for at least two missionaries to make the voyage, since your letter of November 10th shows that you are now asking for only two. I have therefore made other arrangements for the other Fathers who had been intended for your mission.

Be assured that, like you and Fr. Semeria, I ardently desire to send you these two missionaries. So true is this that, trusting in the promise you made in your letter of November 10 to repay me what I spend on the voyages of these two Fathers, I will do everything I can this very day to borrow the necessary sum; when I have it, I will send off, with God's blessing, these good Fathers who have resigned their will into my hands. If later on your finances make this possible, it will be easy to find you other missionaries. It seems to me that the allowance from the Propagation of the Faith ought to be used first of all for the travel expenses of missionaries, everything else taking second place...

Please accept, Your Excellency, etc...

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

9. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria at Jaffna].²

Two missionaries will leave at once for Ceylon, even if the money necessary for their journey has not yet been paid. The Abbé Reinaud is coming to Europe to attend to the interests of the Vicar Apostolic of Colombo.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, January 20, 1849.

My dear Fr. Semeria, your letters always give me the greatest pleasure, but they upset me when you persist in asking me so urgently to send you missionaries. You know, my dear son, that the Vicar Apostolic has reserved to himself all the allowance that the

² Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M.-Semeria.

Propagation of the Faith was to make for Ceylon. This is the most annoying thing a man could possibly do. By refusing the help that we had a right to expect from the Propagation of the Faith, he has made it absolutely impossible for us to send the missionaries. If the Propagation of the Faith had given us the money necessary to pay for the journey, the missionaries would have arrived in Ceylon long ago. How is it that you have not understood this from the beginning? I told Bishop Bettachini this in writing, and I have told you as well in my letters. And in reply all you say is: send us some missionaries! This is really distressing. Without any doubt it would have been possible to defer payment for the chandeliers and so on, and to use the money that has been used for them to bring the missionaries to Ceylon. Bishop Bettachini may have feared that I have done this, but I promise that I have not even thought of such an abuse of confidence, but since I have been thought capable of it, I almost regret that I did not do it.

I hear that M. Reinaud has arrived in Malta and will probably go to Gaeta, where the Pope is, since he will present himself as the chargé d'affaires of the Vicar Apostolic of Colombo. I presume that Bishop Bettachini must have been informed of this commission so that he on his part can write foreseeing what M. Reinaud may say. It is strange that this Goan prelate can have chosen M. Reinaud as his ambassador. No doubt he will take advantage of this position to push his own views forward. It is so easy to be persuasive when one comes from far away and knows how to put one's views across. It was possible to find money to send this representative, and yet it is not possible to find any to set our missionaries off on their journey towards you. Perhaps there are more means available in the Vicariate of Colombo than in that of Jaffna. I would like to make one observation on the side: How is it that Bishop Bettachini, who has the right of succession to the Vicariate of Colombo, is unaware of what is happening there? Plainly Reinaud's mission is intended to contradict his views. He ought therefore to have tried to discover the designs of these two gentlemen in order to thwart their plans, if Bishop Bettachini thinks that these would not lead to a good end. It is very late to be making such observations, but it would be good for Bishop Bettachini to know that the Sovereign Pontiff is still at Gaeta, but that the Congregation of Propaganda is still in Rome, directed by Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the Congregation, since Cardinal Fransoni has fled to Gaeta with most of the other Cardinals. So it would be suitable for Bishop Bettachini, if he

wishes to write and has not already done so, to address himself both to the Pope and to Cardinal Fransoni and Bishop Barnabò, since I presume that Reinaud will go to see these three personages one after the other.

Now I must tell you that, trusting in Bishop Bettachini's word, since in the end he told me in his letter on November 10 that he would pay me back any advances I could make to pay for the journey of at least two missionaries, I am going to borrow the necessary sums to send you these two missionaries as soon as possible. I begin by warning you that they will arrive soon after my letter, since I am aware of the urgent need that you have of them. The essential thing is to send you virtuous and reliable men. They will perfect their English as all our foreign missionaries who have been sent to Canada have had to do, and even Bishop Bettachini himself. Fr. Mouchel has been working hard at this language for some time. One could say that he knows it, and that practice will help him to speak it even better. Moreover, you know his value and his virtues. The companion I will give him will be younger, but no less good a man.³ This will be a first instalment, since later I will easily be able to make up the number six which you asked me for originally, and which Bishop Bettachini has reduced to two in his last letter.

Goodbye: I am in a hurry, since I must go and hold a little ordination of Capuchins *extra tempora*. I embrace you tenderly.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

10. To the Revd. Fr. Semeria, Missionary Apostolic, Superior of the Oblate Fathers of Mary Immaculate at Jaffna, Ceylon.⁴

Three missionaries soon to depart. The Abbé Reinaud is in Europe. Qualities of Fr. Mouchel. Fr. Keating must be more courageous like the other missionaries. Greetings to Fr. Ciamin and Bro. De Steffanis. They must work for the conversion of unbelievers.

³ Three missionaries set out on March 23: Frs. Frédéric Mouchel, Félix Leydier and Jean Lebescou. Cf. Mazenod Journal, March 23, 1849, Ms. Yeuveux I, 76.

⁴ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M.-Semeria.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, February 21, 1849.

My dear and good son, I received your letter of January 8 at the same time as Bishop Bettachini's of January 9, and both of them gave me great pleasure. I hardly have time to reply, for I have just come back from the Ash Wednesday exercises, and I must meet the Prefect and the Mayor about the religious service that has been decreed by the National Assembly.⁵ Would to God that we had so swift a means of communicating with Ceylon: the telegram, which was composed in Paris at 2 o'clock today, reached me at 8 minutes past 5; three hours and eight minutes for a journey of two hundred leagues is wonderful. My letter was very nearly brought to you, dear friend, by two of our missionaries who were all ready to leave tomorrow morning. Bishop Bettachini's letter has made me decide to delay their departure until the next boat. You will gain by having three missionaries instead of two. It was important to wait for the chest of church-vestments which the missionaries are to take with them, and which has not yet arrived, even though I have written to Lyons to ask for it to be sent to me on time. Now we must see what Monsignor's letter to the Gentlemen of the Council will produce. If they decide to send the grant to me, I will take the 5000 francs that he authorizes me to take for the journey of the three missionaries, and I will do my best to carry out all his requests. I must tell you that I was very pleased by the letter he has written me, and I am telling him of my satisfaction. I have said that it is better if he keeps you with him. He will never find men more devoted to himself and to his Vicariaté. I have said too that I assume that, knowing of M. Reinaud's journey, he will have taken the precaution of writing himself to neutralize the effect of that mission, which cannot possibly be in Bishop Bettachini's interests. I presume that the question of new boundaries for the Ceylon Vicariate will be discussed, and as we know Reinaud's intentions, it is not likely that he will put aside all thought of himself. I know that the Bishop of Viviers has noticed him again at Propaganda, but Propaganda is in Rome, and Reinaud must have passed through Gaeta, where Cardinal Fransoni and the Pope are. Surprise is easy, and that is

⁵ By a law of February 15, the National Assembly had obliged the executive powers to require that a service be held on February 24, the anniversary of the 1848 revolution.

why a letter from Bishop Bettachini would have been useful to avert plans that would probably have been hostile, and to defuse the mine. He has said that he will come here, but so far he has not appeared. He wrote to Fr. Aubert, and as you know Fr. Aubert is in England, and will be there for longer than at first I thought.

I have no doubt that you will be very happy with the Fathers whom I am sending you. After Fr. Mouchel, who has shown a perfect zeal and intelligence in all his preparations for the journey, you must not count on my sending you old men. First of all, we do not have any, and then a man needs to be young if he is to be able to become acclimatized. As for Fr. Mouchel, I do not think any missionary has ever had so clear a vocation. He has already studied English a good deal, and you can look on him as a man truly devoted. I would ask Fr. Keating not to fall below the standard set by his brethren. Everywhere they are admirable for their zeal and their charity. If it is hot in Ceylon, it is certainly cold on Hudson's Bay, and all our missionaries on missions to the Red Indians, whether they are French, Irish or Canadian, are certainly leading a harder life than the one that he is so weak as to complain about. Good for Fr. Ciamin. I am delighted by the way he has behaved, and his only fault is that he does not write to me. As for Keating, nobody can decipher his scrawl, and one is tempted to say that he does it on purpose: such scratching is not permissible! I would like to write a few lines to him and to Fr. Ciamin, but I simply haven't the time. I do not want to forget the good Brother De Steffanis, and I send him my most affectionate greetings. We have as yet no news of Fr. Lempfrit's arrival in Oregon, and it takes eight months for a letter to arrive. I recently sent them some shoes, some shirts, some trousers and so on. They have nothing, living among those Indians. And Fr. Keating complains! I leave you full latitude in everything. Only be well aware that we will never have anything from the Propagation of the Faith for Ceylon except what the Vicar Apostolic gives you. You do not give me enough details on your way of life, where you live, and your ministry. When will you begin to win the unbelievers? Are you only on your island as parish priests of old Christians? I had always thought the idea was to convert the pagans. That is what we are made for rather than anything else. There are enough bad Christians in Europe without our having to go and look for them so far away. Give me plenty of information on this, even if all there is to report so far is hopes.

Goodbye, my dear son; I embrace you and bless you with all my heart.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

Fr. Mouchel asks me to tell you that he has taken out credits for more than the 600 francs you said you could afford for an organ, and has used them to buy more important things. I regret that the Propagation of the Faith does not give us anything except the allowance made to the Vicar Apostolic.

11. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria at Jaffna].⁶

Qualities and virtues of Fr. Mouchel. Wisdom and prudence of Fr. Semeria, to whom the Founder allows wide freedom in taking decisions in Ceylon. He must, however, remain in the service of Bishop Bettachini at Jaffna. The invitation to go to Kandy should have been accepted, even if it meant being under the direction of the Abbé Reinaud.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, March 23, 1849.

My dear son, business has mounted up so much during these last few days that I have come to the moment when our missionaries leave and still I have not been able to write to you. I have already finished several letters for the Superior of the Lazarists at Alexandria, for Bishop Bettachini, for our Frs. Keating and Ciamin, and I still have to write to the Superior of the Franciscans at Cairo and the French Consul to recommend our dear travellers to them. I have never seen such zeal, such ardour as that of the good Fr. Mouchel. You would not believe all the trouble he has gone to, the excursions he has made, the thought he has taken to make this journey a success. He has spared no effort, and I must say that he has perfectly succeeded in his aim. And at the same time his pleasant manner and his perseverance have helped him to make the acquaintance of certain gentlemen with whom he had to deal in preparing for the voyage, and they have shown themselves utterly devoted to him and to the work, so that we will be able to rely on their kindness when we come to send other men. Our Fr. Mouchel

⁶ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M.-Semeria.

shows constancy when he undertakes anything, and he is also such a good priest, such a good religious, he has such a good character, that he will be a real treasure for you. He will share your difficulties with you, and we are agreed that he will not discourage you. He knows English passably well and is quite ready to learn the other languages that are necessary for the exercise of your ministry. He is so good that he laughed when he heard of your fear that he might be too old for the difficult work of learning to talk. If he speaks to you about it, laugh about it with him. The other two missionaries are young, that is to say, new priests, for I believe that they are already old enough for the work; at least Fr. Leydier is already 28 years old. I mean what I say. Did not the other missionaries, Italians, Spaniards and other nationalities, have to begin by learning the languages as you have done or are doing in your turn? People showed patience as they waited for them to learn, and they must show a little to you as well. But our men are good, simple, upright, and they will never involve themselves in intrigues or tricks like those do who may be tempted to blame your youth or your inexperience. While speaking of this, I cannot resist telling you how pleased I have been with your wisdom, and the way in which you have conducted yourself in all the difficult and complicated affairs that have arisen on every side. You ask me to allow you full freedom to decide on the course to be followed with regard to the various missions that are offered to you. It seems to me, my dear friend, that you already have that freedom by virtue of your letters of institution. Do what seems best to you in the circumstances. You may have read in one of the letters that Bishop Bettachini wrote to me the following passage: "Be certain that your Congregation is close to my heart, and far from harming its interests, I will do on the contrary everything possible to establish it here in a stable manner, *as I shall show when the right moment arrives...*"⁷

The dots and the underlining are Bishop Bettachini's own. I think that 'here'⁸ refers to Jaffna, and so it seems to me that it is a good idea not to lose our foothold in the district, and above all that you should not separate yourself from the Bishop, who I thought was interested anyway in using your help for his administration and

⁷ Translated from the original Italian: 'Sia certo che la sua Congregazione mi sta a cuore, e lungi dal pregiudicare ai suoi interessi, anzi farò il tutto per stabilirla qui e gliene darò prova allor quando...'

⁸ The word is in Italian in the original.

paper-work. I still hold that view, although I have learnt from your letters that he has taken someone quite different with him on his travels, which must weaken your credit with him, especially if he puts himself into the hands of men who would like to remove you. As always, I submit my notions to your judgement because, being on the spot, you are better placed to judge what is most suitable. Now I think that if we had been able, without leaving either the Bishop or Jaffna, to take possession of the Kandy mission, that would have been a good thing. That mission invites zeal and seems to hold out some promise of success. But I see that the Jesuits are going to take it over. And what will become of Reinaud and his mission to Rome? Frankly, although at one time I felt a great repugnance at making our Fathers into a stepladder for that priest to rise to higher things, in the end I must agree with you that men do not live for ever. This is why I have never decided to write anything against him to Propaganda, but the Bishop of Viviers and Fr. Tempier have not observed the same restraint, and so I presume that Reinaud will come up against some obstacles that will be hard to surmount at Propaganda because of the poor recommendation that the Bishop of Viviers must have sent on ahead of him. I would therefore have been very pleased if the Kandy mission had come into our hands, even with Reinaud as its Vicar Apostolic, if he had been given as coadjutor a Father of our Congregation. But this could not be, for the reasons that I have just given you. And so I no longer know what to say about this. If you think that nevertheless we must send some of our men there, do it without worrying, and may God grant that we can serve both the missions of Kandy and of Jaffna. Once more, I leave you in complete freedom to decide what it is best to do.

This time, my dear son, my letter will leave something to be desired, since I have no time for finishing it. Fr. Mouchel is waiting for it, and I am going to give it to him just as it is. I have written to Fr. Ciamin and Fr. Keating. I hope that the latter will receive with gratitude the paternal advice that I have felt obliged to give him. I have also written to Bishop Bettachini, and my letter can do nothing but please him. It remains only for me to ask you to speak kind words to our good Brother Gaspard, whom I forget no more than the others. Goodbye, my dear son; I am happy to think of the joy with which you will greet the arrival of such substantial reinforcements, which will double the size of your colony at a stroke. This is marvellous, and they will not be the last, provided

that we are given the means to pay for travel. I bless you and embrace you with all my heart.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

12. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria at Jaffna].⁹

Visit to Marseilles of the Abbé Reinaud, who has explained his plans for Ceylon. The Silvestrine Bravi will be appointed Coadjutor of Colombo. Reinaud may be made Vicar Apostolic of Kandy, but the Vicariate will be put in the hands of the Oblates. Bishop Bettachini will ask for Fr. Semeria as Coadjutor at Jaffna. They must learn languages like the Jesuits who will be established in Ceylon.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, May 14, 1849.

My dear Fr. Semeria, I would have liked to write to you a little earlier, but since M. Reinaud appeared at Marseilles, I have waited until he had shown his hand to me before telling you what I think. He arrived with his great beard, not quite knowing how I would receive him. I gave him no cause to complain, but since I did not offer him anywhere to stay, he told M. Jeancard that he was hurt by this, and on the same evening M. Jeancard passed this on to me. Frankly, I do not think I was under any obligation to put him up in one of our houses, but he had been counting on staying at Le Calvaire. I preferred to put him up in my house, and when on the next day I suggested this to him, he accepted with pleasure. Several days passed without any discussion of his own concerns, and when I asked him about what he had been doing at Rome and Naples, he told me of the plan that he had proposed to the Sacred Congregation, which is at the moment in a state of confusion. His plan involved dividing the island of Ceylon into three Vicariates Apostolic, of Colombo, Jaffna and the central one, that of Kandy. The Vicar Apostolic of Colombo would keep his Vicariate unless he preferred to receive a titular Archbishopric *in partibus* and to leave his Vicariate to an Italian missionary, whose name now escapes me, a Silvestrine very highly thought of in Ceylon. Bishop Bettachini would become Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna and the Central Vicariate

⁹ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M.-Semeria.

would be reserved to the Oblates of Mary, it being understood in the mind of the negotiator that he would be made its Vicar, although he did not say this and I did not wish to make him say it explicitly, but there is no doubt whatever that that is what he has in mind. You can understand, my dear friend, that from my point of view that will always be an insurmountable difficulty. Perhaps my refusal, had I expressed it quite clearly, might have cooled his enthusiasm, and I decided to wait and see what I should do if this plan of three Vicariates should come to anything, and whether you thought it suitable for the Congregation to have this Central Vicariate allotted to it. Reinaud claims that it is there that the most good can be done since it is fresh territory, and one can hope for good results with the Buddhists who live there, while there is not much to be hoped for at Jaffna, and also that it is more natural that the Jesuits should go and work there. That is what I have to say on this plan, and I would ask you to let me have your carefully considered advice, based on solid motives. I asked him what was the motive or pretext of his journey to Europe. He replied that he had been sent by the Vicar Apostolic of Colombo to settle matters regarding the property of the missions, so that they would no longer be in the name of the missionary, usually a Goan, who might misuse them. I realized that he was on good terms with certain European missionaries, and he even spoke well to me of those who give you so much ground for complaint, but I think he is in league above all with the Silvestrine who lives at Colombo or near there.¹⁰ According to Reinaud he is a man of great merit and in good favour with the Sacred Congregation, to such an extent that he is destined, if he has not already received his bulls, to be coadjutor of Colombo in place of Bishop Bettachini, who is thus reduced to being Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna. This is to happen even if the island remains divided into two Vicariates only. I presume that Bishop Bettachini must have had some suspicion of this plot and that he has taken some steps to bring it to nothing. It seems that these honest missionaries have tried to misrepresent him at Rome and make him seem a bad administrator. Between ourselves, Reinaud would have had more success at Rome had he not already had a bad reputation. I have never written against him, but I have reason to believe that there have been others who have been less merciful. So his plans have been listened to, and notes on them have been asked for,

¹⁰ Joseph-Marie Bravi.

but he will never be considered as the head of a mission, even if he has to be content with being a Prefect Apostolic when he was hoping for more. Be careful how you use this information that I am giving you, for Bishop Bettachini seems to confide in people too easily and to give too much away. But it would be good for him to be kept in touch about all these intrigues to take Colombo from him. I could see from his last letter that he had suspicion that one or another missionary was aiming at the episcopate. He did well in writing himself to neutralize the efforts of these schemers. I would have involved myself directly in this affair but for the troubles at Rome which have hindered me from writing to Bishop Barnabò, with whom I was already in correspondence. I suspect that some *minutante* must have committed some indiscretion, for how else could Reinaud have known of the account of you that I gave in one of my letters?¹¹ It seems that this fine fellow was shocked by the good impression that it left in the mind of Bishop Barnabò: I presume that he had the charity to try to diminish its effect. He did not tell me so, but he must have had strong feelings about it, for he could not stop himself talking about it to Jeancard. All in all, I showed Reinaud more politeness and kindness than Reinaud had a right to expect in order not to set him against you and our missionaries, to whom he could have done harm when he returns, as is his intention, to Ceylon.

I was very pleased by the last letter from Bishop Bettachini, and by the others as well. It is clear that this good prelate has the best intentions towards the Congregation, and towards you in particular. You yourself have seen what his intentions are.¹² I must say to you in all simplicity that I approve of them. I think so highly of your virtue and your religious principles that I am persuaded that should it happen you would be what you always must be, the

¹¹ In his letter of December 30, 1848, to Bishop Barnabò, secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, Bishop de Mazenod said that Fr. Semeria had all the qualities necessary for a Vicar Apostolic.

¹² This letter from Bishop Bettachini to Bishop de Mazenod has disappeared; but on March 9 he wrote to Bishop Barnabò: 'If, in a Bishop, sanctity is required, the first name would perhaps be Don Giovanni Conte Vistarini. If in addition, together with exemplary goodness, one asks for knowledge, prudence, and all the other qualities with which a Bishop must be endowed, I can think of no one better than Fr. Étienne Semeria, Superior of the Oblates, whom I would like as my successor at Jaffna' (translation of the original preserved at Rome, Archive of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, Scritt. rif. nei Congressi, Indie Orient., vol. 12, ann. 1849-1850, ff. 327-328).

chief and model of missionaries, and the devoted son of the Congregation that is your Mother. I shall certainly write to Bishop Bettachini to thank him for his good intentions. Never let it be known that you have read the letter that he wrote to me. The note that you added to his letter proves to me that you have not thought enough about the position of the various missions. There is some uncertainty in your judgment. You must take care about this in order to give me clear and precise ideas on all these important interests of ours. Insist firmly that our missionaries learn the languages. This is an indispensable duty for them, and you yourself must apply yourself to it. See what advantages the Jesuit Fathers gain by doing this. We must certainly not be jealous of them, but it is very suitable to imitate them. While I am speaking of them, start from the assumption that they will come to the island. It is good for the moment that they have only been called to the small islands nearby; take this into account when you decide what plans to adopt for the best interests of the Congregation. Except for the letter that I wrote to the Father General after yours in which you complained of the young English Jesuit, I have not spoken about anything with the Father who is here with me and with whom we live in excellent mutual understanding.

May 20 — Several circumstances have forced me to delay finishing this letter, and this has given me time to receive yours dated April 9, which reached me today. I was very disturbed to hear that you are ill. I beg you, my dear friend, to apply to yourself the advice that you give to others. Make allowance for the climate in which you are living, and avoid forcing yourself to work as if it were a crime. What would become of this mission if it were to lose you, can you tell me? I would never have believed that this Ceylon mission would have given us so much trouble. It seemed that when you arrived under the auspices of the Vicar Apostolic and with him all you had to do was to be there and you would do much good. I thought of it as the most beautiful of our missions, but I see that I was quite wrong. However, my dear son, you must put a good face on it and make the best you can of your position. Firstly, for the moment it is essential not to separate yourself from Bishop Bettachini. He is bound by his courtesy and his word to continue to protect you. You can see that that is what he says to me in his letter: "The fact that I have made arrangements with the Jesuits has led you to believe that I wished to harm the interests of the Oblates,

but this will never be the case... I love both congregations, but since I made arrangements first with the Oblates, I will put their interests before those of the Jesuits."¹³

You can see that the Vicar Apostolic has committed himself to preferring you, which is not to say that he does not call on the help of others, or rather that he has not already done so. God has his reasons, since that is how things have turned out, and you yourself played your part in making them do so by your journey. Now we must avoid seeming to act from jealousy, which must never happen, but we must see to it that we are not sacrificed. The Jesuits will always have a great advantage over you, in that they send subjects already fully formed who know the language, have experience of your area, and live a little on their reputation, independently of their individual merits. I am not surprised that Bishop Canoz's letter is a little dry. He looks at matters from a different point of view from yours. He would never like to admit that his aim was to get rid of you, and I must say that I myself do not believe that. Bishop Bettachini has called them, and is it surprising that they respond to his invitation? He may have been shocked by the supposition that he had approved of the plots of that young Jesuit and his followers. Here they dissociate themselves utterly from the behaviour of that scatterbrain. In the suggestions that you make to me, you seem always to be thinking as though things were in their normal state at Rome. Do not be deceived. The most appalling disorder is reigning in that poor city, and it is impossible to correspond with it. The members of the various Congregations are scattered. Insofar as I have been able to write, I have encouraged Bishop Barnabò in ways of thinking advantageous to our mission, and now we must wait. What does please me is that he will have been able to receive Bishop Bettachini's most recent messages, which will have doubtless helped to neutralize the plans of Reinaud. Take care. The missionary who came to you for a change of air might have been his pal: I am angry with myself for not being able to remember his name. But to describe him it is enough to say that he was a Silvestrine. I fear that you may not be able to read this last part of my letter; my valet has had the wonderful idea of flooding my inkpot with pure water, and I have no ink to hand.

¹³ Translated from the original Italian.

Goodbye, my dear Father. I embrace tenderly both you and all our Fathers.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

I am waiting impatiently for news of the arrival of Fr. Mouchel and his companions. I received the note from Alexandria. I embrace them cordially.¹⁴

13. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria at Jaffna].¹⁵

Bishop de Mazenod's reasons for delay in writing letters: a visit to some Oblate houses in France, and cholera at Marseilles. Thanks to Fr. Semeria who writes faithfully every month. The Pope has created two Vicariates in Ceylon. Deceit of Fr. Reinaud. Fr. Semeria may be nominated as coadjutor of Bishop Bettachini, and he has no need to fear that he will grow proud. He is to ensure regularity in all things. Departure of Fr. d'Herbomez for Oregon.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, November 10, 1849.

My dear son, I have forgotten the date of my last letter, and all I know is that it was a long time ago, and this gives me great pain. I will spare you a list of everything that has contributed to this unheard-of delay. My journey, or the beginning of my tour, is responsible in large measure, although I was not able to get any further than Nancy because of the cholera which obliged me to retrace my steps in order to get back as quickly as possible to my poor city of Marseilles, which has been so cruelly afflicted. You can understand how busy I have been kept since I came into the middle of this disaster, for when I arrived there were still 70 people dying every day. Meanwhile, letters were piling up on my desk, and I had to deal with the most urgent, and still I can see 80 of them before my eyes which I cannot deal with for lack of time. I will say no more to you about it, although I am sorely tempted to complain that I am alone, absolutely alone, dealing with all the business of the Congregation, which is becoming heavier as the Congregation grows. Fr. Aubert is still in England where his presence is con-

¹⁴ The last three lines are written in the margin of the first page.

¹⁵ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

sidered necessary, and it is that which is crushing me with work. Remember too that I have to copy myself the letters of which I like to keep a record. Am I not well-treated as a Superior General? Let me go on quickly to thank you, dear and good son, for your punctuality in writing to me. One of my consolations is to receive one of your letters every month, and you cannot imagine the pleasure with which I read them. Do not ever deprive me of one. You must admit that I have sent you some excellent subjects to strengthen your mission. If it were not for that poor Keating, who as far as I can see is slightly mad, you would be admirably set up, for our good young Fathers are full of goodwill; you have already set them to work and experience will bring to completion the good that you have already begun to do. It seems to me that Bishop Bettachini has already given you proof of his good dispositions in paying attention to your views on the placing of our subjects. Whatever M. Reinaud says, I believe that he is sincere in his good dispositions towards you and the Congregation. He thought he was doing well in calling the Jesuits who provided him with speedy help, of which he felt a need. It is certain that he would have had reason to ask himself why these Fathers had not been brought onto the island before then, but you cannot blame him for it, since you did not even think of finding out about it from him before you set out on your voyage which resulted in their arrival. I can see in that the hand of Providence, whom it pleased to use the enthusiasm of these good evangelical workers. What matters is that their attitude is enough to disassociate them from the indiscrete and treacherous conduct of that one of their brethren who worked so hard to rob you of the confidence of the Bishop and of the tasks that he had entrusted you with. I think that at the moment peace reigns, but that is no reason for going to sleep because of the tricks that the Italian or Spanish missionaries, accomplices in the plot of that headstrong young Jesuit, might permit themselves. Tell me about that good Fr. Priori — he is a true disinterested missionary. I hope that he has received my reply to the letter that he was kind enough to write to me. I am surprised that you say no more to me about him or of the plan that he had of handing over his mission or of finding one for our Congregation in the Vicariate of Colombo. Another thing that astonishes me is that on the day of your last letter, September 9, you did not yet know in Ceylon of the decision of the Sovereign Pontiff who establishes two Vicariates (and not three) in your island, naming Bishop Bettachini Vicar Apostolic of

Jaffna and giving Fr. Bravi to the Vicar Apostolic of Colombo as Coadjutor. M. Reinaud must have learnt of this decision of the Pope at Rome, where he went, and where he is still not well thought of. He put in a second appearance here on his return from London, where he had been without warning me, although I had stretched kindness so far as to have him stay with me during his first visit to Marseilles. He persuaded the good Fr. Aubert that he had come back to deal with his admission to the Congregation. I still believed that he was not thinking about it seriously and that lurking in his mind always there was a secret motive. First of all he wanted to persuade me that he depended on me for the success of his favourite project of three Vicariates, claiming that the only place where there was really good work to be done was Kandy, and that elsewhere nothing would ever be achieved. I declared to him that I would not say a word to influence Propaganda, but it was a real *coup de théâtre* when I told him definitely that in any case I could never present anyone other than you for the post of Vicar Apostolic. Down came his defences, and there was no more talk of reentering the Congregation. A thousand difficulties confronted him and I was delivered from his pleadings. With regard to this plan of mine, which I have furthered on several occasions by writing to Propaganda, I cannot see why it has aroused in you the anxieties you tell me of in one of your letters. You have nothing to do but let Divine Providence take its course. It is not your personal merit that makes you suitable for this burdensome dignity: it is simply the position in which the Congregation, or I if you wish, have placed you. If you were a religious without virtues, without resources, I would not have trusted you with a mission of such importance, and that goes without saying. But in any other position, even if you had still more virtues and still more talents, nobody would ever have thought of raising you to the Episcopate. I am not helping this project along, or rather pressing it to a conclusion, for any other reason than the greater good of your mission, and for the honour and greater independence of the Congregation. And so, if one day you do become a bishop, you will owe it to the Congregation whose interests you represent and of which you will not cease to be a member. You will be a bishop on the same conditions as the other Vicars Apostolic chosen within the bosom of any Order or Congregation. You will build your house on the solid base of humility, and you will have so many reasons to be abashed before God and before the Church that I cannot imagine that you will have much

reason to fear the attacks of pride, which you fear simply because you fail to reflect on the reasons you will have for putting them down. Is it not certain that if you had remained the Abbé Semeria, if you had not been received into the bosom of the Congregation and if, even as a religious of this Congregation, you had not been chosen to represent it on an important mission, and also if, even in that position, you had not been strongly recommended for the appointment to Bishop Bettachini by myself, and helped by all the credit that my episcopal character and my position in the Church give me with the Sacred Congregation, would anyone even have thought of making you a bishop? I offer these thoughts to you in reply to the fears, the distress and the protestations that you felt yourself called upon to express to me in one of your letters. All in all, I do not know what will come of it, but if the urgent requests that I have made, for entirely supernatural motives, lead to a result in conformity with my wishes, I take all the responsibility, being sure that you will never forget to whom you owe this preferment and the reason for which it was conferred on you. For the present, you do not need to think about this. Continue to do your duty with all the zeal you can muster, keep a watch on yourself in order to remain in the full fervour appropriate to your holy calling, watch over those whom I have entrusted to you, so that they too may do honour to their holy ministry. Keep me always fully in touch with everything, both things and persons within and without. Insist that our missionaries keep in touch with you regularly so that you in your turn can write to me with full knowledge of what is going on. Although you are scattered, I would like nonetheless to constitute you regularly now that there are enough of you to do so. Fr. Mouchel must, of course, be your first assessor and admonitor. I would like to nominate Fr. Ciamin as your second assessor: He is a mature man, and he has steadiness, a good attitude. If you see no difficulties, you can inform him of this as something settled, but otherwise you must give me your opinion. Your two assessors will form your Council. I would like to nominate also a bursar or procurator, because it is in order to have some control over the finances. Until now you have sent no account of your financial management to the Procurator General as you should have done every six months. Put everything in order, and make your accounts up in due form. Keep a fully detailed record of receipts and expenses day by day. The missionaries too must render their accounts to you so that you can copy them into your general

account. Tell them from me that if they cannot come to see you from time to time for the direction prescribed by the Rule, they must make up for this by writing, and do not deprive them of your good advice. You know that you have been accused of a certain weakness when you were superior at Vico where you let several abuses creep in through kindness of heart or timidity. You lacked experience then, but now that you have travelled across the world and have had to deal with so many different people, you know what you need to do to keep each person to his duty. Apart from Keating, whom I regard as slightly mad, you will not have much difficulty with the others, who are excellent boys. As for that Keating, if he carries on in his wild behaviour and you really cannot get any good out of him, I will authorise you to send him to England if you can find the means to send him on that journey without it costing the Congregation anything. I understand that that will be difficult, but in any case it will be much worse for him if he does not begin to act reasonably. I cannot authorise you to spend anything at all for his travel. I will try to write by the same post to Bishop Bettachini. The letter of exchange he has sent me was not in order, for he forgot to endorse it for me. He put his name on the back instead of at the bottom. I hope nevertheless that it will be accepted as it is. Having thought things over, I will wait until I have had the reply from Paris before writing to him. I would like also to write to the good Fr. Mouchel and our other Fathers, but we are busy preparing for the departure of Fr. d'Herbomez, Bro. Surel and Bro. Gaspard¹⁶ for Oregon. What a mission that is! You would not believe what our dear Fathers suffer there, as cheerfully as anybody in the world. The last time Fr. Chirouse wrote to me he said that he had sent a Father to Fr. Pandosy who had nothing to live on, but that he had in his larder a dog and two wolves which would be enough for him until Carnival. He had made himself a soutane from a blanket. I sent them a little parcel of shoes, trousers and so on.¹⁷ This time Fr. d'Herbomez is taking them everything from a needle to an anvil, 22 packages altogether. It is hilarious. But what will not be hilarious is remaining 7 or 8 months at sea, for they will have to go round Cape Horn. The Jesuits in Oregon have been wonderful to our Fathers: brothers could not have done more. I

¹⁶ Gaspard Janin.

¹⁷ The end of this letter is written in margins and in the empty spaces at the tops of the pages.

have said this to the Father General to console him for the distress he was caused by the behaviour of your young English Jesuit. I cannot find a space to embrace and bless you and our other Fathers, but I charge you to say a thousand friendly things to them on my behalf.

Farewell,

† C.. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. I have just received your excellent letter of October 9. What you wrote to Bishop Bettachini is very suitable. Please let me know the results in your next letter. I would like his confidence in you to be firmer and a little more trustworthy. But be patient, and do not ever leave him. You have never told me about your financial resources. Doubtless you were unaware that Fr. Rolleri was at Vico when you sent him your note. It would have been safer to send it to Fr. Tempier, for we shall have to send the note on, with the risk of accidents.

1850

14. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria in Jaffna].¹

Bishop de Mazenod is alone and overloaded with work. A foundation at Buffalo. Two more missionaries are to go to Ceylon. Fr. Semeria never speaks of the apostolate of the Fathers, who must soon begin to work for the conversion of the unbelievers. The division between the two Vicariates does not seem very fair, but it would be necessary to go to Rome to exercise any influence on Propaganda. Fr. Semeria is to send an account of his administration and say clearly what he thinks of the future of the Oblates in the island.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, January 17, 1850.

Be sure, my dear Fr. Semeria, that I wish I could write to you four times a month, so great is the pleasure I find in corresponding with you; but every day it becomes more difficult for me to keep up with this excessive load of work, which is crushing me. Fr. Aubert's absence has left me alone to bear all the weight of correspondence, which is more than my strength can bear, and so I am in arrears with everybody. However, my dear Father, it is not yet six months since I last wrote to you, since I find in my notes that I sent you a letter on November 25.² Even then I had to ask your forgiveness for an unintentional delay caused by a journey I had undertaken, by the cholera which I had to fight hand to hand, and by all the business of the diocese and the Congregation which have grown as the years have passed. If I were to try to excuse myself for the lateness of this letter, I should have to give you the same reasons. How many times have I wanted to write to you? And always I have

¹ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

² The last letter to Fr. Semeria that we have is dated November 10, 1849.

been prevented by some mishap. I have had three Bishops here one after the other, and you can understand that with such guests it is not easy to have time to oneself. One of these prelates was Bishop Timon, the Bishop of Buffalo in the United States, whom I had for eight days. He put before me some very good reasons for having an establishment of our Congregation set up in his interesting diocese. It is clear that there will be plenty to do there, and moreover his diocese is not far from Montreal, and so will serve as a connecting link with our other establishments. And so I yielded to his request. This does not mean that I am no longer keeping anybody for you. I shall try to send you two missionaries, although I am less favourably disposed towards your Ceylon mission. I cannot see that you are doing much there, that you are still only beginning. I search in vain in your letters to see what work you are doing, and up till now you have not told me of a single conversion, and frankly I only agreed to send missionaries to Ceylon in the hope of seeing them used for the conversion of souls. For the Italian and Spanish missionaries who are looking for their daily bread, it is good to win it by serving parishes, but our Oblates are called to a different ministry. I beg you to send me a detailed account of everything concerning you on both the spiritual and temporal levels. My ideas for your mission had been quite different. I can see nothing there but intrigues and very little good work being done. If I am wrong, tell me; that is all I ask. You can see that I was well informed about the changes that were to take place in your island. The trick that has been played on Bishop Bettachini was only to be expected, but at the moment to divide the jurisdictions so unequally is to push *prepotenza*³ too far. You did well in joining with the other missionaries of the Vicariate to provide Propaganda with better information, but I think it would be as well to be slightly careful in order to avoid becoming encumbered with Bishop Bravi. You have said no more to me of Fr. Priori, who had showed himself friendly towards you. You know that I sent a friendly reply to the letter that he wrote to me some time ago. I mention it to you again just in case he may not have received it. I have suppressed the one you wrote to Cardinal Frasoni. Apart from the fact that it was not very well composed, you were insisting on a point that could have been used as an argument against us. Why need you complain so much about the difficulties of having missionaries who speak different lan-

³ Italian: 'insolence', or 'abuse of power'.

guages? It is all very well for us, who have brought Frenchmen into a mission that was intended to be kept for Italians, to make such a remark! For the rest, you say in your letter nothing more than had already been contained in your common complaint. As for me, I cannot carry much weight in this affair, for it would be clear that I would only be writing under the inspiration of your letters and those of Bishop Bettachini, and so I would be considered biased in this dispute. If I could speak in person, things would be different, but I am not in Rome. Bishop Isoard, to whom you suggest I should turn, would indeed have been the right man to deal with these interests in confidence, but you are unaware that he has been dead two years, and so we cannot count on him except as an intercessor in heaven. And in fact, prayer is what is needed to undo the bad effects of an ill-considered decision on the part of Propaganda. But I will write. I can certainly not carry on a continuous correspondence. Who knows how often I had to begin again to write you these 2 pages. Do you realise that it is February 5 today as I take up my pen, and that I began this letter on January 17? How many letters have had to take precedence over it, and how many times I have been disturbed! It is not that I resign myself to the inevitable, but that I no longer know where I am so as to be able to begin again.

February 6. I was not allowed any time yesterday to get on with my letter. Will I be any luckier today? Really, one cannot keep any continuity in one's thoughts with all these interruptions. However, I would like to say to you that in addition to the report that you must make to me of your work, you must also give me an exact idea of your financial resources. In the expenses, it would be good to distinguish what has to come from your own resources from what could come from your churches. You know that I can never consent to your buying an organ out of your own funds. When you have deducted what you need for your upkeep and personal expenses, you must draw up an account of the rest and put part of it at the disposal of the Procurator General. If the missions that receive an income do not help our novitiates and oblationates, how can we provide for them? But it is there that, at great expense, subjects are prepared who go on to be employed on the missions. I sent on to Vico the *effet*⁴ that you addressed to Fr. Roller, who is

⁴ *effet*: a negotiable document giving the right to payment of a sum of money.

superior of that house. It came back to me, and I gave the sum to your creditors in Marseilles. When you are so far away, you cannot know in time any changes in personnel that may happen. And so it would be better, when the case arises, to address *effets* to me personally, but it must be done in good order, as you have done it. Bishop Bettachini sent me one drawn up in such a way that I had to send it to Paris, from where I had to be sent another, since that one could not be cashed.

When the Pope gets to Rome, I will not delay in going to pay my homage to him, and I hope then that I will be able to speak at length and in detail on the interests of your mission at Propaganda. I would like to obtain the title of Missionary Apostolic for all our missionaries in Ceylon. Remind me of those who already have it: I think they are you, Fr. Ciamin and Fr. Keating. I do not know what M. Reinaud can have done at Rome, but I doubt whether he has done any service to Bishop Bettachini. He claimed to be on good terms with Bishop Bravi. He must be on his way back to Ceylon, where he will doubtless make his arrangements with the Vicariate on which his mission depends. Reinaud was in England without my being warned, although I had put him up in my house. I do not know what he went there for, but he had a talk with Fr. Aubert, and certainly deceived him in leading him to believe that he wanted to come back into the Congregation. But this was no more than a trick, and I did not fall for it. When he came back to Marseilles he began to play the same tune to me, until I said to him definitely that in any case it would be, and would have to be, someone other than himself who would become Vicar Apostolic. These words were like a curtain rising to reveal a change of scene. There was no question any more of coming back into the Congregation, and the conversation touched only on generalities. I had no need of this new proof to be sure that that fellow had nothing in mind but his own interests, and God knows what they are! Before I end this letter I must ask you what you think of our future in your island. I can see that it would be useless to hope to obtain an establishment that would serve as a community house for us. Your service consists in being sent to missions that are like isolated parishes. Already there are six of you on missionary service, and with the two that I will try to send you this summer you will be eight. Will this be enough for the share that will come to you when the missions are assigned, or will it be necessary to keep some more men for you with a more distant future in view when we might

hope to see you filling all the missions of the Jaffna Vicariate? How many missions are there in the Vicariate? Will the Bishop be willing to entrust them to you one after the other? I find it hard to believe if there are others already in possession. Think about all these things and reply to me in detail, but let us have no 'perhaps' and 'a little'; what you must do is to think carefully and then say frankly what you think. It would be a good idea, and even necessary, for you to make a historical record of your mission, beginning with your voyage from Marseilles to Ceylon, and going on to your missions, your occupations, the arrival of the other missionaries, where they have been sent, their work as well as your own, the chief things that have happened, whether in your favour or contrary to your interests — in a word, absolutely everything. That is what is done elsewhere.

I must not forget to tell you that to my great amazement I received a letter postmarked Terracina from your brother Jean Baptiste Chirurgo.⁵ It is a letter of congratulations that he was inspired to write by reading in the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith a letter that you had sent to me. He says: 'The fact of having been negligent in the past is no reason to continue to be so in the future... etc.', and he ends by adding: 'May the infant Jesus whose birth is at hand grant prosperity to you and your families, and may a pleasant New Year be followed by many days full of well-being and contentment, etc.'⁶

From this you can see that he is a poet and an intelligent man.

Goodbye, my dear son. I wish a thousand blessings on you and on our Fathers, and I embrace you.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

Since I cannot write to everybody, give my news to all our Fathers and pass on to them my loving greetings.⁷

⁵ *Chirurgo* - 'surgeon'.

⁶ This extract is in Italian.

⁷ The last three lines are written in the margin of the first page.

15. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria at Jaffna].⁸

The allocation of the Propagation of the Faith for Ceylon is in the hands of Bishop de Mazenod. Commissions. Two missionaries soon to be sent. He is to work for the conversion of unbelievers. General Chapter and journey of the Founder to England, where he hopes to establish a local administration in London. Success of popular missions in England.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, April 2, 1850.

My dear Fr. Semeria, our last letters must have crossed. The last that I received from you is dated February 6, and it enclosed one of February 9 from Bishop Bettachini, to whom I have written as well. I was not yet able to give him an account of the sums that he had asked me to draw, firstly because his first document was not in order and had to be corrected in Paris, and secondly because I had not drawn the money on the second. This has given me time to write to the Council and to receive with their reply a complimentary copy of an account of all their allocations for 1849. I have not yet drawn the second sum because it is twenty days post dated. When I have cashed it I will have in my hands, if I am not mistaken, about eighteen thousand francs belonging to Bishop Bettachini's mission. His 1849 allocation was for 15000 fr., of which 2809 francs have already been allocated. So I have drawn that sum, losing a little on the exchange, plus 237 fr. which the Prelate had collected for the Work and is keeping in his own hands, according to M. Choiselat's letter, plus 191 more francs, which the Treasurer of the Central Council at Lyons had undertaken to pay on his own account. From the money that I will have, I will pay for the travel of these two missionaries whom I am sending to you, but who will not be able to leave in May as you would like, but will set out in June.⁹ You can count on them, and take them into account when assigning people to your missions. They will be on their way when you make the assignments. If it is done before August, you can still treat them as though they were present. I will also take from Bishop Bettachini's money the sums necessary to pay for the commissions that the

⁸ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

⁹ Frs. Joseph Vivier and Léon-Charles Mauroit, who left Marseilles on June 23, 1850, Cf. Semeria Journal, Batayron copy, p. 75.

Prelate has entrusted to me, and the advances which you are to pay back to him *pro rata* for expenses involved in your own commissions, which we will deal with. I must warn you in advance that it will not be possible for everything to be sent with the missionaries. You will pay a very high price for your organ, and run the risk of leaving half your business undone. I intend to put the goods on a sailing vessel bound for Pondichery, from where you will be able to have them transported to Ceylon very easily. Following what you have said to me, I will keep 3000 fr. for the sum in question: this will go into the Congregation's funds and you will charge it to Bishop Bettachini. Furthermore, from the money allocated to this Prelate for his mission I will pay not only the 2600 fr. that he authorises me to take for the travel of these two missionaries, but what the journey will really cost, as I do not think that it can be made for that price. Should not the money of the Propagation of the Faith be used for that above everything? And does the Prelate imagine that I am ready to pay out of my own pocket, as I did for you, 1500 fr., which have never been paid back to me? That is not going to happen again.

I have not failed to write to the proper people in Rome on the outrages to which the Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna is being submitted. When you tell me to make my agent speak for me, you do not understand what an agent is. He is an insignificant man whose business is nothing more than to transport documents, but who is never allowed to deal with business. So I have written directly, and with great care, since it was obvious that I must be speaking under your influence, and that I had to avoid saying the same things. I insist always that the Vicariate of Jaffna should be given to our Congregation. I must simply admit to you that I have even repeated that it would be suitable for this purpose that you should be made coadjutor of Bishop Bettachini, so much do I count on your faithfulness and humility. What comes of this depends on the good God. Keep calm about this, and let Divine Providence do its work; think of nothing other than doing your duty, whatever your position and circumstances. I am extremely pleased with what you tell me about all our Fathers. Be sure to tell them this for me. I approve strongly of the idea of nominating Fr. Ciamin as your second assessor, and it goes without saying that Fr. Mouchel must be your first assessor and your admonitor. Since we are separated by so great a distance, I have had to give you wider powers than to ordinary local superiors. When you have an important decision to

make, the correct thing to do is to consult your assessors, but you can deal with plenty of things on your own, with the intention of giving an account of them to me. As for this sort of minor seminary of which you speak, do you really think it is worth it? You would have had to ask for more than two subjects, and for the present I could not have given you them, since I have to provide for needs which are being felt almost everywhere. And is it not more important that our subjects fill all the missions of the Jaffna Vicariate? You have never told me how many men would be necessary for that. And further, are we never going to start working for the conversion of the unbelievers, of whom there is such a huge number on your island? I am longing to see you storm the fort in that country where, it seems, it has been left in peace for a long while. Say something, say a lot to me about all this, and give me your views and your hopes on the matter. I know you have work to do among your bad christians, as you prove to me by your last letter in which you tell me of the many homes you have made and illicit liaisons you have brought to an end in your country, but you must also work for the conversion of the unbelievers.

And now I must speak to you of our coming Chapter. I am sending you the circular letter of convocation for the end of August. You will read there of the measures that I have had to take because of the expansion of the Congregation since the statutes were drawn up. Read this circular carefully, and act in accord with it. Before the Chapter I am going to make a tour of England and Ireland. If I can establish a local administration I will do so to help all our overseas missions. It would be much easier for you to have your commissions done in England than at Marseilles. In view of the cost of sending articles by steam-boat and the great difficulty of unloading them, taking them across the desert, loading them to cross the Red Sea, and so on, it is almost folly to use that route to send the things you ask for, while the communications between London and the English colonies must be frequent and easy. I mean to begin this long journey two days after the Trinity ordination, that is, in the last days of next month. I will need all that time to be back before the end of August. If you think that you could send a letter to me in England in July, I would be delighted to receive it. You could address it to Maryvale near Birmingham. Maryvale, Perry-barr, Birmingham, is, as you know, our house for novices and Oblates in England. Perhaps you do not know how this English mission is prospering beyond all our hopes, giving us reason to

thank the Lord without ceasing. Our Fathers have given at Manchester a mission on the model of the ones we used to give in France, and it has produced marvellous effects. They have just given another one in Liverpool, where we are established, and that too has been marvellous. No Congregation had ever imagined that it would be possible to do such things in that centre of Protestantism. And so our men have the glory and the consolation of having undertaken the task and having succeeded perfectly. At Liverpool they have received 25 abjurations of heresy, and there and in Manchester they have brought back Catholics who were so only in name. Goodbye: I embrace you and bless you with all my heart.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

1851

16. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria at Jaffna].¹

The Pope has approved the changes in the Constitutions. Propaganda are very satisfied with the Oblates, and Fr. Semeria is to be nominated coadjutor to Bishop Bettachini when he asks for him. Sending of four Fathers to the Colombo Vicariate. Bishop Allard has been nominated Vicar Apostolic of Natal. Fr. Semeria is to work for the conversion of unbelievers. Allowance of the Propagation of the Faith for Colombo and Jaffna. Good news from Oregon. Fr. Taché is to be coadjutor of Bishop Provencher on Red River.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Rome, March 12, 1851.²

I am writing to you from Rome, my dear Fr. Semeria. I would have liked to have written earlier, but first I had to deal with the business that has brought me to this capital. I begin by expressing my surprise that my letters do not arrive.³ Recently, it is true, I was a day late for the departure of the boat, but your letter must have left the next month. May God grant that it has not gone astray. The fact is that you have not yet acknowledged having received it. I

¹ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

² The date is not certain since the text is almost illegible, but Bishop de Mazenod was in Rome at the beginning of March and wrote to Fr. Semeria a few days before March 25. Cf. the letter that follows.

³ Yenveux V, 172, quotes some lines from a letter from the Founder to Fr. Semeria, dated January 19, 1851: "...Every morning and evening the Oblates are present in my thoughts before the Most Holy Sacrament. This is my sweetest conversation with our divine Saviour, when I place myself before him, amazed at my great family spread throughout the world..." This extract must be taken rather from the letter to Bishop Taché, written on January 19, since in the spring of 1851 Fr. Semeria complains that for 10 months he has had no news from Marseilles. Cf. Mazenod to Semeria, June 3, 1851.

must tell you at once that the Holy Father has approved all the decisions that we made in the Chapter, both for the formation of Provinces and Vicariates and for the added regulations concerning the direction of major seminaries. The fact that I was in Rome had the advantage that it enabled us to see this matter brought to a conclusion, to the great astonishment of everybody, in a single week, when it would normally have dragged on for at least six months. I saw the Pope twice, and each time he kept me more than an hour. I shall see him again before I leave. It is discretion that prevents me from using the permission he gave me of going to see him whenever I wish. I must tell you too that our Congregation is in very good odour at Propaganda. I have been told that it is the one that is doing the most good and, it might have been added, without noise or discord. Imagine — the Pope had to nominate, by his own supreme authority, the chief superior of the Redemptorists in order to achieve peace among them. The Congregation is in favour as regards the Ceylon mission. It would give pleasure if we were to fill the island with our missionaries, and it is believed that one day it will be handed over entirely to us: this is something that I tell you in the very greatest secrecy. I have insisted that you be nominated as Bishop Bettachini's coadjutor. He has no personal objection, quite the contrary, and when Bishop Bettachini was consulted, what I had written had made such an impression, he replied that if he thought he needed a coadjutor he would ask for no one other than you, but this holy man has not realised that it would be advantageous for him to obtain such a coadjutor, and he said that it did not yet seem to him that the right moment had arrived, which made the Sacred Congregation reject the proposal. We will come back to it later, for it is something I am determined on. Your elevation to the Episcopate will not break the bonds that unite you to the Congregation, and you will always be its dear son, not only because of principles common to all, but also through the special dispositions of our Congregation, where the head and Superior General is a Bishop, the last General Chapter but one nominated another Bishop as assistant to the Superior General, and Bishops are or can be Provincials. To be a Bishop, above all in our missions, is to be head of the missionaries and their model in all the religious virtues, as well as in zeal for the salvation of souls, whom they are equally called to convert and sanctify. The important thing is never to be ambitious for this responsibility, which certainly has its frightening side, never to do anything to obtain it, but when one

is called by the will of God manifested in that of one's superiors, one accepts it in simplicity, with a firm resolve never to use it for one's own personal advantage or to the detriment of religious regularity. So let us allow Divine Providence to do its work and put into its hands all the interests of the Congregation and of the mission.

Meanwhile, Propaganda have given me the faculty of designating those of our men whom I wish as Missionaries Apostolic. For this reason I have been given blank copies of all the documents. I have decided that it would be suitable to grant this title to all our Missionary Fathers in Ceylon, together with the faculties that go with it. And so you can tell all our Fathers that they can, from today on, take this honourable title. I am keeping the diplomas in my own possession, and I will send them to them by the first missionaries who will come to join you, which will be soon, that is, when I am back in Marseilles, for I have agreed to send four of our men to the Vicariate of Colombo to satisfy the pressing requests of Bishop Bravi.⁴ This Prelate did not think it suitable to write directly to me, and in that he was wrong, but it does not matter, for when it is a question of the glory of God and the salvation of souls, I do not trouble about etiquette or a lack of politeness. A reply has been sent to him from here to say that his wish to have Italians is strange and ridiculous. Nor can one easily find them. However, people are happy that I am agreeing to send some, whoever they are, French or Italian. I want you to know that you will be free to place these missionaries, whom I am on the point of sending, wherever you wish, provided that you establish four in the Colombo Vicariate. That is all that is necessary. Needless to say, you will be the superior of these missionaries in Colombo as you are of those in Jaffna. You can tell Bishop Bettachini that I have been very insistent here that Ste Anne should be left in his Vicariate. The view is that that is how it must be, but since each of the two Vicars Apostolic has written to give his view, a Bishop who will be passing through Ceylon on his way back from some mission has been charged with the task of hearing both parties and giving his judgement, which will without doubt have to be confirmed by the Congregation here. I do not know whether this letter will reach you

⁴ Frs. Dominique Pulicani, Jean-Pierre Perréard, Adrien Duffo and Laurent Lallemand, who arrived in Ceylon on July 25. Cf. *Semeria Journal*, Batayron copy, p. 106.

before or after the missionary Priori returns. I have seen him here several times. I was first told at Propaganda that he did not want to return any more; it seems that he made up his own mind, but this missionary is as I believe all missionaries to be who do not belong to a Congregation: they go to a mission to make a position for themselves, and I cannot see that they are greatly concerned about the salvation of souls. I am sure that when they are on the spot they acquit themselves in conscience of the duties they are given, but in the manner of priests in a town or a village. I have a different view of the apostolic ministry of the missions. And even if you do believe that Bishop Bravi wishes to die in Ceylon in the service of the Buddhists, I can see here that he is already tired of it and asking to come back to Europe in order to become a prelate. For the good of the unbelievers, whom I wish we could make some impression on, I wish that good Bishop would become more and more convinced that the climate of Ceylon is making him too fat and bringing him into a dangerous state of health, and then we would have a huge field to cultivate with far fewer obstacles to hinder us. I have no regrets that I am so old, except that I will not have time to see all the wonderful things that I can foresee already, but which can only come to be little by little. And this is not only in Ceylon. There is the beautiful Vicariate of the land of Natal, which has been entrusted to our Congregation. That is a country of the future, to judge by what the Bishop of Port-Louis, Mauritius,⁵ was saying to me the other day, a magnificent country that is going to be populated with new colonies and embraces the mission of the Kaffirs. I have chosen our Fr. Allard to be the Vicar Apostolic of this fine mission. He was approved without hesitation and so has been chosen as Bishop of Samaria *in partibus infidelium*. His extreme dislike of accepting the *onus* of the Episcopate made him refuse this honour, ready as he was to leave for that country as a simple missionary. This refusal, which certainly gives a good impression of his humility, had no effect other than an annoying delay. The Pope, to whom I explained the matter, told me that my authority as a Superior was enough for me to oblige him to obey, but that he would add his own command, since I desired it. I refused two other Vicariates Apostolic since I asked that we should be allowed to gain strength in the service that we were giving already. So far we have no reason to complain of the number of

⁵ G. B. Allen Collier.

subjects coming to the novitiate; it is full of good men. By the way, Fr. Mauroit's uncle has recently received the habit, his brother having already made his vows and gone down to Marseilles, where people were very happy with him. All the missions that we have given this year have done great good everywhere. It is this that makes me desire even more that the numerous subjects whom I am sending to Ceylon should at last launch an attack on idolatry and disbelief. I cannot be satisfied while so much enthusiasm and devotion does nothing but support the sad, old and decrepit Christian population. What I want is new Christians made in a new mould. I have said this here, and I will repeat it, just as I have said it to you on other occasions. I have received news from Marseilles that M. Choiselat has put at my disposal for Bishop Bettachini's account the sum of 7310 fr., of which sum M. Soiderquellé of Lyons claims 2500 fr. to settle his account for some vestments that he has sent to Bishop Bettachini. It seems that these are the vestments that Frs. Viviers and Mauroit took with them. I am going to write a couple of words to Bishop Bettachini to ask him whether I can hand over this sum of 2500, which I do not wish to pay except on his order. 11000 fr. had been allotted to Bishop Bravi, and he has had half of that sum, 5500 fr. being left at my disposal to pay for the travel of the four missionaries for whom he has asked me. This will not be enough to send them on the steamboats and so it looks as though we will be sending them on the ships of the English company which leave from London. The Bishop of Mauritius never travels any other way: it is a little longer, but safer and much cheaper. I was intending, in order to respond to Bishop Bettachini's wishes and your desire, to send you a Father from England, but it happens that the good Fr. Aubert — I do not know what has come over him — has just sent to Canada eight subjects who were in England, precisely the ones from among whom I would have chosen the one you need. I will have to wait until I am back in Marseilles before I can make any other plan. I shall keep back from the funds that I have for Bishop Bettachini the money that I will need for the journey of this teacher. So I hope that in consequence he will be careful not to send any new orders to Lyons. It is rather a lavish way of furnishing foreign missions, to order high-quality furnishings from Lyons! When this teacher, or the missionaries that I am going to send to Bishop Bravi, leave, I will try to send what has not come in the consignments that I have sent you up to now. I am still getting busier every day. I can no longer

keep up with my correspondence, and so may the dear and most beloved Fathers be content to find in the letters I write to you both a reply to those that they have managed to write to me, and the expression of my tender attachment to them. I bless them all as well as you from the bottom of my heart. Fr. Tempier, who has come with me to Rome, says a thousand friendly things to all of you. Farewell.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. We have had news of the Oregon Fathers. Fr. d'Herbomez and the two lay-brothers have arrived and been welcomed with delight. This mission, which is so poor, will soon be able to support itself, thanks to the wise measures taken by our Fr. Ricard. They are working hard and behaving well. But what difficulties they have had to put up with from the very people who should have supported and protected them! Fr. Ricard has shown great courage. On Red River we have been played the cruel trick of the nomination of our Fr. Taché as coadjutor of Bishop Provencher. What does comfort me is that mission is served exclusively by our Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The new Bishop will be the chief of the missionaries. What are we to do? We must make the best of everything that happens. Fr. Tempier has taken it on himself to speak to you about the cause of our holy Father Albini, which I intend to introduce. What he says he will do for you, he must do also for Fr. Mouchel, who, I think, knew that venerable Father. I have written to Monsignor by this post, and I am holding a knife in his back by telling him of what was said to me at Propaganda and telling him of my attitude in case, through his fault...⁶ We need an assurance that we can get from nowhere else, and that is so well understood here that I have been positively told that... not the Vicariate to our Congregation. In a word, if the coadjutor has not been granted, it is because...

17. [To Fr. Etienne Semeria at Jaffna].⁷

The Sacred Congregation of Propaganda is disposed to entrust the entire island of Ceylon to the Oblates and to nominate Fr. Semeria

⁶ What follows is difficult or impossible to read, being written in margins that have been torn, and the ink having been caused to run by dampness.

⁷ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

as coadjutor of Bishop Bettachini. At the express request of Propaganda, and not of Bishop Bravi, Bishop de Mazenod will send four missionaries to Colombo. The Holy Father has granted the pallium to the Bishop of Marseilles. Many Oblate vocations. Success of Fr. Laverlochère's preaching tour.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Rome, March 25, 1851.

My dear son, although I wrote to you and to Bishop Bettachini only a few days ago, I wish to take advantage of the journey of a Lazarist Father who is going to visit China, in order to tell you that I have received your last letter dated February 8, which has been sent on to me from Marseilles. I am still very surprised and, above all, hurt, that at least two of my letters have been lost. I can understand how it must be painful to you to be without any news. I can judge that by the way in which I wait so impatiently for the postman myself, when he is due to bring me one of your letters. I cannot thank you enough for the prompt way in which you write: it is a real joy for me, and softens the pain of separation from my children, and above all from a son such as you. You will have seen from my last letter that I have been kept up to date with all your business at Propaganda. The news you give me only serves to confirm what I knew already, and you know what I felt called to say on that subject. It is out of regard for Bishop Bettachini that what I was asking for has not been done, although it was seen to be a very good idea. The good Bishop has considered the matter solely from his own point of view, but I looked on it differently, and this was well understood at Propaganda. So well, in fact, that I was authorised to ask for an honest explanation, in order to find out whether he seriously was concerned for the good of the Congregation or not. If he does, let him ask for the coadjutor destined for him, and he will be granted to him at once; otherwise, I shall have to decide what to do. Clearly, he is not anxious to have an equal so close to him, and he was able to say truthfully that at his age and with his strength he had no need of such help, but the Congregation needs a guarantee to assure it of its possession of that mission for which it has made, is making, and is ready to make, such great sacrifices. I have written to the Bishop on this subject in such a way as to lead him to speak his mind. I must not hide from you, but I tell you in secrecy, that at Propaganda they were disposed to give

the whole island over to the Congregation, and that is why they would agree so readily to make you coadjutor to cooperate with me and reassure me for the future. We shall see how Bishop Bettachini replies. It is his letter that has held things up here, where they want to observe the proprieties and not to give a Bishop a coadjutor against his will. I need not tell you that you must appear to be quite ignorant of all these things.

As for the 1500 fr. that he is claiming, I thought I had explained myself sufficiently. I reimbursed myself with them because I had advanced that sum to pay in part for the passage of the first missionaries. The Propagation of the Faith intends first of all that these allowances should be used for these expenses, which are most necessary. There is no need to go back to that. I took that money because it was owing to me. I told you in my last letter that I had obtained the title and privileges of Missionaries Apostolic for all our missionaries who are at present in Ceylon. They can exercise these rights from now on, and I will send them the diploma with the four men who will be going to the Vicariate of Colombo. While you await their arrival, as you will be the superior of everybody in the two Vicariates, I authorise you, if you judge it suitable, to establish at once in the Vicariate of Colombo some of the men whom you have in the Jaffna Vicariate, so long as you keep in Jaffna some of those who are destined for Colombo. I told you in my letter that it is for you to place subjects as you think most suitable for the good of the mission. There is no need to pretend that Bishop Bravi is a friend of the Congregation. When he received it into his territory, he was bowing to necessity. And that was the intention of Propaganda, which does not like his repugnance for the French. The view here is, and again I tell you this under the secret, that he will not stay in Ceylon, and that soon, now that he is a Bishop, he will find himself some pretext, the need to lose weight or something else, to come to Rome *e non far niente*.⁸ That will give you an idea of the opinion that people have of him. Bishop Bettachini has proved to them that he is *poco sincero*⁹, and if necessary your letters will give further proof. Whatever becomes of him, there is nothing left of these Silvestrines except one mediocre subject, and it is I who have been called on to supply the needs of

⁸ 'and do nothing'.

⁹ 'not sincere'.

his mission which, from what he says, seems to be in a very bad state. M. Priori will come back as well, although basically he has no great desire to do so, but one must live, and on this subject I made it clear at Propaganda that all these missionaries who do not belong to a Congregation where men walk in obedience and devotion are nothing but men who are trying to make a position for themselves, and that is the truth. They cannot live in Europe with their paltry Mass-stipends, and so they try to set themselves up elsewhere. It is sad but it is true. Everything that I have said will confirm you in your views. It is not that I offered missionaries for the Colombo Vicariate, but Propaganda that asked me for them insistently, singing loudly but deservedly the praises of our Congregation. And so there is no doubt that Bishop Bravi will receive them, the more so because he even asked for our men, although as a last resort and although at the last moment he asked for them to be Italians. I would explain the *silenzio*¹⁰ of which you tell me by the fear that he may have that the Italians in his Vicariate may take offence, since he is responsible for the whole business. Let us be patient and maintain our good will, and the good God will do the rest. I do not think I will still be here when Bishop Canoz and his companion arrive, since I intend to leave during the first few days of next month. The Pope has granted me everything I asked him for the Congregation, and he has added a very great favour which I did not ask for myself personally, and that is the *pallium*; you know how rarely this distinction has been granted to Bishops — one does not hear of as many as two cases in a century. He is going to add a Brief to give further evidence of his goodwill, giving the titles that I may use as a result of this favour shown me by the Holy See for the few services that I have been able to render the Church. Tomorrow I am going to say Holy Mass on the tomb of Saint Peter, and I have no need to tell you that you and all our men will be with me in that sanctuary where I received so special a grace in 1825. I have always attributed to my confidence in the Prince of the Apostles the favour shown me by his successor, Leo XII. May the good God continue to bless us. I calculate that we must have about fifty Oblates,¹¹ apart from the novitiate, which contains plenty of good subjects. You can see that we shall be in a position to send you more men when I am sure of the future of our

¹⁰ 'silence'.

¹¹ Oblates: i.e. students in the scholasticate.

Congregation in the island. Fr. Laverlochère's tour through France will mark the beginning of an era in all the towns where he has been able to speak. There was great eagerness to hear him, as I can understand well by the way in which I myself was impressed by him. He has given new life to the work of the Propagation of the Faith everywhere he has preached. He is a real apostle, and they were right to say at Aix that it was a new Gennesareth and a continuation of the miracle of Pentecost. Farewell, my dear son, and I embrace and bless you with all my heart. A thousand tender greetings and my blessing to all our Fathers, together with that of the Holy Father, which I asked for all of you.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

18. To my dear and beloved sons, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in the island of Ceylon.¹²

Affectionate greetings. The missionaries are to continue doing good work for the catholics, and above all to work with the unbelievers.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, June 2, 1851.

After writing so many letters in haste in order to take advantage of the departure of our dear Fathers who are to join you and to share your work, will I have enough time to write a few friendly lines to you? If I only said one word to you I would be glad, because it would express to you the tender affection that I always feel for you in my heart. If I wrote to you on every occasion, I will not say when I think of you, which is at least twice every day, but when I speak of you, it would be too much, for that happens so often. And still you accuse me perhaps of neglecting you because you do not receive any letters from me. Do believe that that is not my fault. I have not let a month pass without writing to your superior, but for some time my letters have been getting lost, I do not know how.

I have heard that you have done much good work, but there will be a great deal more for you to do when the moment arrives for you to attack infidelity and idolatry. I do not know whether I will have

¹² Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L M-Semeria.

the joy of seeing it before I die, but I will always hope to do so. You will do it, I am sure, when you are more established on your island and new forces put you in a position to extend your conquests.

Stay faithful to your sublime vocation and scrupulous in observing your rules. God will not fail to bless you, as I do now in His name and from the bottom of my heart.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

19. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria at Jaffna].¹³

The letters of the Founder have not been arriving in Ceylon for 10 months. Four missionaries are going to Colombo. Fr. Semeria is to be superior of all the Oblates in Ceylon. Prudence necessary in relations with the Colombo clergy. Difficulty of finding the money necessary for this voyage on English ships. Names and characters of the four missionaries. Will Bishop Bettachini accept a coadjutor?

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, June 3, 1851.

This time, dear son, if God so will, my letter will reach you. I was amazed to learn from your last letter that for ten months you have heard nothing from me. And yet I do not think I have let a month pass without writing. What I find hard to explain is how my letters have been lost while yours arrive here perfectly well. I wrote to you again from Rome and once since my return to Marseilles. However it may be, I have the annoyance of knowing that you are deprived of news from me, and the even greater annoyance to hear that you have allowed yourself to fear that this lack of letters might be due to some other cause than the unfaithfulness of the post or of those who were charged with carrying my letters or seeing that they arrive.

There are four new Missionaries Apostolic who are about to come to you. I had explained to you in my letters that have been lost how this has been arranged. Bishop Bravi, who, strictly between ourselves, is not thought sincere even at Propaganda, — and his correspondence with you and Bishop Bettachini proves his insincerity — Bishop Bravi was crying loudly for missionaries; he would have liked

¹³ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

to be sent some Silvestrines, his own confrères, and then since no Italians were available, as a last resort he fell back on us, still sticking to his whim of wishing that they should be Italians, an idea that he attributed to the Prelate whose coadjutor he is. I do not think Propaganda was able to find more than one Silvestrine, a man of poor intellect, who agreed to make the journey. The General of that little Order replied that there were so few of them they were hardly able to make up their own imperceptible communities in Rome. Italian priests were no more easy to find. And moreover the Congregation of Propaganda is convinced that isolated priests who want to make a career for themselves on the mission are not what is needed, but devoted Congregations like our own, as they did not hesitate to say. As for the request that I should look for Italians among our own men, they quite rightly treated it as ridiculous, and I was told that Bishop Bravi should count himself lucky that I could send him Frenchmen of whom the Congregation says that they are the best missionaries in the world, which is only to give them their due. As a result, it was agreed that I should send four of our missionaries for service in the Vicariate of Colombo, which is in extreme need of them. I have said to you in writing, and I repeat it now, that you are the superior of these newcomers as of the others, that it is for you to place them as you think best for the mission, keeping them if you wish in the Vicariate of Jaffna and sending the old ones to Colombo if you so decide. All that is necessary is that you give four missionaries to Colombo, whoever they are. In order to put things in order it would be a good idea for you to go in person to see Bishop Bravi in Colombo: pay deference to him in every way, but mistrust him as everybody does, missionaries and others. Be extremely courteous and polite with everybody, but do not give yourself away to anybody. If I had to believe the young Jesuit whose name escapes me who asked me on his knees on the ground to forgive him for his plots against you, which he attributed to his youth and inexperience, if I had to believe him, I could not trust Bishop Bettachini any more than the others. So it is decided that I will send four of our men as missionaries. In Bishop Bravi's view this is a *pis aller*, and in the eyes of Propaganda, the best thing to do. The Bishop was pressing that the missionaries should arrive for Easter, for otherwise all would be lost. In Rome it was understood that this was impossible, and they were ready to wait patiently. When I arrived at Marseilles, I set about my duty of sending my men on their journey, but I came up against a big obstacle, which was that Bishop Bravi had not yielded more than

5500 francs of his allowance, a sum that was quite insufficient to pay even for the voyage alone of our missionaries. I wrote at once to the Council of the Propagation of the Faith at Paris asking them to make up the necessary sum, and there was no reply. I was on the point of telling Propaganda at Rome that our missionaries were no longer to be expected because I could not expose our Fathers to the risk of being stranded on the Red Sea. The English company has adopted the policy of not giving second-class places to people unless they book first-class ones as well. Now, as you know, first-class places cost 80 pounds. How do we know that they will not demand that all the missionaries travel first-class, and then how will we manage with these 5500 fr., which will already have been eaten into by the journey from here to Suez? I would like to pass over in silence what that young Jesuit said to me, how places on the bridge are utterly indecent and that priests could not be reduced to occupying them, where they would be treated as mere servants. I said to myself that, while one would suffer such an affront for the love of Jesus Christ, it might be possible that two out of the four might have to agree to travel first-class, if that is a condition demanded by the rulers of the waves, who would otherwise simply leave you on the shore. So this is what we have decided: our Fathers will carry with them the money that belongs to Bishop Bettachini. Fr. Tempier does not think it wise to send it to him by way of London, with a loss of 500 frs. From this money belonging to Bishop Bettachini our missionaries will take what they are obliged to spend in addition to the 5500 fr. given by Bishop Bravi, and an account will be sent to this Prelate, who will repay to Bishop Bettachini all of his money that has been borrowed. It is only fair that the Vicariate for which the missionaries are destined should pay the expenses of their journey. It is quite enough that we are obliged to provide them with all necessary personal effects: really, it is the mission that should provide for them. Is it not strange that there is not a chalice to be found in the parishes or churches where you serve? You were so upset that the last men I sent you had not been provided with one, that this time I have bought four pretty little chalices which I consecrated the other day, and which will be for each missionary to use. They will not take up much room as they can be taken apart, and are kept in a very small case. Each one will also have a missal. Fr. Fabre has looked after all this wisely and enthusiastically.

I have not yet told you the names of the missionaries I am sending you. First there is Fr. Dominique Publicani, the oldest of the

group. He is an angel of virtue, of gentleness, of regularity, a holy and devoted religious who has already had some experience. The three others are just out of the nest, but they are men of goodwill of whom you will be able to make good use; and they are capable of good work. One is called Perreard, another Duffo and the third Lallement. It was not easy to find four good subjects at the same time and so quickly. If I had had more time, I would have had them perfect their English. Only Fr. Perreard knows a little, and he will act as interpreter during the voyage. It is not my fault if the others do not know that language. Fr. Tempier has himself to blame for not following my orders in this matter. He overloaded his men with theological studies, and there was no time for an English class. The English lessons we had organised earlier had been so useful to those of our men who have gone on other missions that he should not have neglected to follow the same system, which had succeeded so well. Patience is needed, and our Fathers will have some difficulty, but they will manage to learn what is necessary to fulfil their mission. The Italians, Lombards or others, whom Bishop Bravi was yearning for, would not have known any more. That is what you must say to yourselves in order to give yourselves patience. I have no more room to speak to you about the men who are coming on the mission. I regard Fr. Keating as a fool. The others are excellent. I am waiting for a reply from Bishop Bettachini to the letter I wrote him from Rome. I am more than ever anxious that he should do what is being asked of him. He has no plausible reason for refusing what I am asking of him with the agreement of the Sacred Congregation, which has understood the importance of my motives. It is well understood that at his age he has no need of a coadjutor,¹⁴ but it is realised that the Congregation of Oblates of Mary needs to be able to see a future ahead of it to devote itself as it is doing, and is disposed to do even more. But we must be in a secure position whatever may happen, even if it is the death of the Vicar Apostolic. I must have confidence in your virtue to speak to you so openly. Keep me well in touch about the dispositions of Bishop Bettachini. He gave way to the stirrings of egoism in his reply to the Sacred Congregation. If, instead of saying that at his age and so on he had no need of coadjutor, he had replied that he was glad to accept, the business would be over. May

¹⁴ What follows is written in the margins of the four pages of the letter.

he come to realise that it would not make you less simple and humble, and that you will not put him in the shade by your intentions.

Farewell: I embrace and bless you.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

20. [To Bishop Joseph-Marie Bravi, coadjutor of the Vicar Apostolic of Colombo].¹⁵

The cost of the journey on the English boats is very high; 5500 francs are not enough to send four missionaries. May Bishop Bravi be the father and the protector of the Oblates.

Marseilles, June 3, 1851.

Your Excellency,

The Sacred Congregation of Propaganda has asked me for four missionaries of the Congregation of Oblates of Mary Immaculate for the Vicariate of Colombo, and I have regarded it as a duty to respond to this invitation, which I have considered as an order. When I came back from my journey to Rome, I therefore made arrangements for the departure of four Missionaries Apostolic. However, I have encountered a great difficulty, in that I have been unable to find the necessary money to pay their travel expenses.

The Council of the Propagation of the Faith has put at my disposal the 5500 francs that you had earmarked for this purpose. But you may not know that the English Red Sea Company demand that everybody who is not a servant takes a first-class ticket, at the price of at least £ 80 each. This is an abuse of power, real tyranny, but what can one do in the face of the rulers of the waves? One must either give way to the conditions imposed by their greed, or stay on the shore.

Last time two missionaries set out for Jaffna, it was only with difficulty that one managed to stay on the bridge while the other, who passed for his master, had to put himself in the first class. The same, or worse, could happen to those who are now getting ready to leave.

¹⁵ Original (in Italian): Kandy, Episcopal Archive.

We cannot expose them to the risks that would result if, once they had reached Suez, they could not embark for lack of money. I would rather have been able to explain matters to you and know your intentions before letting them leave. But as the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda had told me of your urgent need of help, I thought it best not to let myself be held up by these difficulties. It is plain that when one wants missionaries one must pay for their travel; moreover, it is especially for that purpose that the Propagation of the Faith makes allocations of funds.

This is the plan on which I have decided. The missionaries are to travel in the cheapest manner possible. Although a Jesuit who recently came from the Indies with Bishop Canoz has told me that these second-class places, reserved for servants, are unsuitable for priests, our missionaries, who make a profession of humility and mortification, will try to book them. If they do not obtain this favour of being badly accommodated, they will take the cheapest places and pay with the money they are taking to Bishop Bettachini, to whom you will reimburse these advances. I cannot see any other solution that will satisfy your demands and those of Propaganda, to whom I am writing to inform them of this decision.

Now, your Excellency, it remains only for me to beseech you to be the protector of the missionaries whom I am entrusting to your kindness. They are used to finding in me a father: now it is for you to adopt them as your sons. I am sure that you will never have reason to regret this fatherly role which I am handing on to you, because you will never find sons who are more devoted and more ready to share the enthusiasm of the Bishop to whom they are offering their service for the glory of God and the sanctification of souls. For this, they are leaving their families, their friends, and all the possibilities of doing good that they would have had in our country. They are leaving happy and full of good will. It will take them only a little time to gain the experience they lack, and they will count themselves fortunate to share in all things the care of the good shepherd under whose crook they are to exercise their holy ministry.

Please accept, your Excellency, the assurance of my devoted respect,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

21. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria in Jaffna].¹⁶

Ceremony with the Dames of the Congregation of St Anne. Fr Tempier's visit to Canada. The four missionaries are still on their way to Ceylon. Fr. Allard has been nominated Bishop of Samaria. Hopes that Fr. Semeria will soon become coadjutor at Jaffna.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, July 27, 1851.

My dear Fr. Semeria, I am fairly certain that I have missed the post, but no matter, I will begin this letter as I wait to go down to the church again to assist at Vespers, listen to the sermon and give Benediction. This morning, in this same church of the Jesuits, I said a Mass at which all our Dames from the house of the Congregation of St Anne received Holy Communion, and afterwards I gave them Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. I stayed in the house and dined at the expense of our fishwives in order to be able to get on with some letters. Nobody suspects that I am here, and I am being left in peace, something that it is impossible to manage when I am at the episcopal residence. I have been writing for several hours, including a letter to Fr. Tempier, whom I have sent to visit our houses in Canada. He made this voyage courageously, and has had not the slightest difficulty. In ten days he sailed from one continent to another, from Liverpool to New York, and his letters take only 18 days to come from Montreal to Marseilles. It is not like that when one tries to correspond with Oregon. Until now it used to take seven months for a letter to make the journey, but since it has been possible to pass through the Panama Canal, it takes only three. And as for getting to Ceylon, what is there that is not necessary? First of all letters get lost, at least mine, since all yours have reached me, but the missionaries, what must they not do to get there? I fell from the clouds when I received the other day a letter signed by our last four from Alexandria, which was only where they were supposed to be setting off from. May God grant that they are not late in Colombo, since Bishop Bravi was so insistent in asking that they should arrive before August. I am anxious to tell you that my urgent requests have persuaded the Council of the Propagation of the Faith to send me 2000 francs to add to the 5500 that they had already sent me. These

¹⁶ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

2000 will be deducted from next year's allocation to Bishop Bravi. So it will be obvious that I drew this sum after the departure of the four missionaries, whom I had told to use the money they were taking to Bishop Bettachini for any expenses they might need *en route*, with the understanding that Bishop Bettachini would reclaim them from Bishop Bravi. This was my only way of enabling these missionaries, who were being awaited so impatiently, to set out. And so either our missionaries have not needed to use Mgr Bettachini's money, and so the 2000 that the Propagation of the Faith sent me are in my hands at Bishop Bravi's disposal, or else they have used some of this capital, and in that case I will keep an equivalent sum at Bishop Bettachini's disposal, assuming that it is no more than the 2000 francs that I have received.

August 5, 1851.

My dear son, I was writing to you on the very day when I should have sent the letter to the post, and I was able to get no further than you can see. I was in no hurry, as there was no post to catch, but today I have come to camp out in my country office, and I am taking advantage of the solitude I have secured for myself unknown to anybody to return to my letter to you. I have already been writing for six hours without interruption but no matter, my hand is still firm enough to hold a pen, although a little tired, and so I am taking advantage of this in the fear of being surprised by somebody and taken away from the pleasant occupation which I am lucky enough to have arranged for myself today. Bishop Bravi's behaviour and his words are incomprehensible to me. He has certainly done all that he can to have missionaries other than our men, but the letter that you copied for me does not displease me. We shall see whether he keeps to his word. You will have seen by now the treasure that I am giving you. The four missionaries are real jewels. I was as annoyed as they themselves must have been by the unavoidable delay in their journey. They were delayed for fifteen days at Alexandria. From there they wrote me a charming letter which I have had published in the *Ami de la Religion*. I hope they arrived a little before the beginning of August, the time that Bishop Bravi said was crucial for him. I remember that he said the same about Easter, which reassures me a little. He will have four of them, although in fact he would have been contented with two. If only he knew the sacrifice I am making in giving him these subjects! I want him to know that I had to refuse a Vicariate Apostolic which the Sacred Congregation was *pressing* me

to accept, and which I would in fact have accepted if these subjects had still been available. I need only to add one or two more and we would have been masters in that Vicariate, since I was being asked to choose its head, who was to be elevated to the Episcopate.¹⁷ I should be glad if these gentlemen, including Bishop Bettachini, knew these details, for they will prove to them that there is something meritorious in our serving their island when we could be independent elsewhere. I think I have told you that I was only fairly happy with Bishop Bettachini's letter. His tasteless joke about one *Minchione*¹⁸ less in this world if he should happen to die, seemed to me worthy of a street-porter, and did not answer my very just remark. I had been assured at Propaganda (and I tell you this in the greatest secrecy) that I could rest assured, for the whole island was reserved for us, but I am too old to wait. Before I die, I want to see this begin to become reality. When I insist so much that you should be called to be coadjutor, it is certainly not to put a crown on your head, but only for the greater glory of God, the good of souls, the conversion of unbelievers, and the honour of our Congregation, which is called to do great work in the island, when it is free in its movements and in the exercise of its zeal. It will cost me nothing to send more subjects to help, as there are still men who would be glad to join their brethren. What is a Bishop chosen from among the Oblates of Mary but a religious more fervent than the others? We have here before our eyes an example who edifies the whole world. I have just consecrated Fr. Allard Bishop of Samaria, assisted by that other admirable son of the Congregation the Bishop of Viviers, and by the Bishop of Fréjus¹⁹ who, by the way, has just given his major seminary to the Congregation. And now our new Bishop is living at Le Calvaire like a simple religious, he is the first at all the community exercises, and he goes so far in humility, obedience and poverty that he asks permission to go into the room of a sick Father and to give some pictures to his sister-in-law and nephew, whom he saw in passing, because they are here, without troubling to go to his own home, where he will not go before leaving our continent, perhaps for ever. What a worthy man! What a holy Prelate! I can assure you that my responsibility for having been in a position to present him to the Holy See in my capacity as Superior General does not weigh on me at all, any more than that which I

¹⁷ The mission of Malabar. Cf. A. Perbal, 'Missions acceptées de 1841 à 1861, *Études Oblates* 23 (1964) 137-138.

¹⁸ 'Fool'.

¹⁹ Bishops H. Guibert and C. A. J. Wicart.

will bear on your account, my dear son, for like him you are filled with the religious spirit which was poured into your soul on the day of your profession and has been developed by the grace of God and the communication of the Holy Spirit throughout the course of your religious life.

I said to you that you are the superior of all the subjects of our Congregation who are in Ceylon. You will exercise your superiority as you see fit, with the wisdom and prudence called for in the direction of souls. At this distance, I cannot give you any detailed orders. I had thought it would have been good had you welcomed your brethren at Colombo. If prudence demands that you should not do this, so be it. However, it does seem to me that a conversation with Bishop Bravi could have been useful. He thinks otherwise, and so be it. I am struck by Bishop Bettachini's journey along the coasts of Malabar. Must he not have been entrusted with some mission in that area? I had heard it said that Bishop Bravi wanted nothing more than to retire to Italy, but I did not suspect it of Bishop Bettachini. Had this been so he would not have drawn back when there was a question of making you his coadjutor, and so I think you are wrong to imagine this. However, this is just what I would like, for at the moment you and Frs. Mouchel and Ciamin have enough experience of the country to be able to manage on your own. I was really waiting for matters to become a little clearer before sending you the teacher you ask for. First, for the present I have not got one. Could not Fr. Keating have taken on this work under your supervision? However that may be, one of you should have been presented to become a member of the special Council that you mention to me. That would have suited you well. Everything that increases your credit and reputation must be accepted for the greater success of your ministry. The Jesuit whose name I can never remember²⁰ gave me as his sole excuse for the nonsense for which he was asking my forgiveness his view of the good that could have been done for catholic education in face of the protestants, although you could not do it at that time because of your ignorance of the languages. He agreed that that was to desire the impossible, since you had only just arrived.

Busy though I am, I will copy for you the last letter that I have written to Bishop Bettachini.²¹

²⁰ Fr. Strickland.

²¹ Here Bishop de Mazenod transcribes the letter to Bishop Bettachini. Cf. letter 22 below.

That is enough. I must admit that I am growing a little tired, but I did want you to have an idea of my correspondence with the Bishop, since I do not think he will give you my letters to read; I am writing to Propaganda giving the same views. Farewell, my dear son; I bless you with all my heart and also Fr. Lebeschou who thought of me, and all the others.

22. [To Bishop Horace Bettachini, Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna].²²

Four missionaries sent to Colombo. Advantages for the Oblates and for the Vicariate of Jaffna of proposing Fr. Semeria as coadjutor of Bishop Bettachini. Fr. Strickland, S.J., at Marseilles.

Marseilles, [June, 1851].²³

Your Excellency,

I do not know why my letters have for a long time not been arriving in Ceylon. I hope this one will have a more fortunate destiny; I am entrusting it to the missionaries whom the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda has requested for the Vicariate of Colombo. I am sending them in order to comply with the desires of the Sacred Congregation, but I would have preferred to send them to Jaffna, where I should have liked to concentrate all the forces of our family under the direction of you who are already their father and their first superior in the Vicariate of Jaffna.

In the letter I had the honour of writing to you from Rome, I once again explained my plans to you. Were we not in agreement that if one day you were to become Vicar Apostolic of Colombo, Jaffna would at once come to the Congregation of Oblates? I am not speaking of death, to which we are all subject. This is why I desired you to ask for Fr. Semeria as coadjutor with right of succession. This project was pleasing to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, who nonetheless wanted to know your view. Had you been of the same opinion, the matter would have been concluded. You would already have a coadjutor after your heart, holy, a true and affectionate friend, simple in his tastes, humble and disposed only to act as one

²² Original Italian text copied by Bishop de Mazenod in his letter to Fr. Semeria of July 27 to August 5, 1851.

²³ Mgr de Mazenod does not give the date, but this letter was sent by the missionaries who left in June.

man with you. The Congregation of Oblates for its part would have had the certainty for the future of the stability it needs in the work it is doing and is still disposed to do. Unhappily, your reply was negative because you had only considered one aspect of the question. It is true that you had no need of help, considering your youth, your robust health and your indefatigable enthusiasm. But the reasons I brought forward also have some weight, to such an extent that Propaganda, impressed by my arguments, authorised me to write to you, as I did in my letter sent from Rome. I will remind you of its content. If I cannot assure my Congregation of a future in your region, I will regard myself as forced to ask Propaganda for other missions which have been offered to me and which I have refused out of faithfulness to Ceylon and to the Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna. If you agree to the collaboration of a coadjutor taken from among the Oblates of Mary, your position will not change, but on the contrary it will improve, not only because the bonds that unite you to us will be strengthened, but also because the Congregation, which does not die, being assured of a definite and stable future, will put all its forces at your disposal. And then who can say the good that will be done in your Vicariate under your direction? I repeat this, for it is very important; in this way the glory of God and the good of souls will be assured. On this subject, I also wish to say to you that the young Jesuit who behaved so badly in the plot hatched with certain missionaries against ours has come to confess his fault and ask my pardon on his knees. I was certainly not waiting for him to do that before I forgave him, but do you not think that such plots could very well begin again? And so to put an end to these indignities and to all hopes inspired by jealousy, it seems to me that we must embark on the course of action on which we were agreed and which I recall to you in this letter...

23. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria in Jaffna].²⁴

Death of Fr. Leydier in Ceylon. Number of novices and scholastics in France. A Protestant minister has joined the Congregation in England. Show patience with Bishop Bravi, who promises to treat the Oblates like a father. Fr. Semeria to be Superior of all the Fathers in Ceylon. Advice on this subject. The new missionaries must be accepted as they are, without experience or knowledge of English. Death of Fr. Semeria's brother. News of the Congregation.

²⁴ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

L.J.C. et M.I.

St. Louis near Marseilles, September 19, 1851.

My dear and good son, I am replying to two of your letters at once, the one in which you gave me the distressing news of the death of our blessed Fr. Leydier, and the more recent one which I received today, dated August 4 and sent August 10. I wanted to write to you when I received the first of your letters, but I was prevented from doing so by a thousand unending duties. But in my heart I was very upset, and to comfort it I would have liked to talk with you for a while. What a loss for your mission and for our Congregation! Just at the moment when you needed reinforcements the good God takes from us a subject who was already formed and doing so much good work! There is nothing to do but to prostrate oneself and, as always, adore the holy will of God. The details that you gave me filled us all with intense admiration. In his holy resolutions I see nothing but a great delicacy of conscience, great fervour, an admirable fear of offending God, a great spirit of mortification, and in a word all that is necessary for a man to merit what the good Lord has granted him, a holy death, the end of one predestined! We must hope that his intercession with God will win for us a subject to replace him. We have no cause for lament. This year again we shall have forty Oblates in the major seminary, and still more than 20 novices at l'Osier. They are expecting there a convert Protestant minister²⁵ who has asked to enter our Congregation. Together with two other convert ministers, one a parish priest and the other a curate like himself, in the same parish in Leeds, he has called our Fathers into their old parish to form there an establishment of our men. Fr. Cooke, together with Fr. Lynch and Fr. Tortel, have already taken possession of it. Perhaps you will be surprised, my dear son, when I tell you that I am not unhappy with the letters of Bishop Bravi that you have sent me. So far I have not received one direct from him. He says everything in a fatherly way, and shows himself very kind to our new arrivals. What do you want? Everybody has his peculiarities. He has got it into his head that all would be lost if it were discovered in his Vicariate and especially at Colombo that his missionaries are subordinate to those in Jaffna. This is understandable pride. He is remaining within the bounds of duty when he assures you that they will always have with you the regular relationship of obedience and submission. Our Fathers will certainly not fail to conform themselves to this. So do

²⁵ Dr. Crawley.

not protest too violently against poor Bishop Bravi. He is struggling for his part to be kind and fatherly, and goes so far as to imagine himself non esser padre meno amoroso inferiore al padre di Marsigli²⁶. This is hard, as you say, but one must be grateful to him for his good will, and you must maintain friendly relations with him. I do not know how things will turn out, but we must have patience in all things. Meanwhile, I am doing everything in my power to bring matters to the conclusion I desire for the good of the mission and the honour of the Congregation, and that is perfectly well understood at Propaganda. To all the assurances about this that I have received, both before my journey to Rome and during my stay in that capital, we must now add the new assurances that I have received in writing in reply to my repeated requests. Bishop Barnabò, the secretary of the Sacred Congregation, wrote to me on July 8 last: "With regard to the other object (you understand) of the mission of Jaffnapatam, the Sacred Congregation has written recently to Bishop Bettachini to say to him that he must have in mind not only what is necessary (this was my argument) but what is useful to the mission. That is why *the desired measure will perhaps be put into effect without delay*."²⁷ In any case, to set your mind at rest, it is enough to tell you that the intentions of the Bishop of Toron and those of Propaganda are in conformity with yours. If the execution of this measure is postponed, it will nonetheless not be changed. We are always aware of your concern." I think that is clear and reassuring enough; Propaganda has never wavered on this matter. He then adds with regard to our Colombo missionaries: "Propaganda has not ceased to repeat to Bishop Bravi the instructions that it has given him concerning the missionaries whom you have already sent him; we heard this last news with pleasure."

And so all that is necessary is a little patience and a good store of virtues. I entirely agree with your arrangements to look after your health in all circumstances. Yes, there is no lack of privations and fatigue inseparable from your ministry, and do not add any extra burden that could compromise your health, which is so necessary for you to be able to do your duty. Let me know your thoughts on this. I assume that the chief thing that must be moderated is the fast, which is so difficult to observe in a hot country. As for the fast prescribed

²⁶ A father no less affectionate than the father of Marseilles.

²⁷ That is, the nomination of Fr. Semeria as coadjutor. This letter from Bishop Barnabò is transcribed in Italian.

by the Rule, it is for you to judge how it must be kept and when it is appropriate to grant a dispensation. As for those prescribed by the Church, the usage to be followed is that authorised by the Bishops of the country.

My dear son, I have just re-read your letter, something I always do several times, so dear and precious to me are your letters, but really I cannot see anything alarming in Bishop Bravi's letters, either the earlier or the later ones. He starts from a principle which he believes is adhered to in that country, which is that at all cost Jaffnapatam must not seem to have precedence over Colombo. From this he concludes that it would give offence if the missionaries of Colombo could be thought subordinate to those of Jaffna. This idea is fixed in his mind, but he is careful to safeguard your rights of legitimate superiority with the precautions which he thinks necessary according to his way of looking at things. We cannot ask him to give up his opinion, which he doubtless thinks is solidly based. All that we can ask is that he should not attempt to take our missionaries away from their obedience to their superior. He does not disagree with this, indeed, he formally recognises it. In all the rest of his letters, I can see nothing but expressions of good will. Frankly, I was pleased with them. I am also very happy that you have been reserved in your replies: you would have been in the wrong had you spoken to him in any other way. You say to me that I could send from here a special superior for our men in Colombo. But that is not necessary. First of all, Bishop Bravi is not asking me for another subject, and you yourself have sufficient authority to delegate part of your authority to whichever of the Colombo missionaries you judge to be suitable, if you think that because of the distance separating you it is suitable that there should be a special superior for the Colombo Vicariate. If you decide on this, remember that it is for you to fix his prerogatives according to the needs that you see, and that he will always have to render an account of his government to you. Continue to preserve friendly relations with Bishop Bravi so that he has no reason to complain of you. I do not need to tell you that you have done well in insisting that our Fathers should be recognised for what they are, members of the Congregation of Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. It goes without saying too that they must give account to you of their revenues, which they are not to use except up to a value that you must fix; the surplus must be sent to you so that you can yourself give an account of it to the Procurator General of the Congregation. You know that the good Fr. Pulicani, who has a thou-

sand good qualities, has not that of being able to administer finances. You will have to lead him by the hand in this matter.

When you recommend me to ensure that our young men learn English, you obviously do not know that we have three professors in our Oblationate who are taking a good deal of trouble about this, but everything takes time. I wonder how you reconcile the advice you give me not to let subjects leave until a few months later with the pressing and repeated requests that come to me from every side to send missionaries who had been destined for your island. They have had to be accepted just as they were. They will have a little more difficulty, but they will manage in the end. That will always be easier than sending you men like St Francis Xavier, as you ask. That would be to demand too much, and I would be afraid of dampening the enthusiasm of our good Oblates if I offered them no alternative but to become St Francis Xaviers, or else to expect to do nothing. Be patient, and when you are able to launch an attack on idolatry, you will see that you will find less difficulty and more consolations in that work than in battling with those degenerate christians who discourage you so much. I do not know what to say to you about trading in shells. I have little confidence in speculations like that. Who knows what enormous costs of transport would be involved in getting such merchandise over here?

I will not end my letter without saying a word about the loss that you have sustained. I had abstained from passing on the news to you although I was asked to do so by your uncle in Civitavecchia; I do not know what madness came over that good Fr. Jean Baptiste²⁸, followed by our dear Bro. Rossi, to make them so eager to pass on to you so distressing a piece of news. You are too holy not to place your trust in the goodness of God who calls to himself only those whom he judges ready to receive their reward. This is a great help to resignation when one has received a blow that nature finds so hard to bear. Believe, my dear friend, that I am a sharer in your pain. You know how good an opinion I had of your good brother, and what I had done to prove this to him.

To distract you, I must tell you that the Bishop of Fréjus has just called our Congregation to direct his major seminary, which is a

²⁸ There was then in France only one Oblate named Jean-Baptiste, namely, Fr. Sabon, back from England since several months.

good thing, that I have sent Fr. Tempier as Visitor Extraordinary to America, that he has founded several new establishments there, that we have set up a new establishment in the town of Leeds in England, that a convert protestant minister is coming to our noviciate, which will be composed of twenty-five subjects, and that we will have in addition about forty Oblates doing their theological studies at various levels in my major seminary. There are many other cheering things that I could say to you to bring joy to your afflicted heart. Farewell, and a thousand blessings.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.²⁹

I see that I have repeated the news that I had given you when I began my letter the other day. This is not exactly rambling, which is permitted at my age, but due to the long space of time I had to leave between beginning the letter and finishing it, and the mistake I made in not re-reading what I had already written to you before starting again.

I have received Bishop Bravi's letter and another from Fr. Lalle-mant. The Bishop's letter does not lead me to take back any of what I have said to you about him.

24. [To Bishop Joseph-Marie Bravi, Coadjutor to the Vicar Apostolic of Colombo].³⁰

Rivalry between the Vicariates of Jaffna and Colombo. Nomination of an Oblate vice-superior at Colombo. The voyage of the missionaries on an English ship has cost twice the sum envisaged.

Marseilles, November 17, 1851.

Your Excellency,

A journey to Corsica to consecrate a Bishop³¹ has been the cause of my delay in replying to your letter of September 15 last. But I was

²⁹ What follows is written in the margins of the four pages of the letter.

³⁰ Italian original: Kandy, Episcopal archives.

³¹ In October, Bishop de Mazenod went to Corsica with Bishop Guibert on the occasion of the consecration of Bishop Sarrebayrouse, coadjutor of Bishop Casanelli of Istria.

anxious to thank you for the fatherly love that you have shown towards our good Oblates of Mary. They have not failed to convey to me how grateful they are to you, whom they consider as a father.

I have read carefully all that you have written to me on your position in your Vicariate and on the modifications that you consider necessary in the relations between the oblates in the two Vicariates. I can understand how Fr. Semeria must have been surprised to find obstacles in the way of his fulfilling his duties as superior. I am not surprised that he hesitated before agreeing to adopt the course of action that you wisely proposed. He was afraid of failing in his duty. I know that excellent religious well enough to be sure that that was the only reason for his apparent resistance. Who could imagine that such an absurd jealousy could exist between Colombo and Jaffna? As the situation is such as you describe, I gladly agree that Fr. Semeria should nominate for the Vicariate of Colombo a vice-superior to be to all appearances responsible for the Oblates, while being in fact subject to the true superior, who is Fr. Semeria. The difficulty arises from the need to make a choice among the four Fathers in Colombo. They are all good, even excellent, but three of them are too young. The fourth, who is older, has already been a priest for some years and has some experience of the missions, is a real saint, with a good and gentle character, but I doubt if he is a suitable person to become a superior. I leave this choice to the wisdom of Fr. Semeria, but I repeat that this vice-superior will always be subject to him and will receive from him his instructions for the government of the others who are under his direct authority.

In my letter in June I wrote to tell you that, foreseeing that the 5500 f. received from Propaganda for the journey of the four missionaries would not be enough, I had authorised them to take what was necessary out of the sum that they were taking to Bishop Bettachini. As it happens, they had to take 4000 f. in order to pay the enormous price extorted by the English from the unfortunates who are obliged to board their ship. I have written to the Propagation of the Faith about this, and the Council have sent me in two instalments the 4000 francs that the missionaries took from Bishop Bettachini's money. He must have been in great need because Fr. Semeria had to advance him 2000 f. out of the 4000 owed by the Vicariate of Colombo. I take it upon myself to ensure that these 2000 f. reach Fr. Semeria, and a similar sum reaches Bishop Bettachini.

It remains only for me to assure your Excellency of my devotion.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

25. [To the Oblate Fathers of the Vicariate of Colombo].³²

Advice and encouragement to the missionaries, whose vocation is like that of the Apostles.

[Marseilles,] November 17, 1851.

My dear sons, I am writing to encourage you amongst the difficulties of your ministry. God will not forget your sufferings. What I recommend most of all is to live as good religious, that you should not neglect the holy practices of the Rule. Whoever the superior is whom the Provincial gives you, look on him as God's representative! So, my dear sons, be very obedient to your regular superiors; not only is there no perfection without that, but there is no salvation either. Show also great deference to Bishop Bravi, the Vicar Apostolic of Colombo, who deserves your gratitude in every way... Live in the most perfect union among yourselves; if you have any difficulties, do not speak about them to anybody outside. Experience proves that one runs the risk of finding only false friends in the world. Enter more and more into the sublimity of your vocation; you are called to bring to the love of our lovable Saviour degenerate people who serve him so badly and so late, and to make him known to all those pagans who are sleeping so near to you in the sleep of death. Your destiny is to be apostles, and so tend within your hearts the sacred fire that the Holy Spirit lights there and, in the middle of your labours, do not forget your father who loves you and does not cease to pray for you.

³² Ms. Yenneux I, supplement, 107-108.

1852

26. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria, at Jaffna].¹

Fr. Semeria's faithfulness in correspondence delights the Founder, who would however like more news about the conversion of souls. Money due to Bishop Bettachini. Imminent departure of three Fathers who are to go round the Cape of Good Hope. Relations between Fr. Semeria and the Fathers in Colombo. Thanks to God for the prosperity of the Congregation.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, January 21, 1852.

My dear Fr. Semeria, as I do not want to miss the post, I am beginning this letter a little early, as it will doubtless be interrupted a good many times before I can finish it. I begin again. I shall follow the two letters that I have had from you since my last letter point by point. And now I start again — isn't it strange? I have not yet received the letter from Fr. Mouchel of which you tell me in your letter of November 6 last. But I have received the one you wrote me dated December 7. How admirable you are in your correspondence! I am delighted by your exactitude and your letters are full² I always re-read them several times. I must hope that a time will come when you will have some news to give me about the conversion of souls. If we ever become masters of that mission, how we will attack idolatry! It is sad that you are reduced to your ministry among those poor degenerate christians. However, it must be said, Fr. Duffo's letter has interested everybody, and we have read with pleasure the one that Fr. Pulicani has already been able to send us. I think that that Father is

¹ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

² This letter is difficult to read. The ink has spread and in several places has gone through the paper.

rather too anxious about writing to his parents. Those good people allowed me to stay two days in Corte without troubling to come and see me for news of their son.

We are going to set about making a new edition of our Rules, and so be patient until then, and you will find out all the additions approved by the Holy See. You can understand that it would have been too difficult to make manuscript copies. A new interruption — Bishop Taché comes in with somebody else, and so I must lay down my pen.

January 22. I have already explained to you in my last letter our situation with regard to the funds allotted for the two Vicariates. Since the last departure for Ceylon, we have had in our hands 5000 f. at the disposal of Bishop Bettachini. In accordance with his wishes, the following sums will be paid:

To Dr Newman	700	At the disposal of Bishop Bettachini: 5000 frs composed of 3000 frs of his remaining in our hands and 2000 frs drawn from the allowance made to Bishop Bravi for the travel of the missionaries	
To the agent in Rome	500		
To Pavia	850		
		To be deducted	5000
			2050
Frs	2050	Residue:	2950.

To settle Bishop Bettachini's account we held 2510 frs from M. Soiderquelt of Lyon; this sum has been paid by the Propagation of the Faith, and so we have at the Bishop's disposal a further

2510

In all, therefore, we have belonging to Bishop Bettachini: 5460 f.

This account could not be more clear.

Bishop Bettachini has no more money to claim from Bishop Bravi, since he has been repaid the 4000 taken by our missionaries with the 2000 f. that you have repaid to him and the 2000 f. that we have credited to his account here. As for the 2000 f. which you have been so good as to advance, you could be paid here with the 2000 f. remaining from the allowance made to Bishop Bravi for the travel of our missionaries.

And now I cannot prevent myself complaining for my own part, as Bishop Bettachini does, of the enormous expenses incurred by our

missionaries. They must have allowed themselves to be eaten alive, both the last four and the two who came before them. I dare not send the others for whom you are asking by way of the Red Sea. This really is a pity. The journey on a sailing ship will be interminable. But this time I am going to try it. I have decided to send you three.³ I have consulted an English convert ship's captain who comes to me for confession, and he did not advise that our men should embark in London. He thinks, and this is the plan I shall adopt, that they must embark at Marseilles on a boat that goes direct to Mauritius; he assures me that at Mauritius there are always boats going to Pondichery or Ceylon. At first you only asked me for two of our Fathers, and now you need three, but I would send you ten if the mission were ours. There is nothing more amazing than what you tell me of the opinion that has spread among the European missionaries on the island. I do not know where they can have got that idea from. I was also struck by what the Vicar Apostolic of Coimbatore found to say on this subject.⁴ Until I see the realisation of the promise that has been made to me so often at Propaganda, I will not sing my song of victory, although I can see the possibility and also the convenience of the thing. For the rest, you are acting very wisely by conducting yourself with great reserve. Do always as much good as you can. Continue to show to Bishop Bettachini all the regard that his character, and also his attachment to you and to the Congregation, demand. May our Fathers be submissive to him and seek to please him, so that he may have no reason to complain of anybody. The Lord's time will come. I am not so uncertain as you of the advantage that might come to Colombo from entrusting our Fathers with the Kandy mission. I remember that in the past Reinaud represented it to me as very interesting. Would that not be the way to work for the conversion of unbelievers? And so would it not be a good mission for us, who should have that as our only aspiration? The truth is that Bishop Bravi has not asked me for further missionaries. Perhaps he is a little put off by the enormity of the expenses that he has had to meet for

³ Only two missionaries were to leave on April 26: Frs. Constant Chounavel and Léon-Jean Pélissier. Fr. Tamburini asked to remain in Corsica for reasons of health.

⁴ It is not clear what the Founder is referring to here. From what follows it is clear that it concerns the plan of nominating Fr. Semeria as coadjutor of Jaffna and entrusting the Vicariate to the Oblates. There was an exchange of letters between Fr. Semeria and Bishop de Brésillac, Vicar Apostolic of Coïmbra, who was discontented with the Oblate superior and with Fr. Pajeau, one of his priests who wished to enter the Congregation. Cf. Semeria Journal, Batayron copy, pp. 119-126.

the four that I have sent him. Your remarks on the indiscretion of certain ideas of your young Fathers are entirely just. That is a great fault, which they will correct through your good advice, a fault of which unfortunately an example has been set to them. You will realise that this is not the first time that I have complained about this, and that I fulminate against it because it is so opposed to the spirit of charity and to so many other virtues which should be practised by all our men. But your Fathers are essentially good. With regard to them, it is right for me to say to you that although you are their superior you must not call them 'sons', as I think I understand that you do, and to their great satisfaction. Nor must it be allowed that people regard themselves as your sons. This is something that is reserved to the old patriarch of the family. All my sons are brothers, whatever their position with regard to one another. As you have a vice-superior, your representative in the Vicariate of Colombo, you must be content that the Vicar Apostolic deals with him in matters that concern his mission. It is for that superior to deal with you, either to report on how he has followed the instructions that he has received from you, or after having consulted with you, if he has been taken by surprise. I have just re-read the note from Bishop Bettachini that you copied out for me. It is useless to try and deal with the Red Sea Steamship Company. They have more passengers than they can carry, and they will show no mercy. As the price of the journey asked for nowadays seems exorbitant, there is nothing for it but to embark at Marseilles as I told you, but in that case how can one hope to arrive at the end of May, having left at the end of March? That seems to me very difficult. And so I am going to make it my duty to see that they begin their journey earlier, for it is a long way from here to Ceylon round the Cape of Good Hope. I am sending you three Fathers because that is what you ask, although up till now you only spoke of two. I think that Fr. Tamburini, whom I had recalled from England so that he could be used at Bastia, will have no serious objection to make to me. He knows English perfectly, and preached very well in that language. So you will be able to use him at Jaffna for the establishment that you want to make there. He is better for that than an Irishman. And you know of his virtue. The Bishop of Ajaccio is very put out, but I consider it more important to give you all the means you need to establish yourselves solidly than to do anything else. And look how our subjects are disappearing. We have 17 deacon-oblates in the seminary and one at Le Calvaire, so I thought I was rich. And at the same time I am sending six subjects to

Texas, four to Red River, three to Ceylon; England, where horizons are broadening for us, is asking for help that I cannot refuse: they will need at least four. So what is left? If you receive the *Annals of the Propagation of the Faith* you will see what we have provided for various missions during the past year. As you know, a sizeable contingent has been sent to Ceylon. There is reason for amazement and for blessing the Lord who has given such great fruitfulness to our little Congregation to enable it to meet so many needs. And if we had to count all the missions that have been given this year in the various dioceses of Europe, it would be unbelievable. I do not believe that all the other Congregations put together, such as the Jesuits, the Lazarists, the Marists and so on, have done so much. To God be all the glory. You could not find more perfect religious than our *forty* Oblates who today are peopling my major seminary at Marseilles. I tell you this in reply to the good reports you send me of your Fathers in Ceylon. The sight of so much virtue fills me with joy and with hope and also with gratitude to the good God who has so blessed us. I will not go into the details — you will hear them from our Fathers who are coming to join you. There is one who is a model of humility and gentleness, very capable and very holy; Fr. Tamburini is known to you, the third is excellent too, though less brilliant. I am going to enclose with this letter one for Fr. Mouchel. I have taken it out of its own envelope to reduce the postal cost, and when you pass it on to him be sure to tell him that you have not read it. I have looked through it to make sure it contained nothing urgent. Give Fr. Mouchel my greetings and tell him that I have taken his sister's address and written her a few lines to give her the fresh news of him that I received with your last letter.⁵

I am too busy to write to Bishop Bettachini. You can pass on to him the account that I have drawn up in this letter, and he will see that his business is not being neglected. The money that we will save by sending our three missionaries on a sailing-ship will be enough to support them for four or five months at sea; do not be surprised if you have to wait for them.

⁵ The letter is finished by Fr. Casimir Aubert. The final paragraph is written by the Founder in the margin of the first page.

27. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria at Jaffna].⁶

Account of the financial interests of Bishops Bettachini and Bravi. The journey of Frs. Chounavel and Pélissier will take some months. Rivalry between Jaffna and Colombo. The Oblates must wear the cross. Stole-fees. Advice on the admission into the Congregation of a priest of the Vicariate of Coimbatore. Relations with the Abbé Reinaud.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, April 16, 1852.

So, my dear Fr. Semeria, you are not receiving any of my letters. And yet I took good care to see that they were properly stamped. Can it be that you have failed to acknowledge them? I am uncertain about this because you speak of three missionaries whom you are expecting, and yet you have not corrected your error about funds, on which subject I expressed myself very clearly, with the result that you do not at all owe Bishop Bettachini 1000 francs. I will draw up again for you an account of the financial interests of both Bishop Bettachini and Bishop Bravi. In my letter of January 21 I told you that I had 5460 frs at Bishop Bettachini's disposal. Part of this sum is the 2000 frs. which was thought to be still owing to him from the 4000 frs borrowed from his money when the Colombo fathers were on their journey, but had in fact been paid to him by Bishop Bravi without my being able to be aware of it.

If we subtract that,

We owe Bishop Bettachini no more than	3460	fr.
We received from Paris in February for the same Bishop	7896	fr.
We received on March 29, also from Paris	4493.50	fr.

So we have at Bishop Bettachini's disposal a total of 15849.50 fr.

We are going to deduct from this sum the travel-expenses of our missionaries who are about to set off. I cannot give the precise amount. Bishop Bettachini can always draw on me for 12000 fr; that is the best way for him to get his money back, and the means that Bishop Bravi has suggested to me for what concerns him. When the calculations have been made you can see that you have no more left to pay Bishop Bettachini above the 2000 frs which you have already made over to him. Do not be surprised, my dear son, if our mission-

⁶ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

aries do not arrive very soon in your island. As the Vicar Apostolic complained about the cost of travelling via the Red Sea, and insisted that they be sent by another route, we have first had to wait for a boat to take them to Ceylon, and then more patience is required for them to be able to complete so long a journey. It would have been useless to hope to obtain second-class places on those English boats. The Company simply refuses to allow this. On the contrary, they have so reduced the second-class accommodation that it is no longer possible for a priest to travel in them, even in disguise. I have another misfortune to tell you of, and that is that the third missionary whom I was intending to send you, Fr. Tamburini, has given his health as a reason for not being able to accept my invitation. To make up his mind to go, an obedience according to the Rule would be necessary, and that is something that I will never do. To expose you to the risk of regrets and even complaints would be to send you a very bad present. And so for the moment I can send you only two subjects. They will leave towards the end of the month and probably go straight to Pondichery although the boat is bound for Madras. Whatever happens, they will be quite near to you if they manage to stop at Pondichery. You would do well to ensure that in that city and at Madras, in case the boat does not put in at Pondichery, they have the necessary directions for getting from those towns to Jaffna. Looking at the map, I do not think there is any need for them to call in at Colombo, if the boats are able to cast anchor at Jaffna or nearby. I hope that you will be happy with the parcel that I am sending with them. I keep forgetting to ask you why you do not put Fr. Keating in charge of the class that you would like to establish at Jaffna. He speaks English. Everything that you tell me of the jealousy between these two Vicariates makes me sad and only goes to prove further how much better it would be if the entire island was under a single command. I understand that Bishop Bettachini has been removed from Colombo because he could not be suffered there, but if Bishop Bravi is making himself tolerable by concessions like the one you tell me of, that is to buy tolerance at too high a price. To give precedence to that black secretary! To let that impertinent man make him hide his cross! This is terrible! But rest assured that he will not stay in that country: you can be sure, though, that he will manoeuvre at Rome so that he is given a successor of his own choice. Bishop Bettachini might perhaps have warded off that blow had he agreed to ask for the coadjutor from among our men whom Propaganda was disposed to grant him. When Bishop Bravi left he would

quite naturally have been sent to take his place, and he would have left Jaffna in good hands. One would have got used to the idea of resisting the threats of those Goans, who have had no centre for their schism since the Archbishop of Goa was called to Portugal. I think the European missionaries are more to be feared than the blacks, and it is for that reason, and to bring all this to an end, that the state of affairs should have been fixed. I cannot understand the obstinacy of Bishop Bettachini, whose petty ideas have ruined everything. I will never follow his advice. Is it not strange that he takes it amiss that I complained to Propaganda? Does he take me for a puppet, ready to move only when he pulls the strings?

As for Colombo, I approve of your relieving Fr Pulicani of all responsibility for temporal affairs. I told you that he understood absolutely nothing about them. And he is no more capable of being superior. He must only appear to be so in name, in order not to wound the susceptibilities of Bishop Bravi, but I insist that he must give you an account of everything that he does and that he must never undertake anything without your having been warned in advance. As for Bishop Bravi's whim in not wanting our Oblates to wear the Crucifix of their profession openly, I cannot agree to that in the ordinary way of their life and in the places where they have missions. If there is any serious reason for not showing the crucifix openly in the city of Colombo, it could there be put under the cassock as is sometimes done elsewhere, so long as the cord is left outside so that it is clear that a man really is wearing this sacred sign of our apostolic mission. You must give me the fullest information possible on the way in which stole-fees have been taken away from our missionaries. I understand that they have been treated like all other missionaries. If it were otherwise I would complain loudly to Propaganda, whom I have already briefly informed of Bishop Bravi's regulations on this matter. But be careful only to tell me things of which you are quite sure. It could be that in that Vicariate the practice is to pool all the stole-fees in order to share them out later evenly among all the missionaries. If that were the case, our Fathers would have no cause for complaint. You mention again the request made to you by a priest of the Vicariate of Coimbatore. Did you not say that the Bishop had given you some unfavourable information about him? Was that an injustice? It is certain that a priest who has given scandal cannot become one of us. You must be certain that he has been the victim of calumny, since you are raising the question of his

admission again. If he really were a good priest, if his vocation were well tried, and if there were no difficulty in his way except the resistance of the Vicar Apostolic, he would only have to come to France, where we would not need the permission of the Vicar Apostolic. But I still have a poor impression from what you said to me about him earlier.⁷ I approve of the request that you have made concerning Reinaud. There is no harm in maintaining a certain relationship with him, to prove to him that we do not regard him as an enemy; that is not to say that we should place confidence in him, or forget that he is a clever fellow who thinks above all of his own interests, and so there is no point in taking him into your confidence, but by keeping in touch with him now and again you will be able to take some advantage of his experience of the country and his knowledge of men, especially of those with whom you have to deal. I do not need to tell you that this must be done without your giving any hint that you are dependent on him, or seeming to be a novice in business-matters. And always write with caution so that nobody will ever be able to misuse your letters. You see the reserved way in which he writes to you himself, and yet I am not unhappy with his reply.

I am obliged to leave at once for Aix, where I have business to do. I will pass my letter on to Fr. Fabre so that he can write you a couple of lines before sealing it.

28. [To Bishop Horace Bettachini, Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna].⁸

Regrets that Bishop Bettachini is not carrying out the plan of proposing Fr. Semeria as his coadjutor. Advantages of this measure.

[Marseilles, April 16, 1852].

Your Excellency,

In spite of your undeserved reproaches, I remain persuaded that the good of the mission and the state of permanence suitable to a

⁷ Fr. Pajeau did not enter the Congregation.

⁸ Copy: Rome, Archive of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, Scrittura riferite nei Congressi, Indie Orient., vol. 13, pp. 903-904. Translated from Italian.

religious Congregation that furnishes numerous subjects for your Vicariate demand the execution of that measure which at first you approved, and which would have been put into practice had you not subsequently opposed it. This fact has been confirmed to me in speech and writing, and so I cannot doubt it. Put yourself for a moment in my place. You must understand that at the age of 70 I cannot hope to live many years more, and it would not be right for me when I die to leave my Congregation on a distant island, uncertain about its future, as if it were a matter of a simple missionary. What I fear is not the Jesuits, as you have believed, but rather your own premature death — and may God preserve you to live a hundred years — which would open the doors to all the plots of hidden enemies of whose existence in Ceylon I am well aware, who are living in hope of seeing those whose presence irritates them cast out.

You had proposed the ideal solution which would have assured peace from now on. All these schemes would have come to an end the moment your intentions and those of the Sacred Congregation became known. The matter had been seen at Rome as I see it, and I can assure you that a simple sign from you would have been enough to set everything in order. On the contrary, you opposed the scheme, and I do not wish to return to that subject. But I clearly must reflect on the possible consequences of that decision which I cannot bring myself to understand, so great were the advantages that would have flowed from your first plan both for you and for the Congregation: honour for your Vicariate, so despised by that of Colombo, which would have been treated on an equal footing, since both would then have had a coadjutor; moral strength for you both from your coadjutor, a faithful friend chosen by yourself, and from the services of a whole Congregation which would work under your guardianship for the prosperity of the Vicariate, since as the number of their subjects increased the Oblates could make other foundations and work better for the conversion of the unbelievers; and, last of all, an end to the murmuring of a little group of malcontents whose ambitious thoughts were disturbing their sleep.

I express myself in this way, your Excellency, because it has become my habit to speak to you frankly. I hope that my language will not displease you, and that you will rather see it as the result of my confidence in you and as a proof of my friendship, etc.

29. [To the Right Revd. Dr. Bravi, Coadjutor to the Catholic Bishop of Colombo, East India, Ceylon.⁹

Bishop de Mazenod is keeping money for the Vicariate of Colombo. Two missionaries are on their way to Ceylon via the Cape of Good Hope. Bishop Bravi's difficulties with the Goans. The Oblates go on the missions to preach the gospel.

Marseilles, April 27, 1852.

Monsignor,

In accordance with the desire that you expressed to me in your last letter, I have sent to Lyons what you inserted in your letter to me. I hope that it will have produced the good effects that you were hoping for. But I do not wish to delay in obeying your request by informing you that on June 16 I received 2000 f. from the Propagation of the Faith, on October 25 another 2000 f., and on March 29 5496 f., making a total of 9496 f. As Fr. Semeria had repaid to Bishop Bettachini the 2000 f. taken from his allowance for the journey to Colombo of the four missionaries, I am keeping that amount here. So I still have 7496 francs that belong to you; you can draw a cheque on me which will be paid at once on sight.

The huge expense of sending missionaries by way of Suez, granted the British monopoly, has obliged me to put the last two missionaries whom Bishop Bettachini asked me for on a sailing-ship that goes round the Cape of Good Hope. But what a journey that will be! It takes 4 or 5 months to arrive, and amid what inconveniences and dangers! I must admit that it was with great distaste that I decided to make this economy. They will be lucky if they reach Ceylon before the end of August. Poor fellows, they will have time to gain that habit of mortification that they will need for their mission! Fortunately, they are truly apostolic men, full of zeal and virtue.

Dear Monsignor, I sympathise greatly with your position in your Vicariate as you describe it to me. If I were near you I think I would encourage you not to allow yourself to be overcome by the opposition you experience, as I understand, from those black and those Goans. They really have every ground to boast of having made a fine form of Christianity for themselves! Right and reason are on your side. Do not be afraid. It would be bad if those people persuaded themselves that you are afraid of them.

⁹ Original: Kandy, Episcopal Archive. Translated from Italian.

I must thank you once again for your fatherly kindness towards our Oblates of Mary. Give them time to gain a little experience of the country. They have no lack of talent, which goes well with virtue. If the English want things otherwise, I care little¹⁰, firstly because I do not greatly value the judgement of these gentlemen on the qualities suitable for missionaries, and also because the Oblates, who were sent to Ceylon by the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, have as their principal mission the conversion of unbelievers and the instruction of those ignorant people who call themselves Christian, but are not so either in principle or in practice.

Accept, Monsignor, my sentiments of high esteem, etc.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

30. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria at Jaffna].¹¹

Relations between Bishop Bravi and the Oblates. Extract from a letter from the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda. Fr. Pajean. Bishop de Mazenod's confidence in and esteem for Fr. Semeria. Sickness of Frs. Ciamin and Vivier. The good spirit among the Fathers in Ceylon. Hopes that he will one day see the Oblates entrusted with the evangelisation of the whole island of Ceylon.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, July 2, 1852.

My dear son, I have withdrawn for a few days to the country to write to the whole world. I need four secretaries, and I do not have a single one. And so some things have to be postponed. I am afraid, my dear son, that I have not written to you since April. And yet I remember having said to you things that seem like a reply to your letter of March 28, but that is not possible, since you wrote the last lines of that letter on Good Friday, which fell this year on April 9. I have just read that letter finished on Good Friday for at least the third time, and still with the same keen interest. Old Fr. Tempier would have to put his spectacles on to decipher your scrawl, but I, who complete 70 years this month, take mine off to read quickly, and put to shame all the old crocks whom I have around me. I see first of

¹⁰ Bishop Bravi would have liked the Oblates to be 'better versed in the ways of the world', particularly the ways of highly-placed English people.

¹¹ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

all that Bishop Bravi's behaviour is still not inspiring great confidence in you, and yet that Bishop protests his esteem for and attachment to the Oblates. Nonetheless, he does mention to me in one of his letters that he would like them to be more versed in the ways of the world. This seemed to me a strange thing to wish for in missionaries sent to evangelise the most brutish and ignorant people there are in the Church. He speaks to me of the relations they should have with English people in high positions; honestly, that is not what they were sent for, and one soon learns the best way of dealing with foreigners. I do not interpret the passage of the letter that you cite in the same way as you do. He obviously meant that all the missionaries of his vicariate should make up a single family, and that is why he regards it as important that they should not wear the cross. The only concession that I can make in this matter is that our Oblates when they are out of their missions and when they go, for example, to Colombo, should not wear the cross openly, but that they should do what used to be done in France during difficult times, that is, keep the cord outside the cassock, the cross being under the buttons. You can say that this decision comes from me, while granting that it is possible to go to heaven without acting thus, since Bishop Bravi says so. I have nothing to say to you about the Kandy mission, except that if it does come about, Reinaud must be clearly aware that you are not throwing him out of it; but then our Fathers would need to work in English. Fr. Perréard already knew some; you say that Bishop Bravi prefers the others to him. As regards this, I do wish that the Vicar Apostolic would decide which missions he wants served and then negotiate with the superior for the choice of subjects. It would not surprise me at all if he did have the plan you believe him to have, of transferring his jurisdiction to the Silvestrines. In Rome it was believed that in the end he would leave your island to go back to that capital, but it was not hidden from me that there it was believed that one day all the island would be yours. I think you will be pleased if I copy for you the last letter that I wrote to Propaganda, chiefly about this Prelate. It is dated April 16:

"...I have received a letter from Ceylon. The jealousy between the two Vicariates is as strong as ever. Bishop Bravi is going too far with the precautions necessitated by what he calls his policy. Your Eminence knows that I have made all possible concessions to Bishop Bravi. I have allowed the Oblates of Mary in his Vicariate not to give external evidence of their dependence on a superior living at Jaffna; but I would not like Bishop Bravi to press his argument too far

because, in fact, I regard it as important that Fr. Semeria really should be the superior of all the Oblates on the island. I rather suspect that His Excellency is not revealing all the reasons that are making him demand too great a separation. I think Bishop Bravi may be afraid to let them know too clearly at Jaffna what are the resources of the missionaries in Colombo, in order not to arm them against his ambitions. The reason why I explain his behaviour thus is his decision, which seems to me grossly unjust, to allow the missionary Oblates in his Vicariate to receive only mass-stipends, when they can find them, and to take from them the right to stole-fees, which all the other missionaries enjoy. I am waiting for more detailed information, and if this system does not change I will first complain to him, and then to the Sacred Congregation. Bishop Bettachini remains persuaded that Bishop Bravi is too cunning and perhaps lacks sincerity. Basically he seems to me to be a good man, but he is annoyed by my complaints against his obstinacy and maintains that his letters, which are coarse but sincere, are worth more than the compliments offered by the other Bishop. In spite of this he does not change his mind: a great esteem for Fr. Semeria, a constant intention of presenting him to the Sacred Congregation, but delay in the execution of this project.

I am including with this letter a copy of the letter before last that I wrote to him. I still have to speak to you about Oregon etc..."¹² You can see from this letter the confidential terms I am on with Propaganda. I can say anything to them without doing myself any harm, and they are good enough to pay some attention to what I say. I have nothing more to say to you about the abbé Pajeau. Since Bishop Bettachini would not agree to receive him into his Vicariate, it is useless for you to concern yourself with him. Had that not been so, so long as there was no agreement preventing us, I would have troubled little about the resistance of the Lord Bishop of Coimbatore. I do not think that Mr. Pajeau is an *alunno*¹³ of Propaganda in Rome. Their students take on an obligation by oath to serve on the mission from which they come and to which they are ordained. For the rest, you have nothing to blame yourself for in this whole affair. And now I will go on to your letter of May 1. You chose that date well, for it recalls to you the happy day on which you consecrated yourself to God in the Congregation of Mary Immaculate. If your

¹² Original in Italian.

¹³ Pupil.

grateful heart draws you to think of it as what it is, one of the most beautiful days of your life, let me say to you as a bouquet that I regard you as a blessing, a child whom the Lord has sent me, and I owe it to you to tell you that during the long time that has passed since your profession you have not for one instant disappointed me in the hopes that I had for you, that you have always been my consolation and my joy, and that if I esteem you and love you so tenderly, if I put all my trust in you, it is because you deserve it. And now, if you will, go and lay at the foot of the cross this confession that I am happy to make to you. Do not let it make you think any more highly of yourself, for in fact every gift comes from God, but that is what I had to tell you, across the distance that separates us, on the lovely anniversary day of your consecration to God by religious profession. The news you give me of the poor health of good Fr. Ciamin distresses me greatly. Since he is coughing and spitting blood, his vocal organs must rest completely, even if it means that he has to write on a piece of wood with chalk. It is essential that the irritation that has begun on his chest must be healed for fear that he develops tuberculosis on the lung. And good Fr. Vivier must still be looked after. The nature of his sickness is less worrying. Do not expose yourselves to the heat of the sun, but take all the precautions that people who care for their health take in that country. One has to know how to adapt one's way of life to the country one is in. You know already that in spite of my good intentions I have been able to send you only two missionaries, too few for your needs, but I hope that others will present themselves. This time, it must be said to his shame, Fr. Tamburini has shown a lack of courage. He even said to me "If you order me, I will obey". That is not the thing to say to me if one wants to be sent to a distant country. The others are still not sufficiently formed. I think that the two I am giving you will not take long arriving, although it is a long voyage when one does not go via Suez. But what is to be done? It was the Vicar Apostolic's choice. Had we not been obliged to send four of our men to Colombo, you would have been well provided for, but Providence evidently had its own ideas when it arranged matters so that we should enter the Vicariate of Colombo. I certainly do not think that the time has come to put into practice the second thoughts of Propaganda, but you can see that in spite of Bishop Bravi's reluctance the land has already been staked out. He is in no hurry to ask me for more help, but if that is what God wills he will have no choice but to come to that point. Meanwhile, it is at Jaffna that the building must be raised, and that would

have been done already but for the tergiversations of the good Bishop Bettachini, who could only gain by the plan that he has been holding up. He ought to know you enough not to fear you as too troublesome a rival. In the end he has left the Sacred Congregation to judge what is opportune, but all the arguments he must have brought forward earlier are still there, and the impression that they must have made in the mind of the venerable Prefect will not easily vanish. You tell me that you will need 24 to 25 priests for the Vicariate of Jaffna alone. That is certainly a large number, but if the Vicariate were ours we would seek to satisfy that need, even if we had to keep other missions waiting. But will you have any means of supporting them? Does not Bishop Bettachini complain without ceasing of his poverty? When the needs of Jaffna are met, we would go on to deal with those of Colombo with the Sacred Congregation, if it seemed that that part of the island was being forgotten. I did not think there were so many missionaries in Ceylon. A large number of men would be needed to replace them. God will provide if it is his will. It remains only for me to congratulate myself on the good spirits that reign among our Fathers. They have understood the sublime character of their mission and how their regularity of life must call down blessings on them and on their ministry. They have no lack of trials, but they will come through them all with the grace of God. Do tell good Bro. Gaspard how pleased I am with what you tell me of him. It is only the sufferings of Fr. Ciamin that trouble me. Tell him too how much I suffer with him. Remember me to each one of the Fathers individually. I wish I could write to each one of them directly, but it is impossible for me, and so at least let them know that they are all in my thoughts and have a special place in my heart. I bless them, and you, too, my son. Convey my respects also to Bishop Bettachini. I am waiting for him to draw on me for the sum that I have mentioned in my various letters. Farewell.

If necessary, it should be explained that with us the cross is an essential part of our religious habit. We do not wear a hood or a rosary hanging from our belts, but the cross is given on the day of profession as a distinctive sign of our ministry. We do not therefore wear it *ad libitum* as other missionaries do.¹⁴

¹⁴ This final paragraph is written in the margins of pages 1 and 3.

31. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria at Jaffna].¹

Congratulations to Fr. Semeria, who has been to visit the Fathers in Colombo. Opposition of the Goan clergy to the practice of giving Communion to children. Greetings to the missionaries. Deaths of several Oblates.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, January 7, [1853].²

My dear and good son, I am using this small piece of paper because I can see that it will be impossible for me to reply to everybody who is expecting a letter from me. Every day it becomes more difficult for me to meet everybody's wishes, and so I will at least make a show of good will. I must begin by telling you how happy I was with your project of going to visit our Fathers in Colombo. It was indeed necessary to break the ice and overcome that barrier which the too-human policies of a superior authority had put between you. You have succeeded perfectly, and you can see how great was the pleasure that it gave our Fathers to see you: that was in fact what was needed to simplify matters in a number of ways. Even the coadjutor himself seemed happy and I am very glad that you have seen with your own eyes the whole of that Vicariate which until now has been inaccessible to you. I have absolutely no knowledge of what may have been written to Rome. I hesitated to take the initiative for fear of seeming to be a malcontent. That was what held me back during the great storm over children's communion.³ I shall

¹ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

² The Founder has written 1852, but context shows clearly that this letter dates from 1853.

³ The Goan priests and Bishop Gaetano accused the Oblate Fathers of having children make the First Communion when they were too young and insufficiently prepared. Cf. Leflon, *Eugène de Mazenod* (ET) vol. III, pp. 206-209.

always hold it against Bishop Bettachini that he neutralised by his resistance the plans that had been made in Rome during my stay there. It is useless for him to say that his brutal frankness is worth more than the officious courtesy of his colleague. He is nonetheless the cause of the delay in establishing our Congregation on a sound basis in the island, if indeed it will ever be able to be established with all the intrigues that are going on. When one is on the spot in Rome one can get things moving, and that was what I did when I was there, but when one is writing to them they remain on their guard. And so, I repeat, I do not know at all what they mean to do. You did say to me, however, that they had announced some grand plans. The letter from the black Vicar Apostolic⁴ to Fr. Duffo is a strange business. That poor bishop had been represented to me as a good man who did nothing but say the Rosary as he walked up and down his room, which as far as he was concerned was his entire diocese. It seems that he does do other things, both on the visit of which you have told me, and in Colombo, where he writes such nice letters. You must have seen all those people at close quarters. From the letters of our young Fathers, I must conclude that our men are doing good work in that Vicariate, even more than you are able to do in the Jaffna Vicariate. Although I have managed to write to Frs. Lallemant and Duffo, it has not been proved to me that they have done so badly in making children make their First Communion when they have prepared them for it. They are right to want to attach themselves to those young people who up till now have been so neglected by those Brahmins who despise them. With things as they are, it seems to me difficult to bring people to healthy ways of thinking about religion. And so a new generation must be formed, and you must take all your care over them, and fortify them against the ingrained habits of their parents by instilling good habits into them. Had Bishop Bravi complained to me I would have discussed this point with him, but when I wrote to our young Fathers I had to recommend them to conform to the orders of the Bishops. However, I still think that above and before everything else they must occupy themselves in instructing the young and giving them the taste for spiritual things which can only be nourished by frequent reception of the sacraments. It is impossible to continue the system used by those priests who have no zeal and who until now have not saved a single soul, but have allowed their Christian communities to stagnate in a condition of appalling ignorance.

⁴ Bishop Gaetano Antonio Musulce of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri in Goa.

We must do better, and that is why I am so anxious that our Congregation would be established in the Vicariates of the island more firmly than it is at present; that is why I am angry with Bishop Bettachini for putting an obstacle in the way of the carrying-out of so just, so reasonable, and so holy a project. You can tell that Bishop that I have received 6000 f. for him. I would like him to let me know how he intends to use this sum. If he does not want to reserve part of it for missionaries, of whom he still is in need, he can draw on me at fifteen days' notice, as he did for the last sum of money that I had sent to him. I am waiting for a letter from His Grace the Archbishop of Calcutta⁵, who has promised to let me know what he has been able to obtain from the Red Sea Steamship Company for the journey of missionaries. He was intending to ask for a reduction in the price. Will he succeed? I hardly dare hope so. The journey round the Cape is so long and dangerous that I must say it was only reluctantly that I decided to send our Fathers that way. Be sure to say to those who are with you how close they are to my thoughts and to my heart: I bless them all, and I would like to be able to express to each one individually all the love that I feel for them, but I am caught up in all sorts of activities from morning to night. I ask you especially to tell dear Father Ciamin how anxious I am that his health should improve. Do not let him do anything that is beyond his strength. I am relying on Fr. Keating's zeal for the work which, as it seemed to me here, should have been entrusted to him. He will have the advantage of being near you and of doing a very good work for the mission. He will also prove to the Vicar Apostolic that he is fit for work and that he does it well. A little word too to good Bro. De Steffanis. A happy and holy New Year to all.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

Fr. Pierre Clausset and Bro. Urbain Vacher⁶ have climbed the ladder into heaven, and Bro. Winter will soon be there. The good Lord is trying us, for these are great losses.⁷

⁵ Archbishop Joseph Carew, S.J., of Calcutta.

⁶ A scholastic brother.

⁷ This last sentence is written in the margin of the first page.

32. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria at Jaffna].⁸

Joy at the news that Fr. Semeria is cured. Propaganda is asking for further missionaries for the Vicariate of Colombo. Two Fathers are leaving for Jaffna and two for Africa. Incurable illness of Fr. Ciamin: he must not come back to Europe. A copy of the new edition of the Constitutions. Fr. Semeria is named Vicar of the Ceylon missions. Few vocations outside France. Defections of several Irishmen.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, April 8, 1853.

My dear son, you would have to know how worried I was about your health to imagine the joy I felt simply at seeing your writing on the envelope of the letter that I have received from you this very day. You remember that in the last letter I received from you you were not able to write more than a few lines. You were ill then, and had had a fever for several days. That is something that can happen to everybody, and it is not certain that one will die of it, but a father's heart is not so easily reassured! And so it was with a certain anxiety that I was waiting for another post, but two weeks passed without news, a month and still no news, then two weeks more of waiting — it was a long time. And at last this blessed letter appeared before my eyes and made me leap for joy. For the last fifteen days, while it would have brought me so much comfort, the letter had been resting quietly in the post-box at Galle. God be praised! You are on the way to full health, and are not obliged to be on guard in so dangerous a situation for your health. I was glad to hear that you have been pleased with your visit to the Colombo Vicariate. You have not only had the advantage of getting to know the Fathers whom I have sent there, but also that of talking with and making yourself known to Bishop Bravi. You will have put in order the relations that must be established between you. I cannot quite grasp what he meant to say to you about our missionaries. I do not know how he will take the proposal that Propaganda is to make to him that he should call into his Vicariate some more of our missionary Oblates. The Cardinal⁹ has just written to ask me not to refuse the requests that the Bishop will be making to me. It will seem strange that in spite of his reluctance he has been obliged to come to that. We will see it happen, and I am

⁸ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

⁹ Cardinal Fransoni.

certainly very ready to fill the island with our Oblates, and would do so if I could. Whatever anybody says, I think that the face of that Christian community can be changed by instructing the young people and looking after them. That is the only way to success. What could priests do who looked on themselves as Brahmins and the poor people as Pariahs? I remember well what Reinaud said to me long ago of the life that they were leading and the state of abandonment in which they were leaving souls. I can well believe that their pride and self-respect were aroused when they saw our men working as true apostles. I have written to Propaganda to say this, with the aim of forewarning them against anything that may have been said about the excessive zeal of our missionaries. I shall always want to know what they are doing, but I think it would be useless for them to keep up a correspondence with everybody in our Congregation. Let them do as they wish now and again, but it would be an abuse to use the post like that, for there is no way of meeting such exorbitant postal charges. Let them say to you what they wish, and you can act as their messenger. The two subjects whom I am sending you and who are to leave on April 23 are angels. I ordained them last Sunday with two others, one of whom will himself be leaving with a truly holy deacon for the land of Natal.¹⁰ They will have the conversion of 120,000 Kaffirs to undertake, just as, if it is God's will, you in Ceylon will eventually make a start on the conversion of your eleven hundred thousand pagans. You must know in advance that they are called Rouffiac and Lacombe; your young missionaries must know them. I have nothing but good and much good to tell you of them. You will soon be able to judge for yourself. I will try to furnish them with everything they may need. I am sending them by way of the Red Sea, as the Cape route is interminable. One of them will try to pass as the other's servant, in order to save the Vicar Apostolic a little money. You have been asked in writing to put a delay on every letter of exchange from him drawn on me, because I must use some of the money of his that I have for the travel of the two missionaries. If the Council of the Propagation of the Faith sends me the rest of his allowance, I will be able to give it to the two missionaries who are due to travel, in order to avoid bank charges. I would not have delayed until today in replying to our poor Fr. Ciamin had not the state I saw him in filled me with the greatest compassion. It

¹⁰ Frs. Auguste-Marie Rouffiac and Victor Lacombe were destined for Ceylon; Fr. Justin Barret and Bro. Joseph Gérard were to go as missionaries to Natal.

seems to me that the Lord was holding me back in order to give me time to receive the last letter, written as it was in a different tone from that of the other two, which were really lamentable. I would never have agreed to give him the rope to hang himself, but I would have had to reproach him, and now he no longer deserves that, since he has returned to a way of thinking that is in conformity with his duty. Let it be said between us and nobody else, it would have been folly to give him the enormous sum of money necessary for the journey to Europe when you are all convinced that his illness is incurable. These are the dreams of a sick man, which one should not oppose directly, but to which one should not give in. He himself says that the doctors have condemned him without leaving him the slightest hope of a cure. And so we need have no scruple about not bleeding ourselves dry in order to give him the pleasure of dying in Europe. There would be good grounds for fearing that he might die at sea without any spiritual help. And so we must firmly resist, and bring forward insurmountable difficulties against the execution of so unreasonable a plan, such as the impossibility of paying for so expensive a journey out of your money, the fear that he might die en route, which is a danger that one could ask the doctor to confirm, and so on. In the brief reply that I am going to make to him to calm him, I shall not offer any opposition to this journey, but you know the attitude you must take. Even if you did have the money, you would be doing him the worst service you could if you let him run the risk of dying on an English boat without any religious assistance. When he resigns himself to undergoing his sentence where he is, he will have the consolation of breathing his last in the arms of his brethren who will look after him and help him to die a holy death and full of merit in the eyes of God. If he were absent, he would have to do all he could to be back among his own and to die there with the help of their prayers and all the aid that their brotherly charity would inspire at such a moment to lessen the sufferings and increase the merits of him from whom they are to be separated with regret and sorrow.

Our two good missionaries will bring you the new edition of our Rules which I have had printed. Read what concerns you in particular. I nominate as your consultors Frs. Mouchel and Pulicani. I shall wait for you to suggest a procurator to me before I nominate him. Meanwhile you are to continue to fulfil his functions. I am going to discover whether the last Fathers I sent you were not told to take the Register of exact accounts which I have had printed and distributed

in all our establishments; if you have not yet received it, I will give a copy of it to our two Fathers who are getting ready to leave on the 23rd of this month. They will follow close behind this letter, but I wanted to warn you of their imminent arrival so that you can take any suitable steps in advance. It goes without saying that I have nominated you Vicar of our Vicariate of Ceylon, that is, of the whole island. Fr. Mouchel will be your admonitor.

I would like to have a little more time to give you some news about our dear family, but I am under pressure because the time of the post is near, and I would not like to miss it. Also, our two young Fathers will bring you a list of the members of the Congregation. Your missions are demanding subjects and do not produce any; Oregon has given us one, but Red River, Natal, the United States, and even Canada give us nothing. It is our France that is being drained, for England is not providing its share. There are four Irishmen whom we have had to say goodbye to: Daly, Walsh, Grey and Dunne. The last of these deceived us to such an extent that I had given him as a companion to Bishop Allard, whom he has shamefully abandoned. Do not tell Fr. Keating of all these defections, but just do not be amazed if I do not dare to send you men from that inconstant nation.

Farewell, my very dear son: do not do anything unwise that would put your health at risk. You yourself know how necessary you are in Ceylon. God has entrusted this mission to you, and so do nothing to endanger it.

I embrace you with all my heart and I bless you.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

33. [To Fr. Joseph-Alexandre Ciamin at Jaffna].¹¹

Encouragement in sickness. Fr. Ciamin must submit himself to the Will of God and prepare himself to die in the Congregation of Mary. Dangers of a long journey.

¹¹ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

Marseilles, April 9, 1853.

My dear Fr. Ciamin, I do not want to wait until the two missionaries whom I am sending to help your mission leave, which will be very soon, before replying to your letter, which was enclosed with the last letter I received from Fr. Semeria. I was distressed to hear from you a confirmation that you are in a poor state of health, but at the same time I must tell you that I was greatly consoled by the sentiments that you expressed to me in it. Yes, my dear Father, it is the Holy Spirit who has inspired you to say to me what you say, which is so true, so harmonious with the divine vocation to which you have been called by a special favour of the divine mercy. I do hope that you will recover your health although your doctors, from what you tell me, have decided that it will be otherwise, but if it were part of the decrees of Divine Providence that your exile on earth should be shortened so that you might more early enjoy the blessed possession of God, an early reward for your apostolic labours, and yet the end of all our hopes and a faithful accomplishment of the promise that the Lord made to the faithful servants who, like you, have obeyed his voice and carried out the task that he has imposed on them, well, if the good Lord did wish to call you to himself, would it not be a mark of predestination if you were to die in the arms of the Congregation? We shall never be able to thank the Lord enough for having preferred us above all others in granting us such a grace. This is a miracle of which we have been witnesses ever since the Congregation came into being. All who have died in her bosom have died like the predestined, and the good Lord seems to have wished to make them aware of this privilege by making them feel it in their souls. All of them without exception said they knew no terms to express the happiness they felt in dying as sons of Mary in the Congregation to which the mercy of God had called them. The last subject we lost, a young Irish Oblate¹² for whom we had the greatest hopes, did not cease to repeat this with holy joy, like those who had gone before him into glory. There is nobody, even down to the lay-brothers, who does not share in this consolation. We have lost three¹³

¹² Bro. William Winter, who died on January 15, 1853.

¹³ He was doubtless thinking only of the lay-brothers who died in France, since four had died in 1852: Jean Plotier (February 9, 1852), Joseph Favier (February 29, 1852), Joseph Boyoud (April 8, 1852) and G. Featherstone, who died in England on July 5.

of them in a row, and they have confirmed all our members in this sweet conviction. And so, my dear Fr. Ciamin, whatever happens, you will live and die as a child of Mary in the Congregation in which you made your vows *in aeternum*. Having said that, I am ready to grant you all the help you desire so long as there are no insurmountable difficulties in the way. The Father Vicar is a charitable man, and so tenderly attached to you that he will always do all that he can to comfort you and to alleviate your sufferings. He would not be opposed to your returning to Europe if the doctors judged that you would be able to recover your health there, and if his financial situation did not make it impossible for him to provide the considerable sum of money needed for that long journey. But you must consider before God whether a journey like that would not be more harmful than good for you, and whether it would not expose you to the risk of hastening your end, and then what an unhappiness it would be to die at sea among heretics, without any spiritual succour; the thought that you would have exposed yourself willingly to this unnecessary privation would be distressing, especially when you thought of the consolation that you would have had from the presence of your brethren, who would have given your soul the most abundant aid in their ministry with that fraternal charity, that zeal, that care that one really knows how to appreciate when the words of a priest, a religious, seem to raise the soul to the highest regions of heaven. All this must be thought about. And so let us detach ourselves completely from the earth when we are warned that our hour is approaching. This grace is not given to everybody, and the advantages that it brings us are immense, and so let us be sure that we profit from it. Here we never cease praying for you, for you are bound to us by the bonds of the most heartfelt charity. We would like to keep you on earth so that you might still be able to work for the glory of God and the sanctification of souls, and if God has decided to crown you, we will weep for a beloved brother, without however lamenting the fact that he has come sooner than us to port in order to enter into eternal possession of God. Your good and afflicted father,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

34. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria at Jaffna].¹⁴

He is to send reports on the activity of the missionaries. Fathers must not be left alone on a mission. Success of Fr. Duffo with children. Death of the young Fr. Dalton.

[Marseilles], September 29, 1853.

The letters that come from the Jaffna Vicariate do not give me any report in regard to the missions, and the good work that our Fathers may be doing there. And so make an exact report of everything that is happening to you... Each house must fulfil this duty and send a copy of it to the chief house in the Province, which must send a résumé to the Superior General.

The way in which the Fathers do not care... about confessing to one of their brethren causes me the greatest pain. As soon as possible it must be seen to that they always go about in pairs, whatever the cost. If some missions suffer through this, that would be less regrettable than the damage that results from our subjects living on their own. They will have to stay less in the same place, but they will travel round the missions, and being in pairs will be able to do more in a shorter time. At all costs, we must not put our subjects in danger. I am full of regret for those whom death has taken from us; this is God's will, to which we must submit, and we cannot be held responsible for these sad events, although we so greatly regret them; but for subjects to be lost without the help that they have a right to expect from the Congregation to which they have given themselves in total abandonment is another matter. And so you must do all you can to ensure that we fulfil our responsibilities.

What a lot of trouble there is in your island, my dear son! I would never have believed it! And yet thanks be to God because you yourself, my beloved son, have always conducted yourself with wisdom, true zeal and prudence. But what will be the outcome of these loathsome disputes with the Goans?

Fr. Duffo's success with the children is enough to prove what needs to be done to form a christian community that will know and serve Jesus Christ our Master. The fathers and mothers are too encrusted with ignorance and antichristian habits for us to hope to

¹⁴ Ms. Yenneux I, 206; I supplement, 77, 125; VII, 268; IX, 72.

achieve much with them, but by occupying oneself with the youth, caring for them, attaching oneself to them, one will achieve the renewal of that nation: such is my conviction.

We have just lost one of our best Irish subjects, young Fr. Patrick Dalton¹⁵, who died on the 24th of last month in the full bloom of his youth; he was only 23 years old, and already his zeal has consumed him. He had only been a priest since July. He died as one of the blessed, and his last words were: 'O Mary, my mother, come to meet me'. Nobody could have loved the Congregation more than he did, and he loved me as his Father. We must bow before God's designs; he takes from us this good, zealous, grateful young man, and yet we can count seven apostates from among his fellow-countrymen.

¹⁵ Fr. Dalton died on September 24, 1853; the end of this letter must have been written in October.

1854

35. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria in Jaffna].¹

Fr. Semeria's letters are a delight to the Founder. Propaganda is sending a Visitor Apostolic to Ceylon. Extravagant behaviour of Fr. Keating. Two religious sisters may go to Jaffna.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, January 26, 1854.

My dear, beloved Fr. Semeria, I have allowed myself to be caught napping. The post leaves today, and I have only a few moments in which to write, and who knows whether somebody will, as usual, come and, so to say, snatch the pen from my hands in order to embroil me in other business? I am sorry also that I have to take a small piece of paper; be sure that you do not follow my example. Your letters are a delight to me, and they are never too long. True, they too often contain disagreeable things, but it is always you whose words I am reading, with you that I am speaking, and in a way I see you in the letters that come from your pen, written with your hand but, more importantly, inspired by your heart which has so good an understanding of my own, to which it is linked by the most intimate mutual affection that could ever be. Whenever you have bad news to give me, my dear son, I always send you good news in return. You remember the letter from Propaganda that I told you of, which must have been a great reassurance to you in the difficulties that had sprung up around you? Well, today I have another to tell you of which will give you the greatest pleasure and prove to you that I am still being vigilant over here concerning the needs of your mission. To be frank, I was not ashamed, in writing to the supreme judge, to speak my mind fully about things and persons, and at whatever cost

¹ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

to your humility, I return continually to my great plan, which has never been rejected, but certainly delayed. You will see whether my letters make a good impression or not. There has never been such explicit criticism of those who behave so badly towards you and our men, and as for the rest, had there already been other letters expressing agreement even more clearly, this one contains enough to recall what has already been said. You can see from the confidence expressed in you the opinion of your character that I have managed to communicate without any difficulty. I hope that you will have fully adopted the manner of conducting yourself that you had to take on at the moment when you became the natural defender of the Vicariate of Jaffna. You are too well aware of the subtlety and deviousness of your adversaries not to make every effort to foil them. You had to strip yourself of your natural kindness, gentleness and agreeableness, as I hope you have not failed to do, in order to stand up for the rights that you were called to defend before the arbitrator whom the Sacred Congregation sent to gain information on the delicate questions that were dividing the two Vicariates.² It seems to have been providential that poor Bishop Bettachini fell ill and was kept in Sicily until now. He had to ask pardon for his journey and to gain sympathy for his justified complaints. I did not fail to prepare the way for him.

Shall I speak to you now of the extravagances of that poor Keating? If his malaise is incurable and he is wearing you out too much, you have the power to dismiss him, for it is better that such mischief-makers should be outside the Congregation than in it. Let it be said that the Irish are sent to trouble us. I have lost count of the number of apostates from that country, and the other Congregations are having the same trouble with them.

I was waiting rather impatiently to hear from Bishop Bettachini. I was going to offer him two Sisters for your schools at Jaffna, one of whom, an excellent woman with a perfect command of English, is already in the Indies. They belong to a Congregation that I have

² The sense of this passage is not easy to grasp. The two Vicariates were disputing about who the missions of Sainte-Anne of Talavila and Kandy belonged to. Two Oblates in Colombo did not support Bishop Bravi, while Fr. Semeria defended the rights of Jaffna. The Founder wrote to Propaganda about this and received a letter dated January 10, 1854, in which Cardinal Fransonni announced that a Visitor Apostolic would be sent to Ceylon and that Fr. Semeria, in the absence of Bishop Bettachini, would act as the representative of Jaffna in the discussions that were to take place.

received into my diocese which provides subjects for the seaports in the Levant and as far as the Indies, for they have an establishment in Pegu. We only need to know whether Bishop Bettachini will have enough money to pay for their travel and establish them. It must be easy to find out how much the journey from Pegu to Ceylon will cost, but I cannot say from here. I wish I could write to each of our dear missionaries individually, but apart from the high cost of postage, I am so busy from morning to night that it would be very hard for me to find the time to do it. However, I cannot but write a few words of consolation to our good Fr. Ciamin whom the good God is purifying in the crucible of sickness and suffering. You know that one member cannot suffer without pain being felt by the whole body, especially by the head and the heart; and so I pray the Lord to make his faithful servant more holy every day.

I have no need to tell you to keep to yourself the letter of which I am sending you a copy.³ This is confidential, and must remain secret. You can encourage our Fathers in general terms and let them know that the Sacred Congregation approves of their conduct, while exhorting them to patience and to undiminished zeal.

Farewell, dear son; I embrace you and send you my blessing.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles,
S. G.

36. [To Fr. J.-A. Ciamin at Jaffna].⁴

Encouragement to Fr. Ciamin who, in his grave sickness, is undergoing "the martyrdom of charity".

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, January 26, 1854.

My dear Fr. Ciamin, I am in a great hurry, since the post is about to leave, but I quickly seize this half-sheet of blank paper to express to you my tender fatherly feelings which are constantly

³ The letter from Propaganda was copied by Fr. Casimir Aubert after the letter of January 26 to Fr. Ciamin.

⁴ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria. When he wrote this letter, the Founder still did not know that Fr. Ciamin had been dead since November 10, 1853.

moved when I think of the suffering that you are enduring in the loss of your health. My heart shares in your suffering and feels it keenly, but when I think that it is for the service of God and the salvation of souls that you have been reduced to the state you are in, my soul is elevated in contemplation of the reward that you will receive for your sacrifice. If the good Lord calls you to himself, what does it matter whether it is through the arrows of the infidel, death inflicted by a torturer, or the little fire of a sickness contracted in the exercise of the great ministry of preaching the gospel and calling souls to sanctity? The martyr who dies for charity will be rewarded no less than he who dies for the faith. So courage, my dear son: you have fought well, your crown is assured, for the word of the Master cannot fail. If the Lord prolongs your pilgrimage on this earth and you recover your health, this will make you only more zealous to fulfil your task, for you will have seen at close quarters the eternal dwellings and the glory in store for you.

Farewell, my very dear son: do not forget me in your prayers, and receive from me the blessing that I send you in the full outpouring of my fatherly heart.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.
Sup. Gen.

37. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria in Jaffna].⁵

Departure for Jaffna of Frs. Adrien Saint-Geney's and Jean-Émile Flurin. Bishop Bonnard, Visitor Apostolic in Ceylon. A copy of some extracts from a letter of Cardinal Franson. Propaganda is offering the Oblates a mission in Senegambia.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, June 5, 1854.

This time, my dear son, my letter will be a lively one. I will only be able to write a few lines to you. I have just come back from a

⁵ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria. Yenneux I supplement 77 cites some lines from a letter that must have been written on March 10: 'My dearest son, if you knew how distressed I am at not having been able to write to you by the last post... If you knew how busy I am... Everything conspires, certainly not to make me forget, but to make me seem to neglect my good son Semeria, the object of my tenderest affection'.

pastoral visit, yesterday I passed Pentecost Sunday in the Church, and today I must go back there, while tomorrow I shall confirm half the children in my city, that is to say, between a thousand and 1200. And while I am at work, the two missionaries whom I am sending you will set sail for Ceylon. They are a precious letter to you, and will express to you all that my pen cannot. If these Fathers really do carry out my commission, how many times they will tell you of the love I have for you, my beloved son!

Bishop Bettachini was asking me for two subjects, and the Cardinal Prefect asked for three. Had I had three available I would not have hesitated to give you them, but it has been difficult enough for me to choose two. At the same time I have had to send two to Oregon and one each to Red River and Montreal, and God knows whether people will be content with this unequal sharing.⁶

Frs. Saint-Geney and Flurin, who are to come to Ceylon, are two delightful subjects. I could not say too much good of them. They have shown an admirable generosity in their faithfulness to the call of their vocation. They are setting out happy and full of good will, and I am quite certain that they will never give you any anxiety.

Yesterday I received your last letter, dated April 18. I am glad to see that you have been able to warn Bishop Bonnand⁷ against the subtleties, not to say the wiles, of the enemy. I do not think you will fail to show him the copy of Propaganda's letter which I sent you. That was necessary in order to put the opposite case to what others, in bad faith, have told him. I congratulate myself on being in time to warn you against your excessive modesty and against the disposition to sacrifice part of the rights of your Vicariate, which I could see was in your mind. It was only too obvious that those wicked Fathers were harbouring unjust ambitions. There was no reason to yield anything at all. Press your claim with all the excellent arguments that you have on your side, and that is all.

I do not know whether I have cited to you the passage in the Cardinal Prefect's letter that asked me for three missionaries. It impressed me: "...also A. Cassinelli, the Missionary Apostolic, has told me that you will soon be in a position to send to Jaffna three

⁶ Fr. Paul Durieu and Bro. Richard to Oregon, Fr. Vital Grandin to Red River, and Fr. Nicholas Burtin to Montreal.

⁷ Bishop Bonnand, Vicar Apostolic of Pondicherry, sent by Propaganda to decide which Vicariate the missions of Sainte-Anne of Talavila and Kandy should belong to.

more able evangelical workers, members of your admirable Congregation of Oblates, in accord with my request. I cannot but tell you once more how pleased I am about this, *and all the more so since, with these reinforcements which increase the number of Oblate missionaries, I shall be able to send elsewhere some of the secular priests who are in your Vicariate*"⁸.

The words I have underlined made an impression on me. Is this not proof that he wants to entrust the Vicariate of Jaffna to the Oblates? It is high time! But does not the arrival of the Silvestrines also mean that what the first *minutante*, Mgr Buratti, said to me positively in Rome, that in time the whole island will be given to the Oblates, will not come true?

The rest of the Cardinal's letter is as always: "I must finally tell you that the reply of the Vicar Apostolic of Pondicherry has not yet reached me, nor the report of the result of the mission, which is well known, that I had entrusted to him in order eventually to be able to take suitable decisions about the missionaries in Colombo. And so I will wait until I have received the reply I am waiting for, before I give you the full picture, etc."⁹

Now Propaganda is offering me another Vicariate Apostolic, the third that I shall have refused. This one would be in Senegambia, but honestly, apart from the fact that I have not enough subjects to man it, I am not anxious to accept unhealthy countries which eat up those who live in them. I shall keep to the beautiful countries of Ceylon and Natal. The Kaffirs are not wicked, but they would not be easy to convert, because of polygamy which is rife on an alarming scale among that brutalised race. Red River, with its perpetual ice, is a difficult mission, and Oregon too is a rough part of the world. And so we already have our share of difficulty. I presume that if poor Keating has a grain of common sense left he will find in the Papal Brief that I am sending you something to reassure him.

Farewell, dear son; I bless you and embrace you with all my heart.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

⁸ Original in Italian.

⁹ Original in Italian.

38. To our dear Fathers Mouchel, Keating, Vivier, Mauroit, Le-bescou, Chounavel, Pélissier, Pulicani, Perréard, Duffo, Lalle-mant, Lacombe, Rouffiac and to our dear Brother De Steffanis¹⁰.

Greetings and encouragement for the missionaries in Ceylon. The Founder's heart "redoubles with energy and sensibility at the same time as it must become enlarged to feed a greater number of children with tenderness and love". The sending of a Brief from the Pope and of a printed document with the litanies and prayers particular to the Order.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, June 5, 1854.

There are so many of you in Ceylon, my very dear sons, that it would be impossible for me to write to each of you even if I had some time at my disposal. What then can it be when I can manage to snatch but a few short moments? I would not like, however, to allow those I have sent to help you to leave without at least saying that you are always present in my thoughts and occupy a prominent position in my heart. Let each of you individually accept this expression of my most affectionate feelings. Frs. Saint-Geney and Flurin will tell you whether I have aged in my heart. In fact it redoubles with energy and sensibility at the same time as it must become enlarged to feed a greater number of children with tenderness and love. Could it be otherwise with the children that God gives me? Allow me this explosion of feeling; you are all worthy of my love and I thank God that he has chosen you to exercise the sublime apostolic ministry in which, through his help, you acquit yourselves so well. Continue my dear sons to honour your vocation and may the difficulties, troubles and contradictions not discourage you. These tribulations serve but to render your devotion the more meritorious. Be united among yourselves, live in perfect obedience to the man who represents me, or rather who holds the place of God among you. Do not stray from the wise direction he gives you. I know that you do not find it hard to follow that path which brings upon you the blessings of God.

I am sending to each of you the Brief which the Sovereign Pontiff deigned to address to me on the occasion of my sending a report to him. You will be touched, as we all were here, by the ex-

¹⁰ Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

treme benevolence of his touching words. There is not one of them that does not deserve to be well considered and which is not matter for encouragement. You will also receive a printed document which you will place in your breviaries in order that you will not run the risk of forgetting to recite each day the litanies and prayers which follow [and which]¹¹ are particular to the Order. I am most concerned that they be said exactly as prescribed.

Farewell my dear sons, I am forced to interrupt my talk with you.

Accept with my paternal blessing the fresh assurance of my most affectionate feelings.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles, Sup. Gen.

39. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria, in Jaffna].¹²

Definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

Rome, December [7] and 8, 1854.

... It will be at the Solemn High Mass celebrated by the Pope in St Peter's, surrounded by 50 cardinals and nearly 150 bishops, that at the Gospel he will pronounce the infallible dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God. Judge, my dear friend, what a moment that will be for the representative of the family which has been fighting for more than a quarter of a century in the Church under the title of that sublime prerogative of our Mother: I who for some time have been unable to hear her name spoken without emotion. Ah! yes, you will all be there with me, and it will be at the moment that the Holy Spirit pronounces through the mouth of the Vicar of Jesus Christ the great definition that I will present you to our glorified Mother so that she may hear our wishes at the same time as the angels exalt her in the highest heaven.

December 8. It is done, the Holy Spirit has spoken through the mouth of Peter, that is of Pius, Sovereign Pontiff of the Church with which Jesus Christ promised to be until the end of time. The

¹¹ The original Ms. is torn at this point.

¹² Semeria Journal, Batayron copy, p. 292, Rome, O.M.I. General Archive.

infallible organ of that church has pronounced, surrounded by 200 bishops, that the divine oracle which recognises that the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, has never been stained with original sin has been revealed and contained in the deposit of the Church. "It is a dogma of faith," the chief of the Church pronounced in the middle of the bishops of the Universal Church, "that the Blessed Virgin Mary was in the first moment of her conception, by the grace and singular privilege of almighty God, and through the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the human race, preserved free from every stain of original sin"¹³.

I cannot better end my letter. It remains only for us to thank God and rejoice that we proclaimed this great truth in advance by the name we bear. I embrace you, and bless you all.

¹³ Text copied in Italian by the Founder.

40. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria, at Jaffna].¹

Fr. Semeria's letters still bring only bad news. At the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, people are promising that they will entrust the island of Ceylon to the Oblates, but they must wait patiently. Complaints against Bishop Bettachini, Bishop Bravi and Fr. Mola. False accusations against Fr. Duffo. Privilege of the Via Crucis given to the Oblate crosses.

Marseilles, July 10, 1855.

It is only too true, my very dear Fr. Semeria, that all your letters are stamped with the same character, and that I never receive one which does not contain something sad and painful. This could not temper, my dear son, the pleasure I get from regularly receiving your news. I consider you still good, still wise, still worthy of the confidence and love I have accorded you. If men are wicked, if they are deceitful, if they do not stop bothering and, as far as they can, persecuting you, this does not in any way diminish your merit nor that of your brothers who are to act only according to your inspiration and the rules of conduct that it is your job to give them. If Propaganda had been in more of a hurry to act according to its convictions, we would long ago have seen an end to all these conspiracies which manage to slow down its pace and not only allow the continuation but also the increase of the jealousies, dissensions and a deplorable state of things, which is extremely harmful to the advancement of God's work, which becomes essentially compromised. I can do nothing. I said when I was in Rome all I could possibly say. Everywhere in Propaganda I met men who were quite convinced. They went so far as to tell me what I communicated to you, namely that the matter was already decided,

¹ Copy: Reg. Letters 1855-1863, pp. 24-25, Rome, Archive of the Postulation, DM 10.

since they understood the fittingness of it and indeed the necessity for it. I repeat: not being able to disagree that the Congregation needed a guarantee that it would remain on the island and that you were the man who inspired the most confidence, it was decided that you would be named coadjutor, *cum futura successione*, to the Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna, and that if your elevation to the episcopate were to be deferred, it was simply in order to placate the smallmindedness of Bishop Bettachini who was offended that there should be a mitre so near to his own. I was even led to believe that some arrangement could be made which would modify this prudent plan which I would more readily call timidity. For the twentieth time I was told to be patient, and that the island would eventually be ours. What more do you want? Since my return from Rome, I think I have sent you a copy of a letter from Cardinal Fransoni dated April 13 or 23, which begins like this: "Il particolare interesse, etc..."

In a later letter from Bishop Barnabò, secretary of his Sacred Congregation, this Prelate writes: "Mi vedo seriamente etc..." This letter is dated May 28. I have received nothing more since then. It seems to me, my dear son, that there was something in that to be satisfied with. I was, therefore, waiting for the result of these well founded hopes without getting too impatient, knowing the slowness of operations in all the Roman Congregations when your letter arrived and caused me much anxiety, since it spoke of the new plot by the enemies of the good and consequently of the Congregation in your island. The wretched Fr. Mola² must, however, have considerable skill to change decisions that were so firmly taken and in some respects already announced. I hesitated to know what to do when I received your letter. It was a very serious thing to find so much malice involved and apparently to have to defend it against charges such as those brought against [Fr. Duffo.] However, I have made a decision and in order to attenuate the impression left by the false reports of the wretched Fr. Mola, I am going to send a copy of the letter you wrote to him to complain of his disloyalty. Why do these people force us to defend ourselves with such violent means? So much the worse for them if they are shown up for what they are *intus et in cute*³. You can see, however, from the two letters I have transcribed for you that there is nothing to be discouraged about. What should one say about the

² The names which follow are scratched out in the Register. This Fr. Mola was a Lombard priest of the vicariate of Colombo. He later entered the Oblates.

³ Inside and under the skin.

statement attributed to Bishop Bettachini? It is cruel to say this, but if he allowed himself to make it then he has quite simply lied. Furthermore, he is known in Propaganda as a virtuous man undoubtedly, but as an extremely mediocre one. It is the opinion that people have of his virtues that makes him seem so pleasant in the eyes of the good Cardinal Franson, who has always been very much in favour of him. As for Bishop Bravi, he is well known for what he is, but this prelate is so shrewd that he knows how to make the most of everything. The calumny levelled against Fr. [Duffo] is, however, too vulgar and too serious for me not to take it up. That is what I am going to do in my letter to Propaganda. I do not accuse him of it, but he was wrong not to be the first to deny it. I would like our young priests to practise their Latin in their free time. I was sad to see that they are obliged to write to Bishop Bravi in French while he replies to them in Latin. However it is better that they do this than be unsure of whether they were making a mistake. In expectation of a requisition from Propaganda I am reserving you two good subjects⁴ one of whom is an Irishman, who consequently speaks English which he is teaching at the moment to all our Oblates gathered together in our new house at Montolivet near Marseilles. This large family group is today gathered with me at my country house of Saint-Louis. They left Montolivet at four o'clock this morning and came to my Mass at six. I remembered in my prayers all of you, both living and dead, that is to say I wanted to say a Requiem Mass at which all our young students communicated. Among the Oblates there are two who have the same name as yourself. I pray to God that they may resemble you. Give my warmest greetings to each of our Fathers. I do not pity them for suffering a little persecution. This does some good; one keeps greater watch over oneself. And being persecuted by men one draws closer to God who is our only support and true force. May they always walk in the ways of perfection which are indicated to them in their holy Rule, and may they wait for the great moments the Lord gives, by working ceaselessly for their own sanctification and for the salvation of the souls which Divine Providence has sent them so far to seek. I embrace and bless you all.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.
Sup. Gen.

⁴ It is not easy to know which Fathers the Founder is alluding to here. No missionary left for Ceylon in 1855. In 1856 Frs. J.-J. Pouzin, F.-J. Gourret and A. Laclau-Pussacq who knew English very well were chosen. They left with Bishop Semeria in 1857.

P.S. The Holy Father has accorded the privilege of the Via Crucis to our missionaries' crosses. Do not forget in your letters to acknowledge receipt of mine by giving their dates. The last which I received from you and to which I am now replying is dated May 1-16. A seventh Brother has been taken from us this year. He is Bro. Caix, a simple Oblate, who died in England like the angel he was. Fr. Rey who is here at the moment wishes me to send you his affectionate greetings.

41. [To Fr. Étienne Semeria, in Jaffna].⁵

Bishop Bravi is in Rome. The behaviour of the Fathers in Colombo is not beyond reproach. The letter from Fr. Semeria to Propaganda. The Bishop of Vancouver is asking for Oblates. The scholastics in Marseilles are learning English. Death of Fr. Rossi.

[Marseilles, October 1, 1855].

In case I forget, my dear Fr. Semeria, I repeat to you what I think I have already said, namely that you are authorised not only to receive Fr. Vistarini as a novice⁶, but also to admit him to profession in our Congregation when his novitiate is finished. Now I must acknowledge receipt of the various letters you have had the consideration to write to me. I have them all before me, but there are some to which I have already replied on June 12, July 15, and July 18 with the copies of your letter to the Cardinal Prefect, to Bishop Bettachini etc. I do not need to tell you that I always read and reread your letters with renewed pleasure every time. This is not because they are generally consoling; on the contrary, they always contain something rather disagreeable. I prepare myself for this in advance. But I find that you are always the same, wise, prudent, zealous, directing your boat with marvellous skill among the reefs you encounter at every turn. You do well to tell me things just as they are; I can then act with more knowledge of the case, especially in my correspondence with Rome. I neglected nothing in order to parry the thrusts which I could see had to come. People have been well warned. Thus it is that in the last letter I received from Propaganda in Rome I was told in a postscript that: *Mgr Bravi è giunto in Roma. Ella non tema che io mi varrò*

⁵ Copy: Reg. Letters 1855-1863, pp. 28-29, Rome, Archive of the Postulation, DM 10.

⁶ Fr. Vistarini was a secular priest from Lombardy.

delle di Lei osservazioni⁷. And I can assure you that “le mie osservazioni” were well worth reading. It is certain that Propaganda must have waited for this Prelate to arrive in order to take a decision on all the matters pending. Unfortunately I must conclude from the letter that I received from Fr. Pulicani that our Fathers are not as white as I tried to paint them when I wrote to the Sacred Congregation. Fr. Pulicani’s letter condemns them. If I had received it earlier, I would not have written as I did. It is all the more annoying that these Fathers have given cause for people to think badly of them since this could lead the Sacred Congregation to alter its resolution to give us eventual charge of the island. Therefore I consider them very guilty for not having been more concerned with their conduct. Fortunately you are in an admirable *concetto*.⁸ You can see where this leads — to consulting you about the conduct of your Vicar Apostolic. Really, one cannot put a man in a more embarrassing position! What did they want you to reply. You could not say all you thought. You acquitted yourself with modesty and moderation; but from what you say one could never form an exact judgement of this character. Mola appears to have taken upon himself to paint the black side of the picture. Fr. Lallemand has sent me, as you know, an account of the death of this Goan missionary. He certainly said a lot, but he did not explain whether he was really a schismatic. I feel that a sinner of that sort should not have been left alone for a single instant. What is the explanation for leaving him alone, apparently to go and hear confessions? They should not have left the bedside; they behaved like men without experience. They ought to have profited from the sermons and instructions and been ready to give them when the time came. It is not mentioned either whether he was given Holy Viaticum. This account, then, leaves much to be desired. But I repeat that Fr. Pulicani’s letter is most upsetting.

I must say, however, that Fr. Lallemand has written to me and that he rejects all the accusations made against him and his companions. He does not mention the money that was lent. We shall now see what is decided in Rome. I have nothing further to add to what I have said in my letters. I shall remain silent until a conclusion

⁷ Mgr Bravi has arrived in Rome. Never fear that I shall use your observations.

⁸ Essere in concetto = to be esteemed, to be regarded as, i.e. Fr. Semeria is highly regarded.

is reached, and this would certainly have been very satisfactory had not our Fathers given rise to accusations against them.

October 2. I have just received your letter of August 18 which enclosed the letter you wrote to Cardinal Franson. To start with this, I must tell you that this letter seems to me to confuse things a little. Your second reply to Bishop Bettachini is that of a timid man who is frightened to say what he thinks. Since he was provoking you, you should have spoken frankly. You should have avoided making too strong a denial of the claims of Fr. Mola, who may certainly have exaggerated but who also probably spoke some truth. It was also important for you not to contradict yourself. One would have to conclude from your second letter to Bishop Bettachini that all is going wonderfully in his Vicariate and yet your first letter did not suggest that. This first letter, then, of which you sent a copy to Propaganda, will not seem to them to be in accord with the second. However, I think I shall eventually have your letter sent on to the Cardinal. For my part, I am waiting for a letter which will tell me the result of their talks with Bishop Bravi. They are writing letter after letter asking me to send missionaries to Oregon to the Lord Bishop of Vancouver who has no priests; despite my refusal, they are insistent. I really cannot accede to this request unless I forget all thought of sending you new subjects. We are after all a very small family; we cannot provide for all needs. Let them come to a decision about Ceylon; we shall see after that. Our Oblates are almost all young and not far advanced in their studies. I am having them all taught English. It is not a very difficult thing. If you had wanted to, you would have learned it. The Bishop of Bytown did not know a word of it; he resolutely set himself to learn it and he now speaks it very fluently. However this may be, we are learning English at Montolivet. What is this Montolivet, do you say? I shall tell you nothing of it since you will be coming to see it for the General Chapter which will be held within its walls next year. Make your plans accordingly. If they keep their word to me at Propaganda we should be able to sort out many things; but I tend to think that things are not progressing too quickly in this area and it is not for want of pushing them. We shall see in the end. But what can one say about the actions of Bishop Bettachini? This good man would make us out to be thieves when he writes as he does to Propagation of the Faith. And he, of course, makes such good use of the money he is given! He prefers to use it to pay for the visit of musicians rather than for the

transport of missionaries. And the nuns! he was so attached to the idea of having them at the time of his first journey! And really, this would be a luxury given the pitiful state of his Vicariate.

It remains for me to reply to the question that you asked me. It is in fact Fr. Rossi who has gone to join in heaven those of our number who have preceded him. As for masses for the dead, do not worry about them. When we have the sorrow to lose one of the members of our family, we direct your intention to this matter. Thus you have only to direct your intentions for the intercessions you wish to apply independently of masses. Dio ti benedica, io t'abbraccio.⁹

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

⁹ May God bless you; I embrace you.

1856

42. [To Bishop Étienne Semeria, in Rome].¹

Bishop Bravi has been shrewder than Bishop Semeria in Rome. The Sylvestrines are keeping the Vicariate of Colombo. The need for courtesy but firmness in discussions in Rome. Things that Bishop Semeria still has to do before returning to Ceylon.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, September 23, 1856.

I was waiting, my dear son, with great impatience for one of your letters from Rome². I will even tell you that I would have been most troubled if my excellent friend Commander Barluzzi had not told me in a letter that you had arrived in Rome. I recommend you to go and see him once again before you leave in order to find out what he requires from Marseilles, if anything, and to do him the courtesy, as if it were your own idea, of telling him how much I value him and am attached to him.

What shall I say about the decisions made by Propaganda? It seems that Bishop Bravi has been far from idle. Did you not let yourself be intimidated? You ought to have said all you thought quite plainly to Cardinal Barnabò. Buratti, whom you call Father when he is properly called Monsignor, had positively given me hope that the whole island would be under our jurisdiction, but things have since been arranged so that this can never happen. The

¹ Orig.: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

² Fr. Semeria came to Europe for the General Chapter which was held from August 5 — August 12. On May 25 before this he had been named Bishop of Olympia *in partibus infidelium* and coadjutor of the Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna with future succession. He was consecrated bishop in Marseilles on August 17, 1856, by Bishop de Mazenod, assisted by Bishop H. Guibert of Viviers and by Bishop Guigues of Bytown. Bishop Bettachini died on July 26, 1857.

Sylvestrines who are being much supported will have the upper hand. However, let us avoid taking our missionaries from the Vicariate of Colombo. On the contrary, let us straightforwardly replace the ones we have been obliged to withdraw³. Ah! if only we were to find that you were to become administrator of this Vicariate, then we would have to introduce our missionaries in as great a number as possible, but I am afraid that this will never happen. It appears that you have not had time to talk to the Pope; you should not let conversation die. On these occasions one's theme must be prepared in advance. You have, without stepping out of character, to show a certain firmness to people in Propaganda and elsewhere, and this can well go together with modesty; do not hesitate: no one knows the lie of the land better than you.

You could have told me a great deal more in your letter. You did not fully recount to me the details of your interview with Bishop Bravi, whom you would have done well to visit first. Nor did you sufficiently explain what went on during your audience with the Pope. I think that before leaving Rome you would do well to ask for another audience, ostensibly to receive the Pope's instructions and blessing, but in fact in order to interest him in your mission and in the priests who serve it, who could do so much good if they were to spread to Colombo.

I am not against your travelling via Corsica since you hope that the waters will do you good, for if it were only for the pleasure of seeing the Lord Bishop it would be better in my opinion to spend a few more days together and discuss the interests of your mission. I have had sent from England a subject who is to accompany you⁴ and it is important that you go and plead your cause at Lyons in order to obtain some help, in your position as Coadjutor, outside the allocation for the Vicar Apostolic. You should not wait in this matter until the Vicar Apostolic has retired and left you the title and functions of his charge.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

³ Fr. Lallemand who had to return to France because of illness.

⁴ Bishop Semeria did not leave with an Englishman or Irishman, but one of the three Fathers who accompanied him, Fr. A. Laclau-Pussacq, spoke good English since he had been in England from 1854 to 1856.

1857

43. [To the Oblates in Ceylon].¹

The Founder's affection for his missionaries. The goal of their mission: "to announce Jesus Christ to the pagans". The need for obedience to the new Bishop. Three Fathers are accompanying him.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, January 31, 1857.

To my dear sons, the missionaries in Ceylon.

I am on the point of leaving to go to Paris for the opening of the Senate² and I am beginning to despair of seeing the good Bishop of Olympia. If he does not arrive today, I shall be deprived of the pleasure of embracing him before he sets sail to rejoin you. I would not like him, however, to leave Marseilles without carrying with him the expression of my most affectionate sentiments. He will have doubtless told you how much I love you and of the share I take in your consolations and sufferings, of the constant preoccupation of my mind on your account, although this is not enough for my heart. I wish to tell you this myself. The actual shape of the words I am writing to express this to you are in some way myself, and I think that you will also find it more pleasant to read them and, so to speak, receive this emanation of my being. Oh! my dear children, why may I not say this to you in person? I suffer to think that you are so far from me, but when I think of the great mission that is entrusted to you, I cannot do other than congratulate you. What would these areas of Christianity have been like had they been left in the hands of the Goans? And all those pagans on whom you direct your gaze in order to pluck them from the fires of Hell, as soon as you are numerous enough to attack

¹ Orig.: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

² Bishop de Mazenod was named a Senator by a decree of June 24 1856.

their fortress — is there not something there to excite zeal and kindle courage? You know that this is the ultimate goal of my hopes: to announce Jesus Christ to the pagans. It seems to me that we are too exclusively occupied with Christians. I know they give us a lot to do, but I would not like them to take up all your efforts.

I do not need to tell you that you should live in perfect union. You are placed under the crozier of one of our own men who will be the centre of your operations. You know the full worth of this dear Bishop. I am sending him to you as if he were myself. I thank God I was called to impose hands on him. I am sending him to you in good health. May your charity sustain him. The three missionaries he is bringing with him³ are worthy of you. They will work powerfully with you in the holy task for which you are consecrated. They are leaving here as happy men. You will no doubt be happy to receive them and you will soon have them schooled in the holy practices of your ministry. One of them speaks very good English which he went to England itself to learn.

Farewell my dear sons; I know I am in too much of a hurry but what can one do on the eve of a departure? I embrace you, although somewhat hastily and bless you with all my heart.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles, Sup. Gen.

44. [To Bishop Étienne Semeria, Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna].⁴

The Oblates have had to abandon their direction of the seminaries of Romans and Quimper. Death of Bishop Bettachini. Frs. Viviers and Lallemand wish to return to Ceylon. Bishop Bravi is looking for missionaries other than Oblates. Fr. Mola is an Oblate novice. The need to work without excess. Fr. Grandin has been named Bishop in the North-West of Canada. Fr. Chounavel has announced the conversion of pagans in the centre of the island.

³ Frs. Jean-Joseph Pouzin, Auguste Laclau-Pussacq and François-Joseph Gourret left with Bishop Semeria on March 2, 1857. It was at the beginning of the same year that Fr. Bonjean entered the novitiate in Ceylon. Cf.: Semeria Journal, Batayron copy, p. 329.

⁴ Orig.: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

Marseilles, October 10, 1857.

I am ashamed, my dear lord Bishop, to use such small paper to reply to your interesting letters which are always so full of good things. Fortunately when I write to you I am dealing with a Prelate endowed above all with inexhaustible charity and who certainly takes my situation into account and bears in mind my good will. It would of course be more pleasant to talk peacefully to a son, a brother, a friend like yourself rather than have to battle with so many people, highly placed as they are, who are yet without delicacy and I would say without honour. I have, just a moment ago, using the pen that I am now using to shape these words to you, written to one of these characters, whom I had to treat with dignity, but nonetheless severely⁵. If one day you read our history, you will note that this year 1857 is full of events which will seem to you incredible, as indeed they do to us who are witnesses, and I would even say victims of them, were it not for the fact that our habit of accepting trials and difficulties with resignation enabled us to consider them from another point of view. Moreover, if men are unjust, Our Lord can always send us consolations which amply reward us. I tell you this so that you may not feel too much pity for us.

Let us turn to you, my very dear friend, now that you have become, by the death of Bishop Bettachini, Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna. This is a situation which we had foreseen, given the sad state of health of this poor prelate. All I ask of you is that you do not feel obliged to do more than your strength allows. You have to look after both yourself and your missionaries. If something is going badly it will not be your fault. When you have more workers you will be able to do more. In the present state of things you have to work according to your strength. Start from the principle that you are not obliged to do more than one can reasonably expect a man to do. And on the subject of your numbers I must consult you. Fr. Vincens never stops telling me that Fr. Vivier⁶ is less guilty than people think and that he has been more imprudent than culpable in the great affair that has

⁵ That same day Bishop de Mazenod wrote to Bishop Lyonnet of Valence, who was entrusting the direction of his seminary in Romans to the Jesuits, thus substituting them for the Oblates. In 1857, the Congregation had also to abandon its direction of the major seminary in Quimper.

⁶ Fr. Vivier came back to France in 1856. He had often suffered illness since 1852. Furthermore an "imprudent action imputed to him rightly or wrongly" had

been stirred up against him, that he knows Fr. Vivier better than anyone and that he thinks it would be right to send him back to Ceylon where he would really do a lot of good. I have nothing to say in answer to Fr. Vincens, but I think it is indispensable to ask whether you think it is right to accede to his wishes which are shared by Fr. Vivier himself. If you think you can use him some distance from the place he scandalised and thus benefit from the knowledge he has of languages and from the knowledge he possesses of the missions in your country you have only to write to me and he will be sent back to you. I would be more hesitant about passing on to you the petition of Fr. Lallemand, who has written me a fine letter which shows his regret for having turned from his vocation and tells of his desire to return to that mission to which God had called him, and in which he says he would be zealous for repairing the damage he did in the past etc.

October 16. Since I began this letter, I have had time to receive yours of September 6. I see that Bishop Bravi continues to give evidence of the duplicity of his character. You tell me that he wishes to have missionaries brought from Australia; but was it not he who assured you in Rome that were there to be a shortage of Sylvestrines he would never call on any missionaries other than Oblates? The trick he is playing on you over Fr. Vistarini is a real stab in the back. Is it allowed to move workers from one Vicariate to another like that? Fr. Vistarini will have received by now the letter from Fr. Mola. What a shameful thing for him. Fr. Mola has written me a very charming letter; he is very pleased with his noviciate⁷. If he perseveres to the end he will be a real treasure for us. Remain firm and do not allow Oblates who have been placed in the Vicariate of Colombo by the authority of the Holy See to be removed from it. I am going to write to Propaganda about it. But I hesitate to send your letter to Cardinal Barnabò. What can one do when an agreement is made and accepted? All further comment is now useless.

caused a good number of his flock to be against him. Cf.: *Semeria Journal*, Batayron Copy, p. 328.

Fr. Lallemand also came back in 1856, suffering from illness. He had been "bitten by a poisonous rat", Cf.: *Ibidem* p. 325. According to the context of this letter it was also because of some doubtful conduct that he came back to France. He entered the Trappists after 1859.

⁷ Fr. Jules Mola, a secular priest from Lombardy, who had worked in Ceylon, made his profession as an Oblate on September 11, 1858, at N.-D. de l'Osier and was sent back as a missionary to Ceylon.

Make sure that you realise that it is never a matter of indifference for a man to spit up blood. First of all one should not put oneself in a position where this is likely, by doing too much work and performing dangerous penances. Your life as a missionary is penance enough, so be very moderate in that. Then if the misfortune occurs, stop all work and behave as if you were dead. One can ask nothing of a dead man, and so let a man who has coughed up blood not be allowed to preach until he has been well again for some time.

You will learn with pleasure that the Pope has chosen our own dear Fr. Grandin as coadjutor to the Bishop of St-Boniface. I wish he could come and be consecrated by me at Montolivet, but it is not so easy to come from Ile à la Crosse as it is from Ceylon. But in Ceylon your health is deteriorating cruelly. Find out if you could make some change in the diet. Give yourselves what healthy Europeans eat. Stop only briefly in unhealthy territory and do not set up a house there as you have done at Mantotte, for example, which seems to me a plague-ridden place. Start from the great principle that one is not asked to do more than one's strength allows for, and that when there are few workers, as in your case, you have to be careful with yourselves. Do not imagine that I can send you the men you ask for. You will only ever have young missionaries whose strength you will have to take care of.

Fr. Chounavel's letter interest me greatly. I saw in it with pleasure what I desire most of all, namely that he has managed to obtain conversions of pagans in the centre of the island. It seems to me that I have more zeal for them than for all these bad Catholics who are always ready to revolt and threaten to go over to the schismatics.

May you soon be able to deal with the youth in order to give a different spirit from the one they get from their families. When you acquire funds you will see whether you are able to call for nuns.

Farewell, a thousand tender greetings to all our Fathers.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of M[arsei]lles.

45. [To Bishop Joseph-Marie Bravi, coadjutor of the Vicar Apostolic of Colombo].¹

His desire to make up to four the number of missionaries in the service of the Vicariate of Colombo and his insistence that the Fathers should not live far from each other.

...For the moment I ask only one favour of you: that I may be allowed to make up the number of Oblates in service in your Vicariate to four. I would further ask you to place this fourth one in a post near to that in which you have put Fr. Perréard². I am most concerned that the missionaries do not live too far away from each other. It is an advantage for them, and the people entrusted to their care benefit from it enormously. They keep up their fervour through this mutual help and the souls of the faithful feel the effect of this. The favour I am asking is too much in conformity with the zeal that animates you, for me not to be certain of obtaining it from your goodness.

46. [To Bishop Étienne Semeria, in Jaffna].³

Departure of Frs. Mola and Lelons. The qualities of Fr. Mola.

[Marseilles, October 16, 1858].⁴

...The two missionaries allotted to you are about to leave; the third⁵ has fallen sick and his illness, which seems to affect the chest,

¹ Semeria Journal, Batayron Copy, p. 355, Rome, O.M.I. General Archive. Translated from the Italian.

² Bishop Bravi had sent two Fathers near to Kandy and had left Fr. Perréard alone near Colombo.

³ Semeria Journal, Batayron Copy, p. 353, Rome, O.M.I. General Archive.

⁴ This letter was carried by Frs. Mola and Lelons who left on October 16. Cf.: Semeria Journal, Batayron Copy, p. 353.

⁵ Fr. Bruno Peillon had been chosen for Ceylon, cf.: General Council June 8 and 28 1858.

does not allow me to run the risk of sending him to a climate such as yours. But one of the two is Fr. Mola whom you already know and who will be useful for your mission. You were already informed that he had come to the novitiate. He has spent a year there and greatly edified everyone. He did not expect to be sent back to Ceylon; apparently he would have preferred to remain in Europe, but he did not say a single word which might suggest the least repugnance. He has not even let me know personally that he would have preferred any other destination. On the contrary, he set to with a will and arranged everything necessary for the journey himself. I found him really admirable and in the contacts I have had with him he has seemed charming, altogether pleasant and full of good sense and reason. I was careful to say that you liked him a lot, that you had always given me a good report of him etc., and he assured me that he was very attached to you. I am going to write to Propaganda to let Cardinal Barnabò know that he belongs to our Order. I shall stress his good qualities and the edification he has given during his novitiate.

47. To Rev. Fr. Bonjean, missionary Oblate of M.I.⁶

The success of Fr. Bonjean's ministry. He should put a limit to his zeal. The arrival in Ceylon of Fr. Mola.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, October 16, 1858.

I shall be brief, my dear Fr. Bonjean, because I have much to write, but no matter: it is enough for me to express to you in a few words the feelings which I hold so strongly for you. I bless God for your fidelity in replying to the grace of your vocation and all the good which has been brought about through your ministry in the family of the holy Immaculate Mother proves to you how much God is able to bring his call to fruition. The only thing which causes me concern is that I hear that you are tired. This proves that you must know how to place limits even on the most legitimate zeal. Never work beyond your strength; you have to last out for the great service that the Church expects from our Congregation and for the salvation

⁶ Photocopy of the original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation L. M-Bonjean.

of those poor souls that are so much abandoned in your beautiful island where infidelity and heresy still hold sway.

I am sending you an excellent auxiliary⁷. His experience and devotion will be of great value to your mission. I consider that you and he are the key workers in this great task and those I send after you will have only to follow in your footsteps. I can only be delighted for you in that you have as your head a Prelate such as our dear and beloved Bishop of Olympia. You must all work together to conserve him. His health is very feeble and his zeal is excessive. Make sure that you can restrain him, since we need him to live.

May you all be preserved also in order to continue to bring about the glory of God by working for the conversion of these poor souls which without you would not be saved.

I leave you, my dear Fr. Bonjean, with my blessing given from the very bottom of my heart.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles,
S.G.

⁷ Fr. Mola, a former missionary in Ceylon, who was returning there after completing his noviciate in France.

1859

48. [To Fr. Jules Mola, in Ceylon].¹

Thanks for sending a portrait and for sending word of his arrival in Ceylon. The letters he has received from Bishop Bravi and from the Prefect of Propaganda Fide. Fr. Mola should look after his health.

[Marseilles] January 27, 1859.

My dear son, I have kissed with paternal affection this fine portrait you have sent me from Colombo. I have put it near the place where I spend the hours and days of my life. My heart did not need this souvenir to be occupied with thoughts of you. Oh how often your name returns to my lips in my conversations with so many of your brothers who come to me to be put into contact with all our men, scattered as they are over the surface of the globe.

I thank God who has helped you throughout your long journey and I console myself with the knowledge that your health is still good, as is that of your companion² to whom your friendly presence was so agreeable.

The anger of the Bishop, which you speak of in your letter, has calmed down to the point where the letter he was threatening me with was very polite, if a little political as is his custom. The affair is far too curious for me to deprive you of this surprise, if not the pleasure you will get from it. I want to have it copied and have it sent to you.

I am leaving for Paris where I am called by my duties as Senator. I do not know how I can still breathe with all the duties that plague me. However, I did not want to leave without thanking you

¹ Copy of Italian original: Reg. letters 1855-1863, pp. 216-217, Rome, Archive of the Postulation, DM 10.

² Fr. Lelons.

for your consideration in giving me your news and for the fidelity to the promise you made to me on that point.

Now I would like to urge you to take care of your health. I want you to say in all simplicity to our dear Bishop, your Superior, exactly what you are able to do and nothing more. I do not think I shall have the time to write to him; tell him therefore yourself what I would have said on this subject. I have made a great sacrifice in sending you so far away. I considered it a necessity for the good of this important mission, but all my desires are that you preserve yourself precisely for the good that I expect to come from your presence and cooperation.

I would like you to know also that I have received a very long and confidential letter from the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda in which he assures me that if the Sylvestrines were not to manage to establish themselves in Colombo in such a way as to satisfy the Vicariate, Bishop Bravi himself recognised that it would be necessary to have recourse to the Oblates of Mary. The matter is too curious for me to say nothing to you about it. As for the rest, the Cardinal Prefect's letter is very friendly and quite satisfactory.

Quick, quick, I must finish! Farewell, my dear son, I embrace and bless you.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles, S.G.

49. [To Fr. Christophe Bonjean, in Ceylon].³

The Founder's affection for all his sons. The need not to work beyond one's strength. The departure for Ceylon of one Father and two Brothers. He should continue to send reports which edify the scholastics. The apostolate to the pagans.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, November 19, 1859.

My dear Fr. Bonjean, I come to you in a great hurry, but with all due deference to whoever is waiting for me, I will not be distracted from writing at least a few lines to those with whom I would so much enjoy to converse at length and with open heart. We have

³ Orig.: Borella.

never seen each other, but you must admit, my dear Father, that we already like each other a great deal. For me it is an instinct that God gives me, or rather a quality for which I thank him daily, that my heart is entirely bound to all those whom his goodness gives me. Nothing makes me understand the love which God has for all his children more than the feeling I have for all those who belong to me and to whom for my part I am entirely devoted. The love I feel for some in no way damages the love I have for others. Thus it is, my dear Father, that without having had the consolation of seeing you I love you with all my heart.

I never cease blessing the Lord for all the good you are doing together with our dear and venerable Vicar. Only one thing troubles me and that is that you are doing too much. I have tried to instil in him the idea that one is not asked to do more than one's strength allows. You must all imperiously insist that you each avoid doing too much, because we must produce fire that will last. Think of the difficulty we have in recruiting subjects. This time I can send you only one priest⁴. It is true that the two Brothers who are accompanying him are going to be a great help to you, but I am none the less upset at having but one priest whom I can send to you. This need not stop our dear Vicar from making an effort to serve the mission that some people wish to take away from you. I did not have the time to tell him so in the letter which I am sending him but which I have not had the time to finish.

Continue, my dear Fr. Bonjean, to keep some leisure time for yourself so that you can send us some of those splendid reports which edify us so much. They will excite the zeal and the devotion of our young Oblates who are doing their course of studies at Montolivet. I am confident that we shall get some missionaries from among them who will go to your area, the needs of which are well known to me. My great regret is that despite my wishes, people have thought too late of involving themselves in the conversion of the pagan natives. These people would give you more consolation than the long standing Christians who are so ill disposed and so weak in their faith.

Farewell, my dear Fr. Bonjean, I embrace you and bless you with all my heart.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

⁴ Fr. Yves Le Cam. The Brothers were called Byrne and Brown.

1860

50. [To Bishop Étienne Semeria, in Jaffna].¹

Death of Fr. Casimir Aubert. The need to avoid excessive work. The Emperor has proposed Bishop de Mazenod for the cardinalate. Bishop Bonnand appointed Visitor Apostolic of Ceylon. Catholic schools. Holy Childhood. Two novices in Ceylon. Greetings to Frs. Mola and Bonjean.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, February 18, 1860.

I am writing to you from Auriol, my dear Lord Bishop, where I have come to close the mission that our Fathers have been giving. I shall at least start my letter, which I shall be forced to finish on my return to Marseilles. I no longer have with me the faithful interpreter of my thoughts and feelings². The good Lord has taken him from me. What a loss for the Congregation and for myself. I impose silence on myself in order to adore in all submission the impenetrable decrees of Divine Providence.

I have no need to tell you with what interest I have always followed everything that your zeal and that of your fellow workers has inspired you to do. The method you have adopted is the most efficacious. Only one thing troubles me and that is the excessive tiredness which this means for your weak health. Do not refuse yourself anything, I beg you, which might help you, especially food. In fact do nothing beyond your strength.

I am no more happy than you about your relations with Propaganda. I made a strong complaint, since I suspected there was some feeling against us in their offices. The Cardinal Prefect replied in his own hand and assured me that the opposite was the case and that no

¹ Orig.: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

² Fr. Casimir Aubert died on January 17, 1860.

letter left the office without his seeing it. It remained for me, then, to explain myself in person which I flattered myself I would be able to do when I was presented for the cardinalate³, but the grave circumstances which have occurred have put a stop not to the willingness of the Holy Father to make me a Cardinal — he assured me of this directly — but to the possibility of his putting his written word into practice. All my hope for your affair lies in the Visitor Apostolic⁴. The business will certainly be examined before I go to Rome, since my advancement is not even confirmed and there is the main difficulty in the dispute that has arisen between our government and the Holy See. I shall nevertheless not set out for Paris, where I am called for the opening of the session, before I have written again to Cardinal Barnabò. But what impression will my letter be able to make on men who think themselves well informed, indeed better informed than myself? If I had been able to talk to them I would have proved that at Jaffna you are real missionaries, whereas in Colombo they are more or less mercenaries. The Cardinal was not far from agreeing with this when I was talking with him in Rome. In the one place, I told him, you have supernatural vocation, obedience, zeal, and in the other you have calculation, plotting, insouciance and lack of activity. Our missionaries are killing themselves and the others are in good health; ours content themselves with the *victum et vestitum*, and the others are getting together their little pile. This stares you in the face. It seems to me that Bishop Bettachini has not been able to manoeuvre very well. He ought to have worked so that the Sylvestrines⁵ did not get possession of Colombo, since he himself had the unfortunate idea of forming this second Vicariate. At the moment, they have set down their roots there through the intrigues of Bishop Bravi who is shutting his eyes to the truth when he refuses to admit that these missionaries are worth about half as much as ours.

Marseilles, February 20.

I very strongly approve of the line you have taken of having a salary given to the missionary who is in charge of looking after the

³ The Emperor suggested Bishop de Mazenod's name to the Pope "for the cardinal's hat left vacant in the order of designations for France" by the death of Archbishop Dupont of Bourges. Letter of M. Rouland to Bishop de Mazenod, August 13, 1859, cf.: Rey II, 737. The Italian War and the Roman Question prevented Pius IX from proceeding to the creation of new cardinals.

⁴ Bishop Bonnard of Pondicherry, was appointed for the second time by Propaganda to decide to which Vicariate the mission of Kurunegala should be given.

⁵ The Vicariate of Colombo was not given to the Oblates until 1883.

religious needs of the soldiers. Bishop Bravi is free to do otherwise. It appears that this Prelate is pushing what he calls in his letters 'his policy' very far, when he consents to allow Catholic children to go to Protestant schools. How can he hide from himself the efforts at propaganda which all heretics make at all times? This amounts to sending our Catholics into schools of perversion.

If the piece of ground you mentioned is suitable for you, you have been foolish to put off buying it. One often regrets having missed a good opportunity. But does one not have to be a naturalised Englishman to become a landowner in a country under English rule? You will have rendered a great service to the Vicariate when you have established Catholic schools for both sexes, but you will have to choose your nuns carefully. As for the help that you hope for from the Holy Childhood organisation, you will have to procure it for yourself. I can do nothing for the good reason that I along with the Archbishop of Lyons am the only Bishop who did not want the organisation in his diocese. I had to do this in order to protect the association for the Propagation of the Faith, which is our only resource. Do not be afraid of being insistent with the Holy Childhood. Do not forget to say that you are working for the conversion of Buddhists whose children you are baptising and whom you will later have to instruct and protect from Protestant propaganda.

Do not hesitate to admit the good Bro. Poorey to profession from among the scholastics (if I misspell his name, by the way, it is your fault)⁶. He will be the first fruits from among the natives to whom you have consecrated your lives. Let him work hard at Latin so that we may have the consolation of seeing him raised to the priesthood. I must admit that were it not for the fear that his health would not stand a temperature so different from that in his own country I would not resist the desire to ordain him myself into Holy Orders, but I forget my age when I talk like that. Let us give ourselves time to get to know the other novice better⁷ before we decide whether to cut short his novitiate. He is still far from having completed his first year. We shall see later what there is to do.

I should very much like to write directly to our two dear Fathers Mola and Bonjean but I see that I lack the time. I am just about to

⁶ Bro. Paul-Étienne Poorey made his vows but died shortly afterwards on May 8, 1861.

⁷ Bro. Flanagan, cf.: *Semeria Journal*, Batayron copy, p. 366.

leave for Paris and how many things there are to do before I leave. Be sure to tell them both how much I appreciate their services. It is a trial to me and a real sacrifice that I do not know Fr. Bonjean personally; Fr. Mola knows how much I love him and I sometimes tell this to his portrait which I keep carefully very near me. Take good care of these two dear Fathers; they do not enjoy good health and they must not refuse certain comforts. And you, my dear Lord, think also a little of yourself. It is not without some concern that I see that you are often poorly or even ill. And others from among our number are none too well either. Go more slowly, check your zealous impulses and do not work beyond your strength. You need not be carried away by your fervour; take a rest between one mission and the next. In a word, consider it worthy thing to take wise precautions so as not to compromise your health.

It is with regret that I am leaving space on this sheet of paper, whereas you are so faithful in following the recipe I gave you, but there is no way I can do otherwise. People wish to talk to me and pester me on every side. I finish then with regret by blessing all our Fathers and Brothers and embracing you with all my heart.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.
Sup. Gen.

51. [To Bishop Étienne Semeria, in Jaffna].⁸

Death of Bro. Byrne. The Founder has not got used to the departure of Fr. Casimir Aubert. The Congregation can send only young missionaries; it is difficult to find Fathers and Brothers for the schools. The difficulties of the Fathers in the Vicariate of Colombo. The building of a house for the Oblates. Bro. Poorey is not continuing his studies. Fr. Flurin's illness. News of the missions staffed by the Congregation.

L.J.C. et M.I.

St-Louis, near Marseilles, July 8, 1860.

I had come, my dear Lord Bishop, to spend a few hours at St-Louis to take myself away, at least in part, from the disturbances of the town, and I was in the middle of writing letters to all corners of

⁸ Orig.: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

the world. Your turn was about to come when the last post from Ceylon brought me the sad news of the death of the good Bro. Byrne⁹. I was far from expecting this new misfortune to which we must submit as to all the trials the good Lord sends us. How bitter death is when it takes away from us those whom we have so many reasons to regret. Do you imagine I have accustomed myself to the thought that I have for example lost our Fr. Aubert who was so good, so kind, so admirable? I groan several times a day over this irreparable loss. The void he leaves around me is an abyss which nothing can bridge. He is a loss to my heart, he is a daily loss to the service of the Congregation, he is a loss to all those whom he edified, whom he helped, whom he encouraged and whom he carried with him by his advice and most of all by his example. It is something one cannot console oneself about, however subject one is to the impene-trable will of God.

I am despite my silence still very preoccupied with your mission. I have never lost sight of its needs, although I have often found myself unable to supply them as you would wish. This is because you often ask for things which it is impossible to find for you. Where did you want me to find missionaries of the calibre you desire? Such a phoenix appeared once, and heedless of all human considerations, counting on the virtue of the subject whose sacrifice I could measure, I sent him to you. But I would like him to know that the most tender affection of my heart has followed him and will live in me as long as I draw breath. But besides this excellent and cherished Fr. Mola, I can only choose from among our young subjects who entered the Order with a vocation for missionary work which they do not all keep. And you would even like some Englishmen from among these young subjects, and there is not one; and the Irish are little inclined to leave their own country where I must say there is an immense amount of good to be done which only they can do.

Now I see from Fr. Mola's letter that your school is taking on a dimension that you have never mentioned to me. I was under the impression that I was to send you some Brothers who had been initiated by the Christian Brothers into their methods of primary school teaching, and now people are talking to me about trigonometry, physics and even literature. This sort of thing could put us on the wrong track. It would not be easy to find subjects in France to serve

⁹ Bro. Robert Bonaventure Byrne died in Ceylon on May 22, 1860.

a school of that sort, so how are we supposed to find them in England? Nevertheless, I have today written to the Father Provincial and Fr. Boisramé, the Novice Master. I think you have written on your own account in order to make the point more strongly. I am even thinking of recalling from Dublin a good missionary who, although he is Belgian, speaks very good English. However, I am expecting a good number of objections to which I hope to be able to reply. In short I never cease thinking of the needs of your mission, but you will have to work on the principle that we have not got the material to comply entirely with your wishes.

You did very well to transcribe for me the letter of the socius of the Visitor Apostolic. Without betraying the confidence I used what he told you to write a confidential letter to the Cardinal prefect which does not mince words. It is time for us to shake off the yoke of this Prelate who has managed to get himself a good name in Propaganda because of his inexact reports and the excessive devotion of certain people. Do not let yourself be intimidated by his dominant ways, and most of all do not agree to the removal of our Oblates from his Vicariate. To do that would be to give up all hope for the future. Our Fathers would have to be devoid of all honour, feelings and conscience not to make strong efforts to conduct themselves well and to live in an exemplary and entirely religious manner during this period of persecution for them. Do not be afraid to visit them when you think it right. You do not need the permission of the Vicar Apostolic of Colombo to do that.

You ask me for my authorisation for you to build a house. As a general rule you should have sent me the plans of the proposed building so that I could have examined and approved them. However, in view of the urgency of the matter on the one hand and the difficulty of communication on the other we shall forget this and I approve in advance all that you think it right to do, with the recommendation that you do things in such a way that you do not have to go over them a second time. You of course do not need luxury, but do not be miserly over the size of your common rooms, your inside chapel and your refectory. If your resources do not allow you to complete the whole of the building in one go, just finish a part of it in the first year and you can finish it later. But do have satisfactory plans that you have no regrets about.

I am very cross that you have stopped the studies of the Brother who had begun to learn Latin. I would like nothing to hold up his

admission to Orders which is already decided upon. Were it not for the fear that the change of climate would be too dangerous for him, I would have no compunction in telling you to send him to us, even if only to encourage vocations. But, having reflected on the problem, I have decided that it would be more profitable and easier for him to study with you, but study requires continuity and any lacuna is very harmful. It is therefore essential that you organise things in such a way that he can continue his studies, at least in part, while doing other things if for the moment you absolutely cannot do without him.

The condition of the good Fr. Flurin disturbs me profoundly. I understand that his illness is not one for which there can be very much hope. His father has just written to me to ask that he be sent home, flattering himself that his health would return were he to be looked after by his family. This sort of correspondence with families is very disagreeable. What is the use of telling them that people are sick? What can I reply to this poor father? That his son would not be in a state to survive so tiring a journey?

I was hoping to be able to put together with this letter some general friendly letters that certain of our Fathers have written, but I have to send this to Marseilles now, since the post leaves tomorrow. I would not like to miss it and cause you a delay of two weeks.

I would like to send you some interesting pieces of news but I have so little time. Our Fathers in Texas have penetrated into Mexico. The Bishop of Monterey would like to entrust to them the running of his seminary and his missions. This is because the regularity of the Oblates is in stunning contrast to the conduct of the clergy of that region. This does not mean that they will leave Brownsville where they have built a very pretty church and a house for the community. Up till now they were sheltered only by planks which kept out neither cold nor heat nor wind. You know that Fr. Gaudet is Superior of this mission. Our Fathers in Oregon not having enough scope for their zeal there have gone up to the island of Vancouver and into New Caledonia. One of them, whom you perhaps saw at Montolivet, Fr. Fouquet, has gone right into the heartlands of the savage tribes. This was his great wish and I am sure there will be enough to satisfy him. He is learning three of their languages at the same time. Fr. Grandin whom I consecrated coadjutor of St-Boniface has caused a real stir in France. He managed to acquire for his difficult mission not only money, but also new subjects whom he admit-

ted into the Congregation before taking them back with him. All our missions in France, England, Ireland and Scotland give us great consolations. God is blessing the steps of our missionaries; everywhere the work done far surpasses the strength of the workers, and I must confess I am a little worried about this. Can you imagine that at the last mission given by our Fathers in Ireland they heard the confessions of twelve thousand people and there were thirty thousand who actually wanted confession. When will you be able to start on your numerous pagans? For that task I think you ought to be in charge of Kandy. All I ask is that you do not kill yourselves with work in the meantime.

Farewell, my dear and good Bishop, I embrace you with all my heart and I bless all our men especially the one who is sick.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.
Sup. Gen.

52. [To Bishop Étienne Semeria, in Jaffna].¹⁰

Bishop de Mazenod is still pleading the cause of the Oblates in Ceylon with the Congregation of Propaganda Fide. The death of Bishop Bravi who refused to allow the departure of new Oblate missionaries for the Vicariate of Colombo. The departure of Frs. Crousel Gourdon and Salain.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, September 17, 1860.

My dear friend, were I to have to send you a copy of all my letters to Rome on the subject of your mission you would not be tempted to accuse me of negligence. I have made it my business to speak frankly and without mincing words. It is possible that this way of going about things which they are certainly not used to has sometimes surprised them, or so it would appear from some of the replies I have been sent. I have written some open and some confidential letters. The Cardinal Prefect has several times replied to me in his own hand. It goes without saying that they do not want to admit the infidelity of those employees of theirs who have given information about the contents of my letters to the other side, but they know that

¹⁰ Orig.: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

we have our eyes open about what is happening. I admit that I was very severe on the subject of Bishop Bravi. I spoke to his Superior and had no scruple about describing him in such terms as his actions suggested. And now he is dead and all his plans for recrimination buried at sea¹¹. His travelling companion could carry them out, but he will not do so with the same sagacity, finesse and talent that the poor dead man used to show, whose conduct has always been so blameworthy and harmful to the southern Vicariate.

I am writing to the Cardinal that it is not my advanced age (nearly 80) which is stopping me from going to Rome to plead the cause of the interests of religion in the island, but my delicate position. But I repeat what I have always told him, namely that it is vital for the good of religion that the whole island should be served by our Congregation. The death of Bishop Bravi is a providential occasion to take such a decision. The report of the Visitor Apostolic will have proved to them how well our missionaries acquit themselves of their duties. Let them compare this, I tell them, with what the missionaries are doing in the south and then see if these men can even be called missionaries in the strict sense of the word. The Cardinal no doubt remembers that he was of my opinion when I pointed out to him that our men were devoted, obedient characters who followed a supernatural vocation, while the others are men with a financial interest who, having looked for and obtained a lucrative post which they fill without zeal or commitment, consider their position as a piece of good luck from which they must profit to their financial advantage and for their own rest and comfort.

In my last letter which included copies of the notes from Fr. Duffo and Fr. Mola, I am again insistent, and I propose that you be named Vicar Apostolic of Colombo, with the provision that a Pro-Vicar be appointed at Jaffna from among the Oblates to whose charge the whole island ought to be entrusted. I wanted to put the Cardinal on the spot, the death of Bishop Bravi seeming to be a providential occasion for coming to this important decision.

This, my dear friend, is what I have done and it is much more than anyone else would be able to do. I have always had to keep on good terms with the Cardinal Prefect to be able to push my arguments as far as this. Now we must wait and see what Divine Provi-

¹¹ Bishop Bravi died on the boat that was bringing him back to Italy and was buried near Suez. Cf.: *Semeria Journal*, Batayron copy, p. 385.

dence will do or allow, since in my view there was no time for hesitation. However, when men have to make a decision one always runs the risk that they will make the wrong one.

This letter will be carried to you by the excellent missionaries I am sending you. People are very cross with me in England for taking Fr. Crousel from them, but I thought you needed a man of his character and age who spoke good English. The other two will be good religious, but they will need some formation either with regard to the language or the ministry. But when one is going towards the destination indicated by obedience with the devotion which animates these men one always manages to reach it.

I will say no more for today as I am as always excessively busy and yet I want to thank Frs. Mola and Bonjean for the letters they have written me; I would also like to thank Fr. Duffo. My only complaint with them is one that you could have with me today, namely that they write so quickly that it is difficult to decipher their handwriting.

Farewell, dear friend, I embrace you with all my heart.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles, Sup. Gen.

53. [To Bishop Étienne Semeria, in Jaffna].¹²

They are still waiting in Rome for Bishop Bonnard's report on Ceylon. Extract from a letter from Cardinal Barnabô. The hope that the whole island will soon be in the charge of the Oblates. Who could be named coadjutor of Mgr Semeria?

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, December 24, 1860.

My very dear Bishop, I can give no explanation of why your Visitor Apostolic has delayed so long in sending his report to Rome. Things having been prepared, as they have been, by what I dare say is the importunity of my letters, the visit should have been decisive and I do not doubt that we would have obtained what I repeatedly demand with entreaties that are too pressing and too expressive to put the outcome in doubt. But in reply to each one of my letters I am

¹² Orig.: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria.

always told: the matter will be decided when they receive the report which, they assure me in the last letter, they have asked to be sent as soon as possible. You ought to have pressed the point a little at your end. In affairs of such importance it is wrong to sit back and wait. It is not enough to complain, one must act.

I must tell you that I am very satisfied with the disposition of the Cardinal towards us. He is even very solicitous for your health since he had learned that you were ill. I am in a great hurry, and the rapidity of my writing must prove this to you, but I can hardly resist the desire to let you see some passages of the Cardinal's letters.

Here is a copy of the last letter which I send you *in confidence* because we must not let anyone be in the position to say that I communicate to you my correspondence with the Cardinal.

"I received a few days ago your letter of October 18 in which, along with sending the note which Fr. Bonjean, an apostolic missionary, had sent you, you mentioned again your plans concerning Bishop Semeria with a view to the solutions that ought to be adopted now that the Vicariate of Colombo is vacant. On this point, I can only refer to my previous letters and renew to you my firmest assurances that I will do everything in my power to help your plans at the general Congregation when it takes place, by communicating to my eminent colleagues the judicious observations and the detailed reports which you have so kindly sent me. I must, however, tell you that the matter cannot be dealt with with all speed, because we must wait for the report of the Visitor Apostolic, which we have requested urgently, along with other details which will allow us to appreciate better the questions that are pending over these two missions.

"At the same time I learned with great sorrow from Fr. Bonjean's note the news of the dangerous illness contracted by the excellent Bishop of Olympia following the hardships he suffered in the course of a pastoral visit of the unfortunate district of Vanni and other difficult mission stations. But I was happy to learn also that, thanks be to God, the good prelate was now in full convalescence. And, since I noted in Fr. Bonjean's letter the need which Bishop Semeria feels of support and help in his heavy and difficult task, while he waits for the decisions which the Sacred Congregation will take for the better organisation of the two Vicariates and also in order to facilitate the Bishop of Olympia's task in the administration of his mission, by giving him a coadjutor bishop, I would be of the

opinion that you, my Lord, should propose to the Prelate that he ask the help of one of his most capable missionaries in the capacity of Vicar General, for the visits and the other more tiresome duties, without exposing himself to new dangers.

“While binding ourselves to this way of looking at things, and with the assurance that I shall keep you in touch, when the time comes, with the decisions taken by the Sacred Congregation in this matter, I pray the Lord that he keep you in good health for a long time to come...”¹³

In order to get this far you can imagine that I had to do a good deal of pleading. But in the circumstances in which we find ourselves in Rome, it is most annoying to find this delay, occasioned by negligence in sending on a report which should have been sent a long time ago.

I doubt that anyone wishes to return to the situation where the whole island was under the jurisdiction of a single Vicar Apostolic. I still insist that you be transferred to Colombo, with the provision that a Pro-vicar be appointed to Jaffna. I sense that in last analysis they would easily give you a coadjutor, but that is not what I am asking for at the moment. The important thing is that you go to Colombo and that you quietly introduce Oblates there so that they can do as much good as they have in the Vicariate of Jaffna. If the Sacred Congregation acts properly, it will not hesitate to give the two Vicariates to the Oblates, since it is concerned that there should be two of them.

I cannot tell you of the impatience I feel when, on the arrival of each letter from Cardinal Barnabò, he tells me that he is waiting for the report from the Visitor Apostolic in order to be able to make a decision. This gives time to the other side to bestir themselves and increase the difficulties. In writing to the Cardinal I supposed that you had sent him directly either the pastoral letter in Tamil and in English or Fr. Bonjean's brochure. That is why I have not sent them to him, although I did receive second copies, at least of the pastoral letters. I have, however, underlined the merits of Fr. Bonjean by sending a copy of his report which they seem to have read with attention.

And since I am on this point, I shall ask you if you have ever thought about whom we ought to consider if we needed to choose a

¹³ Translated from the Italian text which the Founder copied.

coadjutor. Whichever way the affair works out, we shall have to give this some consideration — whether they give in to my pressing entreaties and transfer you to Colombo, or whether they leave you in Jaffna with what they imagine is the help of a Coadjutor. Obviously this Coadjutor will have to be chosen from among the Oblate missionaries who are on the spot with you. Think about it, then, and let me know your ideas on the subject. You must not let this be known among our Fathers. You know their value.

I am also working at the moment to persuade the Sacred Congregation to form a new Vicariate in British Colombia, in order to free our Fathers, who are the only missionaries in the area, from the hindrances which were too much for them in Oregon, where they had to deal with a very demanding Bishop whom I would not be afraid of calling unjust in his pretensions. I think we shall manage to obtain this. I find myself unexpectedly at the bottom of my page.

Farewell then, I embrace you.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

I find here some space to send a blessing to all our Fathers¹⁴.

¹⁴ This last sentence is written at the bottom of the first page.

AFRICA

1848

1. [To Bishop Pavy on Algiers].¹

Fr. Tempier is sent to Algeria. The Oblates have been founded to put themselves at the service of the Bishops, but must live in community.

[Marseilles] December 4, 1848.

In order to look after the foundation of Blida², I am sending you M. Tempier the oldest member of the family of the Oblates of Mary. You will be pleased with him; he is a man of experience, eminently wise and of very good counsel; you can rely on him as you would on myself for advice about the arrangements to be made.

I have founded our Oblates of Mary only to put them at the service of the Bishops with whom they must cooperate most faithfully, without any other purpose than the glory of God and the sanctification of souls. They are men of zeal and devotion. All they ask — and it is in the Bishop's interest to grant them this — is to live according to their Rule in community, in order to maintain their regularity and fervour and to help each other fully to accomplish their duty.

2. [To Fr. Viala, at Limoges].³

Fr. Viala is asked to come to Marseilles as soon as possible to receive "an extremely important mission".

¹ Ms. Yenneux III, 143; IX, 211.

² The Founder always writes Blidah.

³ Ms. Yenneux IX, 213.

[Marseilles] December 6, 1848.

My dear Fr. Viala, a word from you would have pleased me a great deal.⁴ I am writing to you today to call you back to my side as soon as possible. I have a mission of great importance to entrust to you, and you will have to organise everything for it and receive my instructions. So, do not commit yourself to any retreat whatsoever. You must even finish the one you may at present be engaged upon as soon as possible. I need you here by the 10th of this month, or the 11th at the latest.⁵ If only you knew the prospect that is opening up before you, you would tremble with joy. Fr. Tempier has already left to prepare the way. Truly God is showering down his blessings on our Congregation; he is putting into our hands, as it were, the means to accomplish our vocation wonderfully. Our whole job is to make our standards correspond to such signal favour. Come quickly, then, so that we may discuss these important matters at our leisure. I have not the time today to tell you more about them. It goes without saying that should you have accepted any engagement you must excuse yourself on the grounds of the express orders I am now sending you.

Farewell, my dear Fr. Viala, I await your arrival with impatience. Begin your prayers to God that he may bless the work which is entrusted to us. I send you affectionate greetings.

⁴ The Founder had heard indirectly that Fr. Viala was unhappy with his position in Limoges; he had written to him on July 29 to ask him to stay at his post, even if his health were not good.

⁵ Fr. Viala did not have to leave so early for Algeria, but the Founder needed him to preach a mission at Gréasque. Cf. Letter of January 17, 1849.

3. [To Bishop Pavy of Algiers].¹

When Bishop Pavy judges the time right he may use the Oblates "for the conversion of the Arabs"; meanwhile they should work for "the salvation of the most wayward souls".

[Marseilles] January 5, 1849.

I hope the day will come when you will be able to use them for the conversion of the Arabs. I have never thought that the conversion of these poor Moslems was any more difficult than that of the Chinese. It will be up to you to give the signal when the time comes. It would be better to allow our missionaries to work at their modest ministry, in conformity with their Rule, which lays down that they should work for the salvation of the most wayward souls, rather than give them a cathedral pulpit from which to preach a Lenten Station.

4. [To Fr. Viala, at Gréasque].²

Advice and reflections on the administration of the Sacrament of Penance. The Founder himself will preach at the end of the mission at Gréasque. Fr. Viala's two companions are waiting for him in order to set off for Africa.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, January 17, 1849.

I am replying immediately, my dear Fr. Viala, to the letter which I have just received from you. I was waiting for it with some impa-

¹ Ms. Yenveux I supplement, 107. Fr. Yenveux puts the following note before this extract: "Bishop de Mazenod writes to the Lord Bishop of Algiers to announce the arrival in the near future of three Oblates whom he has requested for Blida".

² Orig.: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Viala.

tience, for since your departure for Gréasque I had heard nothing either of you or of the mission, and this did not fail to cause me some anxiety.

I congratulate you for the good which, by the grace of God, you have already achieved and for that which you still have to do. I recommend that you insist a good deal on the instruction and on the state of mind necessary for the sacrament of Penance. This is the really important point. If one simply goes through the motions of confession without being penetrated by the feelings of contrition which must be present if the salutary effect of absolution is to be obtained, one has done nothing. This is always my fear when I hear our missionaries say that they have confessed a prodigious number of penitents. I have never managed, by a long way, to achieve the numbers quoted by our Fathers. Regret and firm purpose of amendment. Insist on making Jesus Christ known and loved. Speak often of this divine saviour and of all he has done to save mankind. Make them resolve never to spend a day without praying.

I will leave everything to be at Gréasque on the day that you indicate, the 28th of this month. I was committed elsewhere, but I have excused myself; my first duty is to go and finish the great work you have done so well. I will follow the itinerary you suggested: I shall sleep at St-Savournin on Saturday night and from there I shall come on foot to Gréasque. Warn the parish priest of St-Savournin and tell him not to spend a lot of money — eggs or an omelette are quite enough for me. Tell the parish priest of Gréasque not to make a big fuss either. Nothing displeases me more than those meals where there is more than you need. Three or four good courses, if he wants because of the numbers, but no more. Nothing fancy, nothing expensive, the strictest simplicity. That is what is to my taste.

I can understand that you have extended your mission by one week since your audience has been so attentive and enthusiastic but, you know, the Africans want very much to see you. You are already announced in the newspapers. The Paris ones have announced that your arrival in Blida will be very soon. Fr. Pulicani's beard is growing splendidly; he is already so finely adorned as to create envy. Your chapel will be a jewel, and there will even be stained glass. A fine carpet has been bought and a credence-table and we are trying here to get together a small cargo for you. Fr. Bellanger has taken a very lovely missal from me.

Farewell, my very dear Fr. Viala, I send most affectionate greetings to you and your dear companion³. Please give my regards to the parish priest.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

5. [To M. Arsène Peauger, Prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhône].⁴

Bishop de Mazenod asks the Prefect to obtain a free passage for three priests on a boat leaving for Algeria.

Marseilles, February 8, 1849.

Dear Sir,

The Lord Bishop of Algiers, obliged as he is to have recourse to the various dioceses of France in order to serve the religious needs of Algeria, has asked me for several priests and catechists to help him in his task. I have promised him three priests and one catechists whom he daily expects. He tells me that the Government gives a free passage to such clerics. Furthermore, I am assured that you yourself have the right to authorise the embarcation — at the expense of the State — of those who are going to work in Algeria. If such be the case, I should be most obliged if you would be so kind as to grant to Messrs. Viala, Bellanger, Pulicani, all priests, and to a catechist⁵ who is accompanying them the necessary authorisation to be admitted free of charge on board the boats going to Algiers. It is of great importance that their departure take place as soon as possible.

I presume in this matter to count on your kindly disposition towards what touches religious interests, and I thank you in advance for what you will do.

Yours faithfully,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

³ Fr. Coste, cf.: A. Rey, *Mgr de Mazenod*, T. II, p. 306.

⁴ Aut. Copy: Marseilles, Archdiocesan Archive, Register of Administrative letters, vol V, 1844-1851, p. 210.

⁵ The Founder often calls the Brothers whom he sends on the missions "catechists". However, the only Brother to go to Algeria was Br. Augustin Chalvesche, and it seems that he went only in July. Cf.: *Notices Nécrologiques*, vol. VII, p. 448.

6. [To Fr. Viala, at Blida].⁶

Bishop de Mazenod has stopped the publication of a newspaper article against Bishop Pavy. The need to be patient and full of due regard for the Bishop, without being discouraged by the difficulties and setbacks.

[Marseilles] March 5, 1849.

I do not know to which articles you are referring; all I know is that I have stopped the publication of a fairly compromising one which had been sent to the *Gazette* and which M. Olive⁷ had the goodness to show me, seeing that it dealt with us. The Lord Bishop of Algiers can be quite sure that one of us would never allow himself to make his complaints public. God forbid that I should wish in any way to contribute to the denigration of his administration, even if we had more to complain about. As for the personal offences which you told me of, five minutes' prayer at the foot of my crucifix are enough to make me forget them and I do not even need that much time to forgive them. On this subject I will tell you in confidence that I would have preferred it if the rather too laconic letter which you say you wrote to the Bishop had been more polite. One must never forget the deference due to a Bishop even when one has a complaint about him.⁸

I am finishing in haste, in case I miss the post. Farewell, then, my dear Father, do not let yourself be bowed down by any contradiction, do not precipitate matters through an only too justified feeling of anger brought about by the injustices you are suffering. You know the advice the Apostle gives us on this subject, he who suffered so much from all sides and in all ways. Let us always have only one God in our sight, and he will come to our help. Is it not already a fine compensation that you have been able to do good work at Boufarik and in the villages of our colonists!

Farewell, farewell, I send you all my most affectionate greetings.

⁶ Ms. Yenveux III, 150-151.

⁷ A printer at Marseilles.

⁸ The Oblates were to have charge of the parish ministry at Blida and were also to be chaplains to the town hospital. The parish priest was, it appears, very much against their chapel being open to the public. The Bishop gave them seven villages in the neighbourhood to look after. cf.: E. Lamirande *Les Oblats en Algérie* in *Études Oblates*, vol. 14 (1955), pp. 161-163.

7. [To Fr. Viala, at Blida].⁹

The importance of keeping the Founder in regular touch with events in an objective way. The need not to be discouraged.

[Marseilles] March 9,¹⁰ 1849.

Keep me in touch with everything, calmly and without getting worried or discouraged. We shall see how the Bishop will reply to my letter. On your side, act with a good deal of moderation and respect towards the Bishop, while still trying to make him understand that it is absolutely essential for your chapel to be open to the public, in order for you to exercise your ministry which is to preach, to instruct and to confess.

Do not wait for the last minute to write to me; prepare your letter well in advance on a large sheet of paper, without leaving a margin. Explain yourself clearly, exactly, without passion, without fear; God's work must always face difficulties. It is true, though, that this ought not to come from the sort of opposition we are faced with today. Tell me about everything and everyone.

8. [To Fr. Viala, at Blida].¹¹

Bishop Pavy has replied with insults to Bishop de Mazenod's polite letter. The need to bear with patience the difficulties which the Lord foretold for those whom he sent out for the conversion of the world.

[Marseilles] April 5, 1849.

There is good reason to feel grieved when one sees a Bishop forget himself to that extent. I assure you that I am less hurt by the outrageous remarks he allowed himself to make against me than I am to see a man invested with this sacred ministry degrade himself to this degree. In the letter which angered him so much, I reminded him — it is true — of his own writings which constitute a veritable treatise, but I did it with the utmost politeness.

⁹ Ms. Yenneux III, 151.

¹⁰ This letter seems to be the continuation of the previous one. The original Yenneux text is no longer extant, only the proofs of the printed text.

¹¹ Ms. Yenneux V, 232.

Now what must we do? If such important interests were not at stake, so that the salvation of souls was put at risk, my mind would be soon made up. But the consequences of a decision which would involve the abandonment of all the hopes we have entertained for the conversion of the pagans and the good direction of a group of Christians who have been much neglected, do deserve reflection. Therefore I shall make no decision while I am still influenced by the injustices and outrages which you have to suffer. So much the worse for those who abuse their power; they will answer to God for it; it is right for us to suffer in the cause of justice. Let us remember what the Saviour foretold for those like yourself who have been sent out for the conversion of the world; out of respect for those who are persecuting you I will not even quote the words of the Master. Be patient still and keep your thoughts on things of heaven; for the moment, accept what you are being offered since it is being made the condition for your continued presence in a mission which holds out such a fine future. Do not let us cause division through a susceptibility which would certainly be very reasonable but would not be worthy of apostolic men who expect no gratitude from other creatures, since they look only to God. Do not allow yourself to be cast down, my dear Fr. Viala, by such strange and unexpected action. The God whom you serve will be your consolation and reward.

9. [To Fr. Grenier, priest of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate].¹²

Obedience for Algeria.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, October 26, 1849.

My very dear Fr. Grenier, I have been wanting to write to you for several days. I have been prevented from doing so by my activities which are always increasing in number. I am longing, however, to tell you that you must come to me as soon as possible. I am giving you, to begin your apostolic work, a mission for Algeria, where an immense good awaits you. We are aiming at the conversion of the Arabs in taking the road we are on at the moment. Come then as soon as possible. There will be two of you¹³ who will go and join

¹² Orig.: Ottawa, Deschâtelets Archive.

¹³ The other was Fr. Joseph Martin, who was made Superior of the Oblates in Algeria to replace Fr. Viala whom Bishop Pavy no longer wanted at Blida.

three of our men who are already at work. Bring all the things you need with you. I shall not write any more now since I expect soon to press you against my bosom. Meanwhile I embrace you and send you my blessing.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

10. [To Fr. Bellanger, at Blida].¹⁴.

The Oblates are at the service of the Bishops, but these must facilitate the means of maintaining regularity and religious discipline. Blida must serve as a central house where the missionaries will be able to refresh themselves.

[Marseilles] November 10, 1849.

I am delighted that you accompanied Bishop Pavy to Philippeville; by seeing you at close quarters he will understand still more readily that our missionaries are priests who are most devoted to the bishops and that their whole ambition lies in taking on their own shoulders some of the burden that lies so heavily on those of the Prelates... I am most anxious that the Bishop be fully aware of this since it is a basic principle of the Order. I was far from thinking that I would have to become a bishop myself, since in 1823 I had positively refused a bishopric that had been selected for me. Ah well! I used to say to the others in the Congregation that I wished to serve as a footstool that might raise up the bishops in the Church of God. All I ask is that the bishops facilitate the means of maintaining among our members who are consecrated to their service, the spirit of their holy vocation, regularity, religious discipline.

I have always thought that Blida should be a central house where the missionaries would be able to return constantly and learn again the spirit of regularity, and from which they would go out again more ready to fulfil their ministry worthily. From there, without being too far from the residence of the Bishop whose directions are to be awaited, you will be in a position later to go out among the natives and do much good to all the villages which spread out from this important centre in every direction.

¹⁴ Ms.: Yenveux III, 143.

11. [To Fr. Tempier, in Marseilles].¹⁵

Fr. Tempier is sent to Algeria to establish the Oblate community and study the conditions under which new establishments would be accepted.

[Marseilles] November 30, 1849.

My dear Fr. Tempier, I am giving you an express commission to go to Algeria in order to discuss the affairs of the Congregation with the Lord Bishop of Algiers¹⁶. I give you full powers as my Vicar to organise our Congregation in the diocese of Algiers, either as regards the placement of personnel, or the acceptance or rejection of conditions that may be made to you for the formation of our establishments.

Although the members of our Congregation must, in the nature of things, find themselves rather scattered, it is nonetheless necessary to set up a single administration, composed, according to the Rule, of a local Superior, of two assessors, one of whom must be an advisor to the Superior and of a bursar or procurator.

Fr. Martin is named Superior, Fr. Bellanger first assessor and advisor, Fr. Pulicani second assessor because we must keep Fr.

¹⁵ Ms. Yenveux VII, 106; I supplement, 127.

¹⁶ Fr. Tempier left with Frs. Martin and Grenier. It was necessary to name a new Superior, after the return of Fr. Viala, to see if it was right to remain at Blida and to settle the Fathers into a new area of activity around Philippeville, cf.: Journal Mazenod, November 30, 1849, ms. Yenveux I supplement, 86: "Frs. Martin and Grenier leave for Algeria. They are going to take possession of the mission stations which the Bishop tells them to occupy in the Constantine province. They are around Philippeville in the villages of Stora, Valée, Damremont, Saint-Charles and Saint-Antoine. Fr. Tempier is accompanying them to sort out all the affairs in that area. It is basically a question of finding out whether we can stay at Blida which is really the spot which suits us since it is quite near Algiers and within reach of the Atlas where we will have to penetrate later in order to work at the conversion of the Arabs. We will then have to decide whether to accept the offers made to us by M. de Baudicour who wants to sell us his property".

Fr. Tempier was also to examine closely the conduct of Fr. Bellanger who was selling off the Congregation's goods. The Founder had had complaints on this subject. On the Visitor's return he wrote in his diary: "Fr. Tempier has returned from his journey to Algeria. Never was a journey so necessary. He arrived in time to unmask Fr. Bellanger who was unworthily betraying the Congregation untruthfully to the Bishop about the intentions of his superiors. After this discovery Bishop Pavy himself asked Fr. Tempier to leave Fr. Bellanger at Blida for a few more months as a consideration for him since he had allowed himself to be deceived. There are always fresh tribulations. Judas has to get his hands on everything to spoil it". cf.: Journal, December 23, 1849. Ms. Yenveux VIII, 282.

Sabon as procurator or bursar. You will be careful to specify very particularly the function of this last office. All the community money must pass through the hands of the bursar and he must not spend any except on the orders of the Superior who himself is bound to consult his council, as is prescribed by the Rule for all cases that it mentions. Every six months he will give an account of his work to the Procurator General of the Institute.

In the exceptional position in which our Fathers find themselves in Algeria, they will have to consult the Superior personally, or better still in writing, for all the expenses they think necessary for the parishes they serve. Any revenue that comes from their work must be sent to the bursar so that he may encash it. You will take care to see that the bursar is supplied with the necessary registers.

12. [To Fr. Tempier, in Algeria].¹⁷

Advice on the purchase of a piece of property at Blida.

[Marseilles] December 9¹⁸, 1849.

...You will have to be careful about propositions made by the excellent young man who is to deal with you. Be well informed before coming to any conclusions about the present value of property. If it is true that it is so cheap at Blida, you can, without showing any suspicion, take precautions so as not to make any mistakes.

¹⁷ Ms. Yenveux VII, 45.

¹⁸ Yenveux writes: "September 9", but this letter is more likely to have been written in December when Fr. Tempier was actually in Algeria. This text is not found in the manuscript copy of the letter written to Fr. Tempier on September 9.

1850

13. [To Bishop Pavy of Algiers].¹

Qualities and merits of Fr. Martin, the new Superior of the Oblates in Algeria.

[Marseilles] January 14, 1850.

I am sending you Fr. Martin because of his experience and because of the tasks he has always performed well in the Congregation. He will be the Superior of all the Oblates who are working in your diocese. I think that Fr. Tempier has acquainted you with all the qualities of this good priest who has always done the greatest good in all our houses. He was the Superior of the community of Notre-Dame des Lumières when I called upon him to go and work with you. He is a very good priest, aged forty-five, and has experience of the missions. He has been in the Congregation for more than twenty-six years.

14. [To Bishop Pavy of Algiers].²

Fr. Bellanger, having continued with "his extravagant ways", has been expelled from the Congregation. Numerous reasons for this serious decision of the General Council.

¹ Ms. Yenneux IX, 159.

² Orig.: Algiers, Diocesan Archives.

This letter goes over the reasons for expulsion that were reported in the Minutes of the General Council of February 4. The Secretary of the Council ends thus: "Penetrated by the strongest feelings of pain at the sight of the profound sorrow which this succession of crimes and wickedness was causing to our Most Reverend Father General, horrified with good reason by the very unfortunate consequences which Bellanger's conduct could have and undoubtedly would have for the body of which he was still a member, the Council proceeded, by a unanimous vote, to pronounce the speedy expulsion of so bad a person and so perverse a member of the Order. The Council asked the most Illustrious Father General to write by the soonest post to the Bishop of Algiers in order to have pronounced as soon as possible against so culpable a priest the suspension of all ecclesiastical functions".

Marseilles, February 4, 1850.

My Lord Bishop,

Monsieur Tempier, whom I had sent to Africa, on the most pressing insistence of Frs. Sabon and Pulicani, to put a stop to Fr. Bellanger in his wilful disposal of the community funds, to preserve the community from the shame of total ruin and to establish a regularity that did not exist before, has given me, on his return, a faithful account of the state of things. He has also explained to me your feelings on the means whereby Fr. Bellanger is to be recalled to France. I was prepared to comply with your wishes, although I could see that it could cause many problems for the Fathers in our community at Blida, had Fr. Bellanger been able to conduct himself, in the meantime in a satisfactory way, and to allow Fr. Sabon, who had been given sole charge of the finances of the house, the freedom he needed to repair the damage done through Fr. Bellanger's bad management and not make them any worse. However, this was not the case. Nothing can stop Fr. Bellanger in his extravagant ways. So in order to enable you, my Lord, to appreciate the situation and the man involved, I must tell you the story from the beginning.

Fr. Bellanger had only recently joined the Congregation and had finished his novitiate only a few months previously when I sent him to Africa; but he was under the direction of another. I would not have thought it possible, since I did not yet know him sufficiently, to put him in charge of one of our houses. At the time when I recalled Fr. Viala, Fr. Bellanger was already on the spot. I knew that his relations with you were very cordial and that you felt well disposed towards him. I allowed him to remain in the position he had gained because of his age rather than because of his experience in the ways of the Congregation.

However, I would not give him the title of Superior. He was there as first among equals, although this did not prevent the others from showing him all sorts of respect and deference, as he himself admitted. I wanted, before giving him a more explicit mark of confidence, to allow him to prove his capacity to direct religious and to administrate a quite important house, which Blida was becoming because of the numbers of people who lived there.

He was not long in his position when it was realised that there was cause for great concern over the regularity of the house, both in the spiritual and temporal fields. He had hardly left Algeria to come

to France, when some creditors, worried by this departure which they thought would be either prolonged for some time or even definitive, came to the house to claim sums of money which he owed them. People were a little surprised by this and wondered how he had managed to contract debts without anyone knowing of it and without the authorisation of the Superior. He was, after all, a religious and should have understood the consequences of the vows he had made before God. He explained the business as best he could and people satisfied themselves with his explanation, however good or bad it seemed.

Fr. Bellanger left Algeria on June 20 last to come here. But before sailing, although he had a free passage for both the outward and the return journey, and despite the fact that he had no expenses in Marseilles, where, furthermore, he could have found money if he needed it and if the expenses had been judged necessary, he went to M. Bénèche, the bursar, I think, of the Lazarist house in Algiers, to ask him to lend him, in the name of Fr. Viala, who had not the least suspicion of this and who did not need the money anyway, the sum of 645 francs which he would repay, he said, on his return from France. M. Bénèche was good enough to comply with this request and since then Fr. Bellanger has not been seen in the house of these respectable religious. What has he done with that money? What has he done, moreover, with the sum of 150 francs which he borrowed at the same time from M. Ancelin, your general secretary, if I am not mistaken? There is in the account books of the community which I have at this moment in front of me, no record of this money being received nor of the use to which it was put. Fr. Bellanger, it is true, has said and stated, on several occasions, that he has a fairly considerable family fortune. Perhaps he could reply that he intended to repay the sum he was then borrowing from his own income. But, apart from the fact that this would have been quite irregular for a religious who may not use any money without the consent of his Superior, it would seem that he can scarcely defend himself with this argument since on the one hand he was borrowing in the name either of Fr. Viala or of the community, and on the other he has never made any effort throughout this business to honour his commitments. I will come later to say what his fortune consists of, this fortune of which he has so often spoken to anyone prepared to listen.

In the last two weeks of last September he told Frs. Sabon and Pulicani that he had just been paid at the Treasury at Blida a sum

of 800 francs against a bill of the same value which he had in his possession. Where had he come by it, if the story is true? No one knows anything about it. It would be easy to verify the matter by going to the accountant who exchanged the bill; but one can quite reasonably doubt the whole thing. There was the same story towards the end of December. He declared that he had been paid 600 francs against a bill that he had had in his possession since his arrival in Africa and of which no one suspected the existence. But, in any case, it was money he was administering himself and which he was careful not to put in the hands of the bursar a thing still unheard of from a religious.

Your Lordship had placed a sum of 400 or 500 francs at the disposal of Frs. Sabon and Pulicani to help them provide for the modest chapels they serve those items most necessary for worship. These two priests believed, as do all good religious, that it was their duty, after having shared the money between them, to place it in the hands of Fr. Bellanger so that they could ask him for what they wanted when the occasion arose. They also handed over to him the little gifts that they had been given which were either to be used for some purpose or to be given to the poor. Well, my Lord, it became impossible for these two priests to get back the money they had entrusted to him, either to help the poor or to buy vital things for worship. Half way through November last he owed 280 francs to Fr. Sabon and 100 to Fr. Pulicani, for whom he had nothing but insulting words to say, when they asked him about this subject.

Fr. Bellanger, who does not worry about anything when it is a question of neglecting his duties and wasting resources, happened to meet in Africa a young Zouave soldier who he said was a relative of his (his nephew in the Breton way) and straightaway brought him back to the house. He bought him a complete set of clothes, procured him a replacement to get him out of the army, went to Algiers several times and stayed for periods of two to three weeks at the Hôtel du Nord accompanied by this young man, borrowed 350 francs from Mademoiselle Delphine Roubaud in order to pay a first instalment to this replacement soldier, and pledged himself to pay a further 700 or 800 francs to this same replacement on the young man's behalf at the end of last December. In the meantime he kept this young man in the house, gave him accommodation, fed him, clothed him, gave him money, made him go with him wherever he went, gave frequent meals for him, received in the house, at table and gave a bed to all

the old friends of the young man who came to see him, and all this always at our expense. This whole business went on without his bothering to write to me, and he would not allow his confreres to pass the slightest comment since he took them all as insults. There is still more: he allowed this young man to behave in the house as if he were the master and to lack respect for the people living there. I only learned this too late. Such was the state of things when I sent M. Tempier, my assistant in the Congregation, to Algiers, to see things for himself, with power and authority to reform all the disorders which were causing the other two Fathers in the house to complain, and to give me an account on his return of the results he had obtained. He found that the disorders pointed out by Frs. Sabon and Pulicani (who are, however, to be admired for their charity and patience) were only too real. But Fr. Bellanger had tried cast a bad light on this visitation, presenting in false and lying colours the views and thoughts of M. Tempier, and even to spread them abroad. His interest in acting in this way was only too great, given the line of conduct he was following which he knew a Visitor could only disapprove of.

I admit that one can let oneself be taken in by a man like Bellanger who has certain external qualities and to whom lies cost little. I myself was taken in on many occasions before I got to know him properly, and unfortunately I got to know him too late. On the subject of this shameful display of lies and falsehood, I must recall certain facts which M. Tempier tells me he has already brought to your attention during his stay in Algiers: that fine scene which took place a short distance from Summa, when a corps of troops numbering seven to eight thousand men, whom no one saw, stopped one Sunday while returning from an expedition in Great Kabylia, and for whom Fr. Bellanger, at the request of the general said Mass in open country. He described to us here, with all pomposity, in the presence of another Bishop and a good number of priests everything he said and did on that occasion, the harangue he gave, the lunch he took part in, the journey on horseback that he made at the General's side and at the head of the column, right into Blida... And then those 1500 soldiers whose confession he heard and to whom he gave Easter communion at Blida, and again the whole population of Béni-Méred who last Easter made their communion with the exception of only three men, who however had the happiness of receiving communion at your hand a short time later on the occasion of your visit to the

parish. How can one lie so impudently? There was even the touching detail in his story of the unfortunate scorpion that bit him on the cheek and made him shave his face.

I admit that My Lord of Viviers³ and I found that there must be some exaggeration in the number of soldiers who had done their Easter duties. 1500 men was a lot for one confessor and then the devotion of our soldiers in Africa did seem just a little too good to be true. But, nonetheless, when a man whom one does not suspect of being a professional liar, tells you of things that happened before his very eyes, indeed in which he even played a major role, one is naturally inclined to believe him.

I was and had to be singularly astonished — I would say almost stupefied — when I learned that there was not a word of truth in all these stories. I was equally distressed by it and asked M. Tempier to write to Fr. Bellanger telling him of my surprise and sorrow. From that moment I could no longer place faith and trust in anything this brazen liar said or wrote. As for him he was very annoyed to find himself thus discovered, and he kept a long silence. But for all that he was not cured of his mania for lying and squandering funds that did not belong to him.

In fact in his visit to Blida M. Tempier discovered an amazing disorder in the accounts of the house. From the end of June nothing was written in the books apart from a few insignificant entries (and one wonders why he bothered to do this) which in all amount to the sum of 128 francs 73 centimes. The debit side amounts to much the same. We do not know whether he received the normal Government salaries, whether he borrowed or lent or played a thousand tricks of his usual sort. The senseless expenditure made in favour of his supposed relative does not appear at all, the expenses incurred from the many trips and hotel bills for this same man do not appear either. I have learned that on the journey to Philippeville, a journey about which he did not bother to ask my opinion because in any case I would have sent somebody quite different from him, he spent 300 francs. Frs. Sabon and Pulicani found this out from his supposed relative who had become his constant companion. At Philippeville there were many big meals and many guests. He had to satisfy his vanity. He told everyone he had a great fortune; he called himself Bellanger d'Armaillé; he signed papers in which he styled himself

³ Bishop Guibert.

with this noble title. People wrote letters to him in which he was so styled; he saw to it that everything was fitted to his high position in life. These expenses do not appear in the accounts either. He will doubtless say in order to justify them that all expenditure for M. Jules Deresse was paid for by that gentleman. But people know that this young man was penniless, that he was on bad terms with his family, according to Fr. Bellanger's own admission, and that he, Bellanger, had committed himself to getting him back into the good graces of his father, Bellanger's supposed cousin. So if this young man spent these extravagant amounts and paid for the cost of his replacement in the army, he can only have done so with the funds that his father may have sent to Fr. Bellanger. For one does not send money directly to a young man who has been a spendthrift, who has caused much grief and against whom one has a definite grudge. Well, if Fr. Bellanger received money from the father of M. Deresse he can only have done so through normal commercial channels, by treasury bonds or postal bills which the young man's father sent him. Let Fr. Bellanger say which dealer or banker in Algiers or Blida exchanged these bills; let him name the accountants whom he paid in bonds or bills and let us check the payments made in his favour by M. Deresse senior. If he suggests that a different method was used, an easy but little used method when people send money far away, namely that of putting bank notes in a letter, let Fr. Bellanger show us the letter with a specific date and a Dijon postmark in which mention is made of this despatch for the aforementioned purpose. I doubt whether he is able to do this and I am convinced that all his assertions about this young man are nothing but a web of lies, and that the money he spent on his behalf was taken from the funds of the house, for which reason he did not bother to keep any account of them. But since there was a lack of order in his written account, Fr. Bellanger admitted to M. Tempier while the latter was at Blida that he owed 600 francs to Messrs. de St. Lazare of Algiers, 350 to Mlle Roubaud, 100 to the parish priest of Blida and 10 to a certain Thore of that same town. The priests in the house were convinced that he was not telling the truth even then, and that he owed more money either to the parish priest of Blida or to M. Thore, a grocer who supplied the house. They were of the opinion that he owed M. Thore money not because of any supplies received but because he had borrowed money from him.

Furthermore, Fr. Bellanger, given his position as a rich landowner in France, allowed himself to lend from the funds of the

house 600 francs to M. de Laborère, former mayor of Béni-Méred, 112 francs (although people think that it was more than that) to M. Malbos of Summa, 45 to M. Verger of La Mouzaïa: all these are sums which will never be paid back. Perhaps he has even lent money to other people. Nobody would dare to affirm the contrary. A religious is simply not allowed to ignore his duty to that degree.

Given the general state of affairs, M. Tempier, deeply distressed by what he was learning and seeing, tired, as others had been, by Fr. Bellanger's constant assertions that he possessed considerable wealth and property in the Sarthe department and elsewhere (property, however, from which he had transferred the income to an aunt until October 1849) finally asked him what these properties consisted of, where they were situated etc. etc. At this, Fr. Bellanger, never embarrassed when it came to lying, declared to M. Tempier, who took note of it all at the other's dictation, that he had 1) a credit, with a mortgage, of 50,000 francs recognised by deeds signed by M. Garnier, a lawyer of Cambrai, and which depended on property which guaranteed its redeemability; 2) that he possessed, in the commune of Marigné, in the Sarthe department, a fine country property, called La Ronceré, of 154 hectares with an owner's house, a farm house, woods, meadows etc. M. Tempier was wise enough not to have blind faith in the assertions made by this man, even when they were made in the most decisive of tones and the most assured of manners. But anyway it was good to be able to assure, with such precise indications, whether he was lying on this point when it was so easy to check up on the facts. This was the reason why he wanted to take note of what Fr. Bellanger said, and the latter seemed in no way disconcerted by this precaution which he could see was being taken. His face, in a word, was constantly set firm in these circumstances. On M. Tempier's return to me, I instructed him to write to Cambrai and to Le Mans to have positive information about the two facts mentioned above.

Your Lordship will recall at the same time that M. Bellanger used to tell whoever wanted to listen that his father was a retired colonel. He had told us the story of what happened at his first Mass, where his father, who had long been opposed to his priestly vocation, because he was sad to see the family name die with his only son, and to lose an inheritor who bore his name for his rich fortune, was in a state of happiness that was difficult to describe. He asked pardon for the opposition he had put up against his son, wanted to go to confes-

sion to him, put on his colonel's uniform to serve Mass for him and receive communion from the hands of his son. The scene in a word was touching. M. Tempier was to get information about all these fine things. For Cambrai he went to Fr. Derousseau, principal of the junior seminary, with a request to check with M. Garnier a lawyer in the town whether he had a bond for 50,000 francs in the name of M. Jean-Baptiste François Bellanger, a priest living in Le Mans. His reply, dated January 18 last, was that there was no lawyer of that name either in the town or in the surrounding district. As for the information we wanted to have about Le Mans, M. Tempier contacted M. Martin Bruneau, the vicar general and superior of the major seminary. He explained in his letter 1) that M. Bellanger, a priest of the diocese of Le Mans who had been working for our Congregation for some time, seemed to be untruthful in what he said; 2) that he had a mania for spending money and that he sometimes borrowed money to indulge this habit, using as a guarantee for all the debts he was contracting the value or revenue from a very fine piece of property which he said he owned called La Ronceré in the commune of Marigné in the Sarthe department; 3) that for some time he had been adding to his normal name Bellanger that of d'Armaillé, a title he had not used — doubtless through modesty — at the beginning of his time with us; and 4) that he had said his father was a colonel.

M. Bruneau's reply to this letter — which I am sending you herewith and which I ask you to return to me — will let you know my Lord what truth there was in the claims of the unfortunate Bellanger and will edify you as to his conduct at Le Mans.

I will add only a few details about Bellanger's conduct at Blida since M. Tempier's return to Marseilles. The latter had, at my orders, appointed Fr. Sabon as bursar of the house and had said that he would check in all money coming into the house directly and that he alone would be responsible, also directly, for any payments due and any expenses incurred. He had further stated that at the end of December they would have to dispense with the services of a woman, who had her child with her and who had been taken on temporarily as cook at a time when the house had no one for the job. She was to be thanked and sent away as soon as I sent them a Brother from here who would more fittingly be able to look after them. Fr. Bellanger had kept this woman on for six months without any real necessity for it and despite the protests of his confreres. It seemed as though she

would have at least had to leave by the end of December. Well, it has not been possible for Fr. Sabon, despite the position he holds and the orders I repeated in a letter from here to perform so wise a measure, and a measure about which I had given such precise and formal instructions. Bellanger always told Fr. Sabon that it was his affair and that he was dealing with it. In the same way the bursar found it impossible to carry out his job. He is in fact reduced simply to recording payments made without being able to authorise them or make any judgement about the necessity or fittingness of them, and even without being able to find out the use to which Bellanger is putting the sums of money he continually asks for.

Since this state of affairs can go on no longer, and I now know the unfortunate Bellanger for what he is, I am going to expel him from the Congregation which he is dishonouring by his presence. Ten times fewer faults would be enough to get rid of a man from a family which, thanks be to God, is able to command respect wherever it is found. But before finishing my letter I would like to tell you further, my Lord, that this wretch is going to lend or has even already lent a sum of 5000 francs. The Mayor of Blida has apparently been sorting this out. But where did he get this money? That is something we can ask ourselves, now that we know that he has none himself. He has probably got it by borrowing. So much the worse for those who have lent the money to him. The Congregation will be responsible only for the money it has received. He will be prosecuted, if need be, as he is going to be anyway by a certain Sebastian Servet of Barcelona who generously lent him on December 14, 1846, the sum of 1000 pesetas (1250 francs) for a few days only, and who is outraged, with some reason no doubt, that this unworthy debtor is today prepared to deny his own signature. M. Tempier told me that he had informed you of this affair about which I shall make no further comment.

M. Bellanger might ask for the money from a bill in his name which he left in the hands of the bursar of the novitiate house. I enclose this bill in the present letter and ask you to be so kind as to give it to him when he appears at your residence.

You will not be surprised, my Lord, after all you have read that I have summoned M. Bellanger here, by a letter of January 30 last. I wanted to expel him from the Congregation at Marseilles and thus rid you of him, but you may as well expel him yourself from your diocese. He can go where he likes. I was not in time to write by the last post as I had hoped to do. I am still very busy today. I would

like, however, to tell you that the accumulated facts decided the General Council not to delay any longer his expulsion from the Congregation and that I am telling him of this decision and releasing him from his vows. I intend to send to you by the boat leaving on the 10th, a Fr. Eymère, so that the villages in M. Bellanger's charge will not suffer. I would like, however, not to pay his fare.

My Lord, please accept my respectful good wishes with which I have the honour to be your humble servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

15. [To Fr. Eymère, at Blida].⁴

The Founder thought that Fr. Eymère had died after an accident. Thanks to God. Encouragement to Frs Sabon and Pulicani.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, March 5, 1850.

I have only a moment, my dear son, and I use it to express to you all the happiness I felt following the desolation which the awful news of your fall had caused me⁵. I wept for you (the word is no

⁴ Orig.: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Eymère.

⁵ The Founder gives an account of this accident in his Journal and tells of the shock these events in Algeria caused him. "Ah the Algerian mission, how dear it costs us! To what trials has the good Lord put us! Alas! We were already weighed down by having had to expel the wretched Bellanger whose unworthy conduct will be known throughout Algeria! And now by this evening's post we have just learned of the awful misfortune that has just been poured on our heads. That good and excellent Fr. Eymère, whom I had sent to Algeria to replace the Judas who had betrayed the Congregation and the Church, before even arriving at his destination, through a deplorable imprudence, has found the reward for his devotion and good will. The horses of the coach that was taking him to Blida having got the bit between their teeth, this good Father had the unfortunate idea of jumping down from the coach, and in falling he almost killed himself. He lay unconscious on the main road and a man rode off with all speed to carry the news of the dreadful accident to Fr. Sabon, who, coming in all haste, could only give absolution and extreme unction to his unfortunate brother who had lost all consciousness. He had him carried to Blida where he did not lack attention, but the state of the poor Father was desperate when the post left. It was at Béni-Méred that the fall took place. Could he be a victim of the expiation demanded by the Lord in order to wipe out, in union with the merits of the Redeemer, the sacrileges committed by the unworthy Bellanger who was working in that parish at the time of his hypocrisy and double dealing? Whatever be the case, we are losing a charming member, full of youth, zeal and health, who promised a long and fruitful ministry. I am bowed down by the blow, and I beg the Lord to give me the grace to bear this loss which I feel so keenly with the resignation we must have for everything that he is pleased to ordain". (Journal, February 22, 1850. Ms. Yenveux IX, 86)

hyperbole), I wept for you as for a dead man, and so that you would not remain in Purgatory for a quarter of an hour through any fault of mine, I very faithfully offered a Requiem Mass for you, with the proviso that the infinite value of that offering be applied to you in a different way if, against all expectation, you came back to life.

May God be blessed a thousand fold in that he deigned to accept the second of these conditions. You must believe that it needed a miracle for this to happen, and because of that you are obliged to devote yourself more than ever to the service of the Good Master and of the souls he has redeemed by his precious blood. Not content with thanking the Lord for the outstanding grace of preserving you from death, I had the good nuns of St Clare say the Te Deum, since they are always so interested in what concerns us. Let this not make you proud but let the sentiments I am giving proof of here stir up your gratitude and affection.

Farewell, my very dear son, I bless you with all my heart.

Be sure to tell our dear Frs. Sabon and Pulicani how much I share in the sorrows they have endured. They can imagine how much these weighed on my heart. These are the sort of trials which are foretold for all those who do God's work. Let them not lose heart. These are trials which gain us more merit than the most spectacular activities.

Farewell, I embrace and bless you all.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

16. [To Fr. Allard, at Bytown].⁶

The Pope has named Fr. Allard Vicar Apostolic of Natal. Congratulations. He is to come to France as soon as possible.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, December 4, 1850.

My very dear Fr. Allard, I shall not mention all that I had to write to you in reply to your last letters, in order to tell you that our

⁶ Orig.: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Allard. This letter and the three which follow ought to have been published with the American correspondence. We have preferred to put them in this collection which deals with the history of the Oblates in Africa.

Holy Father the Pope has just given our Order the Vicariate of the Natal region, and that he has named you Vicar Apostolic of this district with the title and character of bishop *in partibus*. You certainly were not expecting this event and I am doubly pleased with it. It is now a question of obeying promptly the orders of the Head of the Church and putting yourself immediately in a position to carry out the task assigned to you. I have chosen some excellent men to work with you and they will give you great assistance in this precious mission.⁷ We shall have to work out all there is to do. You will leave, therefore, as soon as you receive this letter and come to Marseilles to see me. I do not need to tell you that since this order is formal there are no excuses to be made. I am waiting impatiently for you. Come as soon as possible. You should bring with you all the notes for Fr. Tempier whom I must send as Visitor to Canada in May.

I shall content myself today with what I have just told you. It is a fairly heavy burden, isn't it? But the Lord, as you know, always proportions his grace and his powerful help to the burden he is laying on us. We have only, then, to submit and obey with confidence.

Farewell, my dear Father, I send you my blessing, in the expectation that I shall embrace you very soon.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

⁷ The Founder is doubtless referring to the Fathers and Brothers who had come back from Algeria. However, the General Council had not chosen anyone for South Africa except Fr. Pulicani (September 26 1850) who nevertheless went to Ceylon.

1851

17. [To Fr. Allard at Bytown].¹

The Holy Father has given the Vicariate of Natal to the Congregation and has named Fr. Allard Vicar Apostolic. Bishop de Mazenod expects him in Marseilles as soon as possible in order to consecrate him bishop.

[Marseilles] January 13, 1851.

Fearing that my two previous letters² have not reached their destination, I am writing to you again to tell you that the Holy Father has judged it right to give the Vicariate of Natal to our Congregation and to name you its Vicar Apostolic. You must set out straight away; I am reserving myself for the task of consecrating you bishop; it is already quite enough that for the Lord's sake I have had to sacrifice laying my hands on our own dear Bishop of Bytown³. I attach an infinite importance to this transmission which establishes between souls such intimate links in the supernatural order. I have no need to tell you that any reflection or any excuses would be superfluous. You must humbly submit to what God has decided through the voice of his Vicar and reply with confidence and simplicity: *Ecce adsum; in nomine tuo laxabo rete*. It is a consolation to walk thus in the way of obedience. It is therefore in the name of holy obedience that I am calling you. Farewell, my dear Fr. Allard; in the hope that I shall embrace you soon I send you greetings and blessings.

¹ Ms. Yenneux V, 128; IX, 21.

² On December 11, 1850 the Founder had sent a duplicate of the letter of the 4th, preceded by these few lines: "My letter of the 4th has been put in the post without stamps; this why I am writing you this duplicate". The two letters arrived in Canada and are preserved in Rome in the Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Allard.

³ Bishop Guigues.

18. To Monsignor Allard, Vicar Apostolic of the territory of Natal, Bishop elect of Samaria, at Bytown, Canada, via Liverpool.⁴

Copy of the letters apostolic by which Fr. Allard is named Vicar Apostolic of Natal and Bishop in partibus of Samaria. He is to accept this burden with confidence and simplicity, and is to come as soon as possible.

Rome, February 9, 1851.

I received yesterday, my dear Lord, the letters apostolic of your institution as Vicar Apostolic of the mission in the territory of Natal and as Bishop in *partibus* of Samaria. Your briefs were accompanied by the letter which I have transcribed to have it passed on to you.⁵ I am keeping with me the original of that letter and also your canonical institution for fear they get lost just like the first Briefs of Institution of Fr. Taché. Furthermore, I had so positively written to tell you to come here as soon as possible that I must presume that you are already on your way. If, contrary to my expectation, you have not already left do not delay any longer. Not only have I to consecrate you but we also have much to sort out about the mission which the Holy See has entrusted to you. You can count on some excellent companions who will be your consolation and who will help you a good deal in bringing to fruition the good you are called to do in this "fine mission"; these are the words of the Vicar Apostolic of New Holland⁶ who is here and who was talking to me yesterday.

⁴ Orig.: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Allard. The Founder's letter is written on the recto of the second sheet, the copy of the letters apostolic on the recto of the first.

⁵ The text copied by the Founder is as follows: "Ill.me et R.me D.ne, Cum Ss.mus. D.N. Pius P.P. IX, auctoribus E.mis Patribus Sacri Consilii Christiano Nomini Propagando, Amplitudinem Tuam eligerit in Vicarium Apostolicum cum Episcopali caractere ac titulo in partibus pro nova Missione, quae erepta est in colonia Afro-Britanica a Natal nuncupata, literas ap[osto]licas huic adnexas epistolae ad Te mitto, ut primum poteris, consecratione suscepta in Missionem Tibi commissam proficiscaris. Quae de tua pietate ac zelo animarum, Sacrae huic Congregationi relata sunt faciunt ut copiosas ex tuis laboribus fructus sperem percipiendos; Deum interim rogo, ut Amplitudinem Tuam diutissime servet, ac sospitet. Romae ex aedibus S. Congregationis de Prop[agan]da Fide, die 7 Februarii 1851. Uti Frater studiosissimus, J. Ph. Card. Fransonii, Praef.; Al. Barnabò, a Secretis."

R.P.D. Francisco Allard, electo Episcopo Samariensi ac vicario Ap[osto]lico Natal.

Concordat cum originali, † J. C. Eugenius, episcopus, Massiliensis.

⁶ This is undoubtedly Archbishop J. Beda Polding, O.S.B., the only man to have the title of Vicar Apostolic of New Holland; he had been Archbishop of Sydney since 1842.

I have no need to add that the Holy Father is counting on your obedience. You must therefore accept this burden with confidence and simplicity. It is not so much you who are being called, but God who is speaking through his Vicar. Farewell, my Lord, and well beloved son, I embrace you and bless you with all my heart.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.
S. G.

19. [To Bishop Allard, in Bytown].⁷

The Holy Father has confirmed his choice: Fr. Allard is named Vicar Apostolic of Natal and must come as soon as possible to be consecrated bishop. The mission which the Church is entrusting to the Oblates is suffering because of the slowness of the Bishop elect.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, Good Friday [April 18, 1851].

I had written to you from Rome, my dear Fr. Allard, but my letter got lost along with eighteen others. I am very sorry about this because this difficulty has once again delayed your departure. You can put it off no longer. The mission which the Church has entrusted to you is suffering from the lack of the workers whom the Father of our family chose for it more than a year ago. I read attentively all that you wrote to me declining the honour of presiding over this important mission as Vicar Apostolic⁸ (I recognised in it your spirit of humility and the religious virtues which distinguish you) but I was not convinced. However, I did not want to take upon myself the final decision, not because I was in the least hesitant about making it, but because I wanted to reassure you further and cut short any new lack of resolve. I sent the question to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. While replying that I had the right to resolve the question myself in my capacity of Superior General of the Order, they decided that you must obey. I did not stop there. I went directly to the Holy Father who at first replied, like Propaganda, that I had the authority to decide. While recognising this principle, I insisted that he pronounce on this himself and that is what he has

⁷ Orig.: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Allard.

⁸ Fr. Allard was prepared to go as an ordinary missionary, but not as a bishop. Cf. Letter M-Guigues, April 18, 1851.

done. So, my dear Father, there is no longer any reason for you to make the least resistance. You are called by the Vicar of Jesus Christ; what can you have to fear? Only the possibility of committing sin if you do not obey without the least delay the orders you have been given. Leave then when you receive my letter; your mission is suffering; I am being pressed by Rome, with good reason since they saw to the needs of the mission some time ago and any delay must be due to us. I will give you three well chosen companions⁹. If you had someone you particularly trusted among those whom you know best, and he were willing to go with you, and knew English, you could take him along with you. Anyone, that is, except Fr. Amisse who is to do a job in Canada¹⁰.

I must not forget to tell you that I have received both your first letter which you wrote in collaboration with Fr. Aubert, and the...¹¹

20. To the Lord Bishop of Samaria, Vicar Apostolic of the territory of Natal, at Marseilles.¹²

Hopes of seeing Bishop Allard again before his departure. Extensive powers of the Superior of the Oblates in Africa. All the Fathers have the title of Missionaries Apostolic.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Ajaccio, October 24, 1851.

My very dear and beloved Lord, son and brother, although I still hope to embrace you before your departure for your mission, I do not want to risk letting you embark without having specified the powers I am giving you. If I were in Marseilles I would get all these faculties written out specifically as I have for all the heads of distant missions. Since you will not have any official documents I shall make this present letter serve and it will be short.

⁹ Four missionaries left with Bishop Allard: Frs. Sabon and Dunne, the scholastic Bro. Logegaray and the lay brother Compin.

¹⁰ Fr. Amisse had been sent to America in 1850 for the foundation of the mission in Buffalo which could not take place. The Founder sent him on with Fr. Molony to Toronto where Bishop Charbonnel had asked for some Oblates. The Jesuits went before them and Fr. Amisse stayed at Saint-Pierre in Montréal until 1853. He was then named Superior in Leeds (England).

¹¹ The last page of the original has disappeared.

¹² Orig.: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Allard.

I give you for your mission in the territory of Natal and for the Séchelles Islands¹³ if we take charge of them, all my powers as Superior General with the exception of the final admission of subjects, whom you will be able to admit to the Oblate community without the Congregation being bound to them in any way before I give my approval. In case, which God forbid, you were obliged for the gravest reasons to expel someone without being able to consult me first, you could nevertheless not release him from his vows.

These are the only restrictions I am placing on the wide powers I am giving you. You are thus more than a Provincial, since I am confidently making you an *alter ego* as it were. I have no need then to describe what your helpers will do. They will naturally be your advisors. They will also have the title of Missionaries Apostolic in virtue of the powers I have received, but this title in no way releases them from your jurisdiction either as Vicar Apostolic or as extraordinary regular Superior. I wish them and you all the most abundant blessings, and I have too good an opinion of them to feel myself obliged to make the least recommendation to them concerning their duties.

I arrive this evening and leave again early tomorrow morning; I am wanted now so I leave you with a heartfelt embrace.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles, Sup. Gen.

¹³ Bishop Allen Colier of Port-Louis (Mauritius) had written to him about this asking for two missionaries, cf.: L. M-Barnabò, August 6, 1851.

1852

21. [To Bishop Allard, at Pietermaritzburg].¹

He is to ordain Bro. Logegaray priest. Fr. Sabon is not to lose heart when faced with the depraved way of life of the Kaffirs.

[Marseilles] July 15, 1852.

Do not delay a day in ordaining Bro. Logegaray, as soon as he reaches the right age. This angelic boy will be a good support for your mission.

Fr. Sabon, good as he is, is unreasonably lacking in the courage to overcome difficulties. He is surprised at the depravation of the Kaffirs², and has no confidence that we will manage to convert them. But does he think that the Church sent you out to catechise devout believers? Do not the savages of Oceania lead equally bad lives? They are cannibals as well. Missionaries must not be so afraid of the devil that it is their mission to destroy. 180,000 Kaffirs to convert? but that is marvellous! Courage, confidence, patience! With the help of grace which performs so many miracles elsewhere, you will produce a fervent christianity.

¹ Ms. Yenneux I supplement, 111.

² Fr. Sabon did meet some Kaffirs but was particularly involved with the whites and the Indians in Durban, while Bishop Allard and Fr. Logegaray took care of the Catholic whites of Pietermaritzburg. Fr. Dunne and Bro. Compin returned to Europe in 1852.

1853

22. To the Minister for the Navy and the Colonies in his house in Paris.¹

Bishop de Mazenod asks for free passage for three missionaries on a ship which is sailing for l'Ile de la Réunion.

Marseilles, April 8, 1853.

My Dear Minister,

Two of my priests accompanied by a brother catechist² are intending to leave for Southern Africa where they will join up with some of their confreres whom the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in Rome has sent to the area to work for the conversion of the Negroes. These gentlemen could only with great difficulty pay for the journey themselves on a merchant vessel. Having learned that a State frigate the *Belle Poule* is about to leave the port of Toulon to sail for L'Ile de la Réunion, I would ask you to be so good as to allow my missionaries a free passage on that ship. Once they have arrived on the island, the two priests and their catechist will easily be able to carry on to the African continent where they are expected, since between la Réunion and that part of Southern Africa there are frequent commercial sailings.³

¹ Orig.: Paris, National Archives, Mar. BB3 679, f. 17.

² Fr. Justin Barret, scholastic Bro. J. Gérard and Bro. Pierre Bernard.

³ The three missionaries were to remain several months in Mauritius. Fr. Jacques Désiré Laval, a Holy Ghost Father, beatified on October 22, 1978, wrote the following about them on October 30, 1853: "They are two good religious. They have breakfast and lunch with us and in the evening they go and dine with the Bishop in his big palace. Fr. Barret hears our peoples' confessions and visits some sick people for us. They are waiting for the chance to go to Natal. I do not yet see when that will be possible; anyway we will keep them with us to the end and we will give them hospitality as best we can." On November 14 he also wrote: "The Oblates are going to sail this week for the Cape; they have been of use to us during their stay here." (Letters to Fr. Blanpin, Paris, Archives of the Holy Ghost Fathers, Rue Lhomond).

Be good enough, my dear Minister, to let me know as soon as possible whether you are willing to meet my request and to communicate with the Maritime Prefect of Toulon to that effect.

Please accept my good wishes with which I have the honour to be.

Your most obedient and humble servant,

† C. J. Eugène, *Bishop of Marseilles.*

1855

23. [To Bishop Allard, in Pietermaritzburg].¹

Congratulations on his resolve to found a mission in the middle of the Kaffir district. Disappointment over the conduct of Frs. Sabon and Logegaray. A missionary to be leaving shortly. Regards to Frs. Barret and Gérard. The need for gentleness and gracious condescension with the Fathers.

Marseilles, June 11, 1855.

No business is too pressing, my dear Lord and friend, and I allow the storm of demands from all those who are besieging me to carry on round me. I must, however, make use of the only moment I have left so as not to miss the post. I had made Fr. Aubert responsible for writing to you on business matters and he must have written to you about this. I wanted however, to reserve myself for writing a letter of congratulation to you over your resolve to undertake the conversion of the Kaffirs.² I understand that this is no easy matter, but this mission has been entrusted to you, and you must be the apostle of these poor idolators. Let us have confidence that the Gospel seed will produce its fruit in that region as it has in others which have been conquered by the Faith. I do not doubt that you are powerfully assisted by those of our Fathers who have been called to evangelise with you that nation which is still without the Faith. They must have measured beforehand the degree of virtue they must acquire if they are to become ministers of the mercy of God, and real apostles of Jesus Christ. I am sorry to see that Fr. Sabon has given in to his weakness. He has always shown so little generosity, so little zeal, so little devotion that one ought to have expected this sort of defection.

¹ Copy: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, DM X, Reg. Letters 1855-1863, p. 23.

² Frs. Barret and Gérard founded the mission of Saint-Michel among the Zulus 30 km from Pietermaritzburg. The mission was abandoned on July 23, 1856, since the Zulus had to leave the valley.

It is a deplorable thing. He calls to my mind the picture of the pagan confessor of the faith who lost the courage for martyrdom which his 39 companions obtained by their constancy. What is there to do about it? I authorise him to leave your mission and go to Canada where he will put himself at the disposal of the Father Provincial of that Province.³ He will go to one of the ports in the United States and will easily be able to get to Canada from there. You will recommend him to look after his belongings very carefully because there is a great deal of stealing in America; there are no more skilful rogues. I will give you in exchange a priest of another type from whom you will get quite different results.⁴ He will travel by way of England since all our ships here are leaving for the Orient. He will leave forthwith and while he is waiting for a ship to take him to the Cape he will work on his knowledge of English, particularly conversational English.

I cannot tell you how distressed I was when I read your account of the eccentricities of Fr. Logegaray. We thought that that young missionary would turn out quite differently. He must have allowed himself to be led astray by thoughts of pride and self-satisfaction to have fallen so low. I intend to write to him when the priest whom I have decided to send in place of Fr. Sabon leaves for Africa. I shall write also to the good Fr. Barret and to Fr. Gérard who must both be a consolation to you. I flatter myself that their charity will inspire them to give Fr. Logegaray good advice which will bring him back to the way of obedience and simplicity. For your part, temper your natural severity which is a result of your love for regularity, with a great deal of gentleness and gracious condescension.

Farewell, my dear Lord and friend, I embrace you and bless and embrace all the Fathers with all my heart.

24. [To Bishop Allard, in Pietermaritzburg].⁵

Montolivet. The allocation from the Work for the Propagation of the Faith. Fr. Gérard's illness. His sorrow on finding out that Fr. Loge-

³ Fr. Vincens, assistant general, had written to Fr. Sabon on June 6, 1855, to give him permission to go to Canada without passing through Europe. Fr. Sabon in fact stayed in Africa where he died at Durban in 1885.

⁴ This refers to Fr. Bompard who did not leave until 1856.

⁵ Copy: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, DM X, Reg. Letters 1855-1863, pp. 33-34.

garay is unfaithful to his missionary vocation. The difficulties in finding replacements because of deaths and people leaving the Congregation. Bishop Allard should give him details of the mission to the Kaffirs.

[Montolivet] November 8, 1855.

If, my dear Lord Bishop, you have received the newsletters that have been sent to you, you will know what Montolivet,⁶ from where I am writing this letter, in fact is. It is the Earthly Paradise in which are carefully cultivated the plants of our garden. It is here where about forty fervent religious are gathered together and are trying to put into practice, while continuing their studies, the virtues of their holy state. From time to time, I come to be edified in their company and give them a few indications of my interest in them in a spiritual way. Thus it is that this morning I made several of them give an account of their morning meditation in the presence of the whole community and I was very satisfied with it. I then addressed a few words to them before saying Holy Mass. I come away here also to expedite my affairs a little, since I am far away from the inevitable disturbance which I experience in town where I have scarcely time to breathe.

It seems, my dear Lord Bishop, that I receive your letters more punctually than you receive mine. I am replying today to the one that you wrote to me on July 6. I delayed replying in order to be in a position to tell you of the new allocation of funds by the Council of the Propagation of the Faith. Although their resources have diminished, they give me to hope that our share will not be less than last year. I informed you of that allocation and in March the Father Procurator General sent you, through the bank of England, as you requested, the sum of 15,000 francs. I am therefore very surprised that in your last letter of July 6 you said that you had received nothing and that no help has reached you for as much as two years. Did not the last missionaries to be sent to you have some money to give you or had they lost it on their journey?

On the subject of these missionaries I am extremely worried to hear of the serious illness of the good Fr. Gérard. I very much need

⁶ Montolivet was situated about 4 km to the south-east of the town. On the scholastic house cf. *Le scolasticat de Montolivet 1854-1862* in *Études Oblates* no. 27 (1968) pp. 133-175, 238-270.

to learn that he has been cured. They should have used balms and compresses on the lower abdomen and if necessary have had him sounded. A man can die if the urine is retained for twenty four hours. If it is only a question of having some urinary difficulties you just need to be patient. But what is the use of advice when we are so far apart?

I hope that Fr. Logegaray is not continuing to belie all our hopes with any further misconduct. He owes you complete obedience on two counts and must conduct himself only according to your directions. I could not tell you how distressed I was to learn that he had been unfaithful to the immutable principles which must be the rule of conduct for every priest of the Church, particularly one who is a religious, and this is eminently the case for one who is a missionary, especially in a pagan country... Inform this young priest that I conjure him to search his conscience and abandon himself entirely to holy obedience: outside these norms there is no merit to hope for and salvation itself is put in danger. I hope you have received on time the funds that we sent to you in order to keep the Dutch priest you were so pleased with working with you.⁷ We are in no position to send you any more priests. And indeed it is the most we can do to replace the wretched Fr. Sabon. You are doubtless not unaware that the Lord has called to himself seven of our priests or brothers since the beginning of the year and that the devil has suborned several more to his side. All this makes our forces less and thus makes any increase in missionaries sent from here all the more difficult.

I will give you no news now. You will find everything of interest to the Congregation in the second newsletter which is sent to you by way of England.

Do not tire of giving me details about your mission among the Kaffirs. All I know is what you told me in your last letter: all about the first steps which had been frustrated, as we must expect, by the devil. Give my fondest regards to Fr. Barret. If I have the time I will write a few friendly lines to him. I would like him to write me a long letter. I send greetings and blessings to all the Fathers and Brothers.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles,
Sup. Gen.

⁷ Fr. Hoenderwangers, allowed to remain at Bloemfontein by Bishop Devereux until 1860.

1856

25. [To Fr. Barret, in Natal].¹

The sending of missionaries for Africa, even if the labourers are young and few in number. The infidelity of Frs. Dunne and Logegaray. Greetings and encouragement to Frs. Gérard and Sabon and also to Fr. Bernard.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, April 23, 1856.

This letter of mine, my dear son, will not reach you speedily. I am giving it to those² who are going to join you but who must first stay in England in order to perfect their English which will be very necessary for them in your mission. It is but a feeble help that I am sending you, but we are so poor! We live on hope. We have a good number of novices, but all these young people must pass through the scholasticate which takes three if not four years to complete. The scholasticate is fairly flourishing, but apart from the fact that death takes its toll without discretion among them, we have to keep them learning there and initiating them to the realms of holy hierarchy, and there are so many needs to be seen to! Your mission to the Kaffirs is only just beginning. I hope that when you have, with God's grace, brought some of those poor pagans to the knowledge of the truth, I will be able to help you more strongly. The devil has really been at work among you, my dear children; the apostasy of the unworthy Dunne was not enough: this poor Logegaray had then to undo all our hopes of him and present you with the scandal of the extravagances of his inexcusable conduct. I am prepared to accept in his favour that his Superior treated him a little too severely; but since

¹ Orig.: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Barret.

² Fr. Victor Bompert and Bro. F.-M. Manuel.

when can one feel authorised because of that to act and talk as he is doing? He has made himself guilty of nothing less than apostasy. Nothing holds any terror any more for a soul which has given itself over to the devil of pride. It is from this that all harm comes — an unbounded pride which naturally blinds the intelligence, and I have noticed during my long experience of ministry that God always punishes pride even in this world by the most humiliating punishment and all too often by apostasy.

May you be blessed, my dear son, you and the good Fr. Gérard who follows in your steps. May the sight of the infidelity of this unfortunate brother not upset you. You are not travelling down that road. Humility and obedience are strong supports and sure guides. Thank God for making you understand that truth. It is only then, that zeal is meritorious, and who can tell what crown is reserved for you?

These few lines will be enough, my dear son, to prove that I still remember you and to remind you of my tender affection for you. Be so good as to pass on these feelings to Fr. Gérard and Fr. Sabon. I am writing to his Lordship the Vicar Apostolic at the same time, but do not forget to remember me to the good Fr. Bernard.

I bless you all with all my heart.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles, S.G.

1857

26. [To Bishop Allard, in Pietermaritzburg].¹

The Founder's activities. The lack of success of the mission to the Kaffirs. The discouragement of Fr. Barret. The need to be a loving father to the Oblates. Relations with the Governor. Bishop Allard should leave his mission and go and "survey his Vicariate". He should write sometimes to the Congregation of Propaganda Fide in Rome. News of the Congregation.

St-Louis, near Marseilles, May 30, 1857.

It is only, my dear Lord Bishop, by coming to hide myself for a few hours in the country that I can catch up a little on the immense correspondence I have to maintain. I hope that those who have to wait a while will sympathise with my position and will pardon my involuntary delay. People do not really know the demands made on me by the population of more than 300,000 souls which is massed round my residence. I can state that I am not free for one day of the week. Even here people come and disturb me; and that has actually happened again today. But I was determined to write to you before returning to town to prepare myself for tomorrow's solemnity, the feast of Pentecost.

I have just received your letter of March 9 containing a duplicate of the one you were sending as a report to the Council of the Propagation of the Faith. I had previously received those of November 26 and January 30.

There is matter for extreme concern in the lack of success of your mission to the Kaffirs. There are few examples of such sterility.

¹ Copy: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, DM X, Register of Letters 1855-1863, pp. 108-110.

What! not a single one of those poor infidels to whom you have been sent has opened his eyes to the truth you were bringing them! I have difficulty in consoling myself over it since you were not sent to the few heretics who inhabit your towns. It is to the Kaffirs that you have been sent, it is their conversion that the Church expects from the holy ministry she has entrusted to you. It is, therefore, to the Kaffirs that you must direct all your thoughts and efforts. All our missionaries must know this and take it to heart. This is what makes me so unhappy when I hear of Fr. Barret's lack of concern of which you have informed me. I have not yet received the letter which you say he has sent and in which you thought he would tell me of all his feelings. I can, of course, understand that he does not want to teach in school. That is not our vocation. And one could always give that job to one of our brothers. However, there are times when we must be able to do even that. I am very sorry to think that this very dear priest has not opened his heart to me. I would have been pleased to receive the letter you say is coming. I would have taken the chance to reason with him. This young Father is so good and has shown such devotion that I would regard it as a great misfortune if he were to lose all taste for the job. You attribute his unwillingness to teach to the fact that his self esteem has been wounded. Are you not a little severe in this judgement? For my part I can forgive this reluctance in a missionary who has been sent out for the conversion of the pagans. I would not find it so easy to excuse any disinclination he felt towards dealing with the Kaffirs. That is his special mission. He has been sent for that as others of his brethren have been sent for the conversion of the savages, and others still for the conversion of the Indians. *Euntes praedicate*: I say that I would not excuse him but I understand it when he is faced the obstinacy with which these unfortunate infidels show their indifference.

I cannot too highly recommend you, my dear Lord Bishop, to show yourself a loving father towards everyone at all times; you understand that these dear children have no one but you to turn to for consolation in their trials.

I learned with pleasure of the good relations that exist between you and the Governor. I did not know that you had been given financial assistance. I saw that in your report to the Council of the Work of the Propagation of the Faith. If you had consulted me on this matter I would not have advised you to tell them anything about it. Now I see that I have made a mistake; I took one document for

another. Still I am no less pleased by this decision of the Governor's which we ought not to have expected since we are foreigners.

I find difficulty in approving your plan of bringing families from Mauritius into your Vicariate. That would mean a lot of expense for a very doubtful result. As for the establishment which you propose setting up in the middle of this large tribe I advise you to go to the area yourself in order to choose the site for the missionaries' house and for the church. It is too important a decision for you to leave to our young Fathers. I would be pleased to see you going out and surveying your territory a little. Missionary bishops do not fix themselves in one residence never to leave it. You should build up relations with your Kaffirs to whom you have essentially been sent.

I should not like to forget to ask you whether you have written sometimes to Propaganda in Rome, that is to H. E. the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith; you have never mentioned this to me. You should give him an account of your mission, mentioning the work of your missionaries etc.

Do not omit any detail for me either. Everything that comes from you interests me.

Fr. Aubert must have given you some of our news in his last letter. You know that his Lordship the Bishop of Quimper called us to his senior seminary with the wish that many of his seminarians join our Congregation. We have finally formed the much wanted house in Dublin which God is blessing in a noticeable way. However, he has taken from us one of our most precious subjects, Rev. Fr. Richard, who was truly a holy religious and whose death was worthy of the saints. You will still have to offer your prayers for him which will no doubt serve to place him higher in Heaven. I shall soon go and mourn at his tomb during the journey that I am going to undertake early in July. This is perhaps a little excessive, you will say, for a man of my age. I feel that I have the strength for it even though I shall be seventy-five shortly after my arrival in England. Help me, my dear friend, to end my long career in a holy manner. I must, however, thank God that I still feel as though I were thirty.

I send affectionate greetings and blessings to all our Fathers and I embrace you with all my heart.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles,
Sup. Gen.

27. [To Bishop Allard, at Pietermaritzburg].²

The mission to Natal is a "failed mission". Lack of success with the Kaffirs, defections of almost all the missionaries. Bishop Allard is too hard on his fellow workers and not sufficiently a missionary bishop. No necessity for putting "everyone in the same mould". He must treat each one with gentleness and sweetness.

Marseilles, November 10, 1857.

I must admit, my dear Lord Bishop, that your letters still trouble me greatly. Up till now your mission is a failed mission. Frankly one does not send a Vicar Apostolic and a fairly large number of missionaries for them to look after a few scattered settlements of old Catholics. A single missionary would have been enough to visit these Christians. It is clear that the Vicariate has been established in this area simply for the evangelisation of the Kaffirs. Now, we have already been there for several years and you are involved in something quite different. I think, to speak truthfully, that you are not fulfilling your mission and at the same time are doing all in your power to help the English colonists. What is particularly disturbing is that you have so many complaints about those working with you. Examine your conscience a little before God and see whether you ought not to make some changes in your relations with them and in the way you are running things. Such disaffection is unheard of. Everyone admires your virtues, but you lack something that would make people go beyond admiration and feel that attachment which facilitates obedience and docility. It is horrifying to see the number of defections in your territory. Brother Compin, Fr. Dunne and finally the execrable Logegaray; and how is it with Fr. Sabon who has written to his sister saying that he needs 1500 francs for the journey, which seems to suggest that he would also like to leave. Now you are very unhappy with Fr. Barret who was, however, a fine subject when he was chosen. All this is very disturbing and one trembles when it is a question of sending someone to the area.

Since I am discussing disturbing facts, you will allow me to add that it seems to me that you are acting far too much like a European

² Copy: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, DM X, Register of Letters 1855-1863, pp. 139-140.

bishop; that is to say that you keep too much out of concrete activity and involve yourself in the administration. Elsewhere I see the Vicars Apostolic putting their hands to the plough like any other missionary, in some territories taking charge of one mission station on their own and in others exploring the country themselves and founding here and there among the pagans to whom they are sent mission stations to which they then send missionaries to continue their work. They learn the local languages in order to carry out the ministry which is their responsibility, however difficult this study may be. In short, they are at the head of everything that zeal for the salvation of the pagans can inspire. It seems to me that you are not acting in this way and perhaps one ought to attribute the failure of your mission so far to the methods you are using. It is a fact that it is unheard of for a Vicar Apostolic, that is a Bishop, and three or four missionaries to be sent to the pagans and not manage to produce a single conversion, not to speak of forming a small christian group. I insist on this because it is not admissible. As for the difficulty which makes you postpone success for several more years, it is no greater than that faced elsewhere where people started straight into their work. Six months are enough for our missionaries in Ceylon to learn the very difficult language of Singalese etc. It is the same in Oregon. How can you need more than a year to understand Kaffir and make yourself understood? But in this case the feeling of duty should stimulate and help us to overcome the difficulties. You can tell our Fathers that I do not accept that in one year people do not put themselves in a position to start exercising their ministry. But I say again that you must give the example because you are sent to the Kaffirs to bring them to a knowledge of the truth.

I beg you, my dear Lord Bishop, not to be angry at my observations. I make them only for the good they will do and to perform a duty which my conscience enjoins upon me. Do not doubt that I applaud your good intentions and the motive which makes you act in everything. No one knows better than I the difficulties of governing men. That is why my long experience prompts me to suggest to you that you avoid putting all men into the same mould, and that you try to draw all you can from them with gentleness and sweetness.

I wish also to say that I am not alone in thinking that your judgement of Fr. Barret is too severe. We make the weak desperate when we have only reproaches to offer them. Make it your study to

reach his heart; in that way you will obtain all you want. It is the way our Divine Saviour showed us.

Farewell, my dear Lord Bishop, I embrace you with all my heart.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles, S. G.

1859

28. To Bishop Allard, Vicar Apostolic in Natal.¹

The sending of missionaries. The need to prepare a report for the Council of the Propagation of the Faith. Anglicans allow polygamy. Bishop Allard can ask help from the Holy Childhood organisation. He should give details of the new mission to the Kaffirs. The Oblates are in Africa to evangelise the pagans. Fr. Grandin has been named a Bishop, coadjutor of Bishop Taché. Greetings to the missionaries.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, October 28, 1859.

My dear Lord Bishop, I am rushing after the people I have sent to help you² in order to send you these few lines. They have left me and I hope to catch up with them in Paris, before they go off in your direction. I had waited, I admit, until the last moment, but that was in the hope that I might receive some word from you. Admit, my dear friend, that you are very late in writing. Although your letters are always very short and lacking in detail about the mission which I would be so interested to hear, given that we are so far apart, they all give me extreme pleasure. I am very sorry that up to now you have not tried to give me a description either of the places or of the things which I can pass on to the Council of the Propagation of the Faith. For such a description you must produce a short but well thought out piece which may be judged suitable to be included in the collection where they keep record of the triumphs of our faith in all the missions of the world, and of the work of all the missionaries and of

¹ Orig.: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Allard.

² These were Fr. Le Bihan and Bro. Terpend.

all the Orders. This important piece should come to me first so that I can add my recommendation to it when I send it on to the Council which must decide whether to include it. It seems to me that there would be a good deal to say, even though you would have to cover up a little the inconceivable lack of success of your own zeal and that of your missionaries. I blame the shameful decision of the Anglican false prophets, who went before you into that region, to allow polygamy. This is a powerful lever the devil has put into their hands in order to neutralise the efforts of your zeal, but what matter? You will end by gaining victory in the name of that Jesus of whose holy doctrine they know nothing. The savages that have been best schooled by you will value the charm of those virtues that are unknown to them but which they will admire in your words, inspired as they are by the Holy Spirit, and in your conduct which they will be able to appreciate. You will have the merit of having won the day by suffering great tribulations and this will considerably increase your personal merit in the eyes of the just Judge who must reward it.

Fr. Aubert must have written to you about your financial state and your commissions. If you happen to baptise a certain number of pagan children in order to send them to Heaven, you could contact the Holy Childhood organisation which might award you some financial support. We could well have your request passed on but I could not give it any recommendation because I have never allowed that organisation to work in my diocese, fearing that it might damage contributions for the Propagation of the Faith, which is the sole source of revenue for all our missions.

I hope that your health is good and that of all of our missionaries; make sure you look after people's health very carefully. Let them not work beyond their capacities. If only you knew the difficulties we undergo in order to supply so many missions. We need years to form subjects and when it comes to a decision on where they are to be sent, it is right to consult their own inclinations. It is therefore important that they have some knowledge of all our missions. Up to now, frankly, we have been able to show them nothing very attractive that would make them want to go to Natal. When people have in view the conversion of the pagans they are not very inclined to limit their enthusiasm to spending their lives looking after a very small number of rather poor Catholics in the various colonial outposts of your Vicariate. Truly, I do not know what to say when discouragement assails our men. Therefore I am waiting impatiently for some

information about your establishment among the natives.³ That is really your mission. A Vicar Apostolic would not have to be sent to look after a few scattered Catholics, and I for my part would not have accepted the mission if that were all it involved. It is the conversion of the pagans that we must keep in mind. All our efforts must be directed to that end. If we kept no hope of reaching that goal, then we ought to give up the mission. But we would be very unlucky to find only among the Kaffirs an obstinacy that the grace of God quells in all our other missions.

I am daily expecting the Bishop-elect of Satala, our own Fr. Grandin, whom I must consecrate coadjutor to the Bishop of St-Boniface. I am beginning to be worried by the delay in his arrival. He should have arrived in Europe at the beginning of this month and here we are at the end of it. He comes from far away, but the savages he is evangelising are more docile than your Kaffirs.

Farewell, my dear Lord Bishop, I shall cut this letter to you short in order to write to some of your priests. Please forward my letters to Frs. Barret, Gérard and Bompert. Please give the others my affectionate greetings and my blessing. I embrace you with all my heart.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

29. [To Fr. Barret, in Natal].⁴

Affectionate greetings. He should write more often. The type of report that should be given to be read to the scholastics and to be sent to the Work for the Propagation of the Faith. Encouragement. The Kaffirs will one day be touched by grace. The Founder's state of health.

L.J.C. et M.I.

St-Louis, near Marseilles, October 28, 1859.

Dear Fr. Barret, I have fled in order to come and spend a few hours here in the country so as not to be distracted from writing

³ In 1858 Frs. Gérard and Bompert founded a new mission of Saint-Michel, 100 km to the south west of Durban, in the Intonyana River reserve.

⁴ Orig.: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Barret.

quite a large number of letters which I must have despatched to the various areas where our missionaries are stationed. But now I see that I have not put your last letter in my folder. It is possible, then, that I shall not reply precisely to what you were telling me in your letters. I shall content myself, therefore, my very dear son, with expressing the feelings of my heart which, although they are well known to you, it will be a pleasure for me to state once again. Let me assure you, my beloved son, that it is a great privation for me to receive your letters so rarely. If one cannot see the person one loves, nothing can represent him better than the characters traced by his hand. It is something that comes from him, in some ways a reflection of his soul. So it is that I sometimes affectionately kiss that dear writing as I would, like a father, kiss your forehead were you near me. You understand, then, that you cause me great privation when you write to me so rarely. Moreover, would you not have something very interesting to tell me about your missions?

I was saying in a letter to his Lordship your Superior that it is so important that we be able to tell our scholastics what you are doing and what you propose to do in order that when the time comes to consult them about their inclinations in missionary work they may be able to think a while about your mission which so far has not offered much food for their zeal. I would like one of you responsible for producing a report which would make the country known, exactly pointing out its position on the globe, its climate, its products, the quality of its inhabitants, that is to say their customs, habits, their religion if they have one, or at least the type of worship they offer to God, and their character. Then you will talk about the first steps made in this mission, the obstacles that presented themselves and impeded the progress of the good you were proposing to do. The services you rendered, in the meanwhile, to the small number of colonists you found, the warm welcome they gave you, the help you received from them. The success of your efforts to establish your mission among the natives, the difficulties which stood in the way of their conversion, the conversion of those who opened their eyes to the light, the type of life you have to lead, the effect which the regularity of your conduct must produce when compared to the *laissezaller* of the Anglican missionaries who hold the law of the Gospels so cheap etc. There you have a theme it would be interesting to pursue. We could present a similar report to the Council for the Propagation of the Faith, which has never, I think, mentioned our mission in its

Annals. It would, however, be important for us to know that you have been sent among the savages to announce the Good News to them and that if the Strong One has put up obstinate resistance in that country you have enough faith in God to have hopes of vanquishing him and of forming on the debris of the vices to which they have given themselves over a virtuous christian community which will console you in all your tribulations and all your sorrows. In fact you will reach this triumph if you are faithful to your Rule and constant in your resolution. Be real *milites Christi* and victory is assured. That is to say, my dear son, that you should never allow yourself to be discouraged. You are the first to be sent to conquer these souls that are under the tyranny of the devil.

All the armies of Hell defend the prey that has been theirs from the beginning. Do not be surprised then if you meet so much resistance. You will break through the ranks of the enemy — have no doubt about it — and you will have the ineffable consolation of having laid the foundations of the love of God among pagan people who are blindly firm in their rebellion. Those people who assist you and those who will come after you will bless your name and you will be amply rewarded. I would like to give you some news but I see that I have hardly enough time to write a few lines to Frs. Gérard and Bompart. They have both written to me, and — as happened in your case — I have not got their letters with me.

If you are in touch with one another, exchange my letters among yourselves and never forget me in your prayers. I will finish by telling you, for your consolation, that despite my great age (you know that I am in my 78th year) I am in marvellous health, that I as yet have no infirmity, that I can still get up at five o'clock having often gone to bed at midnight and never before eleven, that I am lucky enough to be able to observe all the fasts that our Rule prescribes, and also all the days of Lent without exception, observing abstinence most exactly. I am writing to you without glasses, although it is true that I am nearsighted. You can see that my hand does not tremble and it goes without saying that I walk without a stick and with a firm step and that I am not spared a single ceremony, even the frequent consecrations of churches, which as you know last at least four hours when you do them slowly as I do. I wanted to give you these little details to amuse you and because I so seldom do so. You understand that one does not talk about these things in order to boast.

Farewell, my dear son, I send you fondest greetings and bless you with all my heart.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.
S. G.

30. [To Fr. Gérard at the Saint-Michel mission].⁵

He should write often and be of good courage, even if the Kaffirs are difficult to evangelise.

L.J.C. et M.I.

St-Louis, near Marseilles, October 28, 1859.

Now do not start thinking, my dear Fr. Gérard, when you see this long letter that it is all for you. I would be delighted if it were, but I am pressed for time and you will have to share this with our dear Fr. Bompert, to whom I owe a letter as I do to you. Just imagine that I have to send to Paris, without a day's delay, the letters that I am sending to Natal. Those of our number that I am sending to help you left hurriedly without giving me time to write a line. I am rushing after them to Paris so that my batch of letters can get to them before they leave. I do not know whether this is my fault or Fr. Aubert's, but the fact is that I cannot find your letter in my enormous folder which is filled with family letters which are waiting for a reply. Never mind: I do not need to have yours in front of me in order to thank you for writing and to tell you how pleased I am when I receive something from you. Only I urge you not to be discouraged and think badly of me if I sometimes do not manage to reply very promptly. You can be sure that the fault is not mine. How many interesting things you can tell me! It is a real pleasure for me to follow you step by step in the advances and setbacks of your missions. I would love to know day by day what you are doing for the glory of God and the salvation of those poor souls that you have been called to evangelise. I know how difficult the Kaffirs are to convert. The least of your successes would be considered by me as a great blessing from God. Your reward, as you know, will not be measured by your success but by the work you have done and by the

⁵ Orig.: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Gérard.

efforts of your zeal. Moderate this, however, so as not to go beyond your strength and run the risk of falling ill.

I have just been told that I must get ready to leave for town. I do not want to leave, however, before I have written a few lines to our good Fr. Bompert. I must also finish the letter I had started to Bishop Allard, so I leave a little over halfway through this letter, satisfied nevertheless that I have been able to assure you again of my fatherly affection for you and to bless you as I finish my little talk with you.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles,
S. G.

1860

31. [To Fr. Le Bihan].¹

The Founder is delighted with the good attitude of Fr. Le Bihan despite the lack of success of the mission to the Kaffirs. He should keep himself in good health and learn languages. News of the Scholasticate.

L.J.C. et M.I.

St-Louis, near Marseilles, September 3, 1860.

If I were not to send these few lines to you, dear Fr. Le Bihan you would perhaps be tempted to accuse me of forgetting or neglecting you. I am confident that you would not have succumbed to that temptation, because you know only too well that I carry the thought of all of my children in my heart and that it often happens that I am not master of my time. I would like, however, to tell you, my dear son, that I read with great pleasure the little letter you wrote to your dear Superior, the Lord Bishop of Samaria. That dear bishop had it sent on to me; since he was sure that I would be pleased by your attitude. It was indeed on that that I was counting when I discussed with you the possibility of sending you on a mission to the pagans. The Good Lord sends you consolations in exchange for the unpleasant attitude which you meet among your Kaffirs. Do not be discouraged; keep yourself in the fervour of your holy vocation. The time will come when grace will melt the ice in these hardened hearts which are sunk in the mud of their brutish passions.

I am taking up something you say in your letter in order to recommend prudence. You nearly became ill when you went into the water still warm with sweat. Never do that: one can very soon catch pneumonia and I do not think that among the Kaffirs there are doc-

¹ Orig.: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Le Bihan.

tors skilful enough to look after you or cure you of a serious illness. Keep yourself in good health, then, and let it never be from your own fault that you fall ill.

I admit that it must not be easy to learn the Kaffir language, but you know that missionaries always share a little in the miracle of Pentecost. Invoke the Holy Spirit, then, that he may bring to completion the gifts you did not fully receive on the day of your confirmation. You received then the germ of knowledge which must now develop in you for the service of God and the salvation of souls.

You will be pleased to learn that the supply of good Bretons is not exhausted. We still get a few of them. When finally your Kaffirs begin to convert we will be able to have some sent out to you. Our scholastics have gone to spend some weeks at Lumières; they will soon return and I will give them news of you. Several of your fellow students have received their mission, where they are going with confidence and courage. This is the way our family of soldiers fulfils its apostolic vocation by going out to preach the Good News throughout the world and by fighting everywhere against the powers of Hell in order to snatch from them the souls which belong to Jesus Christ who shed his blood for them. Oh! How glad I am when I think of the reward that is reserved for you!

Farewell, my dear son; I bless you and embrace you with all my heart.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles, S.G.

32. [To Fr. Gérard at the Saint-Michel mission].²

Still no conversions among the Kaffirs. "The time will come when the grace... of God will produce a sort of explosion". He must go deeper into the tribal lands and give more details about the Saint-Michel mission. Greetings to the missionaries.

L.J.C. et M.I.

St-Louis, near Marseilles, September 4, 1860.

When I put my mind to something, dear Fr. Gérard, I try to go right to the end of it. I am so happy to be able to talk for a few

² Orig.: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Gérard.

minutes to each one of you that I make the most of the least moment of spare time I get to devote myself to that sweet occupation. Now it is your turn and I am seizing the opportunity of repeating something that you already know, namely that your letters always give me the greatest pleasure. It is not only because they inform me of your inner state of mind, for which you have on the spot in the person of your venerable Vicar all the help you need, but also I take great interest in reading about what you are doing in your work for the conversion of those poor Kaffirs who resist with a diabolic stubbornness all that your zeal prompts you to do to bring them to a knowledge of the true God and to their own sanctification. Their obstinacy is truly deplorable and must be the source of great sorrow for you. After so many years not a single conversion; it is awful! You must not lose heart because of it. The time will come when the merciful grace of God will produce a sort of explosion and your Kaffir Church will be formed. You ought perhaps to penetrate deeper among these savage tribes in order to bring this about.³ If you were to meet some who had not already been indoctrinated by heretics and who had had no contact with white men you would be likely to do better. Do not forget that you have been sent for the conquest of souls and remind Fr. Bompert of this also. You must not be unwilling to make an assault and you must pursue the enemy to his furthest hideouts. Victory is promised only to perseverance. Fortunately the reward is not measured solely by success and you need only to have worked to that end in order to achieve it.

When you have to write to me do not allow yourself to be caught unawares by the post. Be in good time so as to be able to go into the greatest detail about what you are doing, day by day if possible. Remember that I hate to see blank paper in a letter. The cost of postage is far too great for us to pay for blank paper. You have not told me enough about the Saint-Michel establishment. I know that you have built a little church, but what is it actually like? How are you housed? Have you a big enough garden, and some land for cultivation? I cannot see your community from here. Amplify the laconic

³ At the time the Founder was writing this letter, Fr. Gérard had left St-Michel and founded the mission of N.-D. des Sept Douleurs more to the south west. Frs. Bompert and Le Bihan remained at St-Michel (cf. L. Allard-Mazenod, March 30, 1861). In the autumn of 1861, Bishop Allard and Fr. Gérard abandoned N.-D. des Sept Douleurs and went into the mountains of Basutoland where conversions were soon very numerous.

messages of our dear Vicar, and I would say the silence of Fr. Barret had he not broken it recently. But even this is not like the letters that he wrote at the beginning of his stay in Natal when he journeyed about the territory and had to cross rivers on rafts made out of reeds. I hope to be able to write to him by this same post and to write to the Lord Bishop of Samaria, and also send a few lines to Fr. Le Bihan, although he has written to me no more than has Fr. Sabon.

Farewell, my dear son, give my greetings to those to whom I shall not be able to write and be blessed as I hope you are as I send you my most heartfelt embrace.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles,
S. G.

33. [To Fr. Barret, in Natal].⁴

In Marseilles people admire the exactitude and the love of regularity shown by Bishop Allard. The missionary more than others must be a perfect religious. Merit is not measured by success. He should send some drawings of the various missions.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, September 13, 1860.

I was saving you, my dear Fr. Barret, for the end in the resolution I had made of writing a few lines to each of our good missionaries to the Kaffirs. However I had to leave the country where I sometimes managed to get some leisure time and come back to the great abyss of business and occupations which our immense town holds for me. And there the matter rested. Today, whatever happens, I want to send off my letters to Natal and since I have not managed to include you so far I am leaving everything to see to you for a few moments. This is not to recall an old letter of yours in which you complained that people at Montolivet were not doing justice to the goodness of Bishop Allard, your Superior. I think that the person who gave you that information was wrong. There is no one who does not bow to the great virtues and fine qualities of this truly worthy prelate. Someone may perhaps have said that he was concerned with regularity in his mission and of course that is praise not blame, and

⁴ Orig.: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Barret.

the proof that people do think of it as a good quality is that no one has ever hesitated to go and be under his jurisdiction when it was a question of sending someone to help him. It is therefore a simple joke if people have spoken of his severity and one would be wrong to take it seriously.

I was however much edified by your delicacy in this matter and I assure you that if it were possible your action would have increased the affection I have for you, because, if I remember correctly, you yourself pointed out to me some example of the solicitude of the excellent prelate for your sanctification which proved his exactitude and love of regularity. Oh yes, dear son, no one more than I wishes the members of our Congregation to carry the fragrance of Jesus Christ which they could never obtain if they did not keep themselves as perfect religious. Would it not be a monstrous thing that men devoted to God, who have left everything in this world to answer the sublime vocation of the apostolate which was calling them to the conversion of the most abandoned souls whom they had to snatch from the power of the devil by the force and virtue of God who communicates himself only to those elite souls who consecrate themselves to Him — would it not be monstrous I say, that these men should profane so to speak their great ministry by a life of imperfections contrary to the spirit of the holy rules which they have professed and which they are bound to observe at all times and in all places, but especially in the face of the enemy whom they have to fight and whom they cannot conquer except by fidelity to the accomplishment of all their duties as religious? May this good prelate be a thousand times blessed, who maintains by his example and precepts these immutable principles which will be your force and consolation, and will assure your reward which will undoubtedly be *magna nimis*, by reason of your devotion which in my eyes is truly admirable.

I still wait with holy impatience for news of some conversion in your mission. Up to now it has been the least fruitful of all those in the charge of our Congregation. That does not mean that it is the least meritorious. With God, reward is not measured by success. Continue to plant and to water; the increase will come when it pleases the Lord to grant it.

Have you neglected your talent for drawing? I still keep in my breviary the little drawing of Notre Dame de la Garde, and in my

Ordo other things drawn by you. It would be very good of you if you were to set yourself to preparing various views of your establishments for me. You could send them to me over a period of time if you drew them on thin paper; otherwise you could send them on some special occasion, which I know are rare. I have to rush if I am to express once again all my affection for you; I send you my heartfelt blessing.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles, S. G.

Index of Names

— A —

- Accolti, S.J., 26, 45.
 Africa, XXIV, XXX, 163-222.
 Aix, 66, 95.
 Ajaccio, 192.
 Albini, Charles-Dominique, O.M.I., 62.
 Alexandria, 41, 73, 74.
 Algiers, 176-178.
 Algeria, XXXI, 163-187.
 Allard, J. F., O.M.I., Ep. of Samaria, XXXI, XXXII, 10, 60, 75, 109, 186-223.
 Allen, Collier, J. B., Bp. of Port Louis, 60, 61, 193.
 Amat, T., Bp. of Monterey, 155.
 Amisse, P. J., O.M.I., 192.
 Ancelin, secr. to Bp. Pavy, 177.
 Ancona, XXVI.
 André, D. V., O.M.I., 20.
 Arnoux, J. F., O.M.I., 13.
 Arvel, Antoine, O.M.I., 14.
 Asia, 3.
 Atlas, 172.
 Aubert, Casimir, O.M.I., 6, 8, 10, 20, 32, 41, 43, 47, 50, 61, 91, 117, 149, 152, 153, 199, 207, 212, 216.
 Aubert, Pierre, O.M.I., 192.
 Auriol, 149.
 Australia, XXVII, 138.
 Barret, Justin, O.M.I., 107, 197, 199, 200, 202-204, 206, 208, 209, 213-215, 222-224.
 Bastia, 90.
 Basutoland, XXXII, 221.
 Batayron, J., O.M.I., 1, 3, 27, 52, 59, 89, 122, 141, 151, 157.
 Batticaloa, XXIX.
 Baudicour, M., 172.
 Baveux, Léonard, O.M.I., 5.
 Bellanger, J. B., O.M.I., XXXI, 166, 167, 171, 172, 175-185.
 Belle Poule, boat, 197.
 Bellon, Charles, O.M.I., XXXI.
 Bénéche, Lazarist, 177.
 Beni, Louis dei Conti, tit. Bp. of Canope, 11, 16.
 Béni-Méred (Algeria), 179, 182, 185.
 Bernard, Pierre, lay brother, O.M.I., XXXII, 197, 204.
 Berteaud, J. B. P. L., Bp. of Tulle, XXIII.
 Bettachini, Horatio, Vic. Ap. of Jaffna, XXIII-XXVII, 5-7, 11-46, 48-53, 58, 61-64, 67-80, 84, 88-97, 100-102, 104-105, 107, 116-117, 126-130, 133, 137, 150.
 Blanchet, Magloire, Bp. of Walla Walla, 161.
 Blanpin, S.Sp., 197.
 Blessed Sacrament, XXVIII, 57.
 Blida (Algeria), XXXI, 163, 166, 168, 171-173, 176-185.
 Boisramé, Prosper, O.M.I., 154.
 Bompert, Victor, O.M.I., 200, 203, 213, 215-217, 221.
 Bonjean, C.A., O.M.I., XXIX, 142-143, 146-147, 151-152, 158-160.

— B —

- Bagdad, 6.
 Barluzzi, Cdr., 53, 133.
 Barnabò, Alexander, Cardinal, 29, 30, 38, 40, 80, 126, 133, 142, 149, 150, 154, 156-161, 190.

Bonnand, Clement, Bp. of Pondicherry, 59, 116, 119, 120, 150, 154, 157, 158.
 Boston, 10.
 Boudens, R., O.M.I., XXIV.
 Bonifarik (Algeria), 168.
 Boyoud, Joseph, lay brother, O.M.I., 110.
 Bravi, J. M., Coadj. to Vic. Ap. of Colombo, XXVI, XXVII, XXX, 36, 37, 43, 48, 50, 59-61, 64-65, 67-74, 76, 79-81, 83-85, 88, 89, 92-94, 97-101, 103, 104, 106, 116, 119, 127-130, 133, 134, 138, 141, 145, 146, 150, 151, 154, 156, 157.
 Brésillac, M. de M., Vic. Ap. of Coimbatore, 89, 94, 100.
 British Columbia, 161.
 Brown, J., lay brother, O.M.I., 147.
 Brownsville, 155.
 Bruneau, Martin, vic. gen. of Mans, 183.
 Buffalo, 48, 192.
 Buratti, 120, 133.
 Burtin, Nicolas, O.M.I., 119.
 Byrne, R. B., O.M.I., 147, 152, 153.

— C —

Caix, M. J., O.M.I., 128.
 Cambrai, 182, 183.
 Canada, XXIX, XXXI, 10, 61, 73, 109, 187, 190, 192, 200.
 Canoz, Alexis, S. J., Vic. Ap. of Madura, 18, 26, 40, 65, 72.
 Cape of Good Hope, 90, 97, 105, 107, 200.
 Cape Horn, 45.
 Carew, Joseph, S.J., Archbp. of Calcutta, 105.
 Casanelli D'Istria, T., Bp. of Ajaccio, XXIV, 1, 21, 83, 90, 134.
 Cassinelli, Al., miss. ap. in Ceylon, 119.
 Cauvin, A. E., O.M.I., 10.
 Ceylon, XXIV, XXIX, 1-3, 5, 29-32, 38, 39, 48, 50, 58, 60, 64, 67, 75, 77, 89, 91, 93, 96, 97, 99, 100, 107, 109, 119, 120, 130, 138, 139, 141, 142, 153, 187.
 Chalvesche, Augustine, lay brother, O.M.I., 167.
 Charbonnel, Fr. A. de, Bp. of Toronto, 192.
 Chilaw, XXVII.
 China, 63, 165.

Chirouse, E. Casimir, O.M.I., 21, 45.
 Choiselat, Treas. of the Cl. of the Prop. of the Faith, 52, 61.
 Chounavel, Constant, O.M.I., 89, 91, 93, 101, 121, 139.
 Ciamin, Joseph-Alexandre, O.M.I., XXV, 8-9, 11, 13, 24, 32, 33, 35, 44, 50, 53, 76, 101, 102, 105, 106, 107, 109-111, 117-118.
 Civitavecchia, 82.
 Clausset, Pierre, O.M.I., 105.
 Coimbatore, 94.
 Colombo, Ap. vicariate, XXIII, XXV-XXX, 29, 36, 37, 42, 43, 50, 59, 64, 65, 68, 69-73, 76, 77, 79, 81, 83, 85, 88-90, 93, 94, 96-100, 101, 103, 104, 105, 106, 119, 134, 138, 141, 145, 146, 150, 156-160.
 Compin, Joseph, lay brother, O.M.I., XXIII, 192, 195, 208.
 Cooke, Robert, O.M.I., 79, 153.
 Corsica, 21, 83, 89, 134.
 Corte, 88.
 Coste, J.M.F., O.M.I., 167.
 Crawley, George, O.M.I., 79, 83.
 Crousel, Pierre, O.M.I., 158.

— D —

Dalton, Patrick, O.M.I., 113.
 Daly, W., O.M.I., 109.
 Damrémont (Algeria), 172.
 Déléage, J. R., O.M.I., 10.
 Demers, Modeste, Bp. of Vancouver, 130.
 Deresse, Jules, 177-181.
 Derousseau, abbé, 183.
 De Steffanis, Gaspard, lay brother, O.M.I., 8, 32, 35, 102, 105, 121.
 Devereux, A., Vic. Ap. of Grahamstown, 202, 207.
 Dijon, 181.
 Dublin, 154, 207.
 Duchaussois, P., O.M.I., XXIII.
 Duffo, Adrien, O.M.I., 59, 67-70, 74, 84, 87, 104, 112, 121, 126, 127, 157, 158.
 Dunne, Laurent, O.M.I., 109, 192, 195, 203, 208.
 Dupont, J. M. A. C., Archbp. of Bourges, 150.

Durban, XXXII, 200, 213.
Durieu, Paul, O.M.I., 119.

— E —

Echelles du Levant, 117.
England, XXIV, XXIX, 20, 32, 41, 45,
50, 54, 61, 90, 91, 109, 134, 136, 154,
156, 158, 200, 201, 203, 207.
Europe, XXIX, 25, 32, 65, 108, 142, 200.
Eymère, J. P., O.M.I., 185-186.

— F —

Fabre, Joseph, O.M.I., XXXII, 69, 95.
Favier, Joseph, lay brother, O.M.I., 110.
Featherstone, G., lay brother, O.M.I.,
110.
Flanagan, lay brother, O.M.I., 151.
Flurin, J. B. Emile, O.M.I., 119, 121, 155.
Fouquet, L., O.M.I., 155.
France, XXIX, 66, 95, 99, 109, 155, 156,
176-177.
Francis Xavier, St. 82.
Fransoni, J. Ph., Cardinal, XXVIII,
XXX, 29-31, 48, 106, 116, 119, 120, 126,
128, 130, 146, 190, 207.
Fréjus, Major Seminary, 75, 82.

— G —

Gaeta, 15, 29, 31.
Galle, 106.
Ganivet, Joseph, O.M.I., 14.
Garcia, O.S.B., 18.
Garnier, notary at Cambrai, 182, 183.
Gaudet, Augustine, O.M.I., 155.
Genoa, XXVI.
Genesareth, 66.
Gérard, Joseph, O.M.I., XXXII, 107, 197,
199-201, 204, 213, 215-217, 220-222.
Gourret, F. J., O.M.I., 127, 136.
Grandin, Vital, O.M.I., 119, 139, 155, 213.
Gréasque, 164, 166.
Grenier, F. A., O.M.I., 170, 172.
Grey, J. P., O.M.I., 109.
Guibert, H., O.M.I., 31, 35, 75, 83, 133,
180.
Guigues, Bruno, O.M.I., Bp. of Bytown,
XXIX, 21, 130, 133, 189.

— H —

Herbomez, Louis d', O.M.I., 45, 62.
Hoenderwangers, miss. in S. Africa, 202.
Holy See, 75, 88, 138, 150, 190.
Holy Spirit, 13, 25, 76, 85, 110, 122, 212.
Honorat, J. B., O.M.I., XXIX.
Hudson Bay, 16, 32.

— I —

Ile à la Crosse, 139.
Iles Séchelles, 193.
Immaculate Conception, definition, 122-
123.
India, 116, 117.
Intonyana River, 213.
Ireland, XXIV, 54, 156.
Isoard, d', Bp. 49.
Italy, XXV, 76.

— J —

Jaffna, Vicariate apost., XXIV-XXX, 29,
34, 36, 37, 38, 48, 51, 53, 54, 59, 64, 68,
71, 77, 79-81, 84, 88, 90, 93, 94, 96,
100-102, 104, 112, 116, 119, 120, 130,
137, 150, 151, 159, 160.
Janin, Gaspard, lay brother, O.M.I., 45.
Jeancard, J., Bp. of Cérame, 36, 38.
Jesus Christ, 8, 69, 112, 122, 136, 192,
199, 220, 223.
Judas, 172, 185.

— K —

Kandy, 6, 35, 36, 43, 50, 89, 99, 116, 119,
139, 141, 156.
Kayts, XXV, XXIX.
Keating, Louis-Marie, O.M.I., XXV, 8, 9,
13-14, 16, 22, 24, 32, 33, 35, 42, 45, 50,
70, 76, 93, 105, 109, 116, 120.
Kurunegala, XXVII, 150.

— L —

Laborère, M., 182.
Laclau-Pussacq, Auguste, O.M.I., 127,
134, 136.
Lacombe, Victor, O.M.I., 107, 121.

Lallement, Laurent, O.M.I., 59, 67-70, 73, 74, 83, 85, 104, 121, 129, 134, 138.
 Lamirande, E., 168.
 La Ronceré (Marighé), 182.
 Laval, Jacques Désiré, C.S.Sp., 197.
 Laverlochère, J. N., O.M.I., 66.
 Lebescou, Jean, O.M.I., 30, 34, 77, 121.
 Le Bihan, Fr., O.M.I., 211, 219-222.
 Le Cam, Yves, O.M.I., 147.
 Leeds, 79, 83, 192.
 Leflon, Jean, XXIV, 18.
 Lelons, J.M., O.M.I., 141, 145.
 Lempfrit, Honoré, O.M.I., 32.
 Leo XII, 65.
 Léonard cf Baveux
 Leydier, Felix, O.M.I., XXIX, 30, 34, 79.
 Limoges, 164.
 Liverpool, 55, 73.
 Logegaray, J. M., O.M.I., 192, 195, 200, 202, 203, 208.
 London, 43, 54, 61, 69, 89.
 Longueuil, 10.
 Lynch, F. J., O.M.I., 79.
 Lyons, XXVI, 10, 31, 61, 88, 134.
 Lyonnet, J. P. Fr. F. M., Bp. of Valence, 137.

— M —

Madras, 93.
 Madura, 7, 16, 19.
 Maisonneuve, Aug., O.M.I., 10.
 Malabar, 75, 76.
 Malbos, M., 182.
 Malta, 29.
 Manchester, 55.
 Mannar, XXV.
 Mans, 182, 183.
 Mantotte, 9, 11, 139.
 Manuel, F.M., lay brother, O.M.I., XXXII, 203.
 Marie, XXX, 3, 9, 25, 110, 113, 122.
 Marseilles, Calvaire, 36, 75, 90.
 Marseilles, Campagne St-Louis, 127, 152, 205, 213, 216, 220.
 Marseilles, Major Seminary, 21, 79, 82, 91.
 Marseilles, city, XXIV, 10, 36, 41, 43, 50, 54, 59, 61, 67, 73, 89, 90, 133, 135, 149, 155, 187.

Martin, Joseph, O.M.I., XXI, 170, 172, 175.
 Maryvale, 54.
 Mauritius, Island of, 60, 89, 197, 207.
 Mauroit, Léon-Charles, O.M.I., 52, 61, 121.
 Menthe, J., lay brother, O.M.I., 10.
 Mexico, 155.
 Mola, Jules, O.M.I., 126, 129, 130, 138, 141-143, 145, 146, 151, 153, 157, 158.
 Molony, R. J., O.M.I., 192.
 Montolivet, 127, 130, 139, 147, 155, 201, 222.
 Montreal, 48, 73, 119, 192.
 Mouchel, F. P., O.M.I., 9, 12, 15, 30, 32, 33, 35, 41, 44, 53, 62, 76, 87, 91, 108, 109, 121.
 Musulce, Gaetano Antonio, Vic. Ap. of Colombo, XXV, XXVII, XXVIII, 29, 37, 43, 68, 103, 104, 119.

— N —

Nancy, 14, 41.
 Naples, 36.
 Natal, XXIX-XXXII, 60, 107, 109, 120, 186-187, 189-193, 212, 216, 222.
 Negombo, 14.
 New Caledonia, 155.
 New York, 73.
 North America, 10, 12, 83, 200.
 N.-D. de la Garde, 13, 223.
 N.-D. de l'Osier, 21, 138.
 N.-D. de Lumière, 175, 220.
 N.-D. des Sept-Douleurs, 221.

— O —

Oceania, 195.
 Olive, printer, 168.
 Oregon, 16, 21, 32, 45, 62, 73, 100, 109, 119, 120, 130, 155, 161, 209.

— P —

Pajean, abbé, 89, 94, 95, 100.
 Panama, 73.
 Pandosy, F. J. C., O.M.I., 21, 45.
 Paris, XXVI, 24, 31, 45, 50, 52, 92, 135, 145, 152, 166, 197, 211, 216.

Paul, St., XXIII, 19, 168.
 Pavy, L. A., Bp. of Algiers, XXXI, 163, 165, 167-172, 175-185.
 Peauger, Arsène, Prefect of B.-du-Rhône, 167.
 Pegu (Burma), 117.
 Peillon, Bruno, 141.
 Péliissier, Léon-Jean, O.M.I., 89, 91, 92, 101, 121.
 Perbal, A., O.M.I., 75.
 Perréard, Jean-Pierre, O.M.I., 59, 67-70, 73, 74, 85, 99, 104, 121, 143.
 Peter, St., 65.
 Philippeville, XXXI, 171, 172, 180.
 Pius IX, 29-31, 50, 58, 60, 65, 121, 122, 134, 139, 150, 188, 189, 191, 192.
 Pietermaritzburg, XXXII, 195, 199, 207.
 Pittsburgh, 21.
 Plotier, Jean, lay brother, O.M.I., 110.
 Polding, J. Beda, O.S.B., Vic. Ap. of New Holland, 190.
 Pondichery, 16, 53, 89, 93.
 Poorey, Paul-Étienne, O.M.I., XXIX, 151, 154.
 Portugal, 94.
 Pouzin, J. J., O.M.I., 127, 136.
 Priori, miss. apost., 42, 48, 60, 65.
 Provencher, J.-Norbert, Bp. of Juliopolis, 62.
 Pulicani, Dominique, O.M.I., 59, 67-70, 73, 74, 81, 84, 85, 87, 94, 104, 108, 121, 129, 166, 167, 172, 176-180, 186, 187.

— Q —

Quimper, Major Seminary, 137, 207.

— R —

Red River, 16, 62, 91, 109, 119, 120.
 Red Sea, XXVI, 54, 69, 71, 89, 90, 93, 105, 107.
 Reinaud, J. V., abbé, 5-7, 11, 16, 20, 29-31, 35-38, 40-42, 50, 89, 95, 99, 107.
 Rey, A., O.M.I., 128, 167.
 Ricard, Pascal, O.M.I., 21, 62.
 Richard, Gustave, O.M.I., 207.
 Richard, P. L., lay brother, O.M.I., 119.
 Roller, A. E., O.M.I., XXIV, 1, 21, 46, 49.

Romans, Major Seminary, 137.
 Rome, 12, 14, 15, 20, 29, 35, 36, 40, 49, 50, 53, 57, 58, 62, 67, 71, 78, 80, 103, 104, 122, 123, 128, 129, 133, 134, 150, 157.
 Rossi, J. B., O.M.I., 82, 131.
 Roothaan, Joseph, S.J., Sup. Gen. 18, 19, 24-26, 39, 46.
 Roubaud, Delphine, 178, 181.
 Rouffiac, A. M., O.M.I., 107-121.
 Rouland, G., minister, 150.

— S —

Sabon, J. B., O.M.I., 82, 173, 176-180, 183-186, 192, 195, 199, 200, 202, 204, 208, 222.
 Saint-Antoine (Algeria), 172.
 Saint-Charles (Algeria), 172.
 Saint-Geney, A., O.M.I., 119, 121.
 Saint-Michel, mission, 199, 213, 221.
 Saint-Savournin, (Marseilles), 166.
 St. Anne of Talavila, mission, XXVII, 59, 116, 119.
 Sarrebayrouse, aux. Bp. of Ajaccio, 83.
 Scotland, 156.
 Semeria, Etienne, O.M.I., XXIV-XXVII, XXIX, 1-3, 5-10, 14-143, 146-161.
 Semeria, François, O.M.I., 127.
 Semeria, Jean-Baptiste, surgeon, 51, 82.
 Senegambia, 120.
 Servet, Sébastien, 184.
 Sillani, miss. apost. in Ceylon, XXX.
 Soiderquelk, merchant at Lyons, 61, 88.
 Stora (Algeria), 172.
 Strickland, S.J., 18, 19, 21, 26, 39, 40, 42, 68, 69, 72, 76, 78.
 Suez, 5, 8, 69, 71, 97, 101, 157.
 Summa (Algeria), 179.
 Sural, P., lay brother, O.M.I., 45.

— T —

Taché, Al., O.M.I., Bp. of St. Boniface, 57, 62, 88, 190.
 Tamburini, A.L., O.M.I., 89-91, 93, 101.
 Tempier, F. H., O.M.I., 10, 17, 35, 46, 62, 69, 70, 73, 83, 98, 163, 164, 172-173, 175-184, 187.

Terpend, lay brother, O.M.I., XXXII,
211.
Terracina, 51.
Texas, 91, 155.
Timon, Jean, Bp. of Buffalo, 48.
Tissot, J., O.M.I., 10.
Toronto, 192.
Tortel, Adolphe, O.M.I., 79.
Toulon, Prefect of, 198.
Trincomali, XXIX.

— U —

United States, 21, 109, 200.

— V —

Vacher, Urbain, lay brother, O.M.I., 105.
Valée (Algeria), 172.
Valigamme, XXIX.
Vancouver, 155.
Verger, M., 182.
Viala, Jean, O.M.I., XXXI, 163-170, 172,
176, 177.

Vico, 1, 9, 21, 45, 49.
Vincens, J. A., O.M.I., XXIII, 137, 138,
200.
Vistarini, don Giovanni Conte, 38, 128,
138.
Vivier, Joseph, O.M.I., 52, 61, 101, 121,
137, 138.

— W —

Walla Walla, 21.
Walsh, Samuel, O.M.I., 109.
Wicart, C. A. J., Bp. of Fréjus, 75, 82.
Winter, G., O.M.I., 105, 110.

— Y —

Yenveux, A., O.M.I., XXXI, 118, 165,
168, 169, 171, 172, 173, 175, 195.

— Z —

Zulus, XXXII.

Index of Subject Matter

— A —

Ami de la Religion, 74.
 Anglicans, 212.
Annales de la Propagation de la Foi,
 XXV-XXVI, 22, 51, 91, 215.
 Apostles, 8.
 Arabs, 165, 170, 172.

— B —

Baptism, XXVIII, XXXII, 212.
 Belgians, 154.
 Benedictines, XXV.
 Bishops, at service of, XXXI, 72, 163, 171.
 Buddhists, XXVIII, 37, 60, 151.
 Brahmins, 104, 107.
 Bretons, 220.
 Brothers of the Christian Schools, 12, 15,
 153.

— C —

Canadians, 32.
 Capuchins, 30.
 Cardinalate, 150, 157.
 Catechism, XXVIII, XXIX.
 Cholera, 41.
 Church, 65.
 Codex historicus, 51, 112, 211, 212, 214.
 Collèges, 18.
 Community life, 7, 25, 112, 141, 163, 172.
 Confessions, 112, 166.
 Confiding in outsiders, 8, 25.
 Confirmation, 119.
 Congregation "de Propaganda Fide",
 XXIV, XXVI, XXVII, 1, 11, 15, 20,
 29, 35-38, 43, 44, 48-50, 58-60, 62-65,
 67-72, 74-75, 77-78, 80, 89, 93, 94, 96,
 98-102, 103-104, 106-107, 116-120, 125-
 130, 133, 134, 138, 142, 149, 156, 159,
 160, 161, 190-191, 197, 207.

Congregation of the Oratory, XXIII,
 XXV.
 Conversion of unbelievers, XXVII, 32,
 48, 54, 61, 66-67, 82, 87, 89, 98, 107,
 135, 136, 139, 142, 143, 147, 151, 157,
 158, 170, 195, 197, 199, 205, 206, 208,
 209, 212, 213, 215-217, 219, 221.
 Correspondence, 10, 24, 25, 33, 41-42,
 47-49, 62, 63, 67, 73, 74, 87, 106, 107,
 115, 156, 173, 220-221, 222.

— D —

Dames of the Sacred Heart, 12.
 Death of Oblates, 79, 105, 110, 113, 117,
 128, 131, 153, 202, 207.
 Devil, XXX, 25, 54, 136, 195, 202, 203,
 215, 223.

— E —

English, 84, 98, 99, 153.
 Episcopate, 43, 58, 60, 75, 171, 189.
Etudes Oblates, XXIV, 75, 168, 201.
 Europeans, XXVII.

— F —

Fasting, 80-81, 215.
 First Communion, XXVI, XXVIII, 103,
 104.
 Forgiveness, 168.
 Franciscans of Cairo, 33.
 Fraternal Charity, 8, 16, 108, 136.
 French, 32, 49, 59, 64, 68.

— G —

Gazette, 168.
 General Chapter 1850, 54, 58.
 General Chapter 1856, 130, 133.

Glory of God, XXVI, 17, 59, 72, 75, 78, 111, 163.
Goans, XXV, XXVIII, 13, 94, 97, 112, 129, 135.
Gratitude, 91, 110, 123, 186.

— H —

Health of missionaries, 13, 16, 39, 80, 101, 106, 137, 139, 141-142, 149, 152, 212, 219.
Heart, 66, 115, 118, 120, 121, 135, 146, 147, 214.
Holy Childhood, Work of, 151, 212.
Humility, 43, 116, 191, 204.

— I —

Indians, XXVII.
Indiscretion, 90.
Irish, XXV, 16, 32, 90, 109, 113, 116, 153.
Italians, 11, 49, 59, 65, 68, 70.

— J —

Jesuits, XXV, 7, 18-21, 25, 26, 35, 37, 39, 40, 42, 45, 46, 73, 91, 96, 137, 192.

— K —

Kaffirs, XXXII, 107, 120, 195, 199, 202, 203, 205-209, 213, 216, 219-222.
Kindness, 200, 208.

— L —

Language: English, 12, 15, 30, 32, 70, 82, 90, 99, 127, 130, 136, 154, 192, 203.
Language: French, 22.
Language: Latin, 127.
Language: native, XXVIII, 11, 34, 39, 76, 155, 209, 220.
Lazarists, 33, 63, 91, 177, 181.
Litany of the Saints, 122.
Lombards, XXV.

— M —

Marists, 91.
Martyrdom, 118.

Mass, 25, 186.
Missionaries, XXIX, 16-17, 21-30, 31, 61, 82, 90, 91, 98, 99, 157, 158.
Missionaries Apostolic, 50, 59, 64, 193.
Mortification, 9, 97.
Moslems, XXXI, 165.

— N —

Novices, Novitiate, 17, 49, 61, 65, 79, 83, 203.

— O —

Obedience, 16, 65, 121, 189, 191, 192, 204.
Oblate Cross, XXVI, 94, 99, 102, 128.
Oblates of Mary Immaculate, XXIII, XXV, 16-17, 39, 64, 65, 68, 77, 81, 91, 96, 99, 100, 110-111, 123, 146, 160, 163, 201.
Ordinations: priesthood, 21, 30.
Ordinations: episcopacy, 21.

— P —

Pagans, XXXI.
Pallium, 65.
Parishes, 48, 50.
Parish Missions, XXIX, 55, 91, 156, 164.
Patience, XXVII, 80-82, 168-170.
Pentecost, XXVIII, 66, 220.
Persecution, 170.
Polygamy, 212.
Poor, Poverty, XXIII, 17, 107, 109, 117.
Pride, 204.
Priests isolated on missions, 6, 7, 60, 64, 68, 157.
Procurator General, 44, 49, 173, 201.
Propagation of the Faith, XXV, XXVI, XXIX, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13-16, 19, 22-23, 27-29, 32, 33, 52, 53, 64, 66, 69, 71-74, 84, 92, 97, 107, 130, 134, 151, 201, 205, 206, 211, 212, 214.
Property, Oblate, 7, 50, 154.
Protestants, XXVIII, 55, 76.
Providence, 42, 43, 53, 59, 101, 110, 149, 157.
Prudence, 6, 16, 119.

— R —

Redemptorists, 58.
 Regularity, 44, 53, 75, 102, 163, 171, 200.
 Religious, 9, 12, 15, 116, 117, 131, 139, 151.
 Religious Life, 8, 16.
 Revolution of 1848, 9, 10, 15, 20, 31.
 Rules, XXX, 8, 58, 67, 85, 88, 108, 165, 172, 223.

— S —

Sacrifices, 16.
 St. Clare, Sisters of, 116.
 Scholastics, 20-21, 49, 65, 79, 83, 90, 91, 127, 203, 212, 214, 220.
 Schools, XXIX, 12, 25, 76, 93, 105, 107, 116, 117, 151, 153, 206.
 Seminaries, XXIX, 15, 54, 90.
 Senate, 135, 145.
 Sickness, XXIX, 108, 117, 118, 185.
 Stole Fees, 94.
 Sylvestrines, XXIII, XXX, 64, 68, 79, 120, 134, 146, 150.

— T —

Teaching Brothers, XXIX, 206.
 Tepidity, 9.
 Tests and Trials, 24, 102, 137, 153, 168, 169, 184-187.
 Trips of missionaries, XXV-XXVI, 10-12, 15, 19-25, 27-30, 45, 51-53, 61, 68-69, 71, 73-74, 84, 89, 92, 93, 97, 101, 105, 111, 130.

— V —

Via crucis, 128.
 Vicariates of Missions, 109.
 Vocations, XXIX, 12, 90, 91, 109, 142, 143, 147, 151, 155, 220.
 Vocations, Oblate, XXX, XXXII, 6-9, 85, 110, 121, 157, 223.

— W —

Will of God, 16, 79, 110.
 Work of Founder, XXVI, 5-6, 47, 49, 205.

— Y —

Youth, XXVIII, 104, 107, 112, 139.

